



**General Education Curriculum Committee  
Meeting of November 4, 2016, 2:30**

**Minutes**

*Attending:* Barrow, Billingsley, Carden (staff), Cobourn, Cooksey, Desoky, Dietrich, Fernandez, Futrell, Gilchrist, Hagan, Libe, Myers, Pack, Partin, Patton, Reynolds, Riedel, Seif, Shanahan, Singleton, Wiggins-Romesburg, Willey, Wright

*Absent:* Howarth, Ross

**Introduction of Members**

Two new members of the GECC, Scott Patton and Khotso Libe, were welcomed and an updated membership roster was distributed.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of September 23, 2016, were approved.

**Update on CD Petitions**

Wiggins-Romesburg reported that five new CD petitions were considered. Three were approved, one was declined, and the committee requested that one submitted for CD1 approval be resubmitted as a CD2 proposal.

**Update on Assessment Subcommittee**

Shanahan reported that the assessment subcommittee wants to increase transparency in the departments. That is, when the assessment results are reported back to the departments, they will be asked to share how they are embedding the outcomes in the curriculum and helping students to achieve the outcomes. Documentation of the use of the assessment results will also be useful for SACS reporting. A link to the reports will be provided.

Additionally, in an effort to get more uniform artifacts, Shanahan is working with Taylor and Futrell in the Oral Communication Department to video/record speeches using Tegrity.

The WC artifacts are being collected this fall for the Spring 2017 assessment, and NS artifacts will be collected in Spring 2017.

**General Education Task Force Discussion**

Willey presented the DRAFT Cardinal Core Program Proposal and timeline for discussion. The proposal represents the work of the General Education Task Force, a representative group that was appointed by the Provost in 2014 to review the existing general education program and make recommendations for improvement. The Task Force spent 2015-2016 researching best practices in general education and gathering feedback from key stakeholders (faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, and employers), and is now requesting feedback. The implementation date is targeted for fall 2018 (see timeline). One change is the reduction of required hours to 31 to allow students more flexibility in choosing a three-hour elective from any approved Cardinal

Core course in either the Skills or Disciplinary Perspectives categories (see chart on page 5). The intention is for students to be able to use this elective to start engaging the major. Another option might be a course to improve writing skills. Additionally, diversity will no longer be defined as cultural, and any course designated D1 (US Diversity) or D2 (Global Diversity) will not add hours to the Cardinal Core requirements, but will be chosen from a list of courses that double count to fulfill two sets of criteria (reduction of 6 required hours). Stand-alone diversity courses will not be offered. This new practice will affect nursing students since Community Health Nursing is restricted to the major. However, they are getting back six hours due to the reduction in gen-ed credit hours. Cardinal Core courses may be offered at the 100, 200, or 300 levels but should have no prerequisites and must be open to all students.

Futrell questioned the approach to double count diversity courses to which Billingsley responded that the earlier general education program called them competencies because they were not peculiar to a specific discipline. Non-categorical competencies cut across the disciplines. Futrell would rather see diversity courses taught separately in the discipline. Currently, a good percentage of the CD-coded courses are in the discipline. Willey reminded the GECC that the results of general education assessment revealed some shortfalls in meeting the CD learning outcomes; therefore, the goal is to make faculty more aware of the need to incorporate diversity through all course work, merging the competency and skills areas as part of the general education curriculum. She pointed out that this is a metropolitan university that is serving a diverse community. Wright added that diversity can still be done in the major as a reinforcement. Dietrich stated that the university is now more capable at producing a curriculum with more of a diversity component and does not believe that there will be any problem with offering double-counted diversity courses.

Libe wondered if there were plans to provide enough double-counted courses since they fill up quickly. Also, he raised a question about courses that build math skills. Riedel responded that no lower-level developmental math course would count but that any course such as MATH 180 (Elements of Calculus) or MATH 111 (College Algebra) could count to satisfy either the gen-ed math requirement or the elective. Also, Fernandez observed that this will allow students who must take ECON 201 and 202 to meet both the SB and elective requirements.

