Meeting of the General Education Council—Minutes
January 31, 2014
2:00-4:30pm

I. Review of the Minutes from December 13, 2013

Approved, with minor corrections.

Attendance: Maurianne Adams, Karen Stevens, Ernie May, John Lenzi, Dori McCracken, David Morin, Reiko Sono, Farshid Hajir, Justin Fermann, Paulina Borrego, Patricia Gubitosi, Kalpen Trivedi, Claire Hamilton, Carol Barr, Martha Stassen, Martha Yoder, Raz Sibii, Alex Deschamps, Mei Yau-Shih, Yolanda Wiggins, Christian Pulver

II. Standing Reports:

- Carol Barr
- Ernie May
- Martha Stassen
- John Lenzi and Dori McCracken

Martha Stassen: Next week we will administer a survey to all IE instructors. We’re excited because this will be our first feedback from IE instructors. We are also conducting a set of focus groups for sophomores (pre-IE and near the completion of their Gen Ed requirements); juniors and seniors (currently taking or have already taken their IE). We want to better understand student perspectives on integrative learning and the overall undergraduate experience. This is also tied to broader conversations about the University’s Strategic Plan. We will be conducting a total of 9 focus groups consisting of 3 sophomore groups, 3 junior groups and 3 senior groups. We aim to survey approximately 1,500 students. Junior year writing students will be also surveyed.

Issue #1: IE concerns regarding possibility of online IE for students off-campus during senior year & unable to return (study abroad, internships, financial issues). Details of the growing problem and possible solutions: Online IE sponsored by colleges & schools rather than departments, CPE (at added cost). What options will/should the GEC encourage?

Discussion: The Council decided that there was a need to develop IE courses for those particular cases where students are unable to be on campus for their IE. At the same time, Council member also expressed the need to maintain the integrity of the IE as located on campus and taught by full-time faculty. Vice Provost Carol Barr took the lead on this and will report back to the GEC in March with possible ways to approach this issue.

Issue #2: We have a request from the iCons program to use iCons courses for the IE. Their model is similar to the Biology model (different courses for Criterion 1, 2, 3). Their majors come from different departments, however, and we’d need explicit departmental agreements for majors who use iCons courses for the IE.
Discussion: The Council decided that the request from iCons was appropriate and that due to the interdisciplinary nature of the iCons program and its focus on team-based learning, it aligns quite well with the objectives of the Integrated Experience. The Council will affirm the request with the added caveat that any proposals sent to the GEC for IE review should explain the various relationships with other departments and ensure that agreements are set up with those departments that students in the iCons program are able to fulfill their IE requirement.

III. How To Proceed with Global Diversity Designation

- The Gen Ed “Global” diversity designation remains on our agenda. Let’s discuss how best to move forward on this, with or without help from others on campus who are considering this issue.

Discussion: The Council decided to move forward with the process of rethinking the Global Diversity (G) designation and to write up a proposal for the GEC. The Chair selected three people from the Council to work with her on this project.

IV. New Course and Curriculum Management System

- Feedback from reviewers who used the new system for today’s reviews.
- Scheduling of an online training session for reviewers who are new to the system or who want a refresher training session.

V. IE Reviews

1. COMPSCI 326 – Web Programming

Reviewer 1: Recommended. Criteria 2 & 3 look great! For criteria 1, I'd offer a couple of suggestions, but I don't think the GEC needs to see this again. First, the first two assignments ask students to draw on 1-2 non-major courses; here, the assignments should specify that these non-major courses are Gen Ed courses. Second, these collaborative assignments ask students to use these courses in order to identify a problem and then propose a web start-up company to address the problem. This would require students to reflect on 1-2 non-major courses, but the instructor might want to push this a bit further to ask students to reflect on Gen Ed learning in broader terms and for each individual student to reflect on themselves as learners. Given the team-based projects, I'm not sure that these two things are happening, but existing assignments could be tweaked slightly to clarify and foster these goals.

Reviewer 2: Recommended. Basically fine, I made a couple of suggestions within the review form that the instructor could consider in revising the syllabus however changes are not needed prior to approval.

Council decision: Approved with feedback to instructor.
VI. General Education—Quinquennial Reviews

2. Astron 105 – Weather and Our Atmosphere (PS)

Reviewer 1: Recommended. "The syllabi from 2010 and 2011 do not show much or any activities for students to exercise critical thinking or writing. They have since then adopted the TBL format. The team projects in this format seem to involve enough of both critical thinking and writing. Thus, I would recommend approval as long as they continue to use this format. The only concern is that they are "still experimenting with different formats" and said that,"The trade-off has generally been that formats such as TBL or online generally require more time from the faculty teaching the class because of the much higher level of student-faculty interaction." This could mean that they might give up TBL or other useful formats. Considering how conscientious they have been, however, I believe whatever changes they may decide to make will be for students."

Reviewer 2: Recommended. The revised syllabus meets the expectations for review recommendation. The changes made to the Spring syllabus allow for hopefully more critical analysis (as much as is possible with this topic). Gen.Ed requirements are listed appropriately and it will be interesting to see if consistency across sections will work well with the new format."

Council decision: Approved with feedback for instructor.

VII. General Education—Re-Reviews

3. Stocksch 115 – Environmental Biology Statistics (BS) (re-review—QQ and 4 credit conversion)

Reviewer 1: Re-Review for 1/31/14: Recommended. Given the updated materials submitted by the instructor I recommend approval of this course for 3 to 4 credits and QQ. The instructor has addressed the writing concerns and the issue of the additional readings. I do recommend that the syllabus be more explicit in addressing Gen Ed objectives--its stated but I think it continues to be a bit vague.

Reviewer 2: Re-Review for 1/31/14: Recommended. The concerns about readings have been appropriately addressed. While there is no textbook, the readings are chosen from CURRENT scientific articles related to the topic being covered in a given class meeting. The selection of likely readings submitted in response to GEC concerns is an appropriate one, but may change over time, if more current readings on the subjects become available. This is why the readings were not originally submitted. This makes sense, in terms of understanding the class and in terms of educational goals.

Council decision: Approved with specific feedback for instructor.

VIII. General Education—New Reviews

4. History 290A – African American History – Africa to the Civil War (HS U)

Reviewer 1: Recommended. No reservations. This sounds like a well-designed course by someone who recognizes and values the Gen Ed purposes to which it intends.
Reviewer 2: Recommended. This is a fine Gen Ed course. I recommend full approval.

**Council decision:** Approved

### IX. Contingent to Full Approval

- CMPSCI 105
- CMPSCI 120
- CMPSCI 121

- **Next Meeting** – Friday, February 28, 2014 [March 1st Registrar's Deadline],
- **Subsequent meetings** – March 28, April 25, May 16.