

## **FACULTY MEETING MINUTES**

Meeting Location: Heritage Commons, Samuel Read Hall Building

Date and Time: October 4, 2017 at 3:35 PM

### **Meeting called to order at 3:35 PM.**

**I.** The draft minutes for the September 6, 2017 faculty meeting were approved as written.

### **II. Reports**

#### **A. President**

The president was unable to attend the meeting.

#### **B. Academic Deans**

A faculty member requested clarification about the data that was sent out with the Deans' Report, specifically what is a student in a cluster and why is that important. The deans explained that this information was requested by clusters over the summer. There were questions about whether to allocate a flat amount of funding per cluster for projects or allocate funds in some other way. The number of students per cluster is part of that research, but if it's not useful, there can be other means. It's recommended that if somehow we are collecting data for funding, we need to look into more than the number of first-year students per cluster.

The deans were asked what role the General Education Coordinator will have with the Gen Ed Committee and if this will require a bylaws change. The deans explained that the committee requested this position. The Coordinator will fulfill the Principal Academic Affairs Officer of Designee role on the committee and be a voting member; no bylaws change is needed.

A question was raised regarding the rationale for holding classes at 5:00 p.m. on holidays. The deans shared that they were surprised to discover that this happens. They have asked that it be put it on the cabinet agenda.

A question was raised for President Birx (absent) regarding changes to commencement, including changes in days of the week and faculty being seated with students. It was noted that a survey about timing was sent to graduate students and they do prefer that it take place on Thursday.

An undergraduate student representative, Felicia Muse (Student Body VP), spoke to the commencement changes, noting that undergraduates are upset that graduation

may be moving. They would like graduation to stay on Saturday. Student Senate members and senior officers will be meeting with President Birx.

Several faculty members commented that graduation was difficult because of student drinking and the proposed changes seem to be intended to prevent this behavior. The student representative shared that she does not think that changing the date would make a difference as far as alcohol consumption goes, but will bring the issue back to student senate at the next meeting to try and come up with a resolution.

A faculty member requested an update about the hate crime in Plymouth and asked how to get more information now that there is no VP of Student Affairs. The deans stated that there is no further information and once there is additional information it will be shared with the faculty. Any questions can be addressed to Janette Wiggett, Title IX Coordinator.

### **C. Principal Policy Making Committees**

*(Committee reports from Academic Affairs, Academic Technology and Online Education, Curriculum Committee, Faculty Welfare, General Education, and Graduate Council follow this agenda as Appendices A-F. Committee chairs will be available to speak to the reports and answer questions during the meeting.)*

A question was asked related to the role the Faculty Welfare Committee will play in the Oct 18<sup>th</sup> forum regarding Intellectual Property. A member of the committee will attend the forum, but the committee has not been involved in planning the forum.

The Chair of the General Education Committee noted that the committee will be requesting the creation of two task forces, one to make recommendations regarding Integrated Connection (INCO) capstone courses and one to develop an assessment system for the general education outcomes.

### **D. Math Placement Assessment**

*(See Appendix G.)*

Math Placement Assessment Coordinator Justin Wright explained that last year all students took the placement test after arriving. The coordinating team would like it to be administered in a proctored session because of inconsistencies. They have also requested that math placement scores be made available to advisors. It was requested that this assessment occur during orientation. The Dean of Enrollment Management agreed to work towards incorporating the assessment into orientation.

## **III. Old Business**

None

## **IV. New Business**

### **A. Resolutions of Standing Committees**

None

**B. MOTION:**

To endorse the findings of the General Education Outcomes Task Force Report and commit the report to the General Education Committee for follow up and further action. (Submitted and presented by Cathie LeBlanc, Chair of the General Education Outcomes Task Force) (*The Report of the General Education Outcomes Task Force is attached as Appendix H.*)

Moved and seconded. Motion passed.

**Adjourned at 5:00 PM.**

## **APPENDIX A:**

### **Academic Affairs Committee Report October 2017**

The Academic Affairs Committee is continuing its revisions of the academic integrity policy and related processes. The major goals of the revisions are as follows.

1. Create a flatter and quicker process so that cases may be resolved quickly.
2. Create an in-house resolution process for first time violators that also maintains consistency across the university.
3. Offer remediation to provide additional learning opportunities to violators.

The AAC appreciates the thoughtful feedback from faculty during University Days, and will seek additional faculty feedback once previous feedback has been incorporated and a new draft is ready.

Additionally, the AAC recognizes the need to improve the Warning, Probation, and Severance policies and processes. The AAC intends to work on these revisions once the integrity revisions are complete.

