Grand Valley State University

*NOTES: General Education Committee*

Minutes of 2/17/2014

**PRESENT**: Kirk Anderson; Susan Carson; Emily Frigo; Roger Gilles; Melba Hoffer; Jose Lara; Paola Leon; Jagadeesh Nandigam; Alex Nikitin; Laudo Ogura; Martina Reinhold; Keith Rhodes, Chair; Scott St. Louis; David Vessey

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jeanne Whitsel; General Education Office Coordinator

**NOT PRESENT:** Karen Burritt; Gary Greer\*; C. “Griff” Griffin, Director, General Education; Brian Kipp

\* Participating in all work despite conflict with meetings

**ON SABBATICAL**: Paul Sicilian

| Agenda Items | Discussion | Member |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Approval of current Agenda** |  | Approved per consensus |
| **Approval of Minutes from 2/10/14** |  | Approved per consensus |
| **Small group meetings to review CARs and finish draft responses** | Members spent the first hour meeting in smaller groups to review CARs and prepare responses.  The CAR feedback letter template was reviewed, and members were asked to use it. Ideally, a filled-in letter will be no more than two pages.  Member asked: How should we think about 4s? - We aspire to have them attain this by graduation. |  |
| **Discussing CAR responses** | **ANT 215**, **ART 101, CLA 131, CTH 101** **HST 101, HST 102, HST 103, MTH 125**  CARs for these courses were reviewed and discussed. Specific comments, as worked out, went into the responses. We recorded the following new insights about our review process.  We want to frame comments positively, say “this is what we like – this would also be nice”. Under Process feedback, tell them what we really need to have. Overall, we will keep our responses in the first parts positive, focusing on the most productive components, and put any negative feedback at the end.  For example, if CARs report not using the rubrics, we should say, “If these goals aren’t working, please explain why you need to do something else instead.” Some instructors said it was distracting to give students rubrics. In that case they should just use them any way they see fit.  Mostly right now we are providing positive and encouraging feedback. Also, we will not criticize *all* the bad things this time. Instead, we are collecting information to help us decide how we can provide more helpful instruction up front in order to achieve better results.  We need to stress again that an A is not a 4. Instructors not making that distinction will mess up our data. We see 3s and 4s as something attainable only if a student is close to graduation.  It is hard to measure how a student is doing with respect to graduation versus how he is doing with respect to a class. If a course has both first and senior year students, should seniors perform better than those at earlier stages? If everyone gets the same rating, what are we learning? What if a course is critical in developing a certain ability? In that case, if students do well, maybe they’ve achieved that ability, whether they are sophomores or seniors. We hope students will do better as they get older, but we shouldn’t expect an upper level student to do better than one at a lower level if we’re measuring a particular ability improved by that class.  Do we keep track of these issues and comments, and look back the next time a course is assessed to see if our input has been implemented? These responses will be preserved, so anyone who wants to reference them in the future can do so. However, the same instructors may not assess next time, and we will trust that those who do will use our feedback to do better next time. Either way, we should improve our clarity in asking for what we want rather than comparing new CARs to what was done last time. Next time we will state generically that “This is what we’re asking everyone to do” rather than tracking CAR improvement. It’s hard to be critical this time because of our own issues with the process. We are learning too, and we will get it right over time. As we improve our requests, we hope the responses will improve as well. Our hope is that the system will work.  Giving groups time to work on their CAR reviews and then discussing them seems to be the most productive use of meeting time, so we will follow the same procedure next week. More time will be allowed for review and we will have more in-depth discussions as we learn more about the process.  The Chair will read the reviews as he receives them and will borrow everyone’s ideas to come up with better ways to express feedback, then revise the reviews before sending them out. |  |
| **Brief reactions to GVSU proposed curriculum review changes** | This was reviewed briefly. Our only interest was in the section on prerequisites for the Gen Ed courses. |  |
| **Chair’s Report** | We will continue with reviews next week, plus any urgent curriculum matters that might be easy to decide. |  |
| **Director’s Report** | Director was not present. |  |
| **Adjournment** |  | 4:26 pm |