Minutes
General Education Council
Friday, October 29, 2010

Attendance:
Maurianne Adams, Philippe Baillargeon, Stephanie Chapko, John Cunningham, Alexandrina Deschamps, Isabel Espinal, Ginger Etinde, David Fleming, Steve Gencarella, Judy Goodenough, Patricia Gubitosi, Claire Hamilton, Anne Herrington, Sarah Jenness, John Lenzi, Alan Luttenegger, Ernest May, John McCarthy, Dori McCracken, Matt Ouelette, Jared Rose, Martha Stassen, Razvan Sibii,

Minutes:
There were minor corrections that included:
- Jared Rose as attending;
- the number of incoming students for fall ’10 changed to 4,475;
- the number of entering freshman for fall ’10 changed to 3,300;
- the number of entering transfers for fall ’10 changed to 1,200 with 1,100 being out of state.
The minutes were PASSED by the Council.

Integrative Experience – Guest John McCarthy:
John McCarthy asked for the Council before he asks Program & Budget Council to cost out various IE scenarios. It would be helpful if the Council could specify “normal expectations” for size of classes (when IE is done on a course-based option), the qualifications and status of instructors, and the use of writing or other instructor-intensive communication modes. Steve Gencarella noted that the current funding of 210.00 per student to offset the Jr. Year Writing seemed inadequate to the need and questioned how long would faculty be locked into this amount. It was noted that departments tend to differ in the way they emphasize Jr. Year Writing and that there needed to be more accountability. There has been a drift in this over the years and increasingly TA’s are been used for JYWP instruction.

The Council questioned whether class/group size was a factor in I.E. Steve Gencarella mentioned that there has been an increase in the number of students taking Jr. Year Writing and stressed that the quality of writing suffers as a result. Ernie May suggested that a normal expectation for student enrollment is 20 students to 1 instructor.

Concerns arose about budgetary issues. Steve G. stated that if faculty were teaching a regular course of 50 students, the $210 per student model would be satisfactory. However, when teaching an I.E. course of 50, there would need to be at least two TA instructors to ensure that the full range of duties, from grading papers to facilitating discussion and peer interaction, are provided for. He emphasized that the integration called for in IE takes place by the students, and thus suggests small class size. When enrollment exceeds the ‘normal expectation’ of 20, the demands of teaching are changed significantly. Martha Stassen encouraged Council to think about ‘criteria’ and ask instructors by which criteria are proposals submitted. Maurianne Adams emphasized that at the moment, the P&BC has been asked to calculate estimated cost scenarios for IE and has asked for our help. Anne Herrington encouraged the Council to consider where different departments might want to put the most interactive involvement with students – in lower-division seminars or in upper-division IE. She noted that these choices would have to be made within limited funding resources.

Ernie May supported the original view, that funding would have to be increased for the IE. Maurianne Adams asked that we put off discussing structural features – parallels to JYWP, subcommittee of GEC, or some other structure, to be discussed at a later meeting.
On the issue of “normal expectations” for class size in IE courses (where the IE option is a course), the discussion centered on these points:

- 20-30 students
- Small size = greater degree of engagement and accountability of both students and instructors
- Ratio vs. set size? (e.g. 20:1; 25:1)
- Define less explicitly? (“small group expectation”)
- How to balance resources [particularly faculty resources] for JYW and IE?

The issue of instructor qualifications was discussed next. Alan Lutenegger noted that in some professional majors, i.e., Engineering, instructors need professional licensure in order to teach capstone courses. Several people noted that stability and continuity are important when considering instructor qualifications, an argument for tenure system faculty or senior lecturers. John Cunningham said that departmental ownership will hopefully lead to continuity. Steve Gencarella noted that there is presently no mechanism in place to evaluate the balance of instructor skills; and the QQ reviews seem to be the only mechanism for accountability.

On the issue of “normal expectations” for instructor qualifications for IE, the discussion centered on these points:

- Should be above level of supervised TA
- Same expectation as other upper-level courses – this means tenure-system and lecturer faculty
- Faculty qualifications ensures departmental ownership for the IE:
  - Ensure continuity within departments of expectations of IE
  - Stability of instructors (supervision of instruction or instruction itself)

Several members suggested that writing not be a “headline” for IE, but that the IE should reflect active collaboration, engaged student participation and involvement, reflection, and application. John Lenzi shared with the Council that CHC was discussing whether to incorporate IE within the student’s Honors ‘General Studies Scholar’ curriculum. This proposal is still in discussion stage and will be brought to GEC once developed.

On the issue of student reflection, interaction and engagement:

- Writing should not be a “headline”
- Focus on reflection, interaction, application
- Collaborative engagement, active student participation are integral
- Self-assessment / self-reflection (need to unpack self-reflection)

2009-2010 GEC Annual Report:
Council members have the 2009-2010 GEC Annual Report for the Faculty Senate as an electronic attachment. Maurianne will wait a few days, to see if anyone has corrections or additions. If not, she will forward it to the Faculty Senate office for review at the November 18th Faculty Senate meeting.

Anne Herrington led the Council in a discussion of current GenEd expectations about Writing in Social World courses. It became clear that over time, the GEC has held different Schools & Colleges who offer large GenEd Social World course offerings to different standards with regard to the amount of student writing and the extent of faculty feedback to student writing. GEC members agreed that we had been holding AL/HS large lecture GenEd courses to a higher standard than SBS large lecture GenEd courses. GEC members also agreed that there is a clear contradiction between (1) the GenEd intention that students write and faculty provide feedback in all Social World GenEd courses, and (2) the course size that has resulted from lack of resources to provide the needed feedback. A major area of concern is whether writing, with faculty feedback, is a “must” or a “should” for GenEd courses in the Social World.
Maurianne asked Anne Herrington, David Fleming, & Steve Gencarella to prepare a text that would guide GEC reviews writing in all Social World courses in the future, regardless of class size or TA allocation. This extremely difficult question was put over to the December GEC meeting.

**Voting on Course Designation Changes (from I to SB, maintaining the U):**

- Honors 292S, Needs more information regarding writing assignments
- Honors 292D, Approved
- Honors 392L, Approved.

**Next Meeting:** Friday, November 19, 2010 from 1-3 pm, in the Chancellor’s Board Room, 370 Whitmore.