Dr. Emma Wright  
Academic Affairs Committee Chair

## **APPENDIX B:**

### **Academic Technology and Online Education Committee (ATOEC) Report October 2017**

**Meeting Date: September 12, 2017**

#### **Action Items: (Motion Description/Vote)**

1) Motion:

Motion to put out a social media application request for the two at large students on the ATOEC Committee. Application would require student to submit statement of interest and confirm understanding that 2 missed meetings would result in dismissal from committee. Selection is first come, first served. Vote: 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions

#### **Discussion Items: (Description and short summary of discussion)**

- 1) Robin DeRosa initiated a discussion regarding Yammer, the Panther app, and the plan for University online communication: She expressed concern that Faculty not on Facebook are left out of the conversation; and a corporate space has become a space for our conversation; Is this a problem? Robin questioned where it was appropriate for faculty to invest in online dialogue
- 2) Academic Technology Steering Committee for USNH (membership, roles, etc.) – Robin DeRosa's (current faculty representative) term ends in December. Steering committee meets the 3rd Friday of every month, 9am-11am, in Concord at Granite State. Faculty representatives come from each campus and governs ATI and some decisions about purchasing. History provided for context: Representatives normally appointed by Provost. A call will be put out and then interested parties should contact their Dean.

#### **TIP Proposal Actions: (Proposal Description/Vote)**

WebWork Installation – Justin Wright and Emma Wright

Moved unanimously to test in development and determine costs: Update will come in October;

Vote: 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions

(Note: full description of proposal will be provided after final decision is made.)

#### **Other:**

- 1) Creation of Online/Distance Learning Policy Review Work Group:
  - a. JoAnn Guilmett
  - b. Ken Kochien
  - c. Lynn Johnson
  - d. Christin Wixson

- 2) 2016-2017 TIP funding recipients reporting expectations
  - a. Recipients will be asked to report to committee regarding project status in May 2018 or September 2018
  - b. Report can be in person or written
  - c. All recipients will be notified of expectation by ATOEC Chair
- 3) A reminder to all faculty that there are two technology funding opportunities available:
  - a. **Technology Innovation Project:** ATOEC is inviting proposals to support innovative projects that advance how we think about and use technology to enhance student learning and the student experience. Applications for Technology Innovation Projects are reviewed monthly during the Fall and Spring Semesters. Projects applications are due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month for review by the committee at its next monthly meeting.
  - b. **New or Modification to a Technology-Enhanced Space:** In the Spring of each year, ATOEC reviews the usage of existing Technology-Enhanced Learning Spaces in order to determine priorities for upgrades and changes to those spaces, and to determine which new spaces, if any, should be created. Proposals for upgrades and changes to existing Technology Enhanced Learning Spaces, requiring significant budgetary resources, are due on February 15<sup>th</sup> annually for a scheduled implantation in the Summer of the following academic year.
  - c. Additional information regarding either of these funding opportunities can be found at: <https://www.plymouth.edu/committee/faculty/faculty-committees-and-appointed-groups/academic-technology-and-online-education-committee/proposals-to-atoec/>

## APPENDIX C:

### Curriculum Committee Report October 2017

Phase One of “Cluster Curriculum”: We are rolling out two new course types this year: Toolkits and Projects. You received descriptions, samples and general procedures/required elements along with a revised Experimental Course Proposal form in a separate email. We look forward to receiving your proposals for offerings as early as Spring, 2018.

Curriculum Committee Chair Email: There is now a separate email address for the curriculum committee chair. Please direct all inquiries, notifications and proposals to [psu-curriculum-chair@plymouth.edu](mailto:psu-curriculum-chair@plymouth.edu). Please try to remember to use this email address.

#### Meeting Times and Deadlines

Curriculum Committee meetings this academic year will be as follows at the specified location:

- October 20<sup>th</sup> HUB Student Senate Room
  - Deadline: October 11<sup>th</sup> by 11:59:59pm
- November 17<sup>th</sup> HUB Student Senate Room
  - Deadline: November 8<sup>th</sup> by 11:59:59pm
- December 15<sup>th</sup> HUB Student Senate Room
  - Deadline: December 6<sup>th</sup> by 11:59:59pm
- February 16<sup>th</sup> HUB Student Senate Room
  - Deadline: February 7<sup>th</sup> by 11:59:59pm
- **CATALOG DEADLINE FOR SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES**
- March 16<sup>th</sup> HUB Student Senate Room
  - Deadline: March 7<sup>th</sup> by 11:59:59pm
- April 20<sup>th</sup> HUB Student Senate Room
  - Deadline: April 11<sup>th</sup> by 11:59:59pm
- May 18<sup>th</sup> HUB Student Senate Room
  - Deadline: May 9<sup>th</sup> 11:59:59pm