Partin asked if there was a less broad definition for Historical Perspectives to which Willey responded that it will be up to the History Department to decide what they want to propose. Dietrich added that it may not be a course in the History Department, as long as the SLOs are met. Billingsley commented that representatives on decision-making subcommittees can include non-GECC members.

Furthermore, Partin asked if ENGL 102 can be transferred in as an elective. Willey said that this is acceptable if the student does not need an additional writing course, which could be taken as an elective. Advising of students will be important in determining their needs. Concern was raised by Cobourn about students who have difficulty writing. Similar concern was raised by certain members of the Task Force, but the goal of reducing the number of required gen-ed hours was a greater concern.

Another goal is for faculty to propose skills-based general education courses that incorporate writing, oral communication, and quantitative reasoning to foster a cumulative learning process. Innovative interdisciplinary courses also are sought.

All units need to review the proposal for an understanding of the spirit of the program before proposing courses to satisfy the **new learning outcomes**. Currently, there is not a formal response from the committee. However, Cooksey reported that the SGA students were in favor of decreasing the number of required hours.

Billingsley expounded on the philosophy of the newly proposed Cardinal Core Program, which is designed to get away from the check-box attitude. It encourages instructors to familiarize students with the whole range of the educational process across the curriculum. Seif would like to see the philosophy statement reworked to exhibit the spirit of the enthusiasm of the new program, which isn't a group of hurdles to jump but a fitting together of the curriculum and educational process.

Willey further commented that the grandfathering in of new students under the new program and IT side of the transition will be a complicated process. The goal is to front load as much transitional work as possible in the spring when the program is more fully rolled out. This will include some workshopping course-development sessions to familiarize faculty with the new program, to provide guidelines for the course proposal review process, and to get faculty to think about current courses and possible new courses. An engaging general-education course will attract majors while also providing general-education credit.

Partin asked if students will be required to complete the general education program before they reach 61 hours. Willey responded that no tracking mechanism is in place and that it's more of an advising issue. Libe commented that students have different preferences and that the advising community respects this. Still, it is to the benefit of Speed and Nursing students to complete their gen-ed requirements as early as possible.

Partin also asked if faculty of graduate courses had been consulted regarding the writing proficiency of their students. Willey stressed the need to reinforce writing as a basic foundational skill with a research component. Billingsley commented that some students also take business writing, technical writing, or a richer writing course, which does not have to be done by the second semester of the freshman year.

It was noted that transfer students will not be disadvantaged; there is no change in policy if the student is fully certified.

Regarding the budget to implement the Cardinal Core Program (pages 15-16 of the proposal), estimated instructional costs were calculated. Willey hopes that by reducing the number of required hours that there can be a decrease in class sizes and that more faculty will be available to teach general education courses. A&S needs about \$2 million more to support the new program.

In response to Futrell's double-dipping concern, Dietrich explained that double counting does not cost more. For example, a gen-ed course like ANTH 201 is not just part of the major. The budget was costed out not by course but by each student. The numbers do not represent all of the possible seats but how many seats are needed for gen ed. Billingsley informed the committee about a parallel budget issue. Distance education revenue has helped support gen-ed courses, and shifting to a central budget would require some restructuring to underwrite the costs. Currently, less than half of the general-education instructional costs comes from centrally-allocated funds.

Billingsley commented that all academic units have to approve the program. In order to implement the program by fall 2018, the infrastructure needs to be in place by spring 2017 and all courses and catalog submissions settled by January 2018.

**\*ACTION: Shanahan is collecting comments on the circulated draft through November 30, and the GECC was encouraged to respond. A Blackboard discussion board will be available. Common university-wide concerns will be taken back to the Task Force.**

### **Upcoming Meetings**

The GECC will meet again on December 9, 2016. Additional meetings for Spring 2017 have been scheduled as follows: January 13, February 17, April 14, and May 10 luncheon.

Prepared by Kathy Carden