

**General Education Curriculum Committee
Meeting of April 23, 2010, 2:30 p.m.**

Minutes

Attending (Voting): Beattie, Burnet, Cox, Crespo, Futrell, Koerselman, Menezes, Wolfe, Zimmerman *(Non-Voting):* Carden, Dietrich, Reed, Robinson, Steinberg *(Guest):* Karega-Mason

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of February 12, 2010 were approved.

Introductions

Joy Karega-Mason, an English Department Ph.D. candidate, was introduced as the hopeful replacement for Robinson. She will shadow this summer and also serve as an assessment reader.

Review Process for CD Petitions and Pending Proposals

The committee discussed the lingering question of who would inform petitioning students of the committee decisions. The question of appeals was discussed; most members did not endorse allowance for a student appeal to the GECC beyond the initial waiver request. Instead, it was recommended that the waiver forms include an embedded link to the rubric so that students would clearly understand how their essay would be measured.

***Action:** Robinson will prepare a template for both rejections and approvals.

***Action:** Steinberg's office will update the petition forms to include the rubric with time lines.

***Action:** The CD Petition Subcommittee will meet on May 3 to review additional petitions.

***Action:** In the fall, replacements will be sought for the A&S Curriculum Committee chair and SGA student rep who are rotating off the subcommittee.

COB Student Abroad Proposal

Karcher and Goatley proposed a change in current general education policy for study abroad courses for which there are no equivalencies. More specifically, the request is for "tentative approval" for CD credit prior to the experience and submission of an essay. The rationale for the COB cases was explained (partly based on finances); however, after considerable discussion, it was the consensus of the GECC not to change established guidelines for the following reasons:

- Study abroad credit cannot be tentatively approved in advance based on course content.
- CD approvals or waivers require a standardized process and there is no way to assess except for the essay (individualized situations cannot drive the process).
- It's problematic to tentatively say "yes" and then possibly say "no."

Alternative recommendations included the creation of a special topics study abroad course by the department with the understanding that general education credit is not retroactive; there's a time line and process for course approvals. Various members also presented their views on what

qualifies as a significant cultural experience and suggested that study abroad students be given a framework of expected learning outcomes.

***Action:** Futrell volunteered to develop a pre-planning rubric that would require students to interrogate culture vs. approaching CD superficially for any study abroad experience.

NS Assessment

Robinson reported that she successfully recruited readers for the all-day NS Assessment scheduled for Saturday, April 24.

Syllabi Evaluation

Koerselman announced that the syllabi assessment would be postponed until fall when new members would be oriented and all participants trained prior to the syllabi readings. The purpose is to determine whether general education courses (all sections) have migrated from the original intent and required learning outcomes.

***Action:** Robinson will create a template for the syllabi review.

***Action:** Dates for the training and readings will be determined by Robinson's replacement in consultation with the GECC chair and Billingsley's office.

CPE General Education Work Group Charge

Dietrich reported that an option to the threat of state-mandated (HB 160) common course numbering is the alignment of statewide general education learning outcomes. Agreeable outcomes—no more than 5 for each core curriculum area--are intended to provide a basis for workable transfer equivalences within state public institutions. Already, there's about an 80% overlap of outcomes. The concern is at what level the goals need to be demonstrated. The outcomes may also serve as a basis for an inevitable common assessment (time table unknown). Dietrich summarized the three-fold priorities: 1) Establish objectives first, 2) Determine the standards for skill levels, and 3) Incorporate community colleges into the common assessment. It will be a significant operational change.

***Action:** Dietrich will represent the university as a member of the planning committee.

Discipline-specific representatives for the core areas will also participate proactively in the various work group meetings (May 18-20).

Review of the GECC by Faculty Senate Academic Programs Committee

Koerselman referenced the Function and Structure document that requires a five-year review of the main functions of the GECC as outlined in the original charge. Specifically, committee members were asked to provide feedback regarding **significant challenges** and **significant accomplishments** to be incorporated into the overall report. Initial responses included:

Challenges

1. Defining/re-defining of CD courses
2. External mandates
3. Responsibility for areas over which the committee has little control
(Ex: course shortages)
4. Effective communication to students (beyond the STOMP module) conveying why general education courses are relevant, including philosophical elements

Accomplishments

1. CD petition forms
2. General education assessment

***Action:** Input from all current GECC members and past chairs was requested.

Recognition of Outgoing GECC Members

Outgoing members were recognized and thanked. Also, Robinson was congratulated on her doctorate degree and offer of a faculty position at The University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

Prepared by Kathy Carden