

**General Education Curriculum Committee
Meeting of September 11, 2015, 2:30**

Minutes

Attending (Voting): Alagaraja, Banks, Bertacco, Bradley, Cobourn, Desoky, Howarth, Singleton, Swanson (*Non-Voting*): Billingsley, Carden, Dietrich, Gilchrist, Reed, Shanahan, Wiggins-Romesburg

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of May 6, 2015, were approved and will be posted to the gen-ed web site.

Introduction of New Members

Introductions were made and new committee members (Alagaraja and Howarth) were welcomed. The new student reps were not present.

Review of Charge and GECC Structure

Singleton reviewed the committee charge and structure, a recommending body to the Provost. The document can be found under tab 3 of the reference binder.

Election of Committee Chair

Singleton was unanimously re-elected to serve as chair of the GECC.

Subcommittee Service

A request for volunteers was made for service on the following subcommittees:

CD Petition Subcommittee (coordinated by Christine Wiggins-Romesburg): Bertacco and Desoky will continue to serve along with Alagaraja, a new subcommittee rep. Reynolds may be willing to continue, and a new student rep is needed. Petitions typically are reviewed on a monthly basis, but a face-to-face meeting is not needed. Christine forwards the petition forms and essays electronically for response from the decision-making body.

Assessment Subcommittee (coordinated by Katie Shanahan): Dietrich, Gilchrist, and Swanson will continue to serve. Shanahan will invite Brueggemann and Barrow who were previous representatives. The subcommittee works closely with several CEHD colleagues.

Course Proposal Subcommittee (coordinated by Kathy Carden): Since the General Education Task Force is considering revisions to the current university-wide gen ed program, which may impact a change to student learning outcomes, Billingsley recommended a moratorium on new gen-ed proposals. The GECC approved this recommendation. Therefore, at this time, there is not a need for representatives on this particular subcommittee.

*ACTION: Billingsley will inform the undergraduate deans of the moratorium.

CD Petitions Update

Wiggins-Romesburg reported that there are six new CD petitions to review.

OC Assessment Report and Syllabus Review

Assessment Results: Shanahan reported on the first OC assessment, which was conducted in May 2015. A total of 153 assessable student artifacts (14.6%) were collected from Communications, WGST, Political Science, and Honors. The challenge was in assessing the type of artifact provided. Student reflections of speeches were used as artifacts instead of speeches. Since there currently is not a specific rubric for OC, the existing EC and CT rubrics were used in assessing oral communications. There were a few challenges with applying these rubrics due to the format of the student artifacts. The EC rubric assumes that the artifact is a written essay with an introduction, body and conclusion rather than a speech. The CT rubric resulted in the conclusion that the short-answer questions employed as part of some self-reflections are not a standard that usually has a thesis or purpose like essay assignments. Few assignments required students to address counter-evidence, and several relevant contexts were difficult to apply.

Some of the 60% threshold criterion for learning outcomes were met and some were not. Summaries of the specific results are found in the written report (**see attachment**). In part, this may be a consequence of the mismatch of the CT and EC rubrics with the type of artifact used. Measures of inter-rater reliability also are provided, and the level of agreement was high.

Wiggins-Romesburg discussed assessor feedback based on a 71% survey response rate. See Appendix C of the report for recommendations from the readers, challenges encountered using speech self-critique assignments, and specific reader comments on the rubrics (pages 20-21). Some of the readers commented on the difficulty for assessors if not an educator in the discipline. A few minor word changes to the rubrics were suggested.

In addition to lessons learned, base-line data was captured regarding strengths and suggested areas for improvement. Shanahan followed up with the gen-ed course coordinator of the Communication Department who shared what they are doing to meet learning outcomes using the rubrics the department designed. Their rubrics are closely aligned with student speeches. They conduct three types of assessment: student self-evaluations, peer evaluations, and faculty evaluations. Under consideration is the use of some of those pieces to design a separate OC gen-ed rubric to specifically assess speaking ability. For the next general-education assessment, the use of actual recorded speeches, rather than student reflections, might be considered.

Shanahan asked the GECC what they want to do with the feedback and will also consult the Assessment Subcommittee. Dietrich stressed the need to maintain consistency in the rubrics over time. Drastic changes to existing rubrics will not be introduced, perhaps only minor tweaks.

Gilchrist raised a question about the sharing of rubrics with both faculty and students. Shanahan responded that there are no plans to share rubrics with students. However, rubrics are shared with department chairs and faculty to increase awareness of the process and identify course artifacts that most closely align with the outcomes to be assessed.

*ACTION: A follow-up study will be conducted this fall, working with OC faculty in an effort to improve methods of general-education assessment of OC student work.

Syllabus Review: Appendix B of the OC assessment report indicates how many of the sample syllabi are available in Blackboard (89%) and how many provide the stated general-education outcomes (72.7%) and assessment methods (75%).

AA/AS Policy Change Proposal

This proposal will come from the Transfer Office. Due to problems that have arisen, the office would like to be more rigorous about requirements for non-resident AA/AS transfer students, specifically regarding lack in the university's core gen-ed content areas. This change will require re-wording of the policy in the catalog with approval by the GECC.

Update: General Education Task Force

Billingsley reported that the General Education Task Force will meet on September 25. The agenda includes reports on three surveys that were conducted in the summer. One of the returns on the surveys is that large courses are not endorsed. A draft philosophy statement also will be reviewed. The focus over the next three years will be more about how courses are taught (best-practice pedagogy), and the number of required general-education hours and general-education courses might decrease. The possible relationship between the new Belknap Academic Classroom Building and the new general education program will be explored. Billingsley can report on that discussion after the BACB committee meets on October 1. Periodic updates on the Task Force deliberations also will be shared. Part of the work of the TF will be governance and ongoing assessment. The GECC will remain in place at this phase of changes.

Prepared by Kathy Carden