The committee conducts voting twice a month. Any proposals requiring discussion will be on the agenda of the first committee meeting after the proposal is submitted. Below is a list of each month's second proposal deadline:

- October 25<sup>th</sup> by 11:59:59pm
- **TUESDAY** November 21<sup>st</sup> by 11:59:59pm
- January 31<sup>st</sup> by 11:59:59pm
- February 21<sup>st</sup> by 11:59:59pm
- **CATALOG DEADLINE FOR CHANGES NOT REQUIRING SIGNATURE OF A DEAN.**
- April 25<sup>th</sup> by 11:59:59pm

The committee will be voting electronically on all proposals. Only those proposals requiring discussion (as determined by committee members) will be voted on in-person at committee meetings.

Updates to Forms and Procedures Documents: The committee is working to revise curriculum forms and related documentation to align with current administrative structures and account for new opportunities in course offerings.

The most recent Curriculum Change and New Course Proposal forms, approved in August 2015, are available at the following link: <https://campus.plymouth.edu/faculty-governance/committees-and-appointed-groups/curriculum-committee/>. The newest Experimental Course Proposal form is not available on the faculty governance page yet. As soon as possible the newest forms will also be available at the link above in place of the older ones. Please use this link to retrieve the most current forms instead of using older ones you may have saved to your computer.

If you are unsure how to proceed, contact [psu-curriculum-chair@plymouth.edu](mailto:psu-curriculum-chair@plymouth.edu) with your questions.

### **Reminders**

- Transitioning to Four-Credit Model The committee welcomes proposals for program changes to the four-credit model. The committee has developed the following guidelines for departments as they prepare proposals:
  - The overall degree requirements must remain at 120
  - The requirement for a *minimum* of 15 free elective credits remains in effect
  - The degree program should not increase in size (number of required credits.)
- Requests for Information The Curriculum Committee requests that departments/programs inform the committee of any significant anticipated proposals and the planned timeline for submission. This will help the committee to plan its work for the rest of this academic year and beyond. Email [psu-curriculum-chair@plymouth.edu](mailto:psu-curriculum-chair@plymouth.edu) with a summary of planned changes.
- Procedures: Please submit one electronic file (PDF) for each proposal (with appropriate required signatures, recorded votes, etc.) to [psu-curriculum-chair@plymouth.edu](mailto:psu-curriculum-chair@plymouth.edu) by the deadline indicated. When your department has one or more items on the agenda, I will inform the department chair if there are questions and if a representative will need to attend the meeting.

The syllabus checklist can be found at the link below. *Be sure to use the newest ADA and Academic Integrity statements in your syllabi.* The checklist has not yet been updated with the newest statements:

<https://www.plymouth.edu/committee/faculty/files/2010/08/PSU-Syllabus-checklist-Appvd-06Feb2012.pdf>



## **APPENDIX D:**

### **Faculty Welfare Committee Report October 2017**

The Faculty Welfare Committee met Sept 8, 2017 and elected a new Chair. The committee thanks Anil Waghe for his service as chair. Members on the committee are now: Lisa Doner (Chair), Robert Fitzpatrick (scribe), June Hammond-Rowan, Kristina Lind, Alice Pearman, Laura Tilghman and Aparna Waghe (observer).

#### Ongoing work:

The Committee will continue as stipulated in the bylaws to address the needs of faculty. This will not change until such time as some of those roles are superseded by union activities. A new email box is being created for faculty wishing to send information to the Committee. An email will be sent to all faculty once the new email service has been confirmed. Until then, requests may be sent to Lisa Doner ([ladoner@plymouth.edu](mailto:ladoner@plymouth.edu)).

#### Emerging work:

During this time of transition, the Committee recognizes that uncertainty may exist among the various units addressing faculty issues of Promotion and Tenure and workload. In light of this, the Committee agreed to seek input from the AAUP bargaining unit regarding Promotion and Tenure and workload negotiation targets as they relate to the Committee's primary goals. The Committee will also confer with Cluster Guides to discover their understanding and intentions regarding the continuing role of the Committee by clusters and among the faculty. Once collated, this information will be shared with the faculty.

Respectfully submitted, September 27, 2017  
Lisa Doner, Chair Faculty Welfare Committee

## **APPENDIX E:**

### **General Education Committee Report October 2017**

The General Education Committee met twice in September. One of our first decisions was to again postpone sunset reviews. Since the Outcomes Task Force has just reported their work, and now Assessments need to be designed, it makes more sense to wait. New proposals for Gen Ed courses are still welcome!

