Grand Valley State University

General Education Committee Meeting

303C DeVos Center

Minutes of 4/6/2015

PRESENT: Kirk Anderson, Chair; Emily Frigo; Gabriele Gottlieb; Melba Hoffer; Cheryl Kautz; Sarah King; Brian Kipp; Paola Leon; Linda Pickett; Susan Strouse; Patrick Thorpe; David Vessey

ALSO PRESENT: C. "Griff" Griffin, Director, General Education; Jennifer Cathey, General Education Office Coordinator

NOT PRESENT: Haiying Kong; Jose Lara; Josita Maouene; Martina Reinhold; Paul Sicilian; Lawrence Williams

Agenda Items	Discussion	Action Taken
Approval of current Agenda	Chair amended agenda to move End of the Year draft up a few bullet points.	Approved per consensus
Approval of 3/23/2015 Minutes	No concerns.	Approved per consensus
Introduction of newly elected members	Eric Ramsson (BMS) and Hsiaoping Chen (Art) will join us in the fall. The chair thanked Brian Kipp and Josita Maouene for their service to the committee – their terms expire this year. The chair thanked Susan Strouse, Gabriele Gottlieb and David Vessey for agreeing to be nominated for another term, and congratulated them on being elected.	
GEC Chair for 2015-2016 Discussion.	The election of next year's chair will be held on April 13 during our last meeting. The chair made the point that the next chair of the committee is drawn from the pool of currently serving members, so he was hopeful that others were at least considering serving in this capacity.	
Curriculum items for consideration • **PHI 250 Log 8905**	PHI 250 – World Perspectives Course Existentialism is a European movement. Member stated that the case was convincing to make this a World Perspectives course. Members agreed that the proposal was well written. Since the author of the proposal was present, the chair asked about how class discussions would be assessed. The response was, if the student is absent they fail that day's assessment. If they are there but aren't prepared they get a D. Prepared but don't speak C. Prepared and contribute a small amount B and prepared and contribute sound information is an A. Instructor would take notes on the class discussion to assign grades. It was noted that since Sail now auto-populates the statement about teaching and assessing GE goals, this ended up in the SoR twice, but an amendment would not be	P. Thorpe moved to approve proposal. M. Hoffer 2nd motion carries 11-0.

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	requested to fix this redundancy.	
Condensing Skills Rubrics	Received 7 of 9 rubrics from members. Information Literacy – Unclear on how the first 2 rows were different. The group that condensed that modified the first column "students will" information. Should be, plan what you need and then find what you need. In the 2nd one—going from baseline to progressing, baseline is to use resources outside the library (i.e., Google). Member stated it could be rephrased to "simple Internet search". Director stated that this should still be more simplified. Members found it difficult to condense distinctly different bullet points into fewer points. They feel as though we are losing content by doing so. Director stated that Information Literacy might need to be left longer because it is harder and few courses choose this goal. Ethical Reasoning – Member stated that we still have 4 rows. Thought the goal was to collapse into one box to assign just one number when assessing. Director stated that 99% of people pick to give one score. They can see the four parts but still give one number. Biggest critique was seeing the rubric x 3 skills goals x 40 students. If statements are simplified it is less for people to read through. Simplicity matters because it makes it easier to use. Member stated that the single row with lots of information is harder to use than the 4 rows with simple information. Members discussed that if someone sees 4 rows they may think they have to grade 4 rows and give four grades vs one grade. Another member stated that she interprets this as 4 rows but one grade. A member stated that the four row rubric is going to be easier for a student to understand and interpret. Too much information in a row is daunting to students. General Education could adjust assessment process by doing them every year—2 content goals one year, 2 skills goals, the next year, and the last skills goal the following year. Or assess by all courses that have the same skills goals. Member stated that maybe students only need to know the expectations not the information on grading it. This is the first column on the rubric, the "students will" section. Director stated that faculty and students need to be on the same page with the same information. A question was posed: Can we add these student goals to the start of the semester faculty email to share with their students? Not necessarily give students the rubrics; rather, just the objectives. Member stated that instructors could be asked to add the skills goals objectives to the course	

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	syllabus. Give the students the definition for the skills goal and the objectives. Ask faculty to add it to their syllabus without having to hand them extra papers. Students could be pointed to the rubrics on the General Education website. Director stated that we can take the form that is already sent to instructors of GE courses with course goals. However, it contains all knowledge and skills goals not necessarily related to the specific course. Director asked if we want all the Gen Ed goals on the attachment sent to faculty. Member stated to take all goals off and refer them to the Gen Ed website for more information. Also stated that bullets are easier for students and they will be more likely to read it. Keep opening sentence for goal, then say "people with a general education will:" and then list the bullet points. Give them a link to the website for more information. Keep the paragraph that states "Teaching in the liberal tradition…" as well. The GEC agreed to make these changes to the start of the semester faculty email. The director will create a draft of this new message for consideration next week.

