**Plymouth State University**

**FACULTY MEETING AGENDA**

October 3, 2012

3:35 – 5:00 PM, Heritage Commons

1. **Acceptance of the draft minutes** of the May 2, 2012 (held over from the September 5 meeting) and September 5, 2012 meeting. Minutes will typically be available online on the Faculty Governance blog. You will be required to log in to myPlymouth to view the minutes. The Faculty Governance Blog may be found at http://www.plymouth.edu/committee/faculty/

Welcome: Jim Hundreiser, Vice-President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs (VPEMSA)

**II. Reports**

A. Sara Jayne Steen, President

B. Julie Bernier, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

**III. New Business**

1. Resolutions of the Standing Committees – None
2. **Faculty Forum** proposal to discuss General Education Directions (Elliott Gruner)
   1. The General Education Committee has voted to request an October Faculty Forum in order to review and discuss the General Education Program. Our focus at the forum will be General Education Directions. Attached (**Appendix A**) you’ll find a compilation of Gen Ed Direction features from the General Education Handbook (2005). This, along with the results of the faculty survey, will ground the proposed discussion. Any questions, please feel to contact the Committee Chair or local representative. General Education faculty members for 2012-2013: Elliott Gruner (Chair), Peter Drexel, David Zehr, Rebecca Noel, Jason Swift, Jeremiah Duncan, James Stiles, and Katharine Harrington.
3. **Summary of Faculty Welfare’s Forum – September 12, 2012 (John Kulig, Chair Faculty Welfare)**
   1. Report is attached at **Appendix B**
4. **MOTION from Academic Affairs Committee** (David Zehr) AAC voted unanimously in favor of the following amendments to the **academic severance policy**:
   1. See attached **Appendix C** for the current and amended language
5. **MOTION from Academic Affairs Committee** (Linda Levy) AAC voted unanimously to recommend the following revisions to the by-laws description of the committee (changes in red):

Eight faculty members elected by the faculty for staggered three-year terms and two full-time undergraduate students elected by the Student Senate shall be voting members of the committee. Additional voting members shall include: the Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies, the Vice President for **Enrollment Management and**Student Affairs, Senior Associate Director of Admissions, **the University Registrar,** and a senior staff member from the Undergraduate Advising Center.  The committee shall elect a committee chair from among the eight elected faculty members.  In addition, the Faculty Speaker shall appoint a faculty member to be a non-voting participant on the committee for a one-year, non-renewable term.  This member shall be selected from a pool of faculty with not more than five years service at PSU.

This change adds the Registrar as a voting member, and updates the title of the **"Vice President for Enrollment Management and**Student Affairs."  
  
**We also corrected the name of the Undergraduate Advising Center under "duties," Item C.6:**

(1)  The AAC will work with the  Undergraduate Advising **Center**to develop and interpret evaluation instruments for the purpose of assessing the effectiveness of current advising practices.

1. **MOTION from Academic Affairs Committee** (Linda Levy)AAC voted unanimously under the Academic Procedures Policy to require students to declare a major no later than after the accumulation of 60 credits:

[**Declaring Majors, Options, Minors**](https://www.plymouth.edu/office/undergraduate-advising/for-advisors/advisors-handbook/other-academic-procedures/declaration-or-change-of-majors-andor-options/)

Students may declare an academic major when applying for admission to the University or they may enter without having chosen a specific major. ***Students are required to declare an academic major no later than the semester they are completing 60 credits, which is typically the end of the 4th fall or spring semester. Students who fail to declare a major after completing 60 credits are not eligible to register for any subsequent semester until a major is declared. Transfer students with 60 or more credits must declare a major by the end of their first full-time semester.*** In the event that a student chooses a major or changes a major after being admitted to Plymouth State University, the student needs to file a Declaration or Change of Academic Major and/or Option form with the registrar’s office. This form requires the signature of the department chair of the new major. Once this form is complete, the student should return the form to the registrar’s office for processing. Typically, a new advisor from the new major department is either chosen by the student or assigned.

