

General Education Committee Meeting

December 4, 2015

Meeting was called to order at 8:35am

Present: Elif Akcali, Emily Butler, Eva Czarnecka-Verner, Creed Greer, Christopher Hass, David Julian, Tanya Koropecyk-Cox, John Krigbaum, Lynn O'Sickey, John Palmer, Brianna Parlette, Mario Poceski, Heidi Radunovich, Jennifer Rea, Alison Reynolds, Vicki Sarajedini, Brenda Smith

Absent: Russ Bowers, Timothy Brophy, Shannon Cochrane, Elayne Colon, Clay Hurdle,

Guest: Kostas Kapparis

1. Approval of Draft Minutes from November 13th Meeting

Minutes reviewed and approved with several revisions.

2. International and Diversity Designations – David Julian

Julian: noted a dearth of International/Diversity courses being offered, particularly among state core courses. As Gen Ed rules currently exist, only such designation can only be attached to a course that also has another General Education designation. Should that continue to be the policy? Two options: encourage more courses to apply for designation or change requirements.

O'Sickey: Diversity is more of a challenge than International. It would be helpful to encourage departments and colleges to apply where we know there are relevant courses. Support is the key: it is a challenge to get things through committees (General Education, UCC, etc.).

Poceski: Part of the problem may be how narrow Diversity is defined? Maybe exposure to diversity should be more broadly defined. Can a course focusing on International content meet the Diversity definition?

Julian has seen definition change several times.

Discussion about Interpersonal Communication course: Does discussion of class/gender qualify for Diversity?

Several indicated support for continuing to view Diversity from the perspective of "within the US." Many agreed that the Diversity definition is NOT too narrowly defined, and includes more than race and ethnicity. Someone asked if LGBT content fits Diversity definition.

O'Sickey: The content mentioned above (gender, class, LGTB concerns) do fit. The human sexuality course currently awards Diversity credit.

Lindner: Engineering is squeezed by the statewide core – students do not have a lot of elective space to take General Education, THEN take an extra course for just Diversity. AMH2020 definitely helped when it added Diversity. Proposal: Can people from this committee mentor faculty to encourage them to submit their courses for consideration of International and Diversity credit?

Poceski: Not as long as Diversity is defined as US only. Role of Islam in America - can we really understand issues of terrorism without understanding other countries/cultures?

Julian: that sounds like the definition of International. These lines do occasionally get blurred.

Group discussion: Good Life course Instructional Workshop might be a good example of mentorship: explain to people the positives, discuss difficulties. Maybe we are TOO close to the curriculum, and need some outside group meetings. We may need to work specifically with departments to make sure that International and Diversity are not just "spice" added to courses, but are integral concepts. Maybe we need to look through the catalog to identify courses proactively, and ask faculty about applying for General Education designation?

Looking at AP test articulation, only 2 courses get Diversity designation.

O'Sickey: It is always helpful to review definitions of International and Diversity. Average undergraduate student brings 25 credits to UF. Even in engineering with tight schedules, they have some elective space that does not show up on the 8 semester plans, but we need to be mindful of students that come from high schools that do NOT offer as many accelerated mechanisms.

Julian: Bringing the conversation back to the original question: do we NEED to couple Diversity or International with other gen ed categories? Do they need to cover the Humanities or Social science concepts to include Diversity or International content?

Some Design courses have empathy exercises to consider other people's perspectives in design assignments. Could that count as Diversity?

Palmer: Mentoring with faculty to submit General Education changes is not necessarily a good idea: the person we need to reach is the Undergraduate Coordinator, not the faculty member. Are there unwritten requirements for a Diversity designation? Discussion ensues about HOW MUCH of a course must meet definition of Diversity or International. Reviewing PHI2010 (state core course): it seems inappropriate to incorporate Diversity issues. We have upper division courses that do this (Race and Philosophy, for instance). We might be able to rearrange Contemporary Moral Issues to include Diversity, but not Intro to Philosophy. Is there a percentage requirement for content of Diversity or International?

Julian: We go on what we have (what is written in the description of Diversity or International).

O'Sickey: there is a "substantiveness" that is not tied to a percentage. You do not want the Diversity or International content to feel tacked on. In Theatre Appreciation (THE2000) for instance, 50% of plays represented different populations or groups in US and decided "that is substantive."

Poceski: Part of problem is wanting faculty to change what they are teaching to get the designation. This is counter-productive. Sounds intellectually dishonest.

Group: Can we quantify this "problem" - is it really a problem? How many courses are we talking about? Is there really a shortage when students go to register?

O'Sickey: 50% of students change major in first two years... Freshmen appear to have an issue, but after majors change, it is not a problem. We COULD track this year's freshmen to see if it is an issue.

Group: There are 58 Diversity courses offered next spring. Internationalization is of big importance this year, as is diversity and ethics. Ideally, the UF core courses should incorporate these things.

Lindner: we will discuss UF Core and Internationalization in the spring.

