

GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Monday, September 23
2:30-4:00, HUB 109

Meeting Minutes

Present: Pat Cantor (Chair), JJ Theplama, Sandra Gamble, Jeremiah Duncan, Mary Campbell, Alex Herbst, Jason Swift, Jim Stiles, David Zehr

- 2:25 Meeting called to order at 2:25.
New student representative JJ Theplama introduced.
- 2:30 Minutes were approved from September 9 meeting.
It was noted that April 22, 2013 meeting missing and in need of approval. Group agreed to keep finding and posting past minutes on Moodle.
- 2:35 Sunset Renewal Proposal: Review and Vote
- CSDI 1400 Computers: Past, Present, and Future (PPDI)
- No questions raised on this proposal. Committee clarified procedure for final approval of proposals submitted under "early" review when no questions or concerns brought to committee. Proposals would be accepted under general consent.
- Course was approved.
- 2:45 Conversation with Brian Eisenhauer: Integrating Sustainability into the General Education program (*see documents on Moodle*). Sustainability discussion as follows:
- Is it worth putting sustainability in the Gen Ed program?
Benefits and issues reviewed by Brian:
- PSU signatory on pledge to be leader in sustainability.
 - pledge included to make curricular inclusion of sustainability.
 - should be across the curriculum.
- Ponderosa project: infusing sustainability into existing courses suggested by Brian as model to consider.
Brian noted low turnout at faculty workshop; little change in faculty teaching.
Brian asked for views on how this might link to Gen Ed.
Pat noted wellness connection viable. Build on where it already exists.
Brian noted that PSU gets scored on inclusion.
David noted that extended orientation program online, piloted last summer.

Brian suggested goals: keep student connected, get additional info. Module on sustainability discussed as possible. Also, 1st year seminar possible.

More broadly, how do we accomplish sustainability goals at PSU?

Brian noted that other universities have done this as thread in 1st year courses.

Jeremiah: is meaning lost? Sustainability is at least as important as Global Awareness.

Brian noted that natural sciences often focus on topic. Creative writing, lit, art are other examples. Reflexive thinking is key.

Sandra suggests nursing example: consider waste in profession.

Brian saw opportunity to work through teaching learning center to help faculty integrate. Build in sustainability as a connection.

Pat: huge task and would require commitment, resources.

Jeremiah: add on top or drop/ wiggle in? Pushback to both.

Clarified that a change would require faculty support, vote.

David noted faculty support for key connections because they felt expertise in area. How much expertise would we need across faculty?

Jim noted those areas integrated in many graduate programs.

Brian clarified that Ponderosa project was workshop to help faculty integrate sustainability into their courses.

Pat noted learning outcomes as helpful start, a way to embed. Ability to measure/assess noted as challenge, but other areas equally so as well. Relevance to Connections noted.

Brian said he sees face value for students on courses with sustainability issue.

Group discussed that many programs can't add another course.

Committee agreed that going to chairs with brief draft of what might be expected would be helpful. Concrete examples of what others have done useful, particularly other universities that have been successful.

It was suggested that sustainability can be coded in course description, thus helping students see connections across.

Suggested plan for Brian:

- Talk to chairs.
- Draft learning outcomes statement.
- Come back to gen Ed to review.
- Goal to know if viable initiative by end of academic year. Not binding vote, but pathway.
- Keep Gen Ed in loop with chair conversations.

3:15 Update from meeting of CourseEval. Advisory Group, September 17

Pat went to meeting. Focus is on big questions related to online course evals. What's their purpose? Do they tell us anything about student learning? Group would like Gen Ed participation on it. Online evaluations already consolidated into one. Chairs can access aggregate data. Main part of work devoted to big questions, not logistics. Pat asked for volunteer for committee, twice a month 11:00, 1st and 3rd. Tues. Alex recommended a student volunteer. Jason or Pat would be the representative. What can we achieve? What are the best questions to ask? Recommendation to keep Gen Ed informed. Response rates a major concern.

3:30 Questions/Discussion re Sunset Renewal process.

Pat shared notes from Chairs' meeting:

- Lack of data available. Extensions granted for no data, but otherwise submit what you've got. What does low number of response mean?
- One chair suggestion was making it possible to opt out of turning in data when scoring above minimum; alert if below a cutoff to Gen Ed, otherwise not submit.
- How many years of data needed?
Committee thought that all years were implied. Should be better with course eval.
It was noted that seeing data over time helpful.
- Waiver renewals: samples of student work requested. Questions were raised as to why was this needed? Reasoning?
Pat recommended we look more closely at the waiver requirements; suggested we put on Oct 28th agenda.

Mary has posted to Moodle the list of course waivers up in 2014.

File Review Process Discussion:

File submission process reviewed. Committee agreed to have files sent to chair by email until process fully worked out with technology on Moodle for direct submission.

Issue of a tiered system with lead reviewers to vet discussed when volume rises. Benefits of dividing proposals for review among committee members; when any member of the review saw concerns, proposal would be flagged for all to consider.

It was suggested that tiered review could still enable any Gen Ed committee member to review any and all proposals; tiering would allow for efficiency to flag concerns.

4:05 Feedback/input on our new Moodle site:

All agreed that this was a major improvement. Dramatic increase in productivity and ease of management.

4:10 Update on webinar on Embedded Assessment of Gen Ed Outcomes?
Tabled to next meeting.

4:11 Committee adjourned.