The conversation switched back to the condensed rubrics. Member asked if there is a way to show an individual student how they are progressing through the Gen Ed program. The answer was No, since we do not attempt to assess every student for every General Education course. Why would we tell some students how they are progressing when we don't have that data for every student? We are trying to show that the GE program is doing its job. Can do that with aggregate data. Director stated that we are obliged to report how students are progressing. Member stated that a blurb in the syllabus might be appreciated by students so they understand what the course is doing for their education. Member stated that maybe we don't need to tweak the rubric and lose content if we add information for students to the course syllabus.

Member asked what the most important point of assessment is. Is consistency important in data? Depends on class size. Data could be similar in a smaller class and more varied in larger classes.

Member asked what the intent of the rubric is. Is it to have people only give one number for assessment? If so, stick with one row. If not, stick with four rows because then content is not lost. We should be consistent…ask faculty for 1 or 4 numbers but not give a choice. A member stated the condensed 4 row rubric looks significantly better and easier to work with. Also stated that the one row was harder because there were too many complex paragraphs. Director asked, if your target in the future is to be able to give 4 bits of data instead of 1, then we can't change it now because it won't be easy to get that back later. Stated that making it look better will give us a better shot of getting the data we need down the road.   Member asked why we are giving faculty a choice of 1 vs. 4 numbers. Director stated that it was due to large class sizes. Could change the assessment structure for courses over 40 in the future. Committee agreed to go back to a 4 row | Director will create a draft of this new start of the semester faculty email message for consideration next week. |

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	rubric. It is going to be hard to ask assessors to give 4 scores instead of 1. If someone gives 4 scores but aggregates them ~~over time~~ it will be hard to compare them to other future scores where 4 different scores are given. Director stated that as things change we won't compare some data to data where items have changed. The goal is to continue to improve the assessment process so that data can be compared from year to year. Faculty may not like that the assessment changes since what they do in the future won't be what they had done in previous years. Chair stated that we are not going to change that we ask for 1 or 4 scores just yet. Maybe for the following year. For the following year we may have simplified rubrics. We could have them for next year if we decide on them by next meeting. Everyone needs to put their rubrics back to 4 rows with simple language.	Groups will continue to work on their condensed rubrics to further discuss next week.
End-of-Year Report Draft	Director will dig up MTA response and the GPY and Math responses as well. The number of available Issues courses was not known when the draft report was written. Members agreed that it was nice to see all that the committee has accomplished this year. First Paragraph – Curriculum – Number of approved courses doesn't add up but that is due to cross-listed courses. Member stated that we should divide up the courses by Gen Ed categories (Issues, Foundations, etc). Director stated that the report needs to list the Foundations by area (Foundations – Arts, Foundations - SBS, etc). IDS 380 – agreeing to let departments teach 380s for Issues credit. This used to only be approved for Themes. Departments can teach a 380 one time for Issues credit. Allows General Education to be a nimble curriculum, get people create a new Issues class. Director will email all Unit Heads, announcing that Special Topics Issues courses will now be allowed. WRT 150 – need to state that we've hardwired into the writing box no choices on goals. Melba's working group (Design Thinking) has met to set agenda for the university but may not continue to meet going forward. Many of the changes from the MACRAO to the MTA bring students more closely in line with our Gen Ed program. Students will have to perform at a higher level to have the course count. If students get a D at a community college they have to retake the course to have it count at a 4 year institution. Community Colleges wanted this requirement.	Jen will email Kirk how many Issues courses there are
Chair's Report	Need to go through 42 CAR reply letters at the next meeting. BIO 109 CAP has been updated and needs to be approved. IDS 380 email response was positive but there needs to be a meeting with the Dean first.	

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Director's Report	Hired a Grad Student to replace Christy. Christy will train the new Grad Assistant a few days over the summer.	
Adjournment		4:30pm