Grand Valley State University

*General Education Subcommittee*

Minutes of 2/8/10

**PRESENT:** Deborah Bambini; James Bell; Susan Carson; Phyllis Curtiss; Roger Gilles; Hugh McGuire; Lauren Kaercher; Sheldon Kopperl; Keith Rhodes; David Vessey; Kathryn Waggoner, Kari Kensinger; Penney Nichols-Whitehead; Paul Sicilian

**ALSO PRESENT:** C. “Griff” Griffin, Director of General Education; Krista Rye, Office Coordinator

**ABSENT:** Dana Munk; Shelley Schuurman; Judy Whipps

**GUESTS:** Lee Van Orsdel, Dean of University Libraries

| Agenda Items | Discussion | Action / Decisions |
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| **Approval of February 1**  **Minutes** | Approval of the Minutes for February 1 was tabled for review, along with the February 8 Minutes, until the next meeting. |  |
| **Approval of Agenda** | Motion to approve; seconded. | Approved. |
| **Revised Proposal to Change Status of GES/GEC and Basic Skills** | *On March 23, 2009, GES proposed that GES be renamed GEC, that GES/GEC and UCC formally separate in terms of membership, and that Basic Skills be formally included within the responsibilities of GE. UCC responded on 10/19/09; GES responded on 11/13/09; and the GES Chair met with ECS and the UCC chair on November 20, when ECS asked GES to revise and update its proposal based on the conversation up to that point. Hugh, Shel, and Paul will present the revised and updated proposal for GES approval. The next step is for the proposal to be presented to UAS.*  Paul shared his findings after reviewing GES references from the Faculty Handbook. The committee reviewed the current text along with the proposed changes.  An item of discussion was UCC’s task of reviewing Honors and basic skills. The Chair added that while we have reviewed Honors courses with GE equivalencies, the Handbook does say that UCC will review. A committee member added that he thought the only reason why we both review is for those students that may transfer out of Honors and would need GE equivalencies. The Chair added that the GE box is checked when those proposals come through. It was recommended to not change anything pertaining to review of Honors and basic skills at this time.  Motion to approve moving the policy group revised proposal forward; seconded. | Approved. Chair will draft final revision and send to ECS. |
| **LEAP GOALS/ GE Structural Revisions** | *Continue discussion of integrating (or removing) basic-skills courses; keeping, reducing, revising, or transforming the Themes; agreeing on which current GE goals and which LEAP goals to include in the program; and distributing those goals through the proposed GE curriculum.*  The Chair handed out an updated document for GE LEAP and asked if there was general consensus on the bullet points.  Discussion of bullet point #1 - WRT 150. Is there consensus to keep WRT 150 as a required course and then use the course as the primary site of lower-division GE assessment of writing? WRT150 didn't have a "home" per se previously, so this would allow us to assess writing through GE and see where students really are in terms of writing competency.  Discussion of bullet point #2 - MTH 110. This proposed bullet would keep MTH 110 in the books, but not as a GE listing. It would become a pre-requisite to some courses in the Mathematical Sciences category. At this point, it is not GES’s concern to look at the level of the course, but rather to decide where to list it. We will let the Math Department, and perhaps the Provost, decide on the particulars of level and related course number.  The Director added, in reference to Bullet point #1, that when we say “assess,” we should also emphasize that it is an opportunity for faculty to teach, students to learn, and the program to assess outcomes. The Chair concurred that when we are using the term "assess" we mean teachers teaching, students practicing, and the program assessing outcomes.  Discussion continued in regards to MTH 110. A committee member shared concern about MTH 110 not being a basic skill. Are we now saying that students won’t have to take MTH 110 at all? MTH 110 is Algebra and the level that all students “should” be at. If 70% don't need to take it, are we letting the remaining 30% go without requiring math skills? Unless they are getting B.S., we are actually saying that they don't have to take math courses. The BA students would not have to take MTH 110 unless they go into the School of Ed or elect to take a course with the MTH 110 pre-req.  What about taking out PHI 103 (Logic), which does not list MTH 110 as a pre-req? The Director added that the overarching category is analytical problem-solving. The category is not written as quantitative. A committee member asked how many students we are really talking about within that 30%. Response was that we are probably only looking at BA students. However, once the loophole is there saying that GE does not require math proficiency, the number of students is irrelevant. The Chair added that the flipside is if we require MTH 110 as part of GE, then the program looks 4 credits larger than it really is for 70% of the students.  The Director will get statistics from Institutional Analysis on the number of students that do not test out of MTH 110.  A committee member asked if we, as GES, can we make MTH 110 pre-req for the GE program? The Director added that if we keep MTH 110 as a university requirement and call it a quantitative box/category that would be okay, we just don’t want to call it basic skills or GE.  The Chair added that we should do some fact finding and then revisit this discussion. A committee member added that it would be helpful to look at other universities and how they handle algebra.  Another committee member added that perhaps we should ask the university to change basic skills to proficiency skills. We are not talking about a specific class; we are talking about students obtaining a specific skill. The Chair added that the concern is also the level of proficiency. It was noted that MTH 110 is Algebra and MTH 122 is College Algebra. The Math Department is changing the placement, reducing the number of students taking MTH 110 based on ACT scores.  