Major/Option Declaration forms are available outside the regis­trar’s office or may be downloaded from the forms section of the registrar’s website. Major/Option Declaration forms are also used to declare options within a major. Options must be chosen within some majors, whereas in others the options are entirely elective. In either event, the procedure for completing the form is the same as that outlined above in regard to declaring the major itself. Where there are several options available within a major, it is advisable for students to choose the one that best suits their interests rather than to pursue several overlapping options jointly. If a student does choose to pursue a second or subsequent option, at least 12 credits must be different from the first option. To complete an option a stu­dent uses the same catalog as the major. The completion of options is noted on students’ transcripts.

To declare an academic minor, the student needs to file a Declaration of an Academic Minor form. This form requires the signatures of the student’s advisor and an appropriate representative of the department or council offering the minor. Completed forms are returned to the registrar’s office.

1. **MOTION from The Curriculum Committee** to add to the text of the academic catalog a statement about Certificates:

Certificate: An academic certificate consists of specific courses with a practical, applied focus intended to enhance one’s professional credentials. Anyone eligible to enroll in PSU classes may earn a certificate. The courses taken to fulfill a certificate provide a learning experience concentrated on expanding skills, competencies, and knowledge in particular subject areas approved by the department or faculty group offering the certificate program. To earn an academic certificate, students must achieve at least a 2.00 grade point average in their certificate. Declaration of an Academic Certificate form is available from the registrar. All certificates earned at PSU will be listed on the academic transcript.

**V. Announcements**

**IV. Adjourn**

**Appendix A**

Excerpts Pertaining to Directions

from the *General Education Handbook* (2005)

General Education Skills:

**Skills**

To live and learn in a multicultural, multimedia, multidimensional world, students need certain skills. These are the competencies expected of an educated person, the skills needed for lifelong learning. In this General Education program, these skills are developed in meaningful contexts. They are introduced in the First Year Experience courses, built upon and strengthened in all subsequent components of the program and in the major.

1. **Critical Thinking:** the abilities to compare, contrast, analyze and synthesize; and to challenge underlying assumptions; to take imaginative leaps and intellectual risks; and to solve problems creatively and effectively.
2. **Reading:** the achievement of advanced literacy; that is, the ability to comprehend written material within a variety of genres, and to articulate one’s response verbally and in writing.
3. **Quantitative Reasoning:** the ability to analyze quantitative material, and use quantitative techniques to solve problems.
4. **Writing:** development of a writing process that includes the ability to prewrite (brainstorm, outline, take notes, free-write) on a selected topic; to prepare, assess and organize information; and to compose, revise and edit a polished product.
5. **Speaking and Listening:** The ability to use both verbal and nonverbal skills to communicate effectively in one or more languages, to listen actively and to take part respectfully in group discussions.
6. **Conducting Research:** the ability to locate, comprehend and synthesize information; and to understand what constitutes reliable evidence for decision making.
7. **Working with Information Technology:** the ability to perform searches; to use word processing and spread sheets; to work with database management systems and presentation software; to work with software to enhance the creative process; and to make effective use of software to organize information and to communicate with others.

8) **Collaborating with Others:** to know, understand and respond to others’ feelings and perspectives; to work and learn in teams to enhance interpersonal relationship skills; and to develop an awareness of leadership approaches and the ability to influence others.

General Education Direction Component Descriptions

**II. Directions**

The Directions component is intended to introduce students to different ways of considering and understanding human experience which they can apply as they seek meaning in their lives. Directions courses challenge them to see how different perspectives shape the ways in which people interpret ideas and experiences to construct meaning. They emphasize connections between the world of ideas and the “real world.”

Some Directions courses might be interdisciplinary, but most are likely to be offered by specific departments and to carry specific discipline codes. These would not, however, be traditional introduction-to-the-discipline courses with heavy emphasis on the methods of the discipline to exclusion of other possibilities and with an attempt to provide an overview of the whole academic field. Rather these courses might focus on a particular issue or problem or topic of interest within the discipline, especially a topic relevant to students’ own lives. Ideally and whenever possible alternative perspectives and approaches will be woven into the course.

The four Directions essentially represent four different approaches to learning. They are likely, however, to also vary in content since certain topics or problems may lend themselves more readily to certain approaches. In this respect, the Directions are similar to another system of dividing academic subjects, the traditional four category system: the Humanities, the Natural Sciences, the Social Sciences, the Creative Arts. While it may be tempting to match the four Directions with those traditional categories, we would argue this cannot be done exactly. The traditional system based the categorization on discipline. The Directions categories which are based more directly on a combination of method of inquiry and content, lend themselves more readily to (and are meant to encourage) inclusion of interdisciplinary courses.

