

## **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 Koropecykj-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**

Noted a dearth of International/Diversity courses being offered, particularly among state core courses.

- According to current General Education rules, such designations 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 I/D designation, or change requirements.

**Discussion:** Diversity is more of a challenge than International. It would be helpful to encourage departments and colleges to apply where there are known to be relevant courses.

- Support is the key: it is a challenge to get things through committees (General Education, UCC, etc.). 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?
- The General Education Committee has seen I/D definitions change several times.

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

- Committee Members 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. Committee raised question of whether or not LGBT content fits Diversity definition.
  - The content mentioned above (gender, class, LGTB concerns) does fit; the human sexuality course currently awards Diversity credit.
- 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?

- 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?
- Sounds like the definition of International. These lines do occasionally get blurred.

**Committee Discussion:** Good Life course “Instructional Workshop” might be a good example of mentorship: explain to people the positives, discuss difficulties.

- Maybe Committee is TOO close to the curriculum, and needs some outside group meetings.
  - The Committee 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.
  - Should courses be identified from the catalog proactively, and faculty encouraged to apply for General Education designation?

- Looking at AP test articulation, only 2 courses get Diversity designation.
- It is always helpful to review definitions of International and Diversity designations. 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 the General Education Program needs to be mindful of students that come from high schools that do NOT offer as many accelerated mechanisms.
- Bringing the conversation back to the original question:
  - Do Diversity or International designations need to be coupled with other General Education categories?
  - Do Humanities or Social Science concepts need to be covered in order 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?
- 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?** The Committee discusses: HOW MUCH of a course must meet definition of Diversity or International.
  - Reviewing PHI2010 (state core course): it seems inappropriate to incorporate Diversity issues. There are upper division courses that do this (Race and Philosophy, for instance). It might be possible to rearrange Contemporary Moral Issues to include Diversity, but not Intro to Philosophy.
  - Is there a percentage requirement for content of Diversity or International?
- Recommendation that the Committee continues in regards to what is written in the description of Diversity or International.
- There is a “substantive-ness” that is not tied to a percentage. The Diversity or International content should not feel tacked on.

- In Theatre Appreciation (THE2000) for instance, 50% of plays represented different populations or groups in US and it was decided "that is substantive."
- Part of the problem is wanting faculty to change what they are teaching in order to obtain the designation. This is counter-productive. Sounds intellectually dishonest.

**Committee Questions:**

- Can we quantify this "problem" - is it really a problem?
- How many courses fall under the scope of this discussion?
- Is there really a shortage when students go to register?
- 50% of students change major in first two years...
  - Freshmen appear to have an issue, but after majors change, it is not a problem.
  - This freshman year could be tracked in order to determine if this is an issue.

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

The UF Core and Internationalization will be discussed this coming spring. – Dr. Lindner.

**Suggestion:** Continue this discussion as an agenda item in one of the spring meetings, including a re-evaluation of the definitions of International and Diversity.

- Should evaluation criteria be more detailed in written format?
- Once discussed, develop guidance for faculty trying to get Diversity or International designation.
- Target faculty, particularly reaching out to areas offering state core courses.
- Discussion of Undergraduate Coordinators role:
  - Best to reach first, in order to pass this along to faculty.
  - A welcoming message should be ‘sent’ to faculty that the General Education Committee encourages application.
  - Undergraduate Coordinators are not necessarily looking at these issues.
  - Sometimes the Undergraduate Chair is more involved.

- It is hoped that the role of the Undergraduate Coordinator position will be standardized across campus in the future.
- It would be useful to pull data together to determine what is offered, what COULD be offered, etc.

**Committee Question:** 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, it was 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.

**Re-certifying courses:** Sub-Committee reviewed syllabi for state core courses.

- Many of them diverged far from acceptable syllabi, particularly those that had multiple sections within the course.
- This should be considered by the full General Education Committee.
- Committee support is needed to encourage faculty to bring courses up to standard.
- The Committee did not perform a re-certification last year.
  - In absence of clear certification standards, courses are reverting to old syllabi.
- Dr. Julian is meeting with Dr. Lindner next week to find a way to approach faculty and departments, in order to encourage collaboration and build consensus.

**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	---	H, E2	Approved E2,

	Change			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 - it seems that students do not write more than 2000 words. But all literature courses write 2-3 essays. Since it is NOT a writing course, is that an issue?
- The Committee raised concerns regarding:
  - 30% of grade is from a 5-8 minute group presentation.
  - Concern regarding how essays were to be evaluated in terms of learning outcomes.
  - Questions regarding the methodology for grading of essays.
  - The Committee discussed how to evaluate General Education based upon the group assignment.
    - How would individual students be assessed?
  - Policy is that only 50% of evaluated coursework must be graded on an individual basis. (?)

**Procedural questions:** Could this be conditionally approved? How strict should the Committee in regards to approval/denial?

- Committee Member: the committee should not be a gatekeeper. The Committee should instead be working to improve the General Education program.

**Primary Concerns of Committee:** There was not enough information submitted to evaluate the student's learning in the course.

- Too much of assessed work appears to be class participation and group assignments.
- **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 select them between courses in full-time schedules.

**Question:** How regularly will course be taught? If not often enough, will it be a waste of our time to recycle?

- Since it is for spring ONLY, many members felt the committee should not recycle it.
- The Committee should find a way to make a decision, it is 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.*
  - This course needs to be presented to Committee again for H designation.
  - **\*Committee:** A common definition for academic rigor needs to be discussed by the Committee.
- **Motion seconded.**
- **Motion carried.**

**RUT3506:**

- SLOs do not appear to account for International designation (i.e. how will International component be assessed?)
- The Committee raised questions regarding the acceptability of students teaching one another (as syllabus outlines).
  - Committee members 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.

- The Committee raised questions about exam during Reading Days.
- Should content of 3000 word course be more rigorous?
- **Attendance grade:** many Committee members felt that while points may be deducted for failure to attend class, attendance cannot count positively in grading.
  - The Committee questioned tardiness policies (points taken from final grade).
  - Instructor should at least add a statement that: “Consideration will be given for 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.**