



School of Public & International Affairs

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Board of Visitors

April 17, 2020

Dr. Tristan Denley
Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
and Chief Academic Officer
University System of Georgia
270 Washington St. SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Dear Executive Vice Chancellor Denley:

We represent the executive advisory board to the dean of the School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) at the University of Georgia. We are aware of a proposal to redesign the General Education curriculum of the University System of Georgia. We endorse the goal of a thoughtfully-constructed, up to date general education curriculum – one that prepares students for “a new century” as you urge in your General Education Redesign presentation (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8E0x64jk8OE>). However, one component of the proposed redesigned core is a step backward in the broad endeavor of preparing our students to be public citizens and leaders. It is the plan to combine the Georgia and U.S. History and Constitution requirements, which are statutory requirements, into a single “History and Government” course.

On the vast majority of USG campuses, these requirements are fulfilled by the completion of an American History survey course and an American Government survey course. At the University of Georgia, the latter course has been taught for decades by the School of Public and International Affairs, and the faculty have taken considerable pride in fulfilling the “constitution” part of the statutory requirement. The SPIA Board of Visitors doubts that any one individual academic unit at UGA would adequately serve the educational purposes of the statutory requirement by combining the history and constitution curricula into a single course.

We hope that USG will reconsider its plan to combine the history and constitution requirement into a single course - a plan that, at best, waters down important core course content for students in Georgia’s public higher education system. We do not believe this portion of the General Education Redesign serves the interests of UGA students or the interests of Georgia, generally, considering that most alumni of USG institutions will live and work for years to come in Georgia. We believe these students and future alumni will be better informed citizens and more effective leaders if UGA (and USG institutions, generally) continue to fulfill the history and constitution requirement with the two-course approach long-established on most USG campuses.

Thank you in advance for your review of our concerns regarding this very important matter.

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