

General Education Committee Minutes: 9/26/2019

11 am – 12 noon, FLITE 135

Present: Victor Piercey (Director), Khagendra Thapa (CET), Jimmie Joseph (COB), Paul Zube (FNTFO), Amy Greene (EIO), Angie Mishler (Academic Counselors), Mary Beaudry (COHP), Monica Frees (RSS), Clifton Franklund (Assessment Coordinator), Rachel Foulk (CAS), Kathryn Wolfer (Senate Liaison), and Mari Kermit-Canfield (FLITE).

Absent: Jacob Pollak (COEHS) and Leonard Johnson (Academic Affairs),

1. Introductions

The committee members introduced themselves.

2. Announcements

- ENGL 150, COMM 105, and COMM 121 Recertification: The courses have been approved for recertification by the subcommittee and will be on our agenda for the next meeting.
- PDET 290 has been approved for Culture through our new process for experimental courses.
- Data-Use Work Group will meet on Friday 9/27.
- Self and Society Subcommittee is working on a 10-point scale for each component of the decision form.
- AGLS (Association for General and Liberal Studies) is working on a brief gen ed FAQ.

3. Approval of Agenda

Approved unanimously.

4. Consent Agenda

- Minutes for 9/10/2019
- Revised Norms

The norm item “Whole Self” was changed to “Be Present.” With that change, the consent agenda was approved unanimously.

5. Projects for the Year

We discussed the following projects and solicited volunteers for work groups.

- Badging

The work we do on this committee (and in smaller working groups) should involve transferable skills. We would like to identify those skills and prepare a “badging” system to provide evidence of accomplishment. These badges can be applied retroactively for the current year.

Mary Beaudry and Jimmie Joseph volunteered to help with this.

Committee members raised questions that this group should consider:

1. Who will evaluate achievement of badges? How will that work?
2. Any badging system needs to be designed so it doesn't add further hurdles and increase the workload of faculty and staff.

- Communication Plan

We need to improve our communication. Part of this involves providing a coherent answer to the question “why gen ed” and turning that answer into convincing “talking points” that advisors and professors can explain to students. This also involves revising the web page as well as considering different communication avenues for different audiences (including social media, podcasts, etc.).

Amy Greene offered to help with this.

- Themed Student Learning Communities/Linked Classes FLC

I would like to propose and facilitate a faculty learning community (through FCTL) on themed student learning communities/linked courses that involve at least one general education course. The goal is to connect general education to the majors. In addition, I would like to discuss the application of all credits from a themed learning community to general education. For example, if a themed learning community involves a culture class and an HVAC class, each of which is 3 credits, then all 6 credits would count as culture. This will require an approval process.

Mari Kermit-Canfield and Monica Frees volunteered to help with this. Paul Zube and Rachel Foulk expressed interest in helping at some point later.

6. Policies

ELWL submitted a request to change the Culture requirement by:

- Eliminating the requirement for courses to come from different disciplines (which will encourage study of foreign languages), and
- Changing maximum activity credits from 5 to 6 (since there are few 4-credit Culture and 2-credit Culture courses).

The Culture Subcommittee approved the request by a vote of 4 to 2, with the caveat that a mechanism should be put in place to address possible overlaps with majors.

The UGEC discussed this and appreciated the advantages, but also expressed a desire to balance these concerns with an interest in the broader education of our students.

In addition, the need to protect respect the disciplinary value of the culture disciplines was raised.

The discussion raised the following questions:

1. What were the reasons for the subcommittee concerns regarding overlaps with majors?
2. Did the subcommittee consider lowering the maximum for activities credits to 3 instead of raising it to 6?
3. How is general education assessed in activities courses?
4. What do students have to do to earn credit for activities courses?
5. Does the cap of 5 credits limit student enrollment in activities courses? What would happen if the cap were lowered to 3?

The Director of Education will ask the chair of the Culture Subcommittee the first two questions, and the chair of Humanities the remaining questions.