

General Education Curriculum Committee 2004-05
Meeting of November 19, 2004 - 2:30 p.m.

Minutes

Voting Members Attending: Ann Allen, Julie Berman, Susan Crim, Richard Dugger, Karen Gray, Anna Marie Johnson, Avery Kolers (Chair), Babu Nahata, David Schultz, Bill Weinberg, Wiley Williams

Others: Dale Billingsley (non-voting), Kathy Carden (staff)

1. The minutes of October 29, 2004 were approved.
2. The following courses were approved for general education credit, effective Summer 2005:
 - ENGL 323 Afr-Am Lit 1845-Pres-WRCD1 (Willey)
 - ENGL 373/WGST 325 Women in Literature-CD2 (Willey)
 - ENGL 374/WGST 326 Gender & Children's Lit-CD2 (Willey)
 - GEOG 300 Globalization & Diversity-CD2 (Hanchette)*
 - HUM 327 Minorities & Movies-CD2 (Share)
 - HUM 332 Humanities Perspectives on Aging in Diverse Cultures-CD1 (Nuessel)
 - HUM 333 Minorities & Medicine in America-CD2 (Share)
 - MUH 320/WGST 310 Women in Music: A History-CD2 (Schinnick)

*Model syllabus/proposal

Additional proposals in Chinese Studies will be reviewed.

3. Billingsley presented a proposal for a learning communities pilot project for Fall 2005, to be managed by Julia Dietrich. Approval from the GECC was sought to grant general education credit for specially-designed pilot courses as part of a retention/engagement initiative: A&S, with the support of the Provost, plans to offer general education "learning communities" for first-year students. Students will co-register in these courses, and the faculty will integrate the content of the two thematic or topical courses. Although faculty would be challenged to meet the learning outcomes in two content areas (6 hours of learning), the GECC approved the proposal on a pilot basis. Details about submission deadlines and coding of the courses in the registration system would have to be worked out for all experimental projects.
4. Billingsley distributed a spreadsheet report from Tim Kracker in Admissions, indicating the number of students who received credit by examination (or portfolio) each year since 2001. It was noted that only a handful of students take the CLEP exam

to test out of math (8 algebra and 1 calculus). The number is also low for English composition (2 since 2001) and other subject areas. Conversely, 385 students received math credit in calculus and 67 in statistics through AP exams. The numbers were also greatly increased in English language and composition (289) and English literature and composition (444). AP is growing (taking over CLEP). Also, students are bringing high school portfolios with them, which are evaluated by graduate students in the English Department after elaborate training. It was noted that not all of the courses in the report satisfy general education requirements. This document led to further discussion about course demands and test-out options.

5. Course Demands Discussion - In an attempt to address the supply-and-demand issue, especially for freshman and sophomore students, recommendations were presented in the form of a DRAFT letter to the Provost, Deans, and Undergraduate Council. Two structural solutions deal with 1) Reallocation of funds and 2) Reduction of undergraduate enrollment. Interim stopgap measures, which may also aid in retention efforts, were explored.

Test-Outs: A math test-out pilot project is proposed in two stages. 1) Identify AP or highly-prepared incoming students (high ACTs, etc.) and encourage them to attempt to test out. 2) Monitor the success (for a two-year period) of the student who tests out. If the test-out procedure does not hinder performance in the higher-level courses, encourage wider use of test-out options for other GERs.

W. Williams commented that students who test out of MATH 205 generally do well but that MATH 206 is more difficult. *ACTION: He will try to obtain information on how successful students have been previously with such testing. Also, he will consult the mathematics chair about the possibility of writing language for a threshold for MATH 111 -- the suggested course for testing out.

Although one incentive for testing out is economical (cheaper than a 3 credit-hour course), it was pointed out that many of the targeted students will receive scholarships and, therefore, the University would be double hit if paying for a CLEP exam. Also, testing services cannot handle large numbers of students taking a paid CLEP exam.

Content/competency designations (reclassify OC and WC as competency areas): The proposed linking of WC to a 300-level content course did not go over well. This approach was also unpopular during a pilot project in Humanities. Moreover, there's a shortage of faculty to teach these courses, as evidenced with the topical honors courses under WC. Schultz proposed a WC1 designation for courses owned by the English Department and a WC2 designation for specific/more structured writing in the majors with a literacy component. A question arose about the difference between a WC2 designation and WR. *ACTION: Kolers will consult Bronwyn Williams for further feedback before refining the proposed recommendations.

Discussion about ways to address the shortage of OC courses resulted in some interest in linking OC with another content course (with class size limitations). Also, it was noted that courses not based in Communication could also fulfill this requirement. *ACTION: Berman will consult the Communication Department Re: the feasibility of designating OC as a competency course.

Expanded CD2 options: There was no opposition from the GECC to count specific study abroad programs (exceptions) and advanced language courses (with a focus on cultures) as CD2 if the general education outcomes are met and oversight is ensured. However, Kolers reported that Ed Segal is opposed to changing foreign language courses to CD2 and noted that the shortage is greater with CD1 courses.

Higher-level Courses: There was general opposition to this suggestion. Gray reminded the committee that allowing 300-level content courses takes away from the intent of offering foundational courses (no longer general education). There's also the question of assessing the longer list of courses (a problem with the old general education program).

6. Billingsley shared the summarized discussion notes from the November 5 meeting of the Assessment Subcommittee and asked for feedback (via e-mail) prior to the December 3 subcommittee meeting.
7. Billingsley announced the funding of up to two participants to attend the AAC&U Conference on General Education and Assessment in February 2005.

Kathy Carden, recorder