

# Minutes

General Education Council  
Friday, October 16, 2009

## Attendance:

Maurianne Adams, Bruce Baird, Martha Baker, Stephanie Chapko, John Cunningham, Alexandrina Deschamps, Isabel Espinal, Ginger Etinde, David Fleming, Stephen Gencarella, Judy Goodenough, Claire Hamilton, Anne Herrington, Amanda Walker Johnson, Gary Kamen, Kevin Klement, John Lenzi, Alan Lutenegger, Pamela Marsh-Williams, Ernest May, Dori McCracken, W. Brian O'Connor, Amilicar Shabazz, Martha Stassen, Jimmy Cheung, Razvan Sibii, Hongmei Sun

## Minutes:

The minutes of September 18, 2009 were PASSED by the Council.

## Subcommittees:

There were changes made to several of the subcommittees: The revised subcommittees are as follows:

AL/AT – Anne Herrington (Chair), David Fleming, Steve Gencarella;  
G & U – Alexandrina Deschamps (Chair), Bruce Baird, Amanda Walker-Johnson;  
HS – Isabel Espinal (Chair), Amilicar Shabazz, Alan Lutenegger;  
SB – Claire Hamilton (Chair), Genevieve Chandler, Razvan Sibii.

The other subcommittees will remain as follows:

BS/PS/R2 – Judy Goodenough (Chair), Martha Baker, Gary Kamen;  
I & SI – Kevin Klement (Chair), Mark Leckie.

## Report on 4<sup>th</sup>-Credit Approval Process:

Martha Stassen reported on the progress of the 4<sup>th</sup> credit approvals. She reported that as of the deadline, which was 10/15, their office received a total of 175 proposals from 100 instructors for the fall 2010 term. One hundred of the 175 have already been approved by their department heads. The spring 2011 proposals have not yet been submitted.

Amilicar Shabazz, Judy Goodenough, Amanda Walker-Johnson and Claire Hamilton have agreed to be new volunteers for the 4<sup>th</sup> credit approval subcommittee. A training session will be held on Monday 10/19.

There was discussion about difficulty of precisely clarifying the criteria for the 4<sup>th</sup> credit proposals. Criteria include ongoing additional work outside of class, with approximately 2.5 hour per week increase in the workload. Members agreed that an additional weekly laboratory or discussion section would merit a clear YES, and an additional short paper or limited project would not. The approval procedure will involve one initial reader per proposal, with the heavy enrollment courses read first. If the course meets the criteria, then it can move ahead with the approval. In the event that it does not meet the criteria, it will go, with the first reader's questions or issues requiring clarification, to a second reader. If both readers need further clarification, it will be sent back to the proposer with those questions. The approval subcommittee will also meet to discuss emergent problems and questions.

Martha Stassen will assess the trends in approvals for the submitted proposals and report back at the Nov 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. Pamela Marsh-Williams asked if the credit increase will imply that Honors courses be counted as 5 credits, once the norm for General Education courses is 4 credits. This may be a question for the GERICO Policy subcommittee and/or the Honors advisory committees.

Razvan Sibii asked if there would be any statements within the rubric to ensure that the extra work generated by the 4<sup>th</sup> credit will not create an overload for the TA's. John Cunningham replied that the administration will try to look at funds/resources that will provide extra support for TA's in order to assist with the anticipated workload increase.

### **G.E.T.F. – Upper Division Integrative Seminar Proposal**

The Council reviewed several documents to inform their discussion of the proposed Integrative Seminar component of the General Education program. These documents included the GETF Report, notes that Martha took during GETF discussions of the Integrative Seminar proposal, and examples of similar capstone or Integrative Seminars on other campuses. Also, the Capstone Experience Course Proposal Form for the Honors College, was suggested as a possible example of Integrative Seminars, as well as capstone courses in several departmental majors.

Maurianne proposed four 'themes' from the GETF Report, as the possible criteria for Integrative Seminars:

1. that Integrative Learning be considered as one of the Essential Learning Outcomes students need to develop to excel in a "complex and volatile world;"
2. that students be offered multiple opportunities to practice "integrating and applying their learning" to new situations, challenging questions, and real-world problems;
3. that the upper-division integrative experience provides a structured context for students to reflect on their own learning and explore the connections between the broad exposure provided by General Education and the more focused exposure of their major;
4. that the experience would provide students with opportunities to practice General Education learning objectives like oral communication, collaboration, and interdisciplinary perspective taking, at a more advanced level.

Isabelle Espinal stressed that the Council consider how the overall goal of the 2<sup>nd</sup> theme could be emphasized throughout the integrative experience. Kevin Klement inquired if these goals will be linked to the students' majors and the Council confirmed that the first two 'themes' can be accomplished primarily within the major. It was also suggested that criteria be developed for faculty to verify how they are fulfilling these four themes within their course. The subject of 'competencies' arose, as it was agreed that this would allow students the opportunity of making GenEd connections to that which they are learning within their major. Claire Hamilton inquired as to how the integrative skills could be built early into the GenEd experience; Maurianne suggested that this could be done by emphasizing the goals and objectives throughout the GenEd curriculum. Jimmy Cheung supported the integrative experience and gave an example, from a conversation he had during the summer, of the need for GenEd. He shared that as a result of the conversation, he became more sensitive of the need to ensure that basic information and social awareness is strengthened along-side the progressive development of the student's specialized discipline. Alan Lutenegger concurred with Jimmy's statement and added that it is actually the faculty who are most instrumental in meeting this need. He suggested that a good course of action is to have faculty within a specific major, decide which GenEd courses will best help their students in their careers. He described the way that the capstone course he teaches, integrates the learning in the major and applies that learning to real world problems, but does not necessarily "integrate" the learning from General Education. Alexandrina agreed that it is the faculty's responsibility to explain to the student the importance of GenEd.

Council members discussed the location of the Integrative Seminar: at the departmental level? At the level of the major? At a School level? The "reach" of integration was also discussed – to what extent does the IS "integrate" the major with skills, competencies, or knowledge developed earlier in the General Education program? There was discussion about the difference between "integrative" (not necessarily extending beyond a major) and "interdisciplinary" (more likely to extend beyond a major). Does the IS need to be a "seminar" or

might it be a supervised, individual or small group “integrative project” or thesis? We agreed to wait with these logistical matters (“where” and “how”)until we reached consensus about “what” it was we wanted in an Integrative Seminar or option.

Discussion of logistics also involved an analogy to the Junior Year Writing program, which is part of the General Education program, but is not governed by the General Education Council. It might be possible to establish a mandate for the IS or the integrative option that, like the Junior Year Writing program, is a faculty senate mandate with its own approval board, but functioning largely within majors or within departments.

With regards to the third ‘theme’, David Fleming mentioned that he has not observed any course on campus that has fulfilled this. It was noted by several members that some departments are fulfilling some of the ‘themes,’ yet no department is yet fulfilling all. In the future, the GenEd Council might review current capstone courses (499’s) to see if there are any current capstone courses that are fulfilling the ‘themes’ by 75 – 80%.

The meeting closed with Maurianne’s proposal to bring in a set of 4 criteria, build on the statement in the GETF report, to see whether those criteria might provide a framework for our moving forward with the Integrative Seminar component of General Education.

**Next Meeting:** Friday, November 20, 2009 at 2:30 PM, in the Chancellor’s Board Room, 370 Whitmore.