Grand Valley State University

*NOTES: General Education Committee*

Minutes of 4/14/2014

**PRESENT**: Kirk Anderson; Emily Frigo; Roger Gilles; Melba Hoffer; Brian Kipp; Jose Lara; Paola Leon; Jagadeesh Nandigam; Laudo Ogura; Keith Rhodes, Chair; David Vessey

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

**NOT PRESENT:** Karen Burritt; Susan Carson; Gary Greer\*; Alex Nikitin; Martina Reinhold; Scott St. Louis

**ON SABBATICAL**: Paul Sicilian

\* Participating in all work despite conflict with meetings

| Agenda Items | Discussion | Member |
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| **Approval of current Agenda** |  | Approved per consensus |
| **Approval of 3/24/2014 Minutes** |  | Approved per consensus |
| **Re-introduction of newly elected members who can attend** | None attended. |  |
| **Curriculum item for consideration** | 8420: Change course – ART 153, “Foundations: Making and Meaning in Art and Design”  New Foundations (The Arts) proposal  This proposal is a very interesting one, and it makes sense to have the entire GEC review it. There should be others like it next year.  The instructor did a good job of transforming it into a Foundations course. It was well focused on General Education program content. The Creative and Critical Thinking section was good, the Oral Communications part was okay. We liked that it was not a pure studio course but also included readings and special projects.  One concern regarded re-evaluating evidence and logic of arguments. It is not clear where the teaching is taking place. We recognize this is challenging in a studio course; is what they’re doing enough? It’s okay if not all criteria are met in every course. We don’t want teachers to feel that skills goals are taking over their courses, not leaving enough room to teach their own content. We can ask whether there is something the instructor can do in the context of his or her course that would fill in for this goal.  If we approve it today it could be available by fall.    Members discussed the potential problem of professors making a course available only to majors in the offering department, by either making admission “by permit only” or making a particular major a prerequisite. We also want to make sure courses are general enough in scope to appeal to a broader range of students. We may want to add to the proposal instructions that we expect General Education courses to be open to all students. We will watch for permit and major requirements. | R. Gilles moved to approve, M. Hoffer second, motion carried 11-0. |
| **Finalizing the GEC Annual Report** | Members thought the report was well done, nicely summarized and not too long.  One member asked how a course could be removed from the General Education Program. That would happen if assessments either were not done or did not meet minimum standards for approval – for example, the goals were not being taught or we could not see how that was being done. We will add the Internal Recertification Procedure to the General Education website.  There was some concern with the draft’s “cost versus benefit analysis” wording. We can be more general in saying we worked out our approaches.  The Chair will make suggested minor amendments and send the revised report to members before submitting it. | Report as revised was approved by consensus. |
| **Chair’s Report** | The Chair will meet informally with Jeff Chamberlain to exchange information and ideas regarding Honors College instructors’ participation. Some seem resistant to following our guidelines, and there may be better reasons than we perceive. The Chair hopes to gain some insight into their perspectives, and will share his thoughts with the incoming Chair. We want to find a way to meet the interests of both organizations. We think the assessment process is helpful to Honors College instructors.  The Chair expressed his appreciation for everyone’s support and diligence during the year, and said he is glad to have had the experience.  All CAR responses have been sent out. Instructors’ responses to our comments were few, but generally positive. |  |
| **Director’s Report** | The Director talked about some of the changes being made to the General Education website. She also explained that there are two Quick Guides for Fall semester, one for students new to GVSU and one for returning students. New arrivals will not have Themes courses as an option.  We have a few courses for which we have requested amendment in order to transfer the course from a Theme to an Issue, but the process has stalled. The Director will meet with the new dean of the Seidman College of Business to explain the process and see if the dean can get some forward movement on MGT 466. Another course is on hold until someone new is found to shepherd the process. We don’t anticipate success with a couple of the other courses.  A member asked what the Committee would be working on next year. We will be reviewing proposals for Theme-to-Issue course changes and reviewing more CARs. Also, we may potentially be dealing with a recommendation from the Internationalization Task Force. The Task Force is drafting a report which calls for improvements in the way GVSU “teach(es) meaningful and measurable global learning to all undergraduate students” and “make(s) GVSU a global learning community”. Regarding General Education, the Task Force would like to see a review and update of World Perspectives learning objectives and the language used to describe the requirement. It also calls for adding interdisciplinary science courses to Issues, particularly for students in STEM fields. A course dealing with the global implications of climate change would be a good example of an Issues science course. Traditionally, though, science courses seem to need more prerequisites, making them less accessible to students in other majors.  A draft of the recommendation report is being sent to the Provost, who will determine whether to send it to the General Education Committee for review. In order for us to make changes, the Chairs of all departments involved (approximately 30) would need to approve them. The Task Force is just suggesting at this stage that we look at the title and focus of the category. Is global learning outside of our focus? Members should just be aware that this is in the works.  Did we meet our goal of approving 50-60 issues courses in the past two cycles? We have enough courses now; going forward, we need to make sure there are enough total seats in all General Education courses.  We don’t assess Theme courses unless they double dip. Most courses are assessed in the fall so that the GEC can review the assessments during winter semester. Some which cannot be done in the fall are moved to winter. We try to give instructors a year after initial course approval before requiring assessment. |  |
| **Adjournment** |  | 3:45 pm |