

General Education Committee

January 26, 2010 Retreat – Lamson Tower Room

MINUTES

Present: Lourdes Aviles, Samuel D. Brickley II (Chair), Mary E. Campbell (consultant, non-voting), Christopher C. Chabot, Corey J. DeGroot (student, voting), Wilson A. Garcia, Elliott G. Gruner, David Zehr [seven voting members]

Absent: Jong-Yoon Kim

Excused: Annie Gagne (student, voting)

Vacant: Dean of the Academic Experience

Sam welcomed everyone to the retreat at 9 a.m. He noted that today would be the start of discussing several agenda items, which would continue through our meetings this spring.

1. Report (Mary)

Actions of the Curriculum Committee That Affect General Education Courses. Mary reported the changes approved December 18th by the Curriculum Committee. It was moved, seconded and approved (7-0-0-2) to continue the General Education status for these courses: AH 2700, CH 2330 (formerly CH 2130+2230), CH 2340 (formerly CH 2140+2240), CM 3510, CM 3650, MA 2140, MA 3280, MA 4140, MT 3710, ESDI 2500 (formerly NSDI 2500) and NS 4330.

2. Forms and Procedures (Sam)

- a. **Revisions to course proposal form/sunset renewal form.** Sam distributed a draft copy of a revised General Education Proposal Form, which would be used for both initially approving a course for General Education and for renewing a course at its sunset. Much of the required information would be provided in the syllabus versus the current practice of inserting text into the form. The form includes an electronic signature (NH has adopted an electronic signature act). The General Education Committee Chair would print one copy, sign it and give it to Mary for recordkeeping. We need to educate department chairs that everything must be filled out, including the department vote. An alternative would be to write the form, pdf it and send the pdf electronically. The Committee was quite favorable to the revised form and thanked Sam.
- b. **Revisions to student evaluation form.** Sam reported on a meeting he had with Dan Moore and Ellen Murphy. Is it possible to do the Gen Ed evaluations online? Especially for online courses? Evaluations can be loaded on blackboard. Some departments let faculty create their own document. The Chairs are discussing creating one instrument for all departments. Sam asked Dan and Ellen if we could do the Gen Ed evaluation online. Yes, potentially; they're exploring various means including with Banner. When the Undergraduate Studies Office did it online, the number of students responding was low. Response rate is a concern. Force the students to do it? How does one get students to participate? Look at the current Gen Ed evaluation questions. Are there some core questions? Perhaps only one question should be asked—are you aware that this is a General Education course? What makes this a General Education course? Can we shorten the current list of 16 questions? For pure online courses, could upload the Gen Ed evaluation document. One can create an anonymous survey on blackboard. Need mechanism for who has access to the data. We could ask the MIS group to do this as a project; brainstorm. We could invite Ellen to a General Education Committee meeting to discuss this. The Student Senate is backing electronic evaluations. Can students be allowed to see the evaluations of the courses? Ratemyprofessor.com
- c. **Early review procedure.** Sam distributed a draft copy of his General Education Proposal Process, which was discussed.

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- d. **Standard review procedures.** Sam distributed a draft copy of his General Education Proposal Process, which was discussed.
- e. **Establish procedure for voting on Early and Standard Review; preserve integrity of committee votes on all matters.** Should we vote in early review? We do now by it requiring it to be unanimous. The current process allows us to make improvements to the syllabus. We don't have clear criteria on what is acceptable or not on the student evaluation ratings. If we all agree on criteria, it would be okay to vote in early review. Early review was meant to decide whether we have a discussion at a meeting. The process creates discussion topics for the Committee. How do we measure "enough information"? The new proposal form will help a lot. Would like to hear face to face at a meeting from Committee or proposer. One can't find all in electronic early review. One member can say 'no, I want to hear and have the face to face discussion with them.' Has the course improved from early to general review? Turnover of the Committee. Some of the previous problems (e.g., department vote) will go away with the new form. We're voting or not voting. We are not in agreement about the trigger that makes it come to the full Committee.

