Grand Valley State University

*General Education Committee*

Minutes of 11-14-11

**PRESENT:** Kirk Anderson, Deb Bambini, Jim Bell, Jason Crouthamel, Alisha Davis, Emily Frigo, Roger Gilles, Gary Greer, Paul Jorgensen, JJ Manser, Penney Nichols-Whitehead, Keith Rhodes, Paul Sicilian, David Vessey, Judy Whipps,

**ALSO PRESENT:** C. “Griff” Griffin, Director of General Education, Krista McFarland, General Education Office Coordinator

**ABSENT:** Susan Carson, Gabriele Gottlieb, Ruth Stevens

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| Agenda Items | Discussion | Action / Decisions |
| **Approval of**  **Oct 31 Minutes** |  | Approved as submitted. |
| **Agenda** |  | Approved. |
| **GEC Membership Changes** | JJ Manser is our new representative from Student Senate. Chris Dobson is stepping down. Gabriele Gottlieb was the top vote getter in CLAS elections and will be on the committee through 2013. |  |
| **The Role of Study Abroad in the Revised Proposal** | ***We will return to our previous discussion to develop a plan for including Study Abroad as a substitute for the Issues requirement.***  The committee discussed open for the semester aboard and faculty-led study abroad options. The Padnos International Center would agree to the following for Issues credit  2 courses  2 prefixes  Semester abroad (full time at a partner institution)  As long as two prefixes would count towards Issue  GEC also needs to decide and consider Faculty-led programs:  2 courses  2 prefixes  Would the Program be pre-approved? Or just the courses?  A committee member asked how study abroad works with the current Theme requirements. The Director responded that it is similar to what is listed for the semester abroad above. Students also get World Perspectives credit. It is often a challenge to see what course will comes in as. Students have to go to each department to find out ahead of time. Faculty led are treated the same – students take 3, 2, or 1 course abroad and they get spliced into a Theme for credit. With the reduction from 3 to 2 Theme courses, study abroad is also just 2 courses.  The committee discussed the option of have a student do a write up before or after they go abroad. The Director noted that there is a requirement for students to complete and integrative statement, but the question is more about what is done with those statements. The reflective piece is important, but it would be very difficult to give an approval or denial to a student after they already study abroad. According to PIC, about 70% of students complete the write-up.  A committee member thought it very important to have the student write something about how they expect to get the skills that are part of the goals as part of their study abroad application. The Director said that this will be difficult for them to do prior to going abroad. They would really need to write the integrative piece afterward. PIC is fine with collecting them, but again very difficult to say we would approve or deny after the fact.  A committee member asked if students know they get the World Perspectives credit also. The Director responded that typically students have fulfilled the category before they go abroad because they are juniors and seniors whey they go abroad, so it only affects about 10% of students. The committee member added that if students knew before hand it might make a difference. This could be a good incentive.    A committee member suggested having a faculty mentor here at GVSU to send the reflection to afterwards. If did go for entire semester and met with a faculty member afterwards it would cut out the beurcracy and allow faculty to hear from the student.  A committee member asked how many students study abroad in a year. The Director responded that about 600-700 GVSU students go each year, with about ½ of those being faculty- led programs. PIC’s goal is to increase that number. The committee member though matching up students with a faculty member would be difficult because of the quantity.  A committee member was in favor of study abroad proposal, but sees it as a grand parenting clause. The problem is that it doesn’t really fit Issues like it does Themes. It is going to be a different program as part of the upper-level, so he was in favor of accepting it as it.  A committee member agreed and said we need to either say yes we agreed with the study abroad experience, although different from Issues, but feel is an alternative and as valuable and willing to waive the issues requirement in lieu of study abroad. We either think this or we don’t and there is no point in arguing otherwise. Like Honors, it is a different but suitable program.    A committee member would rather see student journaling instead of a required integrative statement.  A committee member wasn’t concerned about the courses being from different prefixes, but was concerned more about helping students reflect. They should be completing an integrative statement that is directed at the upper-level. The Director responded that we could create a form and be more intentional about this. A committee member thought that the statement should be focused on integration alone. A committee member thought the requirement to complete a statement is problematic if GEC has no intention of evaluating. A committee member responded that the reflective process is about the students and less about GEC. It is valuable for the students to go through the process.  A committee member suggested having students do something with it like, perhaps presenting as SSD of having available in PIC for other students to look at. Giving the experience and audience could really help promote the study abroad program. A committee member also suggested contacting students after they return to share their experience with classrooms or in other peer settings.  