

Faculty Senate Minutes April 16, 2009

Call to Order:

Call to order: 4:15 pm; ADUC

Senators Absent: Donna Baker, Bruno Morro, Emma Perkins, Manuel Probst, Michelle Walters

Visitors: Annie Adams, Marilyn Moore, Joy Gritton, Carol Wymer, Jeanie Lee, Antonino Carnevali, Michael Harford, Jason Holcomb – FGEAC; Yvonne Baldwin, Charles Patrick, Geoff Gearer – GESC; Terry Irons – First Year Seminar Subcommittee

Minutes: Senator Fultz moved to approve the minutes of April 2, 2009. Senator Colburn seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Reports:

Regent's Report:

Regent Morrison will have an open meeting on Wednesday, April 22, 2009, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. in Combs. Regent Morrison would like to hear faculty thoughts on the President's evaluation and compensation.

Provost's Report:

The Provost deferred her report to discussion of General Education. The Provost answered questions from Senators.

Senate Actions:

Governance: Senator Berglee presented a slate of candidates for each of four (4) Standing Committees for approval by the Senate membership. One revision was made from the Library for service on the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee. Tom Kmetz is currently serving and cannot serve consecutive terms. Another candidate from the Library will be selected for that election. Senator Macintosh moved to approve the slate as amended. Motion was seconded. Motion passed.

Professional Policies: Senator Chatham presented revisions to PAC-11 – Faculty Research for a first reading. Senator Chatham answered questions about the revisions.

Reports:

Chair's Report: Chair Thomas presented the Report on General Education: Courses and Assessment Documents for a first reading. Some of the members of the FGEAC were in attendance to answer questions about the documents. Joy Gritton provided a brief history of the development of the Courses and Assessment Documents. All General Education reports and documents are on the General Education web page. The FGEAC was working within set parameters [33 +3 hours; everything had to fit within what the CPE defines as core (Appendix C)]. In order to meet the SLO's and implement an effective assessment plan, every outcome had to be assigned to at least one General Education course. The FGEAC had to ensure that students would encounter the entire range of SLO's regardless of which course options they choose. The FGEAC set several goals based on best practice, faculty surveys and employer surveys, three of which are: 1) reduction of courses 2) integration across the General Education curriculum, and 3) enhancement of reading and writing skills. The FGEAC had two remaining tasks set by the GESC: 1) provide guidelines for General Education course proposals, and 2) provide recommendations for the composition of a Senate Standing Committee that will have oversight of General Education courses. The FGEAC provided the following recommendations for the composition of the

General Education Standing Committee to the members of the Senate: [The following was copied directly from documents submitted by the FGEAC.]

FGEAC Leadership Recommendations for Structure of General Education Standing Committee

At an April 1, 2009 meeting of the General Education Steering Committee, Faculty Senate President-Elect, Royal Berglee, requested that FGEAC leadership (Joy Gritton, Tim Simpson and Annie Adams) submit recommendations for a General Education Standing Committee.

According to the "Senate_Gen_Ed_Council_Resolution," the FGEAC charge is limited. The General Education Steering Committee "FGEAC-Duties" document, however, states that the FGEAC is charged with, "[O]rganizing and providing oversight in developing a committee structure for the review and approval of new general education courses."

In a 2008 FGEAC survey on General Education, faculty were asked questions about organizational and decision-making structures based on the Board of General Studies of San Jose State University (Model 1) and a central coordination method from Appalachia State University (Model 2). Participants favored the "Board" model (Model 1 - San Jose State) over the "central Coordination" model (Model 2 - Appalachia State) 52.3% to 38.4 %.

The Curriculum Audit recommendations regarding general education state: "The General Education program must be assessed, reviewed, and revised to properly prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to be successful in the 21st century." It also proposes an "Office of General and University Studies" within the College of Regional and Global Studies. This office would "have oversight for the General Education Curriculum and the Bachelor of Universities Studies Degree Options." A final question in the survey referred to the appropriateness of such an office at Morehead State University. The statement 'This office as stated would be appropriate for implementation at MSU' received its highest rating of 23.3% under the Agree category. 'Such an office organized around a board model would be appropriate for implementation at MSU' received the highest Strongly Agree rating for this section at 16.3%, however, this statement's highest rating was 25.6% under the Agree category. The statement 'Such an office organized around a centralized model would be appropriate for implementation at MSU' received its highest rating in the Disagree category with 24.4%. (See General Education Survey Results: <http://www.moreheadstate.edu/genedreform/index.aspx?id=44430>)

The San Jose State University Board of General Studies is "an administrative agency authorized by the Senate that does not report to any Senate committee, but instead reports to the Provost." See the San Jose State University Board of General Studies website for more information -- <http://www.sjsu.edu/ugs/committees/bogs/>

A second model for consideration is the Eastern Kentucky University General Education Committee. It is the oversight body for General Education at ECU and, like SJSU, it is an administrative agency that reports directly to the Provost. - See the Eastern Kentucky University General Education Committee website for more information -- <http://www.gened.eku.edu/faculty/committee/>

General Recommendations -

1. The General Education Committee at Morehead State University should be created by Faculty Senate, but report directly to the Provost.
2. The Committee should be led by faculty. There should be a Director and Associate Director of General Education.
3. The Director should lead the Course Proposal and Approval Process.

