

General Education Curriculum Committee
Meeting of September 12, 2008, 3:00 p.m.

Minutes

Attending (Voting): Beattie, Busch, Cox, Downs, Futrell, Jones, Karpoff, Koerselman, Maron, Menezes, Singleton, Zimmerman, *(Non-Voting):* Billingsley, Carden, Dietrich, Robinson, Steinberg *(Guests)* Tammy Duddy

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of March 5, 2008 are missing. The approved minutes of February 13, 2008 are now posted to the general education web site <http://louisville.edu/provost/GER/minutes.html> .

Introductions

New members of the GECC (Fannie Cox, Erica Downs, Sam Jones) were introduced. Additional appointments from Speed School and A&S are pending. Bronwyn Williams is a returning member following faculty leave. Kathy Carden is the new staff support person.

Election of Chair

Herb Koerselman was elected as chair of the GECC. As chair, he will also serve on the General Education Assessment Committee.

Reference Binders

General Education reference binders were provided. Carden referenced the contents and encouraged members to keep it up to date and bring it to meetings. Members rotating off of the committee in 2009-2010 were asked to pass it on to the new members.

Summary of Issues

Billingsley reviewed a summary of issues (handout) that have arisen during the past academic year. The Provost is seeking recommendations from the GECC to resolve issues that are not clearly addressed in the current guidelines, including:

- Restrictions of sections for “majors only” (not adding as many courses as in the past and issue of keeping general education courses open to all students while providing enough seats in courses such as HSS 293)
*Action: The committee recommended that a unit only restrict a section of a multi-section course if offered at the same time as an open section.
- Requests for CD credit for study-abroad programs/course work (alignment with approved general education learning outcomes criteria and mechanism for reviewing/approving requests)
- Course “substitutions” as exceptions (appeal process for students not in place and current guidelines state that “departmental and unit academic advisors cannot substitute any unapproved courses for the list of approved courses”)

- CD equivalencies (process for determining credit for 300-level CD courses for transfers)
- Management of general education programmatic requirements (at unit level or through a centralized mechanism)

The chair asked the committee to think about resolutions for these issues and consider revisions to the current general education curriculum guidelines (tab #5 in binder), as well as a process for making exceptions.

Competency-based Exams

Tammy Duddy presented information on CLEP and DSST exams. The Admissions Office is proposing that the university accept more CLEP exams and also start accepting DSST exams for credit. The original intent of this proposal was to target adult learner audiences and make the university more military friendly; however, implementation would have to be across the board for all undergraduate students. Discussion raised a number of concerns, despite some positives as follows:

- Departments have to accept the tests (Karpoff)
- Frees up more general education courses if students “clep out” (Billingsley)
- Tests are not likely to assess Critical Thinking or Cultural Diversity (many 300-level courses) and may bypass the general education curriculum requirements (Dietrich)
- Charges for the study sheets/prep materials (Dietrich)
- Revenue issue/trade off for space (Beattie)
- Tests may measure content, but perhaps not the general education criteria (Futrell)
- CLEP mostly measures non-general education courses, and AP and CLEP are generally utilized by academically strong students (Billingsley)

Steinberg’s office reviews transfer equivalencies and looks at the AP exam scores; there are some concerns regarding specific courses such as statistics.

*Action: The chair recommended that the proposal be presented to the departments. Duddy will provide details on upcoming CLEP/DSST informational sessions (scheduled for October 20 and October 29 at noon).

Assessment Update

Robinson distributed procedural guidelines on the general education assessment project and gave an update. The method of assessment received acclaim from SACS. “Real” student work in a “real” classroom is assessed to determine how well students are doing based on general education criteria. A narrative report of the past three years (2005-2007) can be found under tab #12 in the general education binder, along with rubrics for critical thinking, cultural diversity, and effective communication. Departments are chosen each semester based on enrollments; Natural Sciences is slated next. Robinson works with an appointed departmental rep to collect and code student assignments (every 4th student) and coordinates the eight-hour reading sessions. Readers include tenured professors, tenure-track professors, and graduate students and the rubrics are used to assess. Student anonymity is important (does not affect their course grade) as is a “non-threatening” approach for faculty – assessing the program, not the teaching. The

commissioned assessment project is generally not met with resistance. In fact, some departments have now expressed an interest in the outcome of the reports, which can be utilized to make improvements in a non-threatening way. Although the outcomes are not publicized, the assessments are based on rubrics that are accessible to faculty when planning their assignments. Koerselman suggested that departments be recognized in some way for doing great work.

*Action: The chair will work with Robinson on the next steps.

Update on I2A

Billingsley reported that Patricia Payette is the Director of I2A (Ideas to Action). The focus of this ongoing project is to use critical thinking to foster student learning and community development, beginning in the general education program and continuing through the majors with a culminating experience. Typical culminating experiences have been broadened beyond the thesis to include service learning, internships and co-ops, and capstone projects.

Upcoming Meetings

The GECC is scheduled to meet at 3:00 on November 21, 2008 and December 19, 2008.

Prepared by Kathy Carden