Motion to accept Study Abroad proposal with a requirement of two courses and they must be an outcome, either public statement or written; seconded.  Discussion  The current motion does not require two different prefixes. A committee member through that two prefixes is more essential to Themes but not as much with Issues.  Worst case scenario is that a student takes 6 credits abroad that will all count in major and GE. The committee should think about whether they are comfortable with students having this one less requirement.  A committee member asked how current study abroad courses come back as Theme credit. Do they have to be upper-level? The Director responded that the course can come back at any level, doesn’t have to be 300/400.    A committee member added that you have to take into consideration that study abroad would be a higher level experience.  A friendly amendment was requested and accepted to make explicit that that students also get World Perspectives credit (if needed).  Motion to amend the original motion to require courses from two different prefixes; seconded. Motion to amend Failed.    A committee member was concerned about the faculty-led as it is not the same experience as a semester study abroad. The Director recommended considering two different prefixes for faculty-led programs.  A committee member clarified that it doesn’t have to be a semester abroad; it just has to be 6 credits abroad.  The Director asked what the option would be if the student does go abroad on faculty led and only takes courses from one prefix. Can they take one GVSU Issue course to fulfill upper-level requirement?  Motion to amend the original motion to require two different prefixes for faculty-led programs and one Issue course if they are not from two different prefixes; seconded. Motion for amendment passes.  Original Motion; second and amendments (outlined below) Passed.   * accept Study Abroad proposal with 2 courses * there must be an outcome – public statement or written by student * students can get World Perspectives credit * if they study abroad for the semester (or at least 6 credits) they do NOT have to have 2-prefix requirement * if it is a faculty-led study abroad (or less than a semester) you have to have 2 prefixes * if student goes on faculty-led and takes courses in only one prefix, then can then take one additional Issue course at GVSU to fulfill upper-level | Motion Passed to  Accept the Study Abroad proposal  as outlined (bulleted list at bottom of section) in the Minutes |
| **Moratorium on Course-Change and New-Course Proposals** | ***We will discuss putting a moratorium on certain course-change and new-course proposals while the full revision proposal is under consideration by faculty governance. From Griff:***   * ***We CAN review all requests to move out of themes and from themes to foundations.*** * ***Courses that want to join Foundations or Cultures……….we can approve…………as long as send them notification (ask for an amendment), that the GE proposal will change the goals they need to do.  As the proposal is at the moment, your category has to choose between these two goals (list A) and these two goals (list B).   Faculty can just AGREE that they can achieve the goals.  Then we can let the proposal go forward.*** * ***Stop all new Theme courses pending the GE revision.  The goals are VERY different as are the Issues; therefore, we should not keep doing them***   There was committee agreement to continue to review requests that come through the curriculum system and address them, as outlined in the list above, when received. There is no need to send out information to everyone on the process as it only affects courses that submit proposals. | There was committee agreement to continue to review requests that come through the curriculum system and address them as received. |
| **Curriculum Proposal** | ***We will consider the course-change proposal for US 201, Log #7414—to change US 201 to LIB 201, drop it from Theme #20, and add it to the SBS category (it is currently also part of US Diversity).***  Motion to approve Log #7414; seconded. No discussion. Motion passed. | Motion passed to approve Log #7414 for course-change to US 201. |
| **Discussion Board Activity/Feedback** | ***Our main agenda item for November 21 will be to integrate faculty/student feedback into our final version of the proposal. For now, let’s just touch base on how the campus discussion is going and what we are learning from it.***  The Chair started with saying that the purpose of the GE discussion board is for the campus to reflect on the draft proposal and for GEC to answer concerns and questions. We continue to listen to comments and to decide if there is a need to change the proposal based on the individual comments, or if there is a need to clarify and make arguments better.  Please continue to review the posts to the discussion board. A number of committee members have responded to help clarify questions and comments.  A committee member asked if there were recurring questions or concerns that should be addressed. The Chair responded that most posts were about the upper-level Issues component. There are also some questions about the goal of ethical reasoning. The Director added that there have not been any responses about the goal distribution plan.  A committee member was still worried about the oral communications goal and that people aren’t realizing what will be expected. Largely, people are teaching by doing some sort of presentation and there should be more than this, for example, require two presentations. There needs to be some guidelines for this goal. If class has 80 students where are you going to fit more in if you are both teaching and assessing. The Chair agreed that there is work to do, but didn’t necessarily agrees that a course will have to do two presentations as part of the goal.    