

General Education Curriculum Committee
Meeting of November 20, 2009, 2:30 p.m.

Minutes

Attending (Voting): Beattie, Crespo, French, Futrell, Haworth, Koerselman, Menezes, Singleton, Tudor, Weinberg, Zimmerman *(Non-Voting):* Billingsley, Carden, Carpenter, Dietrich, Robinson *(Guest):* Kristen Roy (sub for Mindy Steinberg)

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of September 25 were approved.

Course Proposal Recommendations

The Course Proposal Subcommittee, chaired by Weinberg, recommended that all nine proposals be approved. However, a number of proposals required modifications (*contingent approval*) due to non-compliance with general education syllabus guidelines and the omission of the learning outcomes and assessments in the syllabus. (See summary of course proposal review – Carden note of 11/20/09.) The coding breakdown is: 1 SB, 2 CD1, 3 CD2, 1 HCD1, 1 HCD2, 1 SBCD2.

Retroactive Credit Request

Koerselman reported on a retroactive CD credit request involving a student who successfully completed a course that was not approved for general education credit at the time of her catalog year but now is. Billingsley reminded the committee that retroactive credit or course substitutions violate the principle of formal approval of courses that are required to meet general education guidelines. The GECC has no authority to waive requirements and such practices undermine policy. The request was deferred to the provost with no recommendation; only the Provost can make exceptions under extenuating circumstances.

Assessment Update

Natural Sciences Review: Robinson reported that the Natural Science courses will be reviewed in January/February. More readers are needed and GECC volunteers were solicited. Rosters were sent to instructors to pull assignments for submission to the assessment committee. Collections range from 700-1,100 documents depending on the department. Regarding the query sampling of general education courses for NS, not all courses have labs (only SL and B coded courses). Some of the courses require writing assignments but not lab reports. Others involve specialized projects that don't fit the rubric. Therefore, some courses were cut from the sampling.

CT Rubric: The updated Critical Thinking Rubric, which incorporates the Paul-Elder model, was approved. Robinson noted that the scoring order was reformatted to best-worst (4-1) scoring.

Alignment of Assessment and General Education Learning Outcomes

Dietrich raised an A&S concern that general education courses are being approved by one set of guidelines and assessed on another. She asked if the form that departments submit to request that a course carry general education credit required a department to say which of the three overarching outcomes the course would take on. There was a consensus that the form should be amended to include a request that departments at least check a box for one or more of the outcomes. This would ensure that the assessment process and the approval process were using the same criteria, at least at this most general level. Reference was made to the language of the opening statement of the learning outcomes and the overall goal for students to think critically, to communicate effectively and to understand and appreciate cultural diversity. Billingsley clarified that the preamble talks about the general education program, not each course. Futrell commented that the original intent may have been forgotten by some and suggested that the learning outcomes be discussed with new GTAs and PTLs and at faculty orientations. As a department chair, he is also willing to monitor general education course outcomes due to the migration of courses. Brief workshops at departmental meetings could also be instructive.

*Action: Koerselman recommended that instructors be reminded of the general education learning outcomes and the need to state them in their syllabi. Prior to each term, Billingsley will request a query and follow up with a reminder to instructors about the policy statement of learning outcomes. (Done December 1, 2009)

*Action: Amend course proposal cover sheet (pending).

Transferability of Credits

Billingsley reported that the CPE, working with the Chief Academic Officers, are planning to review statewide general education outcomes to determine if they can be made uniform, without making the numbers uniform. Models from other states are being reviewed. Major concerns are the seeming lack of understanding regarding discipline-based differences in math requirements and prerequisite checking. Common outcomes and numbering are feasible only for such courses as English. Part of the argument for this approach is an attempt to provide more baccalaureate-degreed students to attract better employers; however, an opposite plan driven by economic development is the need for better employers. Also, there's a need for highly trained/skilled vocational degrees.

IB Credits by Examination

*Action: Billingsley will provide A&S with the summary tables showing how IB exams are credited by benchmark and other comparable institutions. The determination of suitable equivalency for this particular exam may help remedy obstacles to effective transfers.