Grand Valley State University

*General Education Committee*

Minutes of 1-23-12

**PRESENT:** Kirk Anderson, Deb Bambini, Jim Bell, Jason Crouthamel, Alisha Davis, Emily Frigo, Roger Gilles, Gabriele Gottlieb, Jagadeesh Nandigam, Keith Rhodes, Paul Sicilian, David Vessey

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

**ABSENT:** Susan Carson, JJ Manser, Penney Nichols-Whitehead, Ruth Stevens, Judy Whipps

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| Agenda Items | Discussion | Action / Decisions |
| **Approval of**  **Jan 16 Minutes** |  | Approved as submitted. |
| **Agenda** |  | Approved. |
| **Curricular Proposals** | *We will consider two proposals: Log #7458 and Log #7459. Both proposals simply ask to cross-list existing GPY “Earth & Environment” theme courses with ENS. No substantive changes are proposed.*  Log #7458  Log #7459  There are no changes to the GE courses other than the cross-listing of ENS with GPY. Cross-listing will continue for Themes, but will change with Issues course if the final proposal for changes to GE are approved.  Motion to approve Log #7458 and #7459 to cross-list two GPY courses with ENS, including a notation that cross-listing will change with Issues courses; seconded. Motion passed. 1 abstention. | Motion to approve Log 7458 and #7459 to cross-list two GPY courses with ENS, including a notation that cross-listing will change with Issues courses; seconded. Motion passed. |
| **FSBC Memo in Response to the GE Revision Proposal** | *Let’s discuss the memo and determine if any further action is needed prior to the January 27 UAS discussion.*  A copy of the FSBC memo was distributed for review.  A committee member asked what the relevance was of the cost and comparison listed in the Memo. Are they saying that it might not be sustainable? If there was actually a net difference in seats than that would be interesting, or change with what taught by full faculty, but what does it matter with the cost of course. There is not a net difference between Themes and Issues course. The analysis is a bit flawed because 90% of the courses are already offered in CLAS. It might be helpful to have someone on FSBC articulate the rationale for the comparison.  A committee member commented that while it doesn’t come across in the Memo, it should be seen as a good thing that Issues courses will be taught by tenure track faculty and not adjuncts. The Director expects that this number will also change as we move forward. A committee member added that he thought one of our first charges for the GEC committee was to encourage more tenure track and less adjunct faculty. Tenure track faculty have to teach somewhere, so it is still a wash in terms of numbers of courses.  There are some courses that have concerns over the 40 student cap. This affects very few, but we do expect to hear from people about this.  The FSBC encourages dropping the non-transfer requirement for Issues courses. However, Themes have been about the content; whereas for Issues we are not making that claim, they are more about skills. A committee member added that there are a small number of colleges doing similar courses with these goals, so it is imaginable that transfer students could have a similar type of course. The Director responded that 99% of courses coming in are at 100/200 level. So, even if the student is exposed to similar skill at the freshman level, it is still not the same an upper-level course. The committee member added that there are always exceptions and students will always have an option to petition if they want to make a case.  A committee member thought that a bigger concern is that it seems we are asking students to do more, than perhaps other universities in the area. The Director added that students will still be able to get Foundation and Culture credit through transfer, just not Issues. There are very few transfer courses coming in for Themes currently, so it will still be a small number either way. Students can make a claim, for example, if they took a religion course at another school for Religion Theme. In some cases transfer students are getting more credit than our majors are, through the MACRAO for example. This encourages a possible change to the overall transfer policy.  In regard to the transfer policy, the Chair asked if GEC wants to say students can petition for transfer credit if can show 300-400 level and does problem-solving, etc. In terms of policy we say courses do not transfer in, but as with anything you can petition. We don’t want to have to change the proposal, so perhaps GEC needs to reiterate that focus of an Issues course is not on a discipline, but rather on skills.  A committee member asked what the role of FSBC is in the process. The Chair responded that FSBC and UCC have been asked to comment on proposal. Both have supported it, but raise points for consideration. They have acknowledged that GEC has discussed several of the points they raise, but the answers are not clear to them in the proposal.  The Chair asked if #3 on the Memo was saying that they think there is a difference in cost between capstone and GE. A committee member responded that he believed that while they didn’t see any cost change, they would like to track and be able to look back to see if this is true. It is unclear why they choose to use the cost of a Capstone versus an upper-level course.  The committee agreed that neither of the Memos were ruckus producing ☺  The Capstones are discipline specific, whereas the Issues courses are a way to be sure that students have more than one disciplinary exposure. We like idea of majors developing courses that work for both major and non-majors and delivering a way for GE and majors to work together. Themes courses can currently count in a Major, so Issues have minimal impact on Majors. We are really not proposing a huge change for Majors.  The UAS meeting is on Friday 1/27/12 at 3pm in 138E DeVos. They have several things on their meeting agenda, so the GE proposal may or may not make it to discussion. The sense is that it will go to vote in February. There is a possibility that UAS will come back to GEC with possible amendments. If so, GEC will need to discuss any items quickly. The GEC Chair will ask for any requests to be made in writing. It is also possible for them to take up proposals separately. We encouraged the proposals to be considered at the same time, but that is UAS’ prerogative if they want to review as separate. | GEC agreed that they did not want to change the proposal regarding transfer of Issues courses. In terms of policy we say courses do not transfer in, but as with anything students can petition. GEC will reiterate that focus of an Issues course is not on a discipline, but rather on skills.  The UAS meeting is on Friday 1/27/12 at 3pm in 138E DeVos. They have several things on their meeting agenda, so the GE proposal may or may not make it to discussion. |
