

General Education Council

Meeting Minutes

December 17, 2009

Allie Young 31

The General Education Council met at 10 a.m. December 17, 2009, in Room 31 Allie Young. Members present: Barbara Dehner, Edna Schack, Charles Patrick, Yvonne Baldwin, Carol Wymer, Robert Boram, Glen Colburn, Timothy Hare, Cathy Thomas, Dayna Seelig, and Elsie Pritchard.

Yvonne Baldwin introduced Dr. Phil Krummrich, the Director of the Honors Program, who spoke to the council on the topic of a dedicated First Year Seminar for the Honors Program. His points included:

- A dedicated FYS for Honors would assist the program in meeting many of its goals – especially important is the community building and rapport that can take place during the first year.
- All Honors students will be on scholarship and the number will be steady at 40. A major part of the change in the program involves the number of hours and their placement in the curriculum. The ultimate goal is to add no additional hours so time to degree is not affected by Honors programming. The afternoon and evening activities that had been required are no longer part of the plan, which is now concentrated in a total of four courses that are planned for general education.
- A dedicated FYS for Honors is a good opportunity to set the tone for interdisciplinary inquiry and a time to get students to understand the importance of high academic achievement and the value of service learning and study abroad.
- Dr. Krummrich answered questions about other planned courses in the curriculum, whether they offer adequate opportunity to achieve these goals, and whether the FYS program in general might be better served by having honors students in each section. Discussion followed on the pros and cons of the issue and whether a dedicated section would open the door to other programs requesting a dedicated section and thus make the goal of student choice moot.
- The council had asked for some clarifications regarding the FYS proposal on coffee and chocolate, which Dr. Krummrich provided. The interdisciplinary element centers on the various social, political, and economic aspects of both as commodities but also as food items. Fact or fiction element centers on the health claims of both – good or bad for us, etc. but also on what production of these items does for and to developing countries in terms of the environment and economics.

A variety of options were discussed by the council. First, the council considered the FYS proposal, Coffee and Chocolate, submitted by Dr. Krummrich. By unanimous vote, it was agreed that the proposal be approved, but not designated for honors students.

By unanimous vote, the council then agreed that the Honors Program may “recommend” but not require their students to take this seminar.

The council then discussed the issue of whether departments and/or academic programs will circumvent the intent that students choose the FYS based on their own preferences by “recommending” or “informally” advising students to take specific sessions. It was agreed that such practice may be difficult to spot and hard to stop, but that it is not desirable.

First Year Seminar Proposal Revisions: The council reviewed the revisions submitted for the following FYS proposals: *All three were approved as revised*

Chapman, Sustainability

Hare/Crehan, Finding Facts

Pidluzny, Dilemmas

The council reviewed the revision submitted by Dr. You on the Information Age. Dr. Cathy Thomas will contact Dr. You to discuss the revisions. No action was taken.

First Year Seminar Proposal: The council reviewed the FYS proposal submitted by Dr. White, Bounding Rationality. The proposal was approved with the request that the section description be revised a bit to be more student friendly.

Yvonne updated the council on a short meeting she had with the Provost on Tuesday afternoon to discuss possible assessment staffing for Gen Ed. She reported that the Provost agreed with the need for such a person and asked that the Council write a short rationale for the request. This rationale would help with decision making given the current economic situation. The council will take this up at its next meeting.

The council briefly discussed the issue of assessment and particularly data management. Scott Wymer and L.K. Williams offered to attend the council to discuss their product. Yvonne will invite them for one of the first meetings in January.

Yvonne requested all council members to send a short note on their spring schedule obligations to establish whether the 7:30 a.m. meeting time shall continue.

The meeting adjourned at noon. Next meeting date TBA – the week of January 4th.