Directions courses are intended to further strengthen the academic skills upon which the First Year Experience is based. Different directions emphasize different of these, but among them all skills are included. Because these skills are useful in all academic work, students are encouraged to take Directions courses early. Ideally all should be completed by the end of the second year.

Students must take two courses in each of the Directions categories. Directions courses will be a minimum of three credits. Some, for example, Scientific Inquiry courses involving laboratory work, may be more. No Directions course can be required as part of any major.

**Waiver of Direction**

Departments and Councils may petition the General Education Committee to waive one Direction component for students in a particular program. Departments or Councils seeking this waiver must complete the appropriate Petition to Waive Form, thus providing a description of how requirements in the major/option program meet each of the learning goals and skills of the Direction. Initially resistant to the concept of the waiver, the General Education Committee proposed its creation when they realized that there are a certain number of major programs at Plymouth that were unlikely to be made to mesh with the new program without it, and we encouraged departments to only resort to the waiver request when that is so. The General Education Committee always intended that a waiver would only be granted in cases where the **attributes and skills associated with the direction are pervasive throughout the major program**. When a waiver is given, it is granted because it is the belief of the committee that the program as a whole does for its majors what the Direction is supposed to do.

**The waiver form includes a general question asking you to speak to how it is that the goals of the Direction are pervasive in the program, and requires that you present evidence from a minimum of four courses as part of the application procedure.**

This petition must be accompanied by annotated syllabi and samples of student work that support the claims made in the petition. Waivers granted are good for only four academic years. Departments and Councils may petition to extend the waiver. The second and each subsequent petition must include all of the paperwork and supporting evidence described above, plus significant additional assessment data to establish that students completing the program have, in fact, met the goals and developed the skills associated with the Direction. (accepted by Faculty vote, November 5, 2003)

**Creative Thought Direction 6 credits**

**People need to be creative in order to thrive in our complex and changing world.**

People need to understand the creative processes that lead to the generation of ideas and to engage in new interpretations of existing ideas. Creative thought courses encourage students to recognize beauty in its many manifestations and to become aware of formal elements of creative expression.

These courses also encourage students to view themselves as creative beings, to appreciate creativity in others and to regard creativity as an essential component in all areas of human endeavor. In these courses, students develop and value perseverance and a tolerance for ambiguity. Students are challenged to appreciate aesthetic forms, to use their imaginations and to develop the skills and attitudes that allow creativity to flourish: independence and non-conformity, the ability to organize and reorganize information and the confidence to think in new ways.

Creative Thought courses emphasize the skills of **critical thinking, reading, writing, listening and speaking, and working with information technology**.

**Past and Present Direction 6 credits**

**In order to comprehend the present and envision the future, we must understand the past.**

Cultures and societies discern time and construct chronologies of significant events to explain the past, comprehend the present, and envision the future. By examining issues and events that are currently impacting students’ lives, Past and Present courses explore how people interpret causes and effects within events, and how actions and reactions circumscribe the “origin” of an event.

These courses encourage students to realize that different times shape different views of the world. Any form of knowledge is vital and in flux. For students to realize that all fields of knowledge are subject to change, they need to study the changes that have taken place within those fields. They also need to understand the dialectic movement between the past and present: just as the past shapes the present, so does the present shape our understanding of the past. There are multiple perspectives and interpretations of the same events and these interpretations are subject to revision.

Past and Present courses emphasize the skills of **reading, writing, speaking and listening, critical thinking and conducting research.**

**Scientific Inquiry Direction 6-8 credits**

**Including significant lab/field work**

**The methods of science are powerful tools with which we can attain a clearer understanding of the world.**

In the modern world, science has real application to all people’s lives. Scientific literacy helps people to make sense of the explosion of information they encounter every day. Scientific Inquiry courses use scientific methodologies to examine relationships between events in the natural world and make students aware that science occurs in a social, cultural, political, and ethical context.