4. The Associate Director should lead the Assessment Plan of General Education.
5. The majority of faculty on the General Education Committee should be faculty teaching the General Education CORE.
6. The Committee should include administrators closely linked to the General Education Program.

The FGEAC leadership developed the following document for the new General Education committee that states some of the obstacles they encountered and provides some suggested solutions. This document is provided in an effort to help the General Education committee create and maintain the new General Education Program.

[The following was copied directly from documents submitted by FGEAC.]

**Report to the Faculty Senate from the FGEAC Leadership
(Joy Gritton, Tim Simpson, Annie Adams)
April 16, 2009**

On April 13, 2009, the Faculty General Education Advisory Council (FGEAC) submitted Assessment and Course Distribution proposals for a new General Education Program. The committee met regularly throughout its tenure, including summer, and convened 11 of the 23 days before its final deadline, working for 2 or more hours a stretch, to bring a plan forward that could be implemented within the first "snapshot year" of MSU's SACS reaccreditation process. Although the FGEAC was able to fulfill its charge, there were many barriers to success that could not help but adversely affect the good faith efforts of the committee. Because the forthcoming standing committee on General Education will face similar institutionally based barriers, we, the leadership of the FGEAC, have drafted a report that outlines the barriers that need to be overcome so that the future committee can function even more successfully than its ad hoc predecessor.

Please consider the following points, which are stated as positive directives that gesture toward needed solutions, our attempt to be playwrights of future processes, not critics of past practices.

- Organizational structures must be clearly articulated at the start of a project for the project to run smoothly and the process to be transparent. The FGEAC was a Senate created committee that was also subject to oversight from the General Education Steering Committee (GESC), a select group of faculty and administrators who serve at the will of the Provost. Each overseeing body supplied the FGEAC with a formal description of the FGEAC's function and duties, but these descriptions varied significantly, and the committee was unable to determine which description was definitive. Furthermore, because the relationship between the GESC and the Senate was never fully established, the FGEAC ended up being a sort of "mediator" between the bodies while being subject to the dictates of both. Well into the reform process, the FGEAC was given an organizational flow chart that literalized the relation between various groups and stakeholders, but this chart, coming too late, never really did anything to disambiguate the full structure, or to finalize the committee's full charge. Had structures been clarified in the beginning, the committee would have literally known its place and not devoted precious time and energy to attempting to determine its own function and role. We strongly recommend that the function and charge of the new General Education committee be clearly defined and urge that the committee be answerable to Faculty Senate alone.
- There should be clearly functioning mechanisms in place that facilitate open and continuing conversations between committees and groups working on common projects and related goals. Well into the reform process, the Provost designated a "point person" for General Education reform, but this designation did little to facilitate a true conversation between and among various groups working on

common projects and goals. While the leadership of the FGEAC was kept abreast of certain Senate issues, opportunities offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning, and the ongoing effort to streamline course approval processes, we were never made privy to any of the proposals outlining the innovative concept that was supposed to be embedded in the FGEAC's assessment and course plans, differentiated faculty workloads, nor were we informed early in our deliberations of first year program plans for revision. The herculean task of communication should not have been left to one person. Had the GESC been continuously functioning as a sort of regulatory body of the full reform effort, the burden placed on both the FGEAC and the "point person" for General Education reform would have been lessened. Even more importantly, had the GESC been convened as regularly as the FGEAC, and had all of the stakeholders been in attendance, all parties in the reform process would have been well-informed on the various issues confronting the institution and been able to engage in a productive dialogue.

- Projects must be clearly prioritized and sequenced. We are under no delusion that any institution can work on only one project at a time. Just as faculty must juggle teaching, service commitments and research expectations throughout the year, so the institution as a whole must deal with the various improvement projects it has undertaken, all while managing current resources and dealing with the "opportunities" presented by new state budgets and laws. That being said, there is a great virtue to prioritizing important projects, and to understanding which projects need to be finished, or at least heavily underway, before others can productively begin. Because the Audit was coeval with Gen Ed reform, the latter effort was overshadowed by the highly publicized reorganization of departments and colleges. Had General Education reform been prioritized, the FGEAC would have had more information with which to work, and faculty at large would have had more time and energy to focus on this important endeavor. Moreover, if the Curriculum Audit had been completed prior to the General Education redesign, the FGEAC, fully cognizant of the new organizational structure of Academic Affairs, would have been able to make specific recommendations regarding course approval and faculty representation on a new General Education committee.
- Adequate time and resources must be allotted for projects to be successful. The statement attached to the Assessment and Course Distribution proposals articulates the committee's belief that an allocation of more time and resources could have produced even better proposals. Obviously, projects cannot continue indefinitely, but important projects should be allotted a great deal of time and resources. The FGEAC was given a mere 1.5 years to create an entirely new General Education program while members of the committee were also working within their departments to complete the Curriculum Audit. Prioritization and sequencing of projects clearly could have helped, but it is unlikely that 1.5 years is enough to achieve an innovative and viable new program, even when faculty are not dealing with other major projects. As the various members who attended the marathon meetings at the end of the process will tell you, productive conversations were cut short, and emerging solutions were left unarticulated, because the committee had to meet an overly ambitious timeline.
- External mandates that constrain any project must be compiled in a single, public document that clearly articulates the constraints within which faculty must work. Summative descriptions of the Council on Postsecondary Education's (the CPE's) General Education core were buried in early documents that the FGEAC received, and the committee was provided with SACS guidelines, but the committee was given no single document that compiled all of the external constraints that delimited General Education reform. The FGEAC compiled a document of its own, one that included the credit hour restrictions voted on by the Board of Regents, but even this publicized document did not fully explain the full constraints because the committee, at the time of composition, was not aware of the CPE transfer policies that designated