A committee member stated that they like the idea of separate boxes for MTH and WRT. Perhaps the MTH box would have: “take these courses” with a clause that in order to satisfy the Mathematical Science Foundation category you must take one of these courses and also satisfy MTH 110. The Chair added that with using ACT scores and MTH 110 test out, this would allow students to take other courses in the category and also reduce the number of students taking the test.  Discussion of bullet point #3. Students currently take WRT150, two SWS courses and 12 GE courses with writing as a goal. Students also have to either test out of WRT 305 or take the WRT 305 course. The Writing department would much rather have writing integrated into selected GE courses. This proposed revision would eliminate the WRT 305 requirement and put the trust in WRT 150, SWS courses, and the GE assessment. In 2001, the proposal to eliminate WRT 305 passed through Faculty Governance but was stopped at the Board of Trustees. The WRT 305 course would still be around; this would just eliminate the WRT 305 requirement (and placement test).  A committee member asked about SWS. Would this be rolled into Themes? The Chair reported talking to Kay Losey, Director of SWS, about some of these general possibilities. More discussion is needed.  The Chair said that the goal for this continued discussion is to reach a point to making progress and decide what the next steps are. | Griff will get statistics from Institutional Analysis on the number of students that would fall into the 30% category |
| **Discussion of LEAP Goals with GVSU Librarians** | *The new library now being planned will be a center outside the classroom where the university offers students a chance to learn some of the skills they need to succeed, including some of the LEAP goals. Dean Van Orsdel and other librarians will join us to discuss ways in which the new library can contribute to student exposure to and learning of the LEAP goals.*  Lee Van Orsdel, Dean of the Library, gave an update on the library plans. The Board of Trustees approved the budget for the new library space last Friday.  Last fall GES had a discussion of LEAP goals as part of the faculty fora. Lee said there is an amazing alignment between the vision for our library and the GE committee. GE is articulating what the Library is seeing, although from a different vantage point. The LEAP goals are also the same combination of skills that employers are looking for.  Lee shared her own observations of higher education and some of the gaps that can be filled between what we are asking of students in the areas of technology, research, information management, writing, speaking, and digital concepts. Since the beginning conversations to build the new library they have been looking at ways to support students and support the LEAP goals. They have met with the building architect to create what they are currently calling the Knowledge Market. This area will have kiosks for students to work on assignments, meeting space for peer coaching, and overall far more than what a library has traditionally been.  The Library is currently partnering with the Writing Center, School of Communications, and Information Technology as plans are being developed. Lee extended the invitation to GES to also be a part of the process, if interested. The Chair responded that as we (GES) talk about assessment we are talking about teaching, learning, and assessing. We realize that we may tend to assess things that we may not actually be teaching; things that students may learn outside of the classroom. For that reason, it seems like it would be very wise for GES to be a part of the conversations on the new space.  Lee also shared some additional visions they have for the new space. There will be special rooms for group study. This is something they feel strongly about because we often ask students to do class work that we don’t always provide the space for. Steelcase is experimenting and conducting student observations that will help decide on furniture and technology placement. There will be two zones: one for individual work and one for collaboration. A committee member suggested the second floor of MAK to observe student work habits. He also encouraged having plenty of power outlets in the new space.  A committee member asked about “global issues” and how students may be able to connect to the outside world. Lee would love to have GE help inform this area. One of the pet projects for the new space is to find ways for the building to “teach”. Possible ideas are a population clock, daylight clock, maps, multi-cultural learning opportunities, and a learning niche that could help facilitate “learning on the fly”. The learning niche could be a space to share headlines, promote the university values, and to give the Centers on campus “face time” in the library. The Chair added that this might be a space for students in the upper-level Theme components to share their work or findings.  A committee member asked about the possibility of having office hours in the new building. Lee responded that there will be space for faculty to reserve to meet with students or groups, but there won’t be permanent space.  A committee member asked if there will be any way to assess the results of the new Library. Lee stated that they will definitely need to do assessment. She would love to work with the GE committee and perhaps mirror some of the GE assessment.  Lee asked if the GE committee would think it practical or interesting to have a chance to assess where they might be able to enrich the plans along the lines of shared goals. If so, she would invite GES to be involved with reviewing the plans from the architect and planning group before the end of June. The Chair added that this sounds like a great thing for us to be involved with and would welcome Lee to keep us updated. | Lee Van Orsdel from the University Libraries will keep GES aware of building plans and ways the GES may be able to enrich the plans along the lines of shared goals. |
| **Adjournment** | Motion to approve; seconded. | Adjourned at 4:13p |