

**General Education Committee Minutes**

September 7, 2012

Meeting was called to order at 1:45 p.m.

**Members Present:** Elif Akcali, Suzanne Colvin, Eva Czarnecka, Sidney Dobrin, Creed Greer, David Julian, John Krigbaum, Lynn O'Sickey, Morgan Pigg, Alison Reynolds, Brenda Smith, Bethany Taylor, Robert Thomson, and Michael Weigold

**Guest:** Tim Brophy

**Chair:** Bernard Mair

**Executive Secretary:** Ann Greene

**1. Welcome and Introduction of Committee Members:**

Dr. Mair began the meeting by welcoming everyone to a new semester and a new school year and a special welcome to the new members of the committee. Introductions of Committee members and guest were made.

**2. Status of General Education:**

Dr. Mair discussed the emergency conference call meeting of August 21<sup>st</sup> concerning implementing new state legislation governing general education programs at state institutions. The current general education program consists of 36 credits in communication, mathematics, social sciences, humanities and natural sciences and their different distributions of the numbers of credits per area. The legislature has concerns about the following items: time to degree, the strength of the Liberal Arts education, and the uniformity of education that current students have a core set of knowledge.

As a result of these concerns, the legislature will establish a set of common core General Education courses that all students should take. At first it was considered to have five courses that every student should take. However a decision was made to have 5 courses in each of the 5 areas which will make a total of 25 core courses. A student must take one course in each of the 5 areas. Students will take an additional 15 credits determined by the institution for a total of 30 credits. The state requirement for General Education has been reduced from 36 to 30 credits.

The core courses will be available at all 38 institutions, including 11 state universities and 27 colleges in the state system. The Board of Governors and Board of Education has combined to direct the process of determining the core courses. The process has been set up by a Steering Committee consisting of five SUS members and five FCS members. Dr. Mair acknowledged that he is a member on the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee was determined by the Council of Academic Vice Presidents. The faculty discipline committees will be determined by the Steering Committee. Nominations will be determined by members from each campus.

The purpose of the conference call was to approve the nominees from UF faculty to serve on the discipline committees. There are 11 universities, 55 nominations which represent 5 from each campus. Each discipline committee will consist of 12 members, 6 from the universities and 6 from the college systems. There will be 30 positions available on the discipline committee to be populated by 55 nominations from the universities.

The goal is to have the core courses determined by Spring 2013. There are many issues to consider; one issue is how to choose the 5 courses in each discipline. The Steering Committee has decided that the Student Learning Outcomes for each discipline should play a major role in determining the core courses. The universities and the colleges have expressed concern that if the core courses are determined by Spring 2013, there will not be enough time to modify the curriculum and the catalog to get it implemented by target date of Fall 2014. The Board of Governors is willing to put forward a proposal to the legislatures, depending on the progress of the committee to delay implementation for another academic year.

It was stated that this is a broad change to the curriculum, and the time frame would not allow the opportunity to test the courses, nor to look at the actual outcome using pedagogical surveys to see if the design of the courses is achieving the outcomes. Dr. Mair responded stating that only current courses that are already in existence would be used. Moreover, no new courses would be created. The courses could have the same course number with a different name. A question was raised on how dual enrollment and AP credits would be factored into the core courses. It was said that if the AP exam counted toward university credit it would not be affected.

### **3. Responsibilities of General Education Committee:**

Dr. Mair gave an overview of what the committee does and committee members roles for serving on the committee. He also stated that for this year and next year the committee will have a very serious task that will play a very prominent role in the shaping of the General Education program at this institution.

### **4. Tasks for the year:**

The tasks for the committee this year will be working to create the core courses; to revise the University's General Education program; to provide an assessment mechanism and analyzing the results for the General Education program. These tasks are in addition to the committee's regular tasks which consist of reviewing new courses that apply for General Education designations; reviewing existing General Education courses to see if they are continuing to meet their General Education status; and review courses that apply for writing designations.

### **5. General Education Assessment:**

Dr. Brophy discussed the SACS Accreditation process and what is required of the General Education committee to contribute to the accreditation at the university. He shared with the committee a report "Assessing General Education at the University of Florida" which was put together with various information on how to go about developing an institutional assessment plan for the General Education curriculum or program. Dr. Brophy indicated the importance of gathering the information quickly to show the SACS Accreditors that the

job is being done to meet their expectations in assessing student learning outcomes in general education.

An overview of the following was provided:

- SACS Core Requirements and Standards
- The General Education Mission
- Draft Assessment Plan for General Education
- UF General Education Assessment Planning Document
- The Student Learning Outcomes
- Content, Critical Thinking and Communication Rubrics
- Assessing General Education Signature and Template Assignments

Dr. Brophy stated that data is needed this year for the compliance report which is due to the accreditors next September. Information has to be gathered in the Fall and Spring. It was asked if it is advisable for all three components to be assessed every year, or may content be assessed one year, critical thinking the next year and then communication another year.

Dr. Mair created sub-committees to work on a planning document addressing 4 specific issues and they are SLO Approval, Internal Assessment Template, External Assessment Instrument and Mission Statement Revision. The planning document is expected to be completed and ready for submission. Hopefully it will be approved at the next General Education meeting on October 5<sup>th</sup>. The planning document has to be approved by the Academic Assessment Committee which will be meeting on October 9<sup>th</sup>.

**6. Minutes from the May 8<sup>th</sup> and August 21<sup>st</sup> meetings were approved:**

**7. Election of Senate Co-Chair:**

The new Senate Co-Chair is Creed Greer and the Liaison for the Academic Assessment Committee is Michael Weigold

**8. Course Reviews:**

**AST 1002** *Discover the Universe*, Every three years the General Education Committee reviews a number of courses to determine if they meet the requirements for their general education designation. Therefore in the Spring 2012 semester, the General Education Committee reviewed this course to determine if it met the current standard for the designation of Physical Sciences (P). The Gen Ed committee revoked the (P) designation effective Spring 2013 for the following reasons:

- The sections used different texts, and contained significant variations in course content, requirements, and grading schemes.
- They do not contain the general education objectives or student learning outcomes.
- They do not all address key components of the Physical Sciences SLO's such as: major scientific developments and their impacts on society, logical reasoning skills, scientific criticism, techniques of discovery, and hypothesis testing. For instance, only 3 of the 7 sections require students to formulate empirically testable hypotheses - two sections include it as extra credit.

The course was resubmitted in August to be reviewed by the committee for the September 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. The committee *Denied* the (P) designation because the syllabus did not address the comments that were raised in the report.

**CLT 3340** *Ancient Greek and Roman Epic*, Denied H, N. The syllabus does not meet the student learning outcomes for these General Education designations, of H, N.

The SLO's on the syllabus do not align with the Humanities SLO's. The Humanities objectives on the syllabus are closer to the Humanities SLO's but they are not written in the form of student objectives (i.e. not from the student perspectives). Also they should reflect the course content and not be generic.

The International designation is more problematic as it is reserved for courses with a significant current international component. This course addresses historical aspects rather than current international culture.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30pm.