Josh Blanck
S E 494
March 23, 2018
General Education Reflection

Submit the (1) list of gen ed courses; (2) How/if they impacted engineering education to be included in your portfolio. Please describe how your General Education Courses helped you to develop as a professional engineer. Write a reflection that incorporates your thoughts on each of the following questions.

My "significant" Gen Eds are all ECON, as I decided to pursue an Economics Minor in my last few semesters. As such, they are most present in my mind, and the most likely to influence my career going forward.

ECON 101 – Introduction to Microeconomics

 Initially, I took this class merely to fill a Gen Ed slot. It didn't leave that great an impact on myself or my college career.

ECON 102 – Introduction to Macroeconomics

 The material of this course gave me an overview of the decisions that large entities (i.e. nations) make and how they make them. I would have liked to have taken an advanced course in Macroeconomics, but time was not on my side.

ECON 301 – Advanced Microeconomics

 This is the class that started my thoughts on an Econ minor. The material of the class was more in depth than 101, and posited new and interesting problems to solve.

ECON 321 – Discriminatory Economics

 A very interesting course; material involved examples of how policy, while not inherently discriminatory, can lead to discriminatory outcomes. I learned that decisions/policies need be considered from multiple aspects, to prevent cases of disproportional treatment, intentional or not.

ECON 416 – Industrial Organization

 This course focused on the actions of firms in imperfectly competitive markets. Applied to my engineering career, it gives me insight into how companies make decisions, and how best to take advantage of a variety of situations

GE1: What are your current short/long term goals? You may include your "ideal" career in engineering or your preferred working environment.

Short-term goal: I intended to work in industry for ~ 5 years. After that time, I will consider returning to pursue a Master's degree, likely in Software Engineering, but perhaps in a different field altogether.

Perhaps sometime in the future, I'd like to work in an area related to linguistics and language processing, but it is not exactly high on my priorities.

GE2: What have you learned in your general education electives, which allow you to formulate and evaluate engineering solutions in problem solving and innovation beyond the technical aspects in problem solving? How do general education classes help you to think about an engineering problem?

My background in Econ has heavily influenced my decision making: economic decisions are made to maximize utility/value, while minimizing cost. As it would happen, many engineering decisions must factor in costs. I believe that the Econ courses I've taken help me in analyzing the costs, and determining the optimal solution to minimize these costs, while maximizing the benefit reaped from the decision.

GE3: Relate what you have learned in general education classes to seeing beyond the engineering solution in problem solving and innovation. What are some other dimensions to consider and what impact do they have in an economic, global or societal context?

My experience in Econ 321 taught me that policy/decision can have unintended, potentially harmful consequences. My experience in Econ 102 taught me the decisions undertaken by global entities to maintain their existence. These experiences taught me to reconsider the "best" solution. Perhaps it may disproportionally affect a certain group, or it may throw off a delicate balance. I will strive to take in to account these lessons whenever I make a decision in my future career.