

**General Education Curriculum Committee
Meeting of February 24, 2012, 2:30 p.m.**

Minutes

Attending (Voting): Bernstein, Biles, Crespo, Futrell, Koerselman, Leichty, Mansfield-Jones, Maron, Martin, Reynolds, Singleton, Wolfe, Zimmerman.

(Non-Voting): Bays, Billingsley, Carden, Dietrich, Hernandez, Karega-Mason,

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of January 20, 2012, were approved.

New Members

Gary Bernstein (replacement for Weinberg) and Terri Hernandez (replacement for Steinberg) were welcomed as new GECC members.

CD Petitions Update

Subcommittee Decisions: Karega-Mason reported that two additional CD petitions were approved and three were denied.

Policy Revision: In follow-up to an approved motion on December 9, the CD petition guidelines were updated to limit CD credit by petition to one course and to clarify the retroactive policy; that is, UofL study-abroad courses must be approved in advance. The drafted text was approved with one edit: change the word “sanctioned” to “approved” study-abroad program. For the record, there was one “nay” vote by Futrell

*ACTION: Carden will submit the revised policy to the undergraduate course catalog editor and post it to the general education web site.

Study Abroad Course Approvals

Futrell voiced ongoing concern that study abroad not be discouraged. General education policy and internal and external curriculum/course inventory deadlines were reviewed, which includes one-year advance approval of courses (an annual CIF process). Approved general education courses become effective in the summer for the next catalog year and are published following the January 15 institutional deadline for course changes. Billingsley explained that the GECC is obliged to follow the CPE state requirements and the Institutional Research and Registrar Office administrative deadlines. Also, he reiterated that no course approvals are retroactive which ensures equity for students and regularity in the setting of annual degree plans.

As a possible remedy to time constraints, Mansfield-Jones suggested that a “special topics” study abroad course might be proposed by an academic unit using a basic syllabus that could fulfill general education CD1 and CD2 requirements. Billingsley noted that most study abroad courses are offered through A&S and the Honors Program, in particular, and they are variable by topic and division. Koerselman suggested that such a proposal be discussed in the academic units but confirmed that the regular review process be followed with reference to unit curriculum committee and other institutional deadlines.

Syllabus Review Project

In response to controversy surrounding the syllabus review project, discussion was opened to address concerns. For example, Wolfe expressed concern that composition course syllabi do not explicitly follow the general education guidelines for stated general education learning outcomes and would require a close reading. Also, Karega-Mason found in a preliminary review of about 50 of the 565 syllabi (collected to date) that there is, in many cases, a lack of connection between the learning outcomes and assessment methods. She further commented that the splitting up of courses by division (assigning syllabi to the specific discipline of the reader) could cause more problems. Also, she stressed the need to follow the design of the current questionnaire that curtails subjectivity, although there is room for comment as well as straightforward “yes” and “no” answers for each criteria.

Billingsley proposed two methods of assessment: 1) allow the general education office to review the syllabi to make sure that the general education learning outcome statements are there (approved, variant, none at all) and 2) use faculty eyes to certify whether the syllabus identified assessment activities in the course. He stressed the need to assess major programs of the university, even beyond SACS reviews. Re-designing the questionnaire at this point would cause more delays in this project that has been eight years in getting off the ground. Therefore, Bays suggested that a random sampling be conducted to keep the project moving forward, noting that an initial assessment helps refine the process and determine future action based on the data. In addition to determining compliance with general education syllabus guidelines, Billingsley commented that the bigger question is whether the requirements are being met regardless of what is in the syllabus beyond the approved outcomes—that is, reviewing the whole syllabus including required readings. An additional purpose of reviews is monitoring whether courses have strayed.

Billingsley recommended that a minimum of four readers participate in the proposed random sampling to determine whether the current method of assessment is going to offer valuable information. Volunteers included Mansfield-Jones, Bays, Reynolds and Martin.

*ACTION: Karega-Mason will distribute to the readers current syllabi that do not date back prior to 2004, when the general education syllabus guidelines were initiated.

Spring 2012 Assessment

The spring assessment is scheduled for May 19, with training for approved readers on May 15. Music History will be reviewed instead of Women & Gender Studies. Additional departmental reviews include Anthropology, Pan-African Studies, and Sociology.

Assessment Results

Dietrich inquired about the possibility of sharing assessment results with the faculty who teach general education courses. Karega-Mason previously distributed the assessment reports to the deans and asked that the results be shared with faculty through the chairs. She reported that there is no sense that faculty feel threatened and noted that the math results are not posted in aggregate. Billingsley suggested that the report could be appended to the minutes. The GECC voted unanimously to make the results more public through this method.

*ACTION: Karega-Mason will share a PDF version with Dietrich, and Carden will append it to the February 24 minutes.

State General Education Requirements

Billingsley reported that the general education programs at several state institutions are not parallel but are close. Differences for the UofL general education program include the history, cultural diversity, and lab sciences requirements.

Next Meeting

The next GECC meeting was set for April 27 at 2:30 p.m. in the Jouett Hall Conference Room.

Prepared by Kathy Carden