

**General Education Council Meeting Minutes**  
**September 21, 2012**  
**031 Allie Young – 2:00 p.m.**

**In Attendance:** Dora Ahmadi, Royal Berglee, Cyndi Gibbs, Timothy Hare, Sara Lindsey, Beverly McCormick, Gary Mesa-Gaido, Kerry Murphy, Emma Perkins, Clarenda Phillips, Ann Rathbun, Paula Serra, Wesley White, Carol Wymer.

**Guest:** Sharri Jones (Recorder)

The meeting was called to order by Clarenda Phillips at 2:04 p.m.

Dora Ahmadi made a motion to approve minutes from September 7, 2012. The motion was seconded by Carol Wymer.

Amendments:

- Page 3: Second Square Bullet: "... have until October 15<sup>th</sup>" should read "... have until *September 15<sup>th</sup>*".
- "This is a process that needs developed." should read "This is a process that needs *to be* developed."

Vote to approve with amendments was unanimous.

**Point of Order:** Clarenda asked those individuals who provide reports to highlight 3-4 major topics to be discussed.

**Reports:**

First Year Seminar (FYS) – Timothy Hare:

- The FYS Subcommittee is continuing to meet. The biggest issue right now is developing the process for new section proposals for fall 2013 classes. The process for selection of the textbook continues, with an expected completion date of sometime over the next two weeks so that instructors will have time to put in a proposal before January.
- We are going to have over 400 students in FYS in the spring semester. The vast majority are those students who have taken the class and failed, or were not allowed to take the course because they were required to take some kind of provisional course. We have students who are repeating FYS for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> time. This is a serious problem, and at the same time we have very poor retention numbers for last year's freshmen class. One of the best things that we can do is to reduce class size. General best practices for these types of programs say that we should have a 15 person cap – we currently cap around 27, with some having more. We don't have enough instructors. We might be able to have more sections for spring. We will send out another request to instructors for volunteers to teach in the spring. It will be specified that the hope is to reduce class size. We will need to put together an ad-hoc committee/task force to look at the big picture and determine other options.

Dora Ahmadi questioned whether we are looking at the success rate of FYS per type. Do we have any idea of what is happening to those students taking the class for three times – are they being sent to the places that they can be successful?

Timothy responded that until last spring, those students have not been tracked - students who stopped coming, disappeared for one reason or another, dropped, etc. we didn't know who they are or what happened to them. We have started tracking that, but don't have any useful data at this time.

Ann Rathbun: I feel that we need to keep the class size to 20. The intention of FYS is that it be used as a retention tool for everyone across campus. Some instructors are being given FYS classes just to give them a full teaching load. Isn't there something else that we can do?

Timothy: Best practices around the Country are saying 15 for course cap size. There are FYS instructors who are highly motivated and are doing it because they really care about the students. There are some who are being dumped into the classes. The only thing we have done is to have course evaluations, and the sample size is very poor. We are going to try to increase the sample size by administering the course evaluations at the final speaker session, which has historically provided a greater return on the samples. This doesn't solve the problem. The real issue is how to evaluate the instructors. We have discussed that issue, but there is no good solution.

Clarenda: I am hearing two issues on the table which need future consideration:

1. Faculty selection/participation and if you are going to reduce class size, where are you going to get the instructors who will teach.
2. Faculty evaluation.

It is always for the most part going to be the case that academic programs will want the most dynamic faculty to teach their classes because it is a way to develop the programs.

Ann: When we first started offering the course, there was discussion of four credit hours for faculty who teach the course. This was in the original general education document and it has dropped off the radar.

Dora says that she has excellent instructors in her department who are interested in teaching FYS, but she can't schedule them, because she has to cover the department's needs.

Clarenda: Part of this is coming up with solutions that we can further vet. Teaching as an overload is not an option across all of the colleges, so we need to come up with solutions that would attract as many people as possible and find viable ways to evaluate those who are participating and how to have conversations with them when they are not being effective as we would like for them to be.

Clarenda requested something in writing for better ways to recruit faculty so that she can take it forward to the Deans or Provost.