At our first meeting we met with the Transitional Leadership Team and discussed the need for revising/updating INCO courses to fit with the original goal of their being Gen Ed capstones and the new goal of integrating with the cluster model. It was clear that a new task force needs to be formed, to work with those who now teach INCO courses and those who are interested in the revised model of INCO purpose. Such a task force probably could lead to an INCO Fellows program, parallel to the FYS Fellows program that was created last year. The need for campus community discussions on this and other issues (themed Gen Ed and the impact of four credit courses) was shared. This was followed by a meeting with the Gen Ed Outcomes Task Force, which shared a draft of their final report, which was supported by the Gen Ed committee. The final version of this report is being presented at this faculty meeting by that Task Force. Now we need to form a new task force to work on the assessment of these outcomes.

At our second meeting we picked up with what the summer Gen Ed committee four credit retreat had discussed. Since many, but not all, Gen Ed courses will be going to four credits, and since we recognize we must have a minimum of 40 credits to satisfy NEASC but have agreed to not exceed the 45-47 credits now being used, we are working on how to do this. We have initiated contact with FYS, Comp, and Math regarding the First Year Experience courses and movement to four credits, and are hearing responses. We have a rough model, definitely in transition, will be meeting with the Chairs in the near future, and will be holding a campus community discussion on the impact of four credit courses on Gen Ed on November 13, 2-4, location to be announced, to discuss what looks like the best option. We then turned to themed Gen Ed (Pathways?). An experimental group of courses has been proposed to the Curriculum Committee, all including the same theme, all Directions courses, and the group of faculty has been invited to our next meeting, October 23. We have also set a campus community discussion on Themed Gen Ed for December 8, 2-4, location to be announced.

Thus we come requesting two new task forces for this year. The first will be to work on developing assessment for the new Gen Ed outcomes, and should have some membership from that task force, and some from those on the faculty interested in this, with a goal of piloting possibly as soon as this spring, and the task force to be done with its work this academic year. The second task force would be working on the changes in the INCO courses, including INCO instructors, and again others interested, and probably ending with the creation of an INCO Fellows group by the end of this academic year.

## **APPENDIX F:**

### **Graduate Council October 2017**

Report on September 26, 2017 meeting

The Graduate Council held its second meeting of the year on September 26<sup>th</sup> in Frost Commons. The minutes from our August 28<sup>th</sup> meeting were accepted without correction. A vote was taken to accept the revision of the draft by-laws worked on during the August meeting as the by-laws for the council. The revised draft was unanimously passed by a vote of 2/3 of our voting members and is subsequently now the by-laws that will guide the council in its work.

In response to our priority to develop clarity and guidance around how graduate programs can authentically and meaningfully integrate into clusters President Birx and members of the Transitional Leadership Team (TLT) joined the meeting to engage in an open dialogue regarding the vision for graduate programming in the cluster model, our concerns about the transition, and our needs to successfully make the transition. Both the discussion with President Birx and the TLT members were productive and provided us with a foundation to build our work upon this year. Additionally, we spoke with the President about instructional space needs for graduate programs in Concord. He has agreed to support that need and requested a list of courses, possible course enrollments, and the date and time a space would be needed.

In regard to the second priority of the council and in response to a request from senior administration, the council has made a recommendation to administration that graduate commencement take place on the Thursday evening prior to undergraduate commencement. We are currently identifying and submitting suggestions for potential speakers and ceremony recommendations.

The council will meet on the following dates in Frost Commons: September 25, October 23, November 27, December 18, January 22, February 26, March 26, April 23, May 21 (if needed). All meetings take place from 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted to the faculty,

Linda L. Carrier, Ed.D.

## APPENDIX G: Math Placement Assessment

Dear Colleagues,

The Mathematics Department offers the Mathematics Placement Assessment to incoming first years to allow them to avoid repeating course content to which they were exposed in high school. Specifically, the Assessment allows students to start at any of four different levels within the calculus sequence. Students placing into the top two levels are effectively able to avoid two prerequisite courses. While we know that most PSU students will not take courses within the calculus sequence, asking everyone to take the Assessment assures that every incoming student has the same opportunities. Further, the Assessment allows us to identify students that may struggle with their math requirements.

Over the past several years, efforts have been made to improve both the Assessment itself and how we communicate to students about it. With these improvements came an increased awareness of some unintended practices associated with the Assessment. We have found that some students were taking the Assessment after already being at PSU for several years. While this is harmless in itself, it was providing students with an avenue around required courses and unfair to those whose placement level forced them to start in a course earlier in the calculus sequence. Further, we identified what was almost certainly cheating amongst some of the students in this category.