Use of scientific methods in laboratory or field settings is an integral part of these courses. As students plan investigations, collect, analyze and interpret data and develop their ability to propose answers, offer explanations and make predictions, they come to see both the power and the limitations of science. Students investigate the distinctions between rational thinking and anecdotal argumentation and develop an understanding that answers are never final, but always subject to revision.

Scientific Inquiry courses emphasize the skills of **critical thinking, writing, conducting research, quantitative reasoning, working with information technology and collaborating with others.**

**Self and Society Direction 6 credits**

**A rich and productive life encompasses an understanding of one’s self and one’s relationship to the world.**

An educated person must grapple with a question that has interested human beings for centuries: the relationship between self and society. To understand one’s self, one must understand and acknowledge the impact of society on the development of identity and the formation of beliefs. The needs of the individual sometimes conflict with the needs of society. Cultures differ in the relative value they give to the individual and to the group. Using issues that impact on students’ lives, Self and Society courses explore questions of these sorts.

They encourage students to inquire into multiple dimensions of self including the social, physical, emotional and cognitive and to investigate the interactions between individuals and the spatial, temporal, political, economic and technological aspects of the social environment.

Self and Society courses emphasize the skills of **reading, writing, speaking and listening, critical thinking, conducting research and collaborating with others.**

Gen Ed Handbook—Appendix B: Definitions

**Definitions**

The General Education Program is not static. Since the implementation of the program in 2005 the General Education Committee has clarified and updated both elemental terms and administrative processes not explicit in the original proposal. The formal actions by the committee, summarized in this appendix, have been essential in helping faculty propose, teach, and sustain General Education courses.

Directions

* Must be a three-credit course.
* Directions courses are lower level.
* Directions are generally 1000/2000 level, to be taken the first and second year; “accessible to one and all”; Directions courses have to be accessible to first semester first year students.
* The attributes of the Direction need to be throughout the whole course, mentioned in the course description, specified in syllabus.
* All syllabi have to describe how the course will satisfy the Direction.
* Directions are not to be the same as an introduction-to-the-major course.
* Directions address breadth; NEASC requires breadth.
* Pedagogy in Directions courses is to be student-centered and engaging.
* Directions cannot be team taught.
* A course can be both Direction and Connection but Integration must be upper-level.
* A course cannot be a Direction and QRCO, TECO or WRCO.
* Caps for Directions = 25-40; otherwise, have to defend the cap
* Rule = Directions cap is 25-40. Implementation Team said it was VPAA and AVPUS to make decision; General Education Committee could make a recommendation; in future VPAA/AVPUS could bring exceptions to the General Education Committee
* Remind Chairs that Directions course caps may not be lower than 25 except where the nature of a specific course or the physical space available prevents this, nor higher than 40

Waiver of a Direction

* Waiver is done for completing the whole major
* The General Education Committee has in general granted waivers only in situations where both of the following conditions are true: the goals of the Direction are found to be covered throughout the particular major, and including the two courses for the Direction would push the major over 120 or 122 credits or result in no electives within the program
* May Interdisciplinary Studies majors be allowed a waiver of a Direction? All advisors must agree that the waiver is warranted; IS Council must agree that the waiver is warranted; student submits a Student Request to the Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies to be granted a waiver

**Appendix B:**

**Summary of Faculty Welfare’s forum (09/12/12) and concluding thoughts:**

1. Approximately 30 to 40 people attended the faculty forum on salary held on Wednesday September 12, 2012. The audience, heavily populated by chairs and members of COBA, expressed a preference for **Model B**. VPAA Bernier attended the forum. Several people afterwards expressed their discomfort offering alternate views during the forum.

2. The Faculty Welfare Committee sees its task as collecting input from faculty, as well as exercising our own judgment on salary matters, given the trust the faculty has placed in us.