Timothy: The question is “what to suggest”. GEC sent forth a request that general education instructors get a bump so that programs would be rewarded – not clear on what kind of progress has been made. We are doing a number of things but the question is – is there something else that we can do?

The FYS Subcommittee will provide Clarenda a list with suggestions on how to attract faculty and suggestions for faculty evaluation. Clarenda will then present this to the Deans.

Timothy: This is actually a much bigger issue – it really should go back to the GEC, because it needs to be for all general education instructors’ not just First Year Seminar instructors.

Dora: I think this is part of the teaching evaluation that is being discussed as part of the new faculty evaluation program document that the deans do use. I don’t know that you would want to have something just for gen ed classes.

Clarenda: We do not have gen ed instructors and think we do need to have to figure out how to handle within the departments and it is something that we need to have a discussion with the deans and department chairs about.

There was discussion as to whether evaluation within the department would be effective, or if it should be done by someone outside the department.

Bev McCormick asked whether the Chairs Council ever discussed the quality and types of the people that get chosen to teach gen ed and FYS classes?

Dora: It hasn’t been discussed. However, I can present at the Council and discuss the selection and evaluation of FYS and Gen Ed faculty at the chairs council and report back to the committee

#### Registrar’s Office – Roslyn Perry

Kerry Murphy provided clarification on an exchange course question brought up at the last meeting. Exchange courses are listed on the check sheet and are not course substitutions.

#### Assessment: Paula Serra

September 15<sup>th</sup> was the deadline for the deans to submit comments on SLO’s. One dean commented that the SLOs were much improved and appreciated seeing the rationale but did not have any suggestions. Scott Davidson provided a comment on SLO 4a. He also offered a suggested measurable revision.

Clarenda stated that there were actually two issues on the table:

1. Changing 4a
2. Accepting all the other SLO’s that we did not receive any feedback on as they are.

Carol Wymer made the motion for the General Education Council to review the revisions with the alteration to 4a added.

Cyndi Gibbs seconded the motion.  
The vote was unanimous.

Clarenda: We will make sure that you have access to these ahead of time and we will be prepared to discuss them at the next meeting,.

Paula: There was a request for some clarification of definitions. That person was provided with explanation. Perhaps we could start a posting/question/answer on website. She will send email containing the responses to Council.

Clarenda: Send it out, and once we get it, we will make a determination about where it goes.

Ann: Several Faculty Senate members are curious about the criteria for 70% being the passing % for SLO achievement.

Paula: In 2010-11 when data was pulled together, I had to make a decision about what the criteria was going to be. Council was not available to me at that time, and I said that it was going to be 70% or at least adequate (C or better) on rubric. This was brought back to Council. Council voted and it was unanimously approved.

Clarenda: If there are different benchmark requests/desired it needs to come back to Gen Ed Council.

Ann: At Faculty Senate, Dr. Ahmadi questioned whether any studies had been done with ACT composite scores in relation to those students who get 70% or better.

Paula: No studies planned.

#### **Unfinished Business:**

- **FYS Course grading scale**

Clarenda: . Because General Education is a program, if it is the idea of this group to change the marking so that students are required to get a "C" or better, you can put the proposal together and send it through the undergraduate curriculum committee. This should be a Type 1 proposal (unless otherwise communicated).

There was general discussion as to whether this could be enforced because it is not a pre-requisite for another course. There was concern as to whether it would keep students from taking any classes until they pass the FYS class. It was determined that they would not be prevented from registering for other classes, but would have to retake the class. We would still be in the same situation where students are being required to take the course 3-4 times, but they are still accruing credit for their other courses.

There was a motion made by Timothy on behalf of the FYS subcommittee to discuss changing the pass rate of FYS classes to a "C".

Bev felt that there is a direct relationship to failing that class and failing your other classes. It is believed that Lora Pace would have some data which may be pertinent to discussions related to FYS success and student success. It was agreed that the committee should be provided with that data prior to making a decision about whether this would be appropriate action.

Emma Perkins stated that if the change (to require a "C" to pass) happened, they will wait until they have 60-140 plus hours and I will be faced with a course substitution keeping someone from graduating.

