

## **General Education Committee Minutes for September 4, 2020 Meeting**

**Committee members attending:** Samuel Blumer, Janis Brickey, Lando Carter, Warner Cribb, Mark Frame, Jenna Gray-Hildebrand, Terry Goodin, Virginia Hemby-Grubb, Rachel Kirk, Ryan Korstange, Kevin Krahenbuhl, Matthew Keylon, Aliou Ly, Tammy Melton, Greg Nagel, Ryan Otter, James Piekarski, Deana Raffo, Laura White

**Ex-officio members attending:** Nita Brooks, Leah Lyons, Susan Myers-Shirk

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm by Ryan Korstange (chair).

### **Committee Charge**

Nita Brooks, Vice Provost for Academic Programs, gave the committee its charge, which is to review the University's general education mission; all general education courses, syllabi, learning outcomes; data related to the achievement of the goals; and provide University-wide leadership for the ongoing assessment of the general education program.

### **Introduction of Committee Members**

Committee members briefly introduced themselves.

### **Discussion of Typical Duties for Committee Members & Officers**

- Susan emphasized the importance of the General Education Committee, especially during the redesign process. She shared that it is a demanding committee that is responsible for the curriculum, assessment, and teaching award. She emphasized that meeting attendance is critical because of the work to be done this year.
- The plan is to approve a redesign model this year and implementation of the model next year. There are 20 voting members, including 2 student members.

### **Election of Officers:**

- Deana Raffo was unanimously elected recording secretary.
- A student member self-nominated for vice-chair. However, Nita Brooks confirmed that officer positions must be held by faculty. Lando Carter was unanimously elected vice-chair.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the April 27, 2020 meeting were unanimously approved.

### **Discussion of Voting Procedures**

- Susan explained that there was considerable discussion of voting procedures last year and that this is a significant matter.
- Ryan shared "General Education Committee Operating Procedures" (see Appendix) to solicit feedback and work collaboratively as a committee to revise in real-time. It is a draft document that establishes the practices that the committee will use when conducting business where MTSU's Policy 32 does not specify.
- Ryan reviewed committee membership and that meetings are to be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of order. The chair should be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member in accordance with Policy 32.
- Ryan asked for feedback on the "Voting Procedures & Requirements" section.
  - The committee was in agreement with section 4.1 Quorum content as written.

- The committee was in agreement with section 4.2 Use of Secret Ballot content as written.
- Section 4.3 In Absentia Voting involved discussion about the pros and cons of in absentia voting, virtual attendance and voting, and proxy voting. Being present for a vote has been required in the past because information at meetings is important and may influence the way a person may vote. However, this was a point of discussion last year since a two-thirds majority vote is required for approval, and meeting this threshold is problematic when members are not present to vote. The committee reached a tentative consensus to permit virtual participation and voting. Therefore, in absentia and proxy voting would not be permitted. The Operating Procedures document should be revised to operationally define virtual/remote attendance.
- The committee was in agreement with section 4.5 Required Majority content as written.
- General Education Program Changes (section 4.6) establishes the voting requirements for changes to the Gen Ed program. Susan reviewed that it stipulates that a simple majority is required for a proposal for a change to go forward to the university community. After a public comment period (defined as no less than two weeks), if the proposal is approved by a two-thirds majority, it will go forward to the Director of Gen Ed and, if approved, to the University Provost for final approval and implementation. Program changes are defined as new course proposals, course removal, changes to program structure, changes to assessment, and course title changes.
- A question was posed about including policy related to what to do when members do not fulfill their responsibilities. Nita Brooks shared that the Senate's bylaws have a reference to missing multiple meetings. Susan and Ryan will add language modeled after the Senate's bylaws to this document.
- Ryan will make changes to the "General Education Committee Operating Procedures" document as discussed for the committee to review and then come prepared to the next meeting to vote on the document.

### **Discussion of Moratorium on New Proposals**

- In January, the Gen Ed committee voted for a moratorium on new course proposals until the program redesign is completed (13 voted for/4 voted against).
- Susan and Ryan recommend lifting the moratorium because COVID has pushed the redesign timeline back. If a redesign is approved this year, the following year will involve getting everything into the system for approval. A redesign will not launch any earlier than Fall 2023, and that is with a successful year this year and hitting the ground running next year. Fall 2023 would be the first class of the new gen ed program, if all goes as planned.
- Susan shared that there are 4 possible proposals for changes in the pipeline.
- Pros and cons were shared about keeping or lifting the moratorium. Members shared comments about the value that a proposal may bring to current students. Furthermore, we do not know if radical changes will be made to the program design. Several comments were made that if the moratorium were to be lifted, we would need to be strategic about accepting proposals to allow time for the redesign while also reserving the right to place the moratorium again.
- A motion was made to lift the moratorium on new proposals. A friendly amendment was made that lifting the moratorium be for the fall semester only. The motion on the floor is to lift the moratorium for new proposals for the fall semester only. The motion was unanimously approved.

### **Update on General Education Redesign**

Susan gave updates throughout the meeting, including the anticipated timeline for redesign and new proposals in the pipeline. She shared that she does not yet know the status of the budget for summer stipends, etc.

With no new business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Deana Raffo, Recording Secretary