Grand Valley State University

*General Education Committee*

Minutes of 2-20-12

**PRESENT:** Kirk Anderson, Deb Bambini, Jim Bell, , Jason Crouthamel, Alisha Davis, Emily Frigo, Roger Gilles, Gabriele Gottlieb, Jagadeesh Nandigam, Penney Nichols-Whitehead,Keith Rhodes, Paul Sicilian, Ruth Stevens, David Vessey, Judy Whipps

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

**ABSENT:** Susan Carson, JJ Manser

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| Agenda Items | Discussion | Action / Decisions |
| **Approval of**  **Feb 13 Minutes** |  | Approved as submitted. |
| **Agenda** |  | Approved. |
| **Strategic Planning** | *Julie Guevara, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, will join us to talk about strategic planning and our report due May 1.*  We asked Julie to come in to the meeting to help clarify our vision for strategic plan for May 1. Assessment and strategic planning are part of her role. She has visited several different universities and have learned a lot of the last 10 years.  Julie talked briefly about successes of general education here at GVSU. In 1998-99 there was a regional accreditation by Higher Learning Commission (HLC). It is worth noting that at that time the HLC said that we had a new general education program, but no assessment. Our institution has grown over that time, so GE has been pushing a bigger movement to integrate it university wide. The assessment was set up in 1999, but it didn’t really look at student learning outcomes. Not a lot happened after 1999. When Julie’s and Griff’s positions were created in 2005, there was still really not an assessment in place. In 2008 the HLC came in and we had nothing to show, so the GEC did a tremendous amount of work to get an assessment plan set up. HLC said that the GEC and the GE assessment were heroic efforts and it set a great baseline for work to move forward. Since that time the GEC has moved mountains.  When looking at other institutions in Michigan and two outside of Michigan, none of them have a strategic plan and many don’t have an assessment. Again, if you look at GE websites in comparison to other institutions it is like night and day. GVSU is transparent and gives people plenty of opportunity to engage.  In the last 7-10 years the accrediting body is just starting to look at GE as part of accreditation because GE is foundation and core to that liberal education. GE is taking much more prominent role.  One thing to consider in strategic plan. Both HLC reports to us that GE is core to the university mission. Is that still going to be relevant in next 5 years? When looking at GVSU liberal education will continue to be one of core values. But how do we/you make GE more relevant at the university? GE and liberal education go together and this is one thing to consider.  Julie suggested several points for GEC to think about and consider for the strategic plan:  1) The Role of GE. How do we make the plan – what is role of GE at GVSU?  2) And how do we enhance that role of GE at GVSU? Maybe part of vision statement is how GE fits with liberal education and take off from that point.  3) Other piece that has really been ramped up over the years is assessment. GE has done a tremendous job with assessment and structure. The university is at point that we can look at a more sophisticated and refined process.  In terms of GE assessment:  a) Look at closing the loop – we have a structure for how to collect, but do we have structure for how we use for programmatic and/or student learning outcomes.  b) Now when people submit a Course Assessment Plan (CAP) are they using measures? Are their objectives and measures finding what they are looking for. Might be at different level for writing objectives.  c) Transparency of results – who gets, who hears about (students, faculty). Is it to students or with students – what is their role?  d) Students involvement with assessment. We (GVSU) tend to do assessment to students. Don’t necessarily give them the results. What does this process mean to you as a student and what did you learn. There is not a lot of self-reflection currently. How do students learn what they learn and what are they telling us about their experience?  4) What would a better GE program look like? If we could, what would additional changes look like?  Learning communities might be a way for students to have opportunities to test out, what are opportunities to consider available. Not necessarily a better GE program, but what might more options be that students can benefit from.  5) Being absolutely certain. In the previous strategic plan we said we might be able to use for accreditation. Might is not an option anymore – have to get through work of this committee. How do we make it more specific?  Other piece – there are external assessments that conduct as indirect measures, so how does this committee interface with those instruments. Make sure those questions are relevant to this committee get included. (NSSE – doing in 2013, national survey of student engagement.) Freshman survey is scheduled for 2012 (freshman coming in, but if submit GE questions in 2012 than have same questions on 2016 exit survey). One other place is through WEAVE online.  5) Another piece as you proceed with strategic plan is to take a close look at 2006 plan – may not want some things in there. For example – work with external group because c of strong connection with alumni and employers. If going to have it in plan than need to do something with it. If not, may not be necessary to include in plan.  3-5 objectives with particular tasks and strategies are probably sufficient for the next 5 years.  If look at things might be interested into expand, than honors, linked courses, learning communities. How many do you really want to focus on. Where do you really want to put your focus and what are your top 3 priorities.  Julie was interested to hear what others on GEC see and hear.  The Chair noted that the assessment has been focused on student learning outcomes. Student engagement and also faculty engagement seem like viable outcomes of assessment. What do you think about increasing faculty engagement? Julie responded that is it at the top because when instituting the new GE program we want to know how faculty are reacting and engaging to it. In the current program, where does teaching (and assessing) fall in with faculty engagement. When looking at program assessment you have to look at faculty engagement, so it is probably be one of the top 5 priority areas. The Chair liked the current assessment plan and improving with a cleaner plan. We could look at the extent we might design our student learning outcomes assessment to be as engaging as possible with faculty. This will allow that goal in some ways to supersede, but it might be a tradeoff with quality of student learning outcomes vs. faculty engagement.  A committee member asked what GVSU is finding in terms of trends with transfer students. What is overall of GE taken here? It seems as if people are coming in at all different places and that can be a big issue. We don’t have control over quality of classes that are not here.  