

**General Education Curriculum Committee 2003-04  
Meeting of May 10, 2004 - 3:00 p.m., Strickler 126B**

**Minutes**

*Voting Members Attending:* Berman, Black, Boyd, Brown, Clancey, Dugger, Gray, Kolers (Chair), Nahata, Schultz, Williams. *Others:* Billingsley (non-voting), Carden (staff).

1. The minutes of April 19 were approved.
2. Gray reported that she will serve as a resource person for the Curriculum Development Project, when needed.
3. Billingsley reported that Dr. Huot has taken a position at Kent State and will no longer be able to serve as a consultant on the assessment project. The options are to continue to build on the current assessment proposal or develop a new approach. Williams proposed waiting until fall to decide on an assessment process when the committee could give the issue a sustained focus.

Clancey commented that students deserve an assessment of the general education program, as well as specific courses, because they are required to jump through many hoops. Reducing the number of hoops might shorten our 10-year average time span to graduation (the national average is 5.5 years). One way might be a competency-based approach to offer the option to test out of some general education courses or to move to upper-level courses in the degree structure. Also, retention may be improved if the structure of financial aid is shifted to benefit upper-division students approaching graduation.

A number of assessment approaches were discussed. Nahata questioned how to determine whether there is a problem with the courses or the students. Williams proposed that the upcoming assessment of a first-year writing program might piggyback with the general education assessment. Assessment is being done through program review, but it's not specific to the courses, only the program. However, perhaps faculty could be asked to begin thinking about the assessment of general education courses. Some thought assessment should begin at the departmental level, but Schultz proposed that it begin with the competencies. Then, if there are deficiencies or courses are drifting (once compared with established goals), the department could be given a "heads up." However, the committee must not be viewed as a "head hunter." Perhaps assessment could begin with random sampling.

\*It was the consensus of the committee that assessment be a priority agenda item in the fall. In the meantime, it was suggested that Billingsley send out a letter to find out what assessment measures are already under way. For example, Mathematics is currently involved in measuring courses and has already adjusted some lower-division courses. Likewise, the Humanities Division has been saving syllabi, assignments and other information. Education has electronic access to course information in preparation for the NCATE review; however, there are only a few general education courses.

It was proposed that the letter to units/ departments include the following points:

- Stress that the University is required to assess the general education program and courses to ensure continuous/ evolutionary progress (not policing but cooperation is needed for accreditation).
- Advance notice: Ask faculty who are planning courses for the fall to be thinking about the required assessment of the outcomes and what they promise to do (the syllabus must be geared toward the outcomes, and the general education proposal is a binding contract).
- Advance preparation: Ask current general education instructors to maintain course materials, as assessment must begin with what's in place.
- Aside from accreditation purposes, assessment should be done for the welfare of the students (the quality of their education).
- Find out what assessment efforts are already in place and how it is working.

Once the committee knows what is already being done, it will be a good starting point in the fall. Boyd expressed concern about losing credibility if the committee does not follow up or constantly changes direction.

*\*ACTION: Billingsley will draft the letter for committee feedback.*

4. The Dakan four-hour course proposal was tabled for future consideration. The overhauling of a program that has not yet been assessed does not seem reasonable at this time. The Education curriculum committee had a number of questions (handout).

5. Boyd met with the students to review their current reality tree project. He will incorporate additional helpful information after reviewing their interview notes. The project will be revisited in the fall.

6. The general education Honors course issue will be revisited in the fall. In the meantime, recruits to teach these courses were solicited.

7. The committee voted to adjourn for the summer. In the fall, it was suggested that the committee be divided into two working subcommittees to 1) Review new proposals and 2) Develop an assessment plan.

Kathy Carden, recorder (*revised*)