Suggestion: Continue this discussion as an agenda item in one of the spring meetings, including a reappraisal of the definitions of International and Diversity. Should our evaluation criteria be more detailed in written format? Once discussed, develop guidance for faculty trying to get Diversity or International designation. Target faculty, reach out particularly for those offering state core courses. Undergraduate Coordinators are best to reach first to pass this along to faculty. Send welcoming message to faculty that we encourage application.

Poceski: Our Undergraduate Coordinator is not necessarily looking at these issues. Sometimes the Undergraduate Chair is more involved.

Lindner: We hope that the role of the Undergraduate Coordinator position across campus will be standardized in the future.

Koropecj-Cox: It would be useful to pull data together to determine what is offered, what COULD be offered, etc.

Group: What about transfer students? Students at other institutions may not even get exposed to International and Diversity issues, but transfer the course in and get credit.

3. Update from Assessment Sub-Committee – David Julian

Assessment Sub-Committee met since last General Education Committee meeting. After hearing from the committee about the importance of incorporating an International course, we decided to substitute Intro to Music Lit (MUL2010) for Sociology to do this. MUL2010 came up for review 1 1/2 years ago, and there were questions about the International designation. The faculty were given period of time to revise the content or lose the International designation. The department is expected to report back in February.

Recertifying courses: Sub-Committee reviewed syllabi for state core courses. Many of them had reverted back to far from acceptable syllabi, particularly those that had multiple sections of the same course. This should be taken up by the full General Education Committee. Need committee support to be able to encourage

faculty to bring courses up to standard. We did not do a re-certification last year. In absence of clear certification standards, courses are reverting to old syllabi. Julian is meeting with Lindner next week to find a way to approach faculty and departments to motivate them to participate and not feel punished.

4. Courses for Review

Course	Title	Current GE & WR	Request	Status
ART 1010C	Non-Major Photography	---	H, D	Tabled
IDH 3931	The Humanities and Social Change	---	H, E2	Approved E2, Deny H
GMT 4110	Literature and Culture of Byzantium	---	H, E6	Approved
RUT 3506	Creative Lives: Writers, Artists...	---	H, N	Denied
RUT 3101	Russian Masterpieces	---	H, N	Denied

ART1010C – Tabled for next meeting to continue discussion with faculty

GMT4110

Group liked how General Education was assessed, and this is clearly a Humanities course asking for Humanities designation. No issues with word count request. Motion to approve. Motion seconded. Motion Carried.

IDH3931- Humanities and Social Change specifically (not all IDH 3931 sections)

- Gordon Rule 2000 - does not look like they do too much more than 2000. But all literature courses write 2-3 essays. It is NOT a writing course, is that an issue?
- Concerns raised that 30% of grade was from a 5-8 minute presentation by group.
- Some expressed concern about how the essays were to be evaluated in terms of learning outcomes.
- There were some questions about the methodology for grading the essays
- There was discussion about how to evaluate General Education based upon the group assignment. How would individual students be assessed?
- Policy is only 50% have to meet the individually assignment requirement.
- Procedural question: could this be conditionally approved? How strict do we want to be on approve/deny? Julian: I would rather the committee not be a gatekeeper. We should instead be working to help improve the General education program.

- Group's Primary concern: there was not enough information submitted to evaluate the student's learning in the course. Too much appears to be class participation and group work.
- Motion to recycle: Propose making it a 3 credit course (including additional coursework to help). Mark Law has encouraged 1-2 credit courses to allow students to pick them up between courses in full-time schedules. Question: How regularly will course be taught? If not often enough, it will be a waste of our time to recycle. Since it is for spring ONLY, many felt the committee should not recycle it. We should find a way to make a decision on it. Bad precedent to approve since registration is already in progress. Motion did not get voted upon.
- Motion to approve for Writing Requirement contingent on handbook submission, and deny for H for failing to demonstrate SLOs for Humanities. Will need to bring the course back to Committee for H designation. From assessment perspective (SLO), unsure how to make sure it meets H requirement. Group: we may need to discuss a common definition for academic rigor. This often comes up, and it feels like we are comparing different things. Motion seconded. Motion carried.

RUT3506:

- SLOs do not appear to account for International designation (i.e. how will International component be assessed?)
- Questions about acceptability for students to teach one another (as syllabus outlines). Others pointed out that this is a common approach in Humanities, as it encourages students to prepare and read critically.
- Participation appears to be 1/3 of the grade. Is this acceptable? Committee discussed policies about attendance and participation.
- Move Deny H designation for inadequate assessment of Humanities outcomes. Motion Seconded. Motion carried.
- Move to deny International for inadequate assessment of outcomes. Motion Seconded. Motion carried.

RUT3101:

- Similar concerns for this course and RUT3506.
- Questions were raised about exam during Reading Days.
- Should content of 3000 word course be more rigorous?
- Attendance grade: many felt that while you can deduct points for not showing up, attendance cannot count positively in grading. Question about tardiness policies (points taken from final grade). Instructor should at least add a statement that says she will consider legitimate reasons for tardiness.

- Motion to deny H and N for lack of information on academic rigor and failing to assess General Education criteria. Motion Seconded. Motion Carried.