Proposal: "To be approved in early review, a proposal must receive the affirmative vote of at least two thirds (2/3) of the Gen Ed Committee." A super majority is typically 60%-75%. At a meeting we discuss first and then vote, but electronic submissions are usually a vote with no discussion. Can we allow people to change their vote with an electronic vote or discuss electronically before the electronic vote? Issues of workload; rubber stamp; quality. We do not require a unanimous vote in standard review. The student members are the minority. If one has concerns, we want to hear what they have to say.

We can develop timetables at a February meeting.

3. Assessment (Chris) (Elliott)

- a. **Do we want/need further assessments?** Yes. Need time on the agenda. First is to review the 2005 Plan. Elliot distributed his document, Suggestions for Gen Ed Assessment and the section of the General Education Handbook that talks about assessment (page 11, Review of Courses and Student Course Evaluations).
- b. **What do we do with the results of present assessments?** Not enough. Need to track our work, e.g., number of approved proposals, questions raised when review renewals. We have no guidelines for student evaluation ratings. The structure of the questions. If we're not going to do anything with some of the results, why keep the question? Troubled by faculty who do not take into consideration the results of student evaluations. Ask on the form to explain any results below 3? At the time of renewal, we only see the results of the last year of the fourth year of offering the course. It was left to the Chairs how many times they use the General Education evaluation.

Assessment has to be done actively. Are we doing what we say we are doing? Is what we are doing what we should be doing? We have changed the program based on what we have learned/assessed.

General Education Assessment Plan Guidelines, April 2005; prepared by the General Education Implementation Sub-Committee on Assessment and presented to the General Education Committee. Would be good to give to new Committee members. The table on pages 6-13 is a framework for assessing. We should look at this and perhaps use it as a guideline/plan. It could be a suggested agenda for the Committee. Do what the Plan said we would do. The truest indication of assessment is change. Use the Plan as a framework. See Goals on page six. These goals are do-able. We have done Focus Groups (CTDI, GACO, will do PPDI); faculty survey

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(Fall 2008); student evaluations. Robert Miller wrote the questions for the student evaluations; he would be happy to talk to the Committee. Try to get instructors to standardize their syllabus so General Education could be at the beginning of the document.

We need to ask for resources and to be careful with resources. Make the data transparent. Share the results with the faculty.

- c. **First year requirements—discuss how do the requirements relate to each other.** EN 1200, IS 1111 and Mathematics Foundations. This fall a pilot of linking one section of EN 1200 with one section of IS 1111 was done. The First Year Council has talked about learning communities. The General Education Committee should hear occasionally from these courses (from Elliott, Wendy, the Mathematics Department). There should be a meeting to talk about the First Year. The General Education Committee would be the place to do this. Perhaps pilot two sections of each (EN 1200, IS 1111, a Math Foundations course); try to get some quantitative data. We are trying to build skills with these three courses. Skills are difficult to measure. Could you do a direct assessment?
 - d. **CLA—discuss the pilot results and any future plans for testing** (David)
 - e. **Is there any way to highlight/reward successes?**
4. Other Issues
- a. **Should sunset provision be longer than four years?** (Lourdes) That would require a vote of the full faculty. Would need data/justification to do it.
 - b. **Writing in the disciplines—is one WRCO course enough?** (Elliott)
 - c. **Communication with faculty** (Elliott)
 - d. **Reception of the committee**
 - e. **Procedures for elective chair; when, who votes** (Elliott) The Faculty Speaker e-mails committees to vote their chair at the end of the academic year. We could create our own procedures. Should vote at the last meeting of the spring semester. Let all (old members and new members) vote? Can't have it both ways. The Steering Committee should talk about this to have consistency. Elliott will bring a proposal to the first meeting, which can then go to the Steering Committee.

The retreat concluded at noon. The first meeting of the General Education Committee for the spring semester will be Monday, **February 8th**, 2:30-3:30 pm in HUB 123.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary E. Campbell, Scribe
Director of Curriculum Support

These minutes were approved February 22, 2010.