

General Education Committee
Meeting Minutes for April 15, 2016

Committee members attending: Amy Sayward, Yang Soo Kim, Willis Means, Nancy Caukin, Aimee Holt, John Zamora, Keying Ding, Charles Chusuei, Phil Loubere

Ex-officio members attending: Greg Schmidt, Sheila Otto

Guests attending: Jeremy Aber, Warner Cribb, Karen Petersen

Business:

- The minutes of the February 2015 meeting were approved – moved by Willis Means, seconded by Nancy Caukin, and approved unanimously.
- New proposal for General Education from Geosciences, adding Physical Geography (PGEO 1030) in the Natural Sciences area
 - Karen Petersen mentioned that the College of Liberal Arts’ dean’s office thought that the Cultural Geography minor might benefit from the proposed addition and be interested
 - Jeremy Aber talked about how the existing course had been radically reimaged in the process of thinking about this as a General Education course, specifically in shifting from a more tradition lecture/lab format to examining issues in the field (e.g., climate change, energy resources, and food supply) and engaging in more active learning (e.g., some “flipped” class sessions and more hands-on activities). The faculty are also considering developing an on-line component over time, which will require a redesign of the lab component, but given that the equipment is not highly technical nor expensive, this seems possible.
 - Aimee Holt asked about the assessment plan for the course and mentioned that this would meet a need for an on-line science course offering that Peter Cunningham had stressed in the past. She also pointed out that this course is part of the approved General Education curriculum at other TBR institutions, although it appears in different categories at different universities.
 - Willis Means gave his opinion that this course seemed to be at least as valuable, if not more so, to General Education students as the existing regional/cultural geography course. Warner Cribb added that both would be useful.
 - When asked about the number of sections that might be offered, Warner Cribb stated that three were imagined, but that there were sufficient faculty to expand that number over time. The transition to the Davis Science Building has also added an element of uncertainty to the department’s short-term plans.
 - In the discussion about how this change would have two courses from the Department of Geosciences in two different sections of the General Education curriculum, it was observed that this was also the case with the Department of Physics and Astronomy. It was also noted that no negative comments or concerns about the proposal had been received from the university’s deans.

- Sheila Otto inquired about whether this might narrow the General Education experience of Geoscience majors. Warner Cribb said that it would depend, and Jeremy Aber said that he wouldn't recommend this course to his majors and that they would take the Physics course (already in this category) in any case.
- The motion to approve the proposal was moved by Charles Chusuei, seconded by Willis Means, and passed unanimously.
- Revised course and assessment proposal from COMM 2200
 - The department has suggested changes in the assessment process and to that end met with both Sheila Otto and Aimee Holt. The proposal is to make the assessments on the oral speeches only, rather than on the outlines of the speeches. This change in assessment would lead to changes in the assignments and the course proposal. Other changes in the course resulting from the assessment process have included the addition of another speech, an added reflective component, and the development of an assessment rubric and training materials.
 - The motion to approve was made by Nancy Caukin, seconded by Charles Chusuei, and passed unanimously.
- The General Education Mission Statement Subcommittee
 - Aimee Holt reported on the shorter – but still comprehensive – mission statement for the committee. This is resulting in changes to both documents and to the General Education website, with separate faculty and student pages. She circulated a draft of both to the committee, which expressed their appreciation for the committee's work.
 - The motion to approve the revised mission statement was made by Amy Sayward, seconded by Charles Chusuei, and passed unanimously.
- Subcommittee Reports
 - The Policies and Procedures Subcommittee, which selects the recipient of the Award for Outstanding Teaching in General Education, found that the revised rubric made its work very efficient. The subcommittee also expressed appreciation that all of the nominees exhibited high quality instruction in this key area.
 - The Assessment Subcommittee reviewed several Gen Ed course assessment reports:
 - The report on HIST 2010, 2020, and 2030 revised proposals found they were all positively received and well written.
 - The report on ECON 2410 found a clear assessment mechanism that had been expanded slightly and included data.
 - The report on CHEM 1010/1011 and 1030/1031 offered more feedback and suggestions to highlight the things that the subcommittee knew were being done but that were not noted in the report
 - All of the reports were approved, though some included more feedback, given that this is an important developmental process.
- A motion to thank the retiring members passed unanimously, with Aimee Holt expressing the committee's appreciation for their work and for the on-going learning process fostered in the committee as a whole. Nancy Caukin will be chairing the committee in the coming year (2016-17 academic year).