It is our goal to give every PSU student an opportunity to take the Assessment, even if this means making it available to non-first year students. To avoid the problems mentioned above, we are offering this opportunity only in proctored sessions. These sessions have been scheduled in appointments as needed thus far. This has been somewhat burdensome for the Mathematics Department, and poorly communicated to students and faculty (though every effort was made to communicate the matter to impacted departments). This should impact very few students (less than 30 a year) and very few programs.

In the future, we will be offering these proctored sessions in prescheduled sessions. The session dates, times, and locations can be made available to impacted departments and programs and anyone interested, and appear below. We're reaching out to the faculty now to ensure that everyone is aware of this change in practice and has had the opportunity to provide feedback.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
10/30	5:00pm	Hyde 327
11/7	3:30pm	Hyde 327
11/10	9:00am	Hyde 327
12/5	3:30pm	Hyde 327
12/7	5:00pm	Hyde 327
2/1	4:00pm	Hyde 327

Justin Wright (Math Placement Assessment Coordinator), Annie Hager, Eric Laflamme, and Emma Wright

## APPENDIX H:

### Report of the General Education Outcomes Task Force

Ben Amsden, Pat Cantor, Cathie LeBlanc (chair), Holly Oliver, Joey Rino

#### Executive Summary

Building on the work of the General Education Working Group, the General Education Outcomes Task Force (GEOTF) developed a set of four **habits of mind** (see below) which are usual ways of thinking or ways of engaging with the world. These habits of mind represent the learning outcomes of the General Education program as a whole (as opposed to individual components of the program) and can be assessed in every General Education class, not just those of a particular component. The GEOTF also developed a **benchmark** for each habit of mind. These benchmarks use **signposts** to assess a student's level of achievement for each habit of mind. Students early in their General Education program (such as in First Year Seminar) are likely to be at the **basecamp** level of achievement while students later in their General Education program (such as in the capstone class) are likely to be at the **summit** level of achievement. Students in other General Education classes (the majority of students) are likely to be at the **climbing** level of achievement for the habits of mind. Patterns other than this will indicate that we should engage in further analysis to determine what we might need to change about either the General Education program itself or our assessment of it. A General Education Assessment Task Force should be appointed to develop a full assessment plan.

**Purposeful Communication** is a habit of mind characterized by the construction of meaning through interactions with texts and people and the creation of new messages. **Problem Solving** is a habit of mind that involves an iterative process of identifying, explaining, and exploring problems, describing challenges, envisioning possible solutions and their implications, and making decisions about how to proceed based on all of these considerations. **Integrated Perspective** is a habit of mind characterized by the recognition that individual beliefs, ideas, and values are influenced by personal experience as well as multiple contextual factors—cultural, historical, political, etc. **Self-Regulated Learning** is a habit of mind that encompasses the desire to learn, the ability to set personal goals for learning, and the capacity to engage in a self-monitored learning process.

#### Recommendations for the General Education Committee

- Request the creation of an General Education Assessment Task Force (GEATF); Fall 2017
- Recruit members of the General Education Outcomes Task Force (GEOTF) to serve on the GEATF in an effort to carry forward philosophy and process
- Charge the GEATF with the development of an assessment plan to operationalize the Habits of Mind Benchmarks
- Request interim report to the General Education Committee; January/February 2018
- Submit draft report with recommendations to the General Education Committee; March 2018
- Submit final report to full faculty; April 2018

## **Purpose of this Work**

The need to establish learning outcomes for Plymouth State University's (PSU) General Education program and to assess student achievement of those learning outcomes has been identified as a priority since the current General Education program was first introduced in 2005. Despite repeated and varied efforts by the General Education Committee, this goal has not yet been achieved. PSU's accrediting body, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) has made it clear that PSU must make it an institutional priority to design and implement a plan to assess General Education. The General Education Committee fully supports this recommendation.

Since the inception of the current General Education program, PSU has been assessing student satisfaction concerning individual General Education courses via end-of-semester course evaluations. These student satisfaction surveys focus on student understanding of the role of an individual course and its goals within a particular component of the General Education program. For example, the Creative Thought course evaluation asks students to rate the extent to which "This course has caused me to understand the creative processes that lead to the generation of ideas and new interpretations of existing ideas." This kind of indirect assessment of individual courses is valuable but it tells us nothing about the General Education program as a whole and does not actually assess student learning in the program. Over the years, several subgroups of the General Education Committee have attempted, without success, to create an assessment plan that directly assesses student learning in individual courses. None of these assessment plans focused on the General Education program as a whole.

