Grand Valley State University

***General Education Committee Meeting***

167 Lake Ontario Hall

 Minutes of 11/3/2014

**PRESENT**: Kirk Anderson, Chair; Emily Frigo; Ella Fritzemeier; Gabriele Gottlieb; Melba Hoffer; Andrew Kalafut; Sarah King; Brian Kipp; Haiying Kong; Jose Lara; Paola Leon; Josita Maouene; Linda Pickett; Martina Reinhold; Susan Strouse; Patrick Thorpe; David Vessey

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

**NOT PRESENT:** Paul Sicilian\*

\* Participating via email despite conflict with meetings

| Agenda Items | Discussion | Action Taken |
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| **Approval of current Agenda** |  | Approved per consensus |
| **Approval of 10/27/2014 Minutes** | Approval is tabled until next week to give members more time to review the minutes.  | Approved per consensus |
| **Revisiting CAR reply language for CTH 161 and others like it (i.e. sharing rubrics and feedback with students)** | Members discussed the pros and cons of explaining rubrics to students, as well as when and how to do so, and to what extent. The director obtained copies of the Transitions publication but determined that rubric information doesn’t belong there. The first exposure students will have to this information is in the classroom. What is the best way to handle the introduction?Some concerns instructors have about sharing rubrics with student include:* The explanations are too time consuming
* It adds to students’ stress levels by giving them too much information. They worry that they have one more thing to work on mastering.
* Students worry that level rankings will affect their course grades.
* The rubrics seem intimidating; is there a way to redesign them to make them less so?

Regarding handing out the rubrics as a way of teaching students about the skills, suggestions included:* Remove numbers from the levels to avoid confusion with course grades
* Describe rubrics as a way of measuring “where we aim to get you to by the time you graduate”. Have instructors explain to students that in a freshman class we expect a student to be in the first two levels, and by their senior year we expect them to be at level 3 (or the equivalent designation, if numbers are removed).
* Instead of using the term “rubric”, use “Skill Development Trajectory in General Education Courses”. Have instructors explain that “This is a way of talking about what’s common to all GE courses. Common goals are framed in this discipline in the following way:” and then provide the rubrics. This wording may also help to differentiate between grades and levels.
* Suggest to instructors that they post results after grades are posted, so students do not become concerned that they are only getting a 1 or a 2 in cases where that rating would be appropriate for the student’s level (e.g. freshman), or that this will affect their grades.
* Make sharing the student results information optional rather than expected. To accomplish this, it was decided to remove the word “How” from the beginning of Question 14 on the CAR, changing “*How did* you inform each student about how they performed on each of the General Education goals…” to “*Did* you inform…”

We will make minimal changes to instructions and CARs for this term. We will email CARs with the reworded Question 14 to instructors assessing this term.The director took notes on suggested amendments to the CAR template and the CAR reply document. Proposed revisions to the CAR reply language included adding a line about how sharing the rubrics lets students know where they are and what they are aspiring to, much like content learning is scaffolded in the major. The chair will revise the language and send out to the committee.Also discussed:Is there a better way to make skills assessment information available to students than to deliver it in class? Should it be attached to the syllabus, or should a website link be provided?Should we be introducing this information more incrementally? Should we get faculty used to it first before introducing it to students? If students are not exposed to this information in the beginning of their college career, they do not understand why GE courses are necessary when “they don’t relate to my major”. It would be helpful to explain to them that they are acquiring skills such as problem solving which they will later apply to their major studies. Instructors in the major fields can then explain, “Here you’ll be using the problem solving/collaboration/etc. skills you learned in your General Education courses.”The director will give a sample revised rubric to the committee so they can review and vote on accepting the changes next week. She will then tell instructors, “We’ve discussed this issue, this is what we want, and here is how you can do this in the future.” | The GEC agreed to have the word “How” removed from CAR question #14. Director will have this done and have revised versions emailed to assessing instructors.Chair will revise CAR language and present to committee. |
| **Curriculum items for consideration:**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).Log 8709: Course change – LIB 400, Visionary Thinkers [new to GEC]Note: The change is to add the course to Cultures: World Perspectives. | **HST 376 Log #8480**The course title was changed because students were concerned that “The History of Witches” meant they would be learning about witchcraft.We were very happy with the proposal overall. Our only request is that the proposer to provide a more explicit definition of how the course relates to Identity. If the amendment is done well, we would like to use the proposal as a model.**BIO 319 Log #8720**Regarding SoRs: Currently, GE categories and goals have not been included in a number of SoRs. This is a problem because it is the only binding document for course instruction, and instructors may feel they are not required to teach goals which are not mentioned in the SoR. If we learn that proposers can go back in and add GE goals information, we will ask them to do this if it is not already included.We would like the proposer to add the GE goal information to the SoR if this is possible. We will defer responding until we find out whether this can be done in Sail.The UCC will be changing the proposal entry system in Sail, adding radio buttons that proposers can use to have GE goal info auto populate. **LIB 400 Log #8709** The “Teach” and “Measure” sections under the second World Perspectives content goal were left blank.The description (and perhaps the title) should specify that the emphasis is on cultures primarily outside of the U.S. We want to be sure the course distinguishes itself from the existing “Visionary Thinkers in the American Mosaic” course and emphasizes the World Perspectives attribute.We would also like the proposer to be more explicit about what the instructor will do in the Teach entries for many of the goals.The importance of distinguishing between “U.S.” and “American” was also discussed.  | J. Lara moved to request a more explicit description of how the course relates to identity. J. Maouene second. Motion carried 17-0.Two friendly amendments were subsequently made: 1) Return the proposal to the chair only2) Ask proposer to see if she can add GE goal information to the SoR and let us know whether it can be done in Sail.The chair moved to table the BIO 319 decision until after we learn whether GE info can be added to SoR in Sail. G. Gottlieb second. Motion carried 17-0.G. Gottlieb moved to have the proposer: 1) Add the teach and measure information to the second World Perspectives goal2) Make the description more explicitly state that the focus of the course is on cultures “…located primarily outside of the US” 3) Consider that the above might be further accomplished by changing the title to something like “Visionary Thinkers in a Global Context”. 4) In the “Teach” explanations, make the instructor’s role more explicit.M. Hoffer second, motion carried 17-0. |
| **Decisions regarding Cultures: World Perspectives vs. Global Learning.**Should we change any names?Should we change any goals?Should we solicit info from unit heads? | This item was tabled for future discussion. |  |
| **Chair’s Report** | The chair attended the Design Thinking initiative meeting. He concluded that our Issues courses already cover the goals they discussed, in particular collaboration, integration and problem solving. It appears that this will not affect what we are doing. “Design thinking” is a rather vague term; faculty are not clear on exactly what that is, so we will hold off on making any changes until they come up with a more explicit definition. It does seem to include involving stakeholders, which we are doing by involving students in the process. |  |
| **Director’s Report** | The director asked if GEC wants her to send goal information to unit heads and ask them to distribute the information to faculty so it will be included in their syllabi. This will insure that they have the most current information and that it is included. Members were in favor of this, so we will create the necessary documents and implement this during Winter term. The director has updated numbers on the transition from Themes to Issues, and requested that this be added as an agenda item for the next meeting. The chair agreed to do so.  | Director will have the necessary documents created and contact unit heads this winter.Chair will include in Nov. 10 agenda. |
| **Adjournment** |  | 4:27 pm |