

General Education Curriculum Committee
Meeting of March 3, 2006 – 3:00 p.m.

Minutes

Attending (Voting Members): Berman, Brown, Gray, Holloman, Johnson, Nahata, Schultz, Swanson, Tyler, B. Williams, W. Williams; *(Nonvoting):* Carden, Cunningham, Dietrich
(Guests) Irving Joshua, Mary Joshua

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of February 3, 2006 were approved.

Introductions

Christopher Cunningham was introduced as the back-up support person for the GECC.

Course Proposal – Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Joshua)

Dr. Irving Joshua proposed a new general education course for natural sciences (S) credit entitled “Introduction to Fundamentals of Biomedical Sciences,” an intensive physiology and biophysics course that requires BIOL 102 and CHEM101, or its equivalent. The course, PHZB 215, is an introduction to basic concepts of organic chemistry, physics, biochemistry/cell biology, and physiology and their application to problem-based learning modules related to medicine and dentistry. It is designed to motivate students – particularly (but not exclusively) students of minority, rural, and underprivileged backgrounds – to utilize previous course work to further develop skills in the sciences, and to promote at the undergraduate level the pursuit of relevant scientific careers. They will “apply abstracts in a way that will have clinical meaning.” The course will be offered every summer during the four-year funding period and is intended for targeted students completing their freshman and sophomore years. Although it will be taught on the Health Sciences Campus, students living on the Belknap Campus will be shuttled. No more than eighty students will be selected for any one class. The course is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and Drs. Mary and Irving Joshua are the principal investigators. If demand is overwhelming, a second session can be opened but subsidy is for grant students only. However, the need for a separate session is not anticipated given the rigorous course work, as well as the time commitment during the summer. Criteria for selection into the program include overall GPA, problem-solving skills, evidence of the ability to work independently or in small groups, and the prerequisite courses.

The committee approved the course.

*Action: Carden will process paperwork to ensure that the course is added to the 2006-2007 course inventory and distribute an updated general education course listing.

Update on General Education Assessment Process (B. Williams)

Collection of data is ongoing. Some data has been collected in the form of scantrons, but rubrics have been designed for written documents. B. Williams suggests one of three options:

1) hold on to the scantron sheets and add them to the fall batch; 2) apply rubrics to scantrons; or 3) figure out another approach. The issue will be revisited. In preparation for the SACS visit, data will be collected from Anthropology, Sociology, Pan-African Studies, and Health and Sport Sciences this spring. Data was collected from History and Humanities last fall.

Update on Course Demands Issue/Data (B. Williams)

The unresolved issue about course demands was discussed. Billingsley voiced concern about the proliferation of topics-oriented courses and the addition of new courses versus additional seats where there are shortages. The first set of data, however, concludes that the previous rising enrollment in general education classes dipped, effective Spring 2005 through Spring 2006; therefore, it is projected that the number of offerings for Fall 2006 and Spring 2007 should be lowered. Since the data reflects overall averages, W. Williams requested that the data be more specifically categorized by general education requirement (i.e. Humanities, Natural Sciences, etc.).

*Action: Billingsley will ask the Registrar's Office to break down the data by discipline for each general education requirement.

Update on Blackboard Caliper Project (Brown)

Brown commented on the development of a template for the Blackboard Caliper Project. In an attempt to better tailor the template, the committee was asked to review and respond to two questions sent to the Project Caliper Focus Group 1) to obtain a better understanding of the data to be collected within Caliper (identification of core fields or the kinds of data needed) and 2) to identify sources used to populate Caliper (what system and by whom) and types of updating (manual or automated) and frequency.

Dietrich stressed the need for student anonymity during any random sampling. Possible methods were discussed. The subject of student responsibility in submitting recommended portfolio pieces was also discussed. B. Williams wondered if a report would indicate who tagged the course (student or faculty) and how it would be done. W. Williams pointed out that the field labeled "operating units" does not fit for general education courses. The committee was reminded that every general education course is coded in the course title.

*Action: Brown will follow up with the Caliper Focus Group to clarify the committee's questions and concerns.