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges, PSU's accrediting body, has requested that we develop a comprehensive approach to the assessment of student learning, with emphasis on evaluating the effectiveness of the general education curriculum as a whole. The following is the summary of the process used to begin the development of that comprehensive approach.

## **Process**

In 2016-2017, members of the General Education Committee and two Cluster Guides formed the General Education Working Group (GEWG) for the purpose of considering general education learning outcomes and assessment. The GEWG recognized that to assess the program as a whole, learning outcomes for the program as a whole would need to be developed. It was the group's feeling that previous assessment attempts had failed because they focused on individual components of the program. The GEWG also recognized that the new assessment program would need to directly assess student learning within the program.

In April 2017, the GEWG held a retreat to create a draft set of outcomes and rubrics for assessing the outcomes. The group reviewed the University mission, identified themes throughout the PSU General Education program, and considered assessment through the lens of the VALUE rubrics (which can be found [here](#)) developed by the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AACU). After extensive discussion, the GEWG identified four habits of mind, or ways of thinking about and engaging with the world, that PSU students will acquire and strengthen through their participation in general education. In addition, the GEWG created

rough drafts of rubrics for assessing the outcomes. (Details of the work done by the GEWG were included as a report to the faculty on the May 2017 faculty meeting agenda and can be found [here](#).)

The General Education Committee discussed the GEWG Retreat Report in May 2017 and agreed to continue the work on outcomes and assessment. The General Education Committee requested that the Faculty Governance Steering Committee form a task force of 5-7 faculty members, to be called the General Education Outcomes Task Force (GEOTF), before the end of the spring 2017 semester. The General Education Committee recommended that at least one member of the GEWG (more if appropriate) serve on the GEOTF. Five faculty members volunteered to serve on the GEOTF. Two of the five—Cathie LeBlanc and Joey Rino—were also members of the GEWG.

#### **Charge to the General Education Outcomes Task Force:**

1. The General Education Outcomes Task Force (GEOTF) shall get feedback from the faculty about the four outcomes created by the General Education Working Group (GEWG) and clarify and revise the "definition" and "framing language" for each outcome.
2. The GEOTF shall review and revise the draft rubrics created by the GEWG and get feedback from the faculty about them. The GEOTF shall then revise the rubrics as appropriate.
3. The GEOTF shall bring the finalized set of outcomes and rubrics to the faculty for a vote no later than the October 2017 faculty meeting.

In May 2017, the GEOTF began its work by reviewing the Steering Committee Charge, the General Education Handbook and the GEWG Retreat Report. In particular, the GEOTF reviewed and discussed the four habits of mind identified by the GEWG—Purposeful Communication, Problem Solving, Informed Citizenship, and Creative Thinking—and the draft rubrics created by the GEWG for each of those four habits of mind.

### **Guiding Principles**

As we embarked on our charge of clarifying and revising the draft outcomes and rubrics, we agreed to abide by the following guiding principles in our work:

1. Outcomes and rubrics should be designed to provide information about the effectiveness of the General Education program as a whole (as opposed to individual components of the General Education program), as well as about student attainment of the habits of mind.
2. Outcomes and rubrics should reflect a strengths-based, rather than a deficit, approach in describing students' levels of attainment of the outcomes.
3. Outcomes and rubrics should reflect the knowledge and skills encompassed in the General Education program as it currently exists, rather than as we might desire it to be.

4. Outcomes and rubrics should be written so that they can be used in all general education courses, regardless of the discipline of the course. That is, the language of the outcomes and rubrics should be understandable across disciplines.
5. Outcomes and rubrics should focus on knowledge and skills that can be observed and assessed in all general education classes.

We also kept in mind that our charge focused on the review and revision of the outcomes and rubrics, rather than designing an assessment plan. We anticipate that the General Education Committee will request the creation of another task force to develop the assessment plan.

## **Key Decisions**

The Guiding Principles provided us with a lens through which to review the excellent work of the GEWG. Through an intensive process of scrutinizing and discussing the GEWG's draft habits of mind and rubrics, we arrived at the following key decisions.

We envisioned a student's journey through the General Education program as being similar to ascending a mountain—starting at basecamp, climbing, and eventually, after much effort, reaching the summit.

With this metaphor in mind, we decided not to use rubrics, which are traditionally associated with grading finished products. Instead, we designed benchmarks, which are intended to show where students are in the process of developing habits of mind.