It was felt that this is a bigger question and we should not focus on just FYS and is as much in the disciplines as in FYS.

Timothy made a motion to table the motion to discuss changing the passing grade until additional data could be presented.

Bev seconded the motion. The Council voted and the motion was tabled.

Paula will provide the achievement rates for the FYS SLO's; Emma will get non-completers, etc., from Lora; Clarenda will speak with IR about getting grade distribution data.

- **FYS New Membership Proposal**

Timothy stated that the FYS Subcommittee is still working on it. The item will carry forward to next time.

- **Approval of use of FYS Funds**

Clarenda stated that there is an official process to request the spending of funds. As long as requests do not exceed what is in budget, it shouldn't be an issue. What happened was that someone asked for a clarification. Perhaps there was not enough of an explanation for what it was for – perhaps that is what happened. Clarenda will speak with the budget office to ask them to contact her if there are problems.

Ann stated that there had been previous request for faculty to be involved in matters of budgeting, and we were told that is not your area of expertise. Now we are expected to defend our position.

Clarenda: There are some things we cannot solve and those things we should not tarry on – if we cannot come to a resolution at this time, then we have other things on the agenda and we should move forward. I hear two issues:

1. Where does faculty have a voice in the budgeting process?
  - a. Ann – we are working on that in faculty senate.
2. The other is process for budget request approvals.
  - a. Budget requests go through a specific approval process. General education is no different.

- **General Education Course Proposal Cover Sheet**

Ann Rathbun made motion to approve the Course Proposal Cover Sheet  
Dora Ahmadi seconded the motion.  
The Council voted and the motion was unanimously approved.

- **SLO Assessment Process for Approved Exchange Courses**
- **Solicitation of New Exchange Courses**

Clarenda reminded the Council that the question was how we get assessment tools for approved courses. It was suggested that we use the form that was submitted/distributed to the departments for all general ed courses.

Paula clarified that this was the form used to reduce the measures from two to one, use that form to ask the exchange courses to indicate what measures they use for each SLO - the same process, just ask them to do it.

Motion: Use the same Reduction in SLO Assessment Tool Process for Exchange Courses Form

During discussion about which version of the form was being discussed, it was identified that the current exchange courses have not been through a process of approval for SLO's. The current form (reducing from two to one SLO) can be used with some alterations. The middle column of the form should have the "previously approved" removed. It should also include a section for General Education approval.

Clarenda: There will be an amendment to the form as it is not asking for a reduction to SLO's – but is being used as a form for them to submit their assessment tools.

Ann moved that the Council accept the use of the form already approved gen ed courses.  
Dora seconded the motion.  
The Council unanimously approved the use of the amended form.

- **Solicitation of New Exchange Courses**

Dora made a motion to not solicit new exchange courses, but if a program has a need, they can complete the form and request the General Education Council to review.  
Ann seconded.  
Vote: Unanimous.

#### **New Business:**

- **New Course Proposals [BIOL 499E Capstone and GEO 103 (NSC 2)]**

The course proposals were submitted using the old version of the form which requires 2 SLO's instead of 1. The form has not been revised. Clarenda will make sure the form is updated.

Carol Wymer will work with the person who submitted the BIOL 499E proposal and have him submit an updated version. Clarenda will work with the other person to get an updated version of GEO 103 submitted.

Clarenda made a motion to remove the two course proposals from Blackboard until they could be revised.

Bev seconded the motion.

The vote was unanimous.

- **Computer Competency:**

There was general discussion as to whether this was actually an issue. It was determined that

GEC originally voted that there was a need for computer competency testing. The faculty senate document on gen ed says we have to have some kind of computer competency.

Clarenda and Emma will get with Keith Moore and Misty Hanks and come up with proposal and bring the information back to the group that they will take to the Provost.

- **Adding new courses to the currently full Distribution Areas**

- **General Education course approval process**

Clarenda will write up the last two bullet points and have something posted to the blackboard site.

Dora made a motion to close the meeting.

Bev seconded the motion.

Motion approved.

**Action Items:**

**Discussion:**

**Next Meeting:** October 5, 2012 at 2:00 p.m.

**Meeting adjourned:** 4:02 p.m.