3. The Faculty Welfare Committee has reconsidered the models and 5 of 7 committee members people continue to favor **Model A** (but are not strongly opposed to C or D), while two people favor Model B. The reasons the majority have not changed their opinion are:

a. We have not seen comparative data on the relative difficulty of hiring new faculty, the number of people who have left after being hired, and the reasons faculty give for declining an offer or leaving once here.

b. We felt that **Model B** would hurt the morale of the faculty at a time when PSU needs our best efforts to recruit and retain students, and volunteer for service.

c. The committee acknowledged how contentious our campus can become when certain departments are treated differently, which occurred some years ago causing faculty unrest and criticism of administration. After instituting minimum salary for ranks across departments and easing salary compression, the campus became relatively stable.

d. An academic institution depends on faculty working beyond the letter of the law of our contracts, and is easily disrupted by “unequal pay for equal work.”

e. A major rationale for **Model B** was to recruit new faculty in certain departments. Yet **Model B** raises the salary of every person in a department. The committee agrees with the need for salary adjustments for new hires but does not see the need to raise all salaries in a department.

f. We believe the difficulty of hiring new faculty can be eased by other means, including but not limited to focusing on workload issues (see 4 below)

4. Those in favor of **Model B** support the need to address market equity by paying higher salaries in order to attract well-qualified faculty, but are sympathetic to the view that we do not necessarily have to boost the salary of all members of a department to impact hiring decisions.

In addition, those in favor of **Model B** recommend exploring other solutions beyond raising salaries to attract new faculty hires, including workload adjustments, one-time payments such as funds for a research project, stipend to complete doctorates, generous allotment for moving expenses, money for software purchase, or faculty development funds.

**APPENDIX C:**

**Severance Policy Language Change**

**Proposed language (changes in red):**

[**Second Academic Severance**](https://www.plymouth.edu/office/undergraduate-advising/for-students/warning-probation-severance/)

Students who are academically severed a second time will be assigned to non-matriculated, part-time status. **Students may not appeal for reinstatement during the next regular fall or spring semester following a second severance action.**Students who have incurred a second severance, who had pre-registered for courses during initial registration the previous semester, will be dropped from the courses in which they pre-registered. If students decide to return as continuing education students (see below), they must re-register. Students who have been severed a second time have three educational options at Plymouth State University:

1. They may take courses as non-matriculated, part-time students through the Frost School of Continuing and Professional Studies for the purpose of lifelong education

2. They may take courses as non-matriculated, part-time students through the Division of Online and Continuing Studies in order to repair their cumulative GPA and to demonstrate their commitment to earning an undergraduate degree from Plymouth State University. Students, who, through self-advised selective repeating of courses and taking of new courses, raise their cumulative GPA to 2.00 or above, may appeal, in writing, to the Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies for readmission to a degree program. The Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies, in consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Advising and a voting member of the Academic Affairs Committee, will make a final ruling on the appeal. Readmitted students will be placed on academic probation for the next regular semester. If the appeal is denied, a student may continue to work on repairing their GPA and may apply for readmission to a degree program no sooner than two academic years following the second severance.

3. Without having raised the GPA to 2.00, they may apply for readmission no sooner than seven academic years following the second severance. If readmitted, these students may choose (a) to declare academic bankruptcy or (b) to repair their existing cumu­lative GPA.

If the cumulative GPA of any student readmitted following a second severance falls below 2.00, that student will incur a third, and final, severance.

**Policy CURRENTLY reads:**

**Second Academic Severance**

Students who are academically severed a second time will be assigned to non-matriculated, part-time status. **Students may not appeal for reinstatement following a second severance action.**Students who have incurred a second severance, who had pre-reg­istered for courses during initial registration the previous semester, will be dropped from the courses in which they pre-registered. If students decide to return as continuing education students (see below), they must re-register.

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3. Without having raised the GPA to 2.00, they may apply for readmission no sooner than seven academic years following the second severance. If readmitted, these students may choose (a) to declare academic bankruptcy or (b) to repair their existing cumu­lative GPA.

1. If they choose **Academic Bankruptcy**, all grades that are more than seven years old will be removed from the calculation of their cumulative GPA and calculation of their cumulative GPA will begin anew. They will be placed on Academic Probation for the first regular semester following readmission.
2. If they choose to **repair their existing GPA**, they will have up to two semesters on Academic Probation in which to achieve a 2.00 cumulative GPA. In order to avoid a third severance, they must earn a minimum semester GPA of 2.00 for the first probationary semester and must have raised their cumulative GPA to 2.00 or above by the end of the second probationary semester.

If the cumulative GPA of any student readmitted following a second severance falls below 2.00, that student will incur a third, and final, Severance.