In response to the discussion board posts, a committee member suggested adding some clarification for the upper-level in the proposal. There seems to be some general anxiety about what GEC means by integration, so perhaps adding some explanation of what we mean into the proposal might be beneficial.  The Chair responded that we had back away from detail on the proposal and directed folks to the website for additional information, but it sounds like it might help to add some of that detail back to the proposal.    The Chair added that we can also do some more as fare an integration samples on the website. Much of the confusion by faculty is how they approach integration from their disciplinary perspective. A committee member added that we are saying that students will encounter this outside of GVSU. Another committee added that we are not asking faculty to leave their field, we are saying it is a responsibility to educate themselves in other areas. Many faculty are already doing this.  A committee member commented that the interdisicplinarity also comes from the students and not just the faculty alone. These courses encourage learning and communication in class and students will also make connections on their own and at an individual level. It is partly the responsibility of the students to seek those connections. The Chair recommended perhaps adding a separate section on the website for Student information.  There was a post on the discussion board by a faculty member that thought students would be bringing in work from other courses and the faculty would have to evaluate the knowledge gained from other courses and majors. The Chair clarified that this was not the case.  A committee member noted that a few of the comments were critical of the categories and why they exist. We have an answer as to why we have the categories so perhaps we should add more information about this in the proposal for clarification. The Chair agreed to add more explanation to the paragraph on page 7.  One comment on the discussion board suggested that the upper-level should be just one course that is outside of the major. A committee member responded that if we did that the one course would have to be a lot more intensive as an “ultimate course”. This also couldn’t be done with a class of 40. The Director added that if you dropped the cap to 30, you *might* be able to do it. A committee member was concerned that if you remove a course counting in the major, you will have a difficult time getting departments to add courses. What will departments motivations be to have a course that their majors are excluded from. The Chair added that the courses wouldn’t exclude the major, but the course wouldn’t count for GE credit. The committee agreed that it is a good incentive to have courses that are developed in the majors also.  A committee member referred to the discussion board posts about ethical reasoning and humane inquiry. We do say that we are replacing humane inquiry. Maybe we could affirm in the proposal that the tradition of humane inquiry is a blanket value that is already embedded. The word “replacing” makes it tough.  The concern was more of a core curriculum issue because all acquire this knowledge and that knowledge is more important than skills, but it is a false dichotomy because knowledge is derived through skills. A committee member asked if you are saying skills drive knowledge. No, the argument is that skills and knowledge go hand in hand.  A committee member added that on the issue of human inquiry or ethical reasoning, we don’t’ have to say replace, or get rid of one without other. He will send some definitions to use to show how they are key to liberal arts and the university mission statement.  A committee member added that humane inquiry is one of those non-assessable things, kind of like a life-long learner. We can make sure student have skills, but we can’t make sure they are civically engaged. It is a false dichotomy.  A committee member noted that there are two other tensions being brought up: the professional schools are saying that too much is required through GE at the sake of the professional schools and other are saying that GE is too focused on continued vocational training rather than worrying about how knowledge is transpired. There is a general idea that general knowledge is being replaced with vocation training because we need to attract students that feel like they can get a job after college. There are many articles are being written about replacing liberal arts with good workers. No matter how we feel about this, it is a perception. There is a real conflict between what we want and what employers want. We need to show that we have thought about this a lot and have been very reflective.  **NEXT STEPS**  The revised proposal will go to ECS on November 28th and their Chair will make it public. They will hold a university wide forum on December 2nd. ECS will then deliberate and decide on next steps.  ECS asked about splitting the proposal, but the Chair responded that it would be very difficult to split especially if some areas pass and others don’t.  The Student Senate representative added that once the proposal goes to UAS students can also come forward with their support. As a whole, this proposal is for students and many are in support of what GEC is trying to accomplish. Students will get more bang for their buck with integrated classes.  The Chair will continue to work on revisions. If you have recommendations please send them to the Chair by this Friday and he will work on it. Study Abroad will also be included.  Next week’s agenda will be to finalize the proposal in order to send on to ECS. | The Chair will continue to work on revisions. If you have recommendations please send them to the Chair by this Friday and he will work on it. Study Abroad will also be included.  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| **Adjournment** |  | Meeting adjourned at 4:23 pm |