

General Education Committee Minutes

January 6, 2012

Meeting was called to order at 2:00pm

Members Present: Fiona Barnes, Barbara Curbow, Eva Czarnecka, Sid Dobrin, Melissa Johnson, John Krigbaum, Mark Meisel, Andy Ogram, Morgan Pigg, Brenda Smith, Bethany Taylor, Robert Thomson, Theresa Vernetson, and Greg Zuest

Co-Chair: Bernard Mair

Executive Secretary: Ann Goodson

1. **Dr. Mair opened the meeting.**
2. **Minutes from the December 2nd meeting were approved with the following correction:**
 - Include the vote count of 13 for and 3 against in line 2 under #3

3. **Common Humanities Course Update:**

There was more discussion about the common course and the negative votes that were received. Dr. Meisel stated his negative vote was regarding the scaling issues. He described the scaling law as something that grows to a certain size and then collapses. He believes it was fine when there were 3 professors and only 30 students or even 100 students in year one. Then there were 6 professors and 300 or 400 students in phase 2 as it was ramping up, but now to go from 300 to 6,000 is a road to disaster. Dr. Curbow asked that her comments be recorded because she too voted against the course and her concerns were about size, findings TAs, and finding instructors. Dr. Curbow's biggest concern was what it means to channel 19,000 credits into one course without thinking about the expense of other smaller humanities courses. She believes some of the other courses will not have the support they need to keep them afloat.

Dr. Mair pointed out that the current plan is to maintain the same method of delivery when it is scaled up as it is in its current version. There will be large lectures with 400 students and it is crucial that we maintain the feature of having small discussion sessions of no more than 20 students. It will be the same format even in its scaled version. There is a thought that if we are not able to provide the teaching power it may become necessary that we go to an online version. The online version would ONLY incorporate the lectures and not take away from the small discussion sessions. The small discussion sessions are an absolute necessity that we will maintain no matter how large the lectures are delivered.

It was asked if the logistical problem would be the small groups finding enough TAs to teach them. Dr. Mair stated that with the requirement of all students taking it will inject additional revenue back into staffing the course.

Dr. Thomson asked if finding enough instructors will mean going outside of humanities faculty or graduate students to teach the classes. It was stated by Dr. Mair that the plan is

to choose the most qualified and appropriate students who may not necessarily be classified as humanities.

The humanities designation is not used only to satisfy the Gen Ed designation, several of the Gen Ed designations are actually incorporated into the degree programs that are required. The course will be reviewed after 3 years to assess the benchmarks that will be set for the course to determine if it deserves to be recertified as mandatory for all students. In addition to the course coordinator as stated in the proposal there will be a Steering Committee of at least 6 faculty members to be appointed to serve as guardians of the course. Dr. Smith stated that a search committee has been created to select the person who will be in charge of overseeing it from the administrative standpoint.

4. Recertification of Courses:

The committee discussed the review process of the courses, and sub-committees were formed without assignments. The committee also discussed how these specified courses were chosen, and which sub-committee would review which course.

The composition of the sub-committees was formed to span the breadth of the Gen Ed designation of science, humanities, and social sciences, as determined by disciplines. The sub-committee groups will meet individually to set up their own assignments for evaluating the courses. After visiting the class they will write their report and a copy of the report will be sent to the instructor, giving him/her the opportunity to respond to the report, especially if there was a misunderstanding or if something was not quite clear when the committee evaluated the class.

It was asked if a time limit has been set on the process and Dr. Mair stated that the process should be completed before the end of the semester and the committee should have a staggered set of deadlines. There will be a master list of the courses with the sub-committee group assigned to a course for evaluation. The committee discussed how to create a template of a review form to be used in the evaluation of the course.

Meeting adjourned at 3:15pm