

GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
MEETING #21 AGENDA

Date/Time: March 14, 2011, 2:30–4:30 p.m.
Location: 303-C DeVos Center, Grand Rapids

2:30 Approval of February 21 Minutes
Approval of Agenda

2:35 Chair's Report

Since February 21, we have held four university forums, received more feedback on the Discussion Board, held meetings with several departments and colleges, and heard direct feedback from several departments and individuals. There has also been action by the UAS and the Provost regarding the reduction of the Theme requirement from 3 courses to 2. We also learned that, in order to get our proposal approved in April, we will have to have a final version completed very shortly after our March 21 GEC meeting. Let's assess where we are and determine what decisions need to be made.

2:45 Decision Points

As we anticipated, it's impossible to locate a "consensus" among the many students, faculty, departments, and colleges we have heard from over the past six weeks. But we can identify a pattern of questions and concerns expressed about the draft proposal. In order to settle on a final version, we should at least consider the seven "decision points" below. Depending on our decisions about these points, we could end up with the exact same proposal we've drafted—or quite a different version.

The New LEAP goals:

We've proposed to separate oral communication from written communication, transform ethical reasoning into a skills goal, and add the skills goals of civic responsibility, teamwork, and problem-solving. We've left the exact definitions of these goals deliberately vague in anticipation of a transition period during which we would work with faculty to refine and develop each goal. Do we need to offer more specific guidance on what these goals mean and how they can or should be integrated into GE courses?

Distribution of goals:

Do we want to insist that all goals get taught and assessed as part of the program, or can we build in flexibility as a way to integrate the new and revived goals over time, knowing that not all students will necessarily be exposed to all goals? (See the "Plan 66" document distributed via e-mail on March 2.

Civic Responsibility:

Art and Psychology do not believe CR is a fit for them or their categories. Do we want to persuade them otherwise, try trading CR to other categories, make CR an option in "Plan 66," move CR to the upper level, make CR a "knowledge goal" to be connected to the upper-level, or just eliminate it altogether?

Upper-level categories:

Do we need categories at all? They could provide guidance and structure for faculty proposing courses and for students selecting courses. But do categories add an unnecessary dimension to the program? If it's necessary, what is it?

Global Issues:

Assuming we want upper-level categories, is "global awareness" a goal we want to build into the program? Do we want to emphasize current issues? What would it mean to call these "critical issues," or "current issues," or "big issues," etc.?

Number of upper-level courses:

Can we achieve the upper-level goals in a single course? Do we want to encourage "majors" courses to double as GE courses? Do we want to encourage a mix of majors and non-majors in each class? Do we mainly just want students to get outside of their majors? Will it help clarify the upper-level GE courses if they are intended specifically for non-majors?

Skills vs. content:

Is the main purpose of the upper-level component to develop student skills in teamwork, problem-solving, and integration? Or is the idea to get students exposed to another discipline or two—and the skills associated with them?

Perhaps the main decision we face is this: Given our timeframe, is it reasonable for us to complete a final proposal to our satisfaction in the next 7 to 10 days? Or has the reduction of the Theme requirement from 3 courses to 2 also reduced the urgency of our proposal, giving us time to pursue these decisions, with help from a broad range of student and faculty involvement, next year?

If we do decide to continue the discussion of the proposal into next year, do we want to make a brief proposal now to UAS regarding the Theme categories? A possibility would be to propose allowing students to complete their Theme requirement by taking any two Theme courses, rather than two courses in a single category. This would further relieve "time to graduation" pressures and begin the transition away from Themes toward a new kind of skills-oriented upper-level requirement.

If, on the other hand, we decide to push ahead with the proposal and complete it during the week of March 21, we need to make a plan for drafting the final proposal and gathering whatever supplemental materials we think we'll need in order to make the proposal as persuasive as possible.

4:25 Adjournment

www.gvsu.edu/gened - Look under GE Subcommittee for agenda and minutes and location.