The benchmarks for each habit of mind identify signposts, which are the significant elements comprising each habit of mind. For each signpost, the benchmark shows three levels of achievement:

- Basecamp represents the level we can reasonably expect students to attain by the end of their first year at PSU. We anticipate that some students will enter with knowledge and skills already at the Basecamp level for some or all signposts. Just as climbers use their time in basecamp to become acclimated, acquire tools they'll need for the climb, and plan their ascent, PSU students will have opportunities and experiences during their first year to develop the skills and knowledge they will need to move to higher levels.
- Climbing represents the next higher level of skill and understanding in relation to each signpost. Climbing is the process a student undertakes while traveling through General Education; thus, in the benchmarks, the climbing level is depicted as “longer” than either of the other two levels. Students may find some climbing level signposts easier to reach than others, just as some parts of the trail are easier to traverse than others when ascending a mountain.
- Summit, by design, represents a sophisticated level of skills and understandings that will be challenging but achievable for students to reach. We anticipate that students will demonstrate summit level skills during their senior year. General Education capstone courses would provide ideal opportunities for students to demonstrate that they have



attained the summit. Climbers who ascend to the summit are rewarded with inspiring views and new perspectives on where they have been. Similarly, Capstone courses could provide opportunities for students to look back on their progress through General Education and reflect on what they have learned and how they will apply their skills and understandings in the future.

Since the habits of mind and benchmarks are designed to assess the General Education program as a whole, they should be used in a wide range of classes, including First Year Seminar (FYS) and a General Education capstone experience (the INCO). We would expect most students in FYS to be at the basecamp level of achievement in all four habits of mind and we would expect most students to be at the summit level of achievement in all four habits of mind. If our assessment activities show this not to be the case, we will need to determine why and change the General Education program to do better. This is our vision of how the habits of mind and benchmarks will provide assessment for the program as a whole.

The GEWG had identified four habits of mind: Purposeful Communication, Problem Solving, Informed Citizenship, and Creative Thinking. After a careful review of the GEWG's habits of mind, we made some revisions to the descriptions and elements (signposts) for Purposeful Communication and Problem Solving. In particular, we tried to convey that problems can take many different forms and vary widely in scope, and that Problem Solving does not follow a linear sequence, but is an iterative process.

Members of the GEOTF who also served on the GEWG shared insights about the intentions of that group regarding the Informed Citizenship habit of mind. We concluded that the name, Informed Citizenship, did not accurately reflect the intentions of the GEWG. After much deliberation, we changed the name to Integrated Perspective and made some revisions to the benchmark for it.

The GEWG had significant discussion about whether Creative Thinking should be included as part of Problem Solving or should be a habit of mind on its own. In reviewing that discussion, the GEOTF decided to incorporate Creative Thinking as part of the Problem Solving habit of mind.

We then went back to the General Education Handbook and discovered that the development of lifelong learning skills is explicitly mentioned throughout the document as a desired outcome of the General Education program. To capture this aspect of the General Education program, we identified Self-Regulated Learning as a habit of mind that is integral to the program. We thought of Self-Regulated Learners as students who are—at the summit level—actively involved in their learning process, aware of their own metacognition, and able to monitor and regulate their thinking about what they are learning. Self-Regulated Learners direct their own learning process, including taking responsibility to behave in ways that support their learning. They are aware of conditions that support their learning and try to establish productive learning environments. They demonstrate their belief in the value of learning and show increasing confidence in their own capabilities as learners.

The four habits of mind we have identified—Purposeful Communication, Problem Solving, Integrated Perspective, and Self-Regulated Learning—are consistent with research about the skills and habits of mind that will equip students well for life and work after college.

Members of the GEOTF held a University Days session in which approximately 80 participants attended. Participants reflected regarding the plausibility of using the habits of mind and benchmarks in their General Education classes. As these benchmarks had already been created, considered, and refined by two separate groups, our intent for the University Days session was not to refine language, debate specific signposts, or consider new benchmarks. Rather, we sought information regarding the support and resources faculty would need in order to teach general education courses with an eye toward these habits of mind. Feedback from the session regarding the concept of the Habits and the Benchmarks was very positive. We utilized faculty feedback to provide needed clarification to descriptions, benchmarks and framing language in this final report. We reported to the General Education Committee on September 11, 2017 and received their endorsement of this work.

