

## General Education Committee

September 13, 2010 – HUB 123

### MINUTES

Present: Samuel D. Brickley II (2:50 pm), Mary E. Campbell (consultant, non-voting), Christopher C. Chabot, Peter G. Drexel, Jeremiah S. Duncan (new faculty, non-voting), Wilson A. Garcia, Elliott G. Gruner, Jillian A. Spring (student, voting), Jason A. Swift, Audra Wheeler (student, voting), David Zehr [nine voting members]

Presenter of Proposal: Warren C. Tomkiewicz

Vacant: Dean of the Academic Experience

Exhibits: General Education Proposal Form; General Education Proposal Process (e-mailed with the agenda)

*Recorded in the order in which the agenda item was discussed.* Elliott Gruner called the meeting to order at 2:32 pm. Each Committee member introduced themselves. Elliot stated that he will ask for more time for some topics that will come to the Committee.

1. **Approval of May 10<sup>th</sup> and May 17th.** Moved, seconded and approved unanimously.
3. **Course Proposal - Standard Review**  
ESP 3400 Life in the Universe (INCO); offered experimentally Spring 2010, seeking permanent status. The syllabus does not include how the General Education skills will be addressed. After some discussion, it was moved and seconded to approve contingent upon the skills being added to the syllabus. *Approved 8-0-0-1.* Warren will send the updated syllabus to Elliot.
2. **Review of revised application form and process.** Elliot asked if the Committee wanted to receive proposals on the new form only, or on either the old or new form. The new form and process were sent to the Chairs and Assistant Chairs and posted to the Web. Previously there were two forms—one for initial approval and one for sunset renewal; now there is one form for both actions. The syllabus needs to include how the General Education skills will be addressed. The new form also asks for summary statistics of the Gen Ed student evaluations and a reflection by the instructor. It was suggested to only accept the new form. Elliott is willing to accept the new form and tell departments who submit the old form that they need to resubmit using the new form.
4. **Request to modify the process of approving General Education status for first offerings of Experimental courses.** David explained that the proposal was suggested by the Provost. The first offering of an experimental course is approved by the Provost. It is only submitted to the Curriculum Committee for second experimental and/or permanent offering. The proposal is to have the Associate Vice Present for Undergraduate Studies approve the General Education status of a first offering of an experimental course. The course would be submitted to the General Education Committee for a second experimental and/or permanent offering. The rationale for the proposal is that it will expedite the ability to advertise the General Education status of an experimental course. The Associate Vice President will (a) notify the General Education Committee and (b) ask the instructors of experimental courses (first offering) to conduct the Gen Ed Program Student Evaluations. It was moved and seconded to approve the proposal. *Approved 9-0-0-0.*

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5. **Review of anecdotal assessments.** Elliot asked upper-level students last spring to write about General Education; absolute rejection. They do not understand the point of General Education; “Gen Ed courses didn’t fit what I needed or expected; not in my major.” They were unconvinced about the skills. Some students do not look at the General Education section on the syllabus. There is a disconnect when the student spends more time on a General Education course than on a course for the major, or for real life applications/connections. They don’t understand it; they can’t judge something that they do not understand. Gen Ed is embedded in the course. The instructors have to make it explicit; bring it up several times each class, “this is why....” Students should think, these are the skills I’m gaining so that’s why I need Gen Ed. In a liberal arts model, students learn to draw connections. We look at how effective Gen Ed is. Are there too many courses? What is the implication in terms of majors? A student may not want to spend a lot of time on a Gen Ed course versus a course for the major. Gen Ed courses can bring down their GPAs. General Education courses must be challenging. The difference may be the instructors. Students didn’t like the ‘old’ Gen Ed either. A Psychology major would ask, “Do I have to take statistics?. I just want to help people.” The information on [www.whatwilltheylearn.com/schools/3298](http://www.whatwilltheylearn.com/schools/3298) is incorrect. We should not pay attention to it. It is not evaluating properly; it is based on misinformation. Elliot will not respond.
6. **Assessment – review of the “General Education Plan Assessment Guidelines” from April 2005.** Examples of current assessments are the sunset renewal process (courses and waivers); focus groups; Gen Ed student evaluations. Faculty perspective versus assessing skills. Need assessment data on how Gen Ed benefits students. We need to find out more. Elliott wants to start the process to do more.
- Look at the April 2005 Guidelines. Elliot will develop a plan from that report.
  - Students reactions to Gen Ed, e.g., focus group, having a good instrument
  - Survey faculty about Gen Ed. Additional faculty focus groups. Talk to full faculty meeting.
  - Survey chairs about Gen Ed. Talk to the Council of Chairs about Gen Ed.
  - Revisit Foundations Courses (EN 1200, IS 1111, Math Foundations) with the Coordinators
  - Go to the department level. Members of the Gen Ed Committee visit one department other than their own to talk about Gen Ed.

Build a plan over the next two/three years. Accreditation is important. We need assessment beyond assessing courses at sunset renewal. This will be Elliott’s agenda.

The General Education Committee meets on the second and fourth Mondays of the month from 2:30 to 3:30 pm in HUB 123. . The next meeting of the Committee will be **September 27<sup>th</sup>**.

The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 3:39 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary E. Campbell, Scribe  
Director of Curriculum Support

Sam explained that he teaches 1:25-2:40 pm on Mondays so he will be arriving to Committee meetings at 2:50 pm.

*These minutes were approved September 27, 2010.*