| **Plans for the Summer “Issues” Workshops** | *Last week, we agreed that our first job is to establish as clearly as possible the criteria for judging “Issues” course proposals. Our existing materials include the language of the GE Revision Proposal, the “working documents” produced in summer 2011 by the various faculty groups, and the VALUE rubrics produced by the AAC&U. Let’s discuss these materials and see what it would take to develop revised materials specifically aimed at articulating the criteria for successful course proposals.*  The Chair asked the committee what they, as a faculty member, would like to have in hand or know to check their proposal against and how close are our current materials to what we need. Do we need to reorganize the materials into a packet, or do we need to recast or develop new materials?  The Director noted that one of the things we heard in the forums is how much do faculty have to do to include the goals. We don’t have an answer for that (teamwork, problem solving, etc.). The Chair responded that we need to not think about how much, but rather is it an assessable activity. Most activities can be done in single class period. We don’t necessarily recommend this, but don’t think we’ve stipulated a specific amount.  A committee member added that the question in the mind of faculty will be is it going to be is this enough. This can create some anxiety for not being as concrete.  The Chair noted that in the Collaboration materials we have the four main areas to look at. Faculty should use that as a rubric for the criteria to use. The disciplinary leeway is how you take your material and apply it to collaborative work. It will be important to include the definitions and examples that we used during the summer work groups.  A committee member suggested saying that they have to teach and assess the goals for a significant part of semester, but not the entire course. As long as they can demonstrate integral part of course we are satisfied. GE wants you to meet the criteria, but is open minded to different approaches. It is also important to make clear that faculty are both teaching and assessing the goals.  The committee discussed the process for submitting proposals. Below is the information from the white board:     |  |  | | --- | --- | | February  Preproposal  GE Proposal GE Goals longer version VS. | Course Proposal (after workshop in August)  Teach (skill & content)  How you teach What you Teach (rubric X)  Assess = students  Practice Skills  No you assess What you assess |   The Director noted that the “Teach” part of the goal is more difficult. We can be prescriptive and say that a handout must be attached to your syllabus (as a standard for GE), or leave it open-ended (and no one knows what asking). We can ask how you are going to teach it, but not sure how to put on a form.  A committee member suggested, in regard to the range of prescriptive versus open ended, that SWS has an attachment they use to explain the requirements. Maybe GE should also have an attachment with a link that students could go to. SWS asks for a minimum of 4 hours, a minimum number of pages, etc. The 4 hours is what they want you to deliberately teach; this can be valuable to the faculty and it wouldn’t be difficult to create.  A committee member suggested leaving the proposal process a little open-ended as far as “how much” and see how the proposals come through. This will allow faculty to give input. It will be a little more grassroots to have the form ask “what will you teach” and “how much time will you spend on it”.  The committee agreed that it would be helpful to provide a one-page handout with the goal definition and bulleted list for Collaboration, Integration, and Problem solving. Additional supplemental information will also be available. A committee member suggested also having exemplars similar to sabbatical proposals.  The Chair also suggested having a similar sheet to show what kind of relationship the course has to have to be an Issues course. The Director recommended using the language from the proposal and put right at top of the page.  The Chair noted that there is not a lot that needs to be done in order to invite people to do pre-proposals. After that GEC, along with FTLC, can talk through the ideas and put through proposals. A committee member suggested having a Blackboard site for faculty to connect with other faculty that are also working on proposals. The Chair added that there are plans for an online component.  If there is not a vote by UAS on the GE final proposal on Friday, GE will send an email to Dean’s on February 1st to let them know that the process for Issues proposal is coming down the pike. | The committee agreed to have a one-page document with the goals definitions and bulleted lists. A similar one-page sheet will also be created to show what kind of relationship the course has to have to be an Issue.  If there is not a vote by UAS on the GE final proposal on Friday, GE will send an email to Dean’s on February 1st to let them know that the process for Issues proposal is coming down the pike. |
| **Adjournment** | Motion to adjourn; seconded. | Meeting adjourned at 3:32 pm |