Grand Valley State University

***General Education Committee Meeting***

167 Lake Ontario Hall

Minutes of 10/27/2014

**PRESENT**: Kirk Anderson, Chair; Emily Frigo; Melba Hoffer; Andrew Kalafut; Haiying Kong; Paola Leon; Josita Maouene; Susan Strouse; Patrick Thorpe; David Vessey

**ALSO PRESENT:** C. “Griff” Griffin, Director, General Education; Jeanne Whitsel, General Education Office Coordinator

**NOT PRESENT:**  Ella Fritzemeier; Gabriele Gottlieb; Sarah King; Brian Kipp; Jose Lara; Linda Pickett; Martina Reinhold; Paul Sicilian\*

\* Participating by email despite conflict with meetings

| Agenda Items | Discussion | Member |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Approval of current Agenda** |  | Approved per consensus |
| **Approval of 10/20/2014 Minutes** |  | Approved per consensus |
| **~~Curriculum items for consideration~~** |  |  |
| **January GE conference** | The director recommends discontinuing our usual January GE conferences and changing to an assessment-driven conference. The current version is difficult to organize and it’s hard to get people to attend. She would prefer to hold two one-hour meetings to discuss what we’ve learned based on the course assessments. She will talk with Christine Rener about introducing a GE track to FTLC conferences. She will watch for the FTLC’s call for proposals, and will give a presentation of the current status of Issues, etc. at the next meeting.  The director also suggested having a 1-2 hour forum in February to present what we’ve learned in our 1-1/2 years of doing the assessment process. We will request success stories from assessors. As we review CARs, we can ask the authors if they’d be willing to have a panel discussion, in which each panel is given a couple of questions to address. |  |
| **CAR reviews**   * **Chance for committee to discuss aspects of CARs we didn’t get to last week (CTH 161, PHI 220, COM 202 and PHI 300), if needed. At the very least, the chair would like to discuss a possible response to the CTH 161 CAR.** * **GEC review of MUS 100 CAR – all members are assigned to read this CAR** | **CTH 161**  The instructor has an issue with distributing rubrics to students, as he feels they would be confusing, especially to freshmen. His perspective is that he’s incorporating the rubrics, but students don’t need to know them. The chair acknowledged the author’s concerns, but we still need the students to have that information. First-year students should start using rubrics right away in order to get used to them. Should we provide instructions to help 100-level students to better understand their use? We can mine the expertise from CARs of those who have done this successfully, to find suggestions for those who are having trouble explaining rubrics to students.  What is the best way to respond to this professor? It was decided that the chair will work on a response and present it to the committee next week.  We expect instructors to give rubrics to the students. This is specified under section B, Teaching Methods, in the CARs. Professors and students both need to understand the importance of rubrics. Their significance is greater than the grade one earns in a course; the course is part of something bigger.  We tell instructors they must use rubrics as given, but we don’t tell them how to do it. The message we want to convey when distributing rubrics to professors is: “Best practices indicate that students should be involved in this process, and the university needs this information. We would like students to get feedback across curricula to see how they’re developing GE skills and achieving goals across their education. This is a way for students to track their own progression as they attempt to achieve mastery over time. We want you to share this information with your students and to make it clear that this is bigger than their course grades.“ We suggest that they explain to students, “This is not for your grade, but I will be assessing this and you might be interested in knowing how you’re progressing in these areas.” It might help to say that assessment will be done after grades are submitted to help minimize confusion over scores versus grades.  We’ve been asked to include rubrics in the next GE Handbook, and we’ll do that. It’s one way to distribute rubrics to students and advisors. The director will look into adding them to the Transitions book as well.  We need to craft a document that explains how to use rubrics, when to distribute them, and why, and include that in the packet of instructions we send instructors at the beginning of each semester. If the GEC agrees, the director will modify the emails sent with the packets to stress that the GE rubrics must be used.  We’ve been sending the beginning-of-term instructions two weeks before classes start, but it was strongly suggested that this should be done much sooner. The information may affect which textbooks are selected and how assignments are designed to teach goals. It was decided that the instructions would be sent out in Week 9, before textbook orders are due for the next term. It will include wording like “As you prepare to turn in your textbook orders…” Their information includes which rubrics they are required to use, and we can direct them to the rubrics page on the GE website for detailed descriptions.  Though some perceive data collection as busywork, it is needed for accreditation. We’re collecting evidence that we’re teaching what we say we are teaching, and how we are doing that, because accreditors care that we deliver what we claim. General Education courses are given particular scrutiny because all students (who do not transfer courses in) have to take them. We could issue a letter to the entire campus community explaining this, because most faculty will teach a GE course at some point. This could also be a topic of an assessment workshop.  Would it help to call rubrics something different, using a “friendlier” term such as “trajectory” or “overall goal” or “aspiration”, as in “What do you aspire to achieve over the course of your education?” We also want to convey the “bigger picture” idea and stress that use of rubrics is not about an individual course, and that it is not a substitute for anything but stands on its own.  The director will work on language for an email message to send to unit heads, along with an updated Standard Report of who is teaching which courses this year.  GEC will discuss at a future meeting.  We will also have student workers go through CARS to mine data from the answers to Question 6.  **MUS 100**  All members need to agree on the response to this CAR before it is sent out. The chair will draft something for discussion in a future meeting. Emily Frigo will send the chair a draft letter to build on. |  |
| **Curriculum items for consideration**   * **Log 8721: Course change – HST 212, India: History and Civilization [new to GEC]**   + **Note: The change is to add the course to Foundations: Historical Perspectives (in addition to being in Cultures: World Perspectives).** * **Log 8480: Course change – HST 376, History of Witch Hunts [new to GEC]**   + **Note: The change is to move the course from Themes to Issues (Identity).** * **Log 8720: Course change – BIO 319, Global Agricultural Sustainability [new to GEC]**   + **Note: The change is to move the course from Themes to Issues (Sustainability).** | **HST 212**  This is going to become a double-dipper, adding Historical Perspectives. However, the current course syllabus does not mention existing World Perspectives goals, nor does it show any oral assignments.  Can they do all they need to do with one essay assignment? We advise against putting all assessment eggs in one basket because different rubrics need to be used for different categories.  Does the SoR include goals? If not, now is the time to point that out. We will ask the instructor to add those. We will also ask for methods of evaluating oral communication. We will not ask for changes to the GE form. | M. Hoffer moved to request amendment, D. Vessey second. Motion carried 10-0. |
| **Chair’s Report** | Due to time constraints, HST 376 and BIO 319 will be tabled until next week. |  |
| **Director’s Report** | We will be putting old CARs on the GE website.  The director and chair will attend a design thinking workshop and report back to the committee. |  |
| **Adjournment** |  | 4:25 pm |