certain disciplines to specific areas in the Council's General Education core. The FGEAC was only made aware of the full transfer policies when a member of the committee circulated a document he had found on the CPE website. Had all of this relevant information been compiled, verified, and made readily available to the committee when the committee was given its charge, the FGEAC would have been able to avoid a great deal of unnecessary work, and members of the committee could have done a better job informing their departments and colleagues of the external rules and regulations that constrain General Education reform at MSU.

- Internal mandates that are not bound by clear and unequivocal external constraints should not be needlessly changed in the middle of a project. The original articulation of FGEAC's duties stated that the full faculty would vote on the General Education framework put forward by the committee. After the committee was given its charge, the Provost, in consultation with the President, decided that a full faculty vote would undo the hard work of the committee, and she decreed that the new framework would not be voted upon, but ratified by, the faculty. This administrative fiat caused a great deal of trouble for the FGEAC, not in the least because the committee had to determine how the process of ratification would work without voting. The FGEAC eventually mapped out a process whereby the committee would gain approval for its projects through the Faculty Senate, yet this positive resolution only added more work to an already overburdened committee. In the future, such positive resolutions may not be possible, and it is likely that an unwarranted shift in process could undermine or invalidate the work being done by a functioning committee.
- Barriers to open communication in the Academic Affairs unit (the excessive layers of inquiry and lengthy delays in responses) need to be removed. A clarification of organizational structures would remedy many problems in communication, as people would now know whom to contact for what information, but organizational structure alone will not address the significant barriers to open communication in Academic Affairs. As we discovered, committees can be the subject of ongoing conversations without ever becoming participants in said conversations. We neither wish to make all conversations public, nor argue that overseeing bodies must have the committees that they oversee in attendance if those bodies engage in a conversation about said committees, but we would like to assert that the traditional channels of open communication in the university should be open. At one point, the leadership of the FGEAC was told that they could not meet with the Chair of the Faculty Senate without an administrator present. This condition was later removed, and the meeting did take place, but the fact that this traditional channel was momentarily closed to faculty (or redrawn with new conditions) is troubling. Likewise, it is equally troubling that a request for a meeting between the leadership of the FGEAC and the Provost was not denied, but ignored, because the meeting apparently could not take place without another administrator present. The Provost obviously has the right to set conditions to meetings, and to be selective about requests on her time, but the faculty also have a right to a quick and forthright response to a good faith request. The Provost did eventually meet with the leadership of the FGEAC, and even put forward a plan for overcoming potential communication problems or errors, but there has been no remediation of the long delays in response. If communication in Academic Affairs is to be open and effective, the head of that unit must respond in a timely fashion to important and time sensitive messages. The Provost wisely required the FGEAC to be open in its communication, and to make its work available to the full faculty on the website. We would strongly encourage the Provost to have more committees follow the productive precedent set by the FGEAC, and to consider creating a website that publicizes the ongoing work of the Provost's office (not just finalized reports).

Again, we as noted earlier, we earnestly intend these directives to be seen as positive steps toward more effective shared governance. Instead of looking backward, we want to move

forward, and use our knowledge and experience to help the institution meet the ambitious goal that it has set for itself—to be the top regional institution in the South. We can only achieve this lofty goal if we take stock of what we have done, learn from our previous mistakes, and make more productive choices in the future.

The FGEAC members answered questions about and provided clarification of the Courses Document.

After lengthy questions and answers, Senator Chatham moved to end the first reading of the Courses Document and move to the first reading of the Assessment Document. Senator Katz seconded the motion. Motion passed.

The FGEAC members answered questions about and provided clarification of the Assessment Document.

Senator Stanley moved to continue the first reading of the Assessment Document at the next meeting. Senator Lafleur seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Announcements: There will be a Special Called Senate Meeting on Thursday, April 23, 2009, to discuss General Education Courses and Assessment Documents. **The meeting will be held in BRECK 302.**

Adjournment: 5:55 pm