## **Habits of Mind Descriptions**

**Purposeful Communication** is a habit of mind characterized by the construction of meaning through interactions with texts and people and the creation of new messages. "Text" refers broadly to any communicative message, including, but not limited to, messages that are spoken or written, read or listened to, non-verbal, and/or delivered through any form of media (digital, social, artistic, print, etc.). Construction of meaning and creation of messages are influenced by individuals' prior experiences as well as cultural and historical contexts. Creation of messages involves the development and purposeful expression of ideas and is designed to increase knowledge, foster understanding, and/or promote change in others' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors. To be effective, messages must engage the perspectives of others and foster dialog among individuals and the community.

**Problem Solving** is a habit of mind that involves an iterative process of identifying, explaining, and exploring problems, describing challenges, envisioning possible solutions and their implications, and making decisions about how to proceed based on all of these considerations. Problem solving encompasses a broad array of activities and approaches. Problems range widely in scale and scope—small to large, local to global, well-defined to ambiguous, simulated to real-world—and problem solving may be undertaken individually or in collaboration with others. In all cases, engaging in problem solving requires the ability to think creatively, adapt and extend one's thinking, acknowledge different contexts and incorporate different perspectives, embrace flexibility, consider potential implications, determine courses of action, persist and adapt despite failure, and reflect on the results. While the types of problems encountered and the strategies used to grapple with problems vary across disciplines, the problem solving habit of mind is relevant to all disciplines.

**Integrated Perspective** is a habit of mind characterized by the recognition that individual beliefs, ideas, and values are influenced by personal experience as well as multiple contextual factors—cultural, historical, political, etc. All human beings are interconnected through their

participation in natural and social systems. An integrated perspective recognizes that individual decisions impact the self, the community, and the environment. Students will acknowledge the limitations of singular points of view and recognize the benefits of engaging with and learning from others in order to integrate multiple perspectives for effective communication, problem-solving, and collaboration.

**Self-Regulated Learning** is a habit of mind that encompasses the desire to learn, the ability to set personal goals for learning, and the capacity to engage in a self-monitored learning process. Self-regulated learners demonstrate strong commitment to the process of learning and take responsibility for their own learning. They take intellectual risks, persist in the face of challenges, and learn from their mistakes. They are able to organize and reorganize information, interpret information in new ways, and generate their own ideas. Self-regulated learners demonstrate metacognitive awareness (an understanding of the factors that influence their own learning) and cultivate the skills and confidence they need in order to be effective learners.

## **Benchmarks**

See the Appendix

## **Assessment using the Benchmarks**

- The habits of mind are intended to span all General Education courses. Our intention is to assess the effectiveness of the General Education program as a whole rather than assessing the individual components of the program. We, therefore, purposefully avoided identifying habits of mind that correspond to a specific component of our current program. For example, we are not developing a Habit of Mind and benchmark specifically about the Creative Thought Direction. Instead, assessments of any or all habits of mind could be made in every General Education course.
- We do not expect every student to enter PSU at the basecamp level in each signpost for a particular habit of mind. We view basecamp as attainable in a student's first year at PSU. Determining the percentage of students at basecamp, then later at the climbing and summit levels, could be one way to assess the effectiveness of the General Education program.
- We do not intend these benchmarks to be used like traditional rubrics. They are meant to gauge the growth of students as they progress through the General Education program, not as mechanisms to assess the quality of individual assignments.
- Given the complexity of data gathering across all four habits of mind, we recommend that the development of an assessment plan begin with a pilot program using a subset of General Education courses. We suggest that the pilot program be used to develop a data collection process that is not burdensome to faculty teaching General Education courses.

## **Recommendations for the General Education Committee**

- Request the creation of a General Education Assessment Task Force (GEATF); Fall 2017
- Recruit members of the General Education Outcomes Task Force (GEOTF) to serve on the GEATF in an effort to carry forward philosophy and process

- Charge the GEATF with the development of an assessment plan to operationalize the Habits of Mind Benchmarks
- Request interim report to the General Education Committee; January/February 2018
- Submit draft report with recommendations to the General Education Committee; March 2018
- Submit final report to full faculty; April 2018

## Glossary

**Habit of Mind** – a usual way of thinking and engaging with the world. For example, one way of engaging with the world is to habitually think about communicating with a purpose.

**Benchmark** – each habit of mind is comprised of a list of 3-5 items that will be used to assess student work. These items are called signposts. The assessment will indicate the level of accomplishment of the student on the signpost. For example, the Purposeful Communication habit of mind has a benchmark comprised of 4 signposts.

**Signpost** – an item used for the assessment of student work on a particular habit of mind. For example, one signpost of the Purposeful Communication habit of mind is Awareness of Context. We will assess student work to determine the sophistication of their awareness of the context(s) of their communication when they are engaged in the communicative act.

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**NOTE: Appendix including Benchmarks can be found on pages 22-25.**

