

**General Education Curriculum Committee 2005-06
Meeting of September 16, 2005 - 3:00 p.m.**

Minutes

Voting Members Attending: Ann Allen, Lynn Boyd, Sherri Brown, Karen Gray, Carol Holloman, Babu Nahata, David Schultz, David Swanson, Bronwyn Williams (Chair), Wiley Williams

Others: Dale Billingsley (non-voting), Kathy Carden (staff), Julia Dietrich (non-voting), Michelle Bachelor (non-voting), Leah Riggs for Alicia Paez (student representative)

1. **Introductions:** Bronwyn Williams, the new Chair, called the meeting to order, and members of the committee introduced themselves. David Swanson is the newly appointed A&S Curriculum Committee representative. Sherri Brown replaces Bill Weinberg (will serve out his term). New members received general education reference binders.

2. **Committee Function:** Williams summarized the function of the committee in two focused areas:

- approval of courses for the general education curriculum
- assessment of the general education program

3. **Minutes:** The minutes of May 5, 2005 were approved.

4. **General Education Course Equivalency Proposal :** In follow up to the committee's approval of the General Education Course Equivalency Proposal on 5/5/05 and the endorsement by A&S on 9/7/05, transfer liaisons were designated for each of the seven general education requirement areas:

Written Communication (WC) -- Bronwyn Williams
Oral Communication (OC) -- Julie Berman
Mathematics (M) -- Wiley Williams
Natural Sciences (S/SL/B) -- David Schultz
Arts & Humanities (A/H) -- Karen Gray
Social/Behavioral Sciences (SB) -- Sherri Brown, working with Ann Allen
Cultural Diversity (CD1/CD2) -- Ed Segal, working with Ann Allen

*ACTION: Tim Kracker will work with the liaisons to draft equivalency guidelines for each of the discipline areas and for the cultural diversity competency area.

5. **General Education Assessment:** Williams gave a progress report on the assessment mandate. He recapped the work that was completed by the Assessment Subcommittee in an effort to make the process as painless as possible for faculty. Michelle Bachelor, Graduate Fellow, is coordinating the logistics planning for the assessment project.

A time line and instructions for submitting student assignments is forthcoming, following the October 13, 2005 drop deadline. Details are being worked out, including a cover sheet for the submission of sample work to protect anonymity. Instructors will not be assessed. Since the focus is on the assessment of student learning, broad-based rubrics were designed to assess sample work to determine the attainment of the general education competency goals of effective communication, critical thinking, and awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity. Assessment has begun with English and will continue with History and Humanities in Fall 2005 and then extend to Sociology, Anthropology, Pan-African Studies, and the Health Sciences in Spring 2006. Assessment of the learning outcomes in other departments will be phased in.

A few concerns were raised, but an initial data base must be established for SACS followed by monitoring for continual improvement. One concern is the utilization of multiple-choice tests, an assessment method that is an unacceptable practice in the review of general education course proposals.

*ACTION: During the fall semester, a “call for readers/assessors” will be made and a training session will be scheduled. The assessment plan will be in place by Spring 2006.

6. **Rubrics:** The rubrics that were drafted in the spring were generally approved for across-the-board assessment. However, it was suggested that the Critical Thinking rubric be subdivided to make the assessment more applicable to the Natural Science, Mathematics, and Social Science disciplines. Supplementary specifications for Humanities have been drafted already. Balance must be maintained so that the rubrics are not too specific for the lower-level general education competencies. Some common threads (synonyms) would hold the various disciplines together when assessing what a generally educated student should be able to do. Also, if too discipline-specific, the training of assessors would become problematic. For consistent comparisons, it will be important to use the same assessment instrument vs. continually changing it. Shultz suggested that the sampling of the lab student might be more effective than assessing the work from lecture classes; lab reports could be reviewed to demonstrate competencies. A motion was approved to use discipline-specific rubrics, instead of a global rubric, for assessing the Critical Thinking competency. Readers will be guided by a descriptive table of criteria.

*ACTION: Schultz/Brown (Natural Sciences), Swanson (Math), and Allen (Social Sciences) will draft the sub-divided rubrics, consulting others as necessary.

7. **E-portfolios - Blackboard System:** Billingsley and Bachelor reported on the use of Blackboard for e-portfolios. Essentially, Blackboard is a set of file folders for compiling selected student work. Currently, there is no assessment mechanism that allows for comments. However, a module project called CALIPER can be added as early as Spring 06 to allow for movable/portable containers of information. The purchase of a port and additional servers for expanded space is required.

8. **CPE/General Education Reform Task Force:** Dietrich reported on the status of the statewide general education reform discussion. Although there is some agreement among institutions concerning outcomes; the statewide assessment initiative was met with negative response. The proposal has evolved to competency-based vs. course-based assessment. If implemented, the statewide agreement does not include a CD requirement.

Kathy Carden, recorder