



January 17, 2019

Dear Provost Kuleck:

As a member of the Oregon Tech community and a member of the now-concluded General Education Reform Ad hoc Committee (GERAC), I am writing to give my perspective on the General Education Review Task Force (GERT Force; CC-ed) letter of January 7, 2019. I would hope for the continued process of gen ed reform to have greater inclusion of viewpoints, and I advise not to postpone implementation.

Like the signed members of GERT Force, I see great opportunity for general education reform in the process of the last 6 years. Where I differ is that I also believe the GERAC recommendations provide an effective way to continue the process. GERAC represented a variety of perspectives, including one of the members of GERT Force. By general consensus, GERAC was concerned that the process recommended by GERT Force in their 2016 report had begun to stall out. It needed impetus, recommendations to overcome impasses and to get the process moving forward, again.

The concerns GERT Force have raised are important, and I would assure them that we on GERAC discussed these same concerns at length with our aforementioned variety of perspectives. There were plenty of disagreements, but none were overly contentious, and all arrived at effective compromises. In all, it was a very successful deliberation process. For instance, I myself fought for the program integrated study that was a part of the 2016 recommendations. However, I came to understand that program integrated study is already being developed through Oregon Tech's assessment process, and whether or not the recommendation to continue that development is overly "soft," I would ask GERT Force to recognize that it is faculty-led.

However, one thing that could be better post-GERAC is a return to more general discussion of gen ed. Most discussion of the GERAC recommendations and of how they continue or contrast with GERT Force's recommendations has been done with little public opportunity for participation. Despite the recent sharing of documents, I suspect many faculty are unaware of what the recommendations mean to them, specifically. Honestly, one of the strengths of the GERT Force process was the importance placed on inclusion, and the campus community needs more of that.

Finally, I feel postponement in order to wait for new leadership is ill-advised. First, Oregon Tech may not be able to recruit such a reform-focused provost. Second, even if we are able to recruit someone with the right skill set, she or he may not actually agree with the recommendations of GERT Force and/or GERAC. Third, assuming agreement or nearly so, how much farther would implementation be delayed while the new provost learned the basics of the new job, including responsibilities beyond reform? Perhaps

most importantly, doesn't relying on new leadership ignore the important, continued role of faculty in the reform? All due respect, leadership comes and goes while faculty have a much longer term commitment.

I deeply appreciate the work that you, the Office of Academic Excellence, and GERT Force continue to do. Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns. I advise not to delay the continuing reform of gen ed, something GERAC was formed to facilitate. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Dr. Matt Schnackenberg", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Matt Schnackenberg
Communication Dept.