The Director responded that transfer students are definitely a trend. There is a specific number in the accreditation report. There will be a considerable increase because of the economics of students at community colleges. Certainly, there is a perception that there is a difference in quality of education. There are a number of MACRAO’s, but it is a relatively small portion overall. This is a good question.  Julie added that transfers can spill over into what you are assessing. It is an option for GEC to look at transfer and what really assessing. It is up to GEC if that is one thing you want to look at.    A committee member asked if GEC decides to focus on other things, such as linked courses for example, that what are the boundaries and what is appropriate for GEC to decide. Julie responded that it is about whether those will be a resource or not. GEC sets the path for GE and the Provost and UCC will approve or not. The strategic plan is for what you aspire GE to be. Some can be fulfilled and some will be just aspirational. In planning also have to say these are the resources we need.  A committee member asked what a linked course is. The Director responded that there is a lot of research to show that students do well if they are in identical sections of, for example, WRT 150 and PSY 101. The same 24 students in one section are also in the section with 300 students. The Director will be meeting with a couple of departments in the next week for a possible pilot test this summer.  Julie added that an overarching goal would be to look at how you keep GE relevant. You can do that through assessment of student learning outcomes, but also through different options like linked courses, Honors, etc. Everything GE does should be linked to accreditation and to helping students.  The Chair noted that we close the loop to some degree, but we can always do more. Maybe there are ways to embed through conversations with units about GE. Julie may be able to have conversation as she works with units and looking at other measures. Many use WEAVE online a lot with students. It was agreed that it wouldn’t work to combine GE assessment and unit assessment, but maybe a pilot could be discussed with a few units. The Chair added that with the new cycle and rubrics, GE will have more confidence with cluster data and reporting.  The committee will turn attention to the GE strategic plan after spring break. | The committee will turn attention to the GE strategic plan after spring break.  The strategic plan and report are due May 1. |
| **Preparing for the Summer “Issues” Workshops** | *We will finalize the drafts of these documents:*   1. *The draft document we plan to attach to the email, describing the Issues component and guiding faculty as they consider developing Issues courses—in particular the “Integration” definition and description.* 2. *The draft spreadsheet, to be completed by unit heads, indicating what courses they might be able to develop as Issues courses, what faculty might be able to participate in the S/S process, and so on.*   The committee reviewed and tweaked the draft documents to send to unit head’s and dean’s. The intent will be that unit head’s will forward information along to their faculty.  The Chair asked to have a short discussion about the general principles to get to 30 proposals before we start receiving proposals.  A committee member asked if it is beneficial to a department to try to keep each class they offer in a separate issue. Does that help units in the long run, or does it not matter. The Chair responded that it is less important that it was in Themes, but might help with summer funding because we want to spread around across issues, so it could be desirable.  A committee member wondering about the number of sections a department will offer and if that will bias the selection process. A committee member responded that one thing to look for is courses piloting in 2012-13 with multiple sections, but it is not a prime criteria. The number of sections was removed from the draft document.  The Chair added that this is the first round and we just need to build some criteria. In some ways don’t care about section, but maybe most important is that we just get good courses.  A committee member asked if we know how many sections will be needed. The Director responded that it is difficult to say because in 2013 students can take either Themes or Issues. We will need to know by 2014, but by then we will have at least 60 sections at least per semester. There will probably be enough for transfer students’ issue. It won’t be as big a consideration until 2016. The Director will continue to monitor.  As far as proposals, it all goes back to faculty engagement. We want 30 faculty over summer to come work on cool courses.  The committee agreed that a March 15 deadline was not realistic for units to respond and was change to April 2, after spring break.  A committee member asked if we will need to have a proposal process for Foundations and Cultures also. The Chair responded yes, but it will be during the academic year. Those will be for 2013-14 program. Those courses will either change their course assessment plan or not be included in the catalog. | The email to unit head’s and deans to propose Issues courses will be emailed on Friday, Feb 24.  The deadline for responses will be April 2. |
| **Curricular Proposals** | *Log #7676, a new course proposal from Women and Gender Studies for WGS 255, Gender and Popular Culture, proposed for the US Diversity category.*  A committee member was concerned about the amount of race included in the description. Race needs to be a primary focus. Three of the GE content categories are covered in very small amount of time. He would recommend sending the proposal back to request current SOR that they are teaching now. Speaking and writing are mentioned, but not in the SOR. It seems to be coming from just a participation grade and it would be better to see actual case of where teaching oral and written and SOR and how our content goals are being met.  A committee member asked if we are going to schedule a moratorium for old goals and new goals. The Chair responded that we have had one request and we told them to go ahead and use the new goals. In the new program they will be required to teach and assess. GEC will talk about a moratorium for goals at a future meeting.  The Chair suggested asking for an amendment for the content goals to be clarified in regard to depth of coverage, a revised SOR, and clarity on big project (annotated bib, oral part of ) and then since this will be part of new curriculum it might be partial to see how we will be doing assessment (new goals). So, say you might consider and your work will be done or nearly done next year. Two levels of revision, clarify these for passage this year. Hard for us to require that this semester.  Motion to request amendment; seconded. Motion passed. | GEC will talk about a moratorium for goals at a future meeting.  Motion to request amendment to content goals, revised SOR and clarity on big project; seconded. Motion passed. |
| **Adjournment** | Motion to adjourn; seconded. | Meeting adjourned at  4:27 pm |