

General Education Committee Minutes: 4/29/2021

Present: Victor Piercey (Director), Monica Frees (RSS), Jake Pollak (former COEHS), Clifton Franklund (Assessment Coordinator), Mari Kermit-Canfield (FLITE), Katie Kalata (COB), Andrew Peterson (EIO), Rachel Foulk (CAS), Paul Zube (FNTFO), Angie Mishler (Academic Counselors), and Leonard Johnson (Academic Affairs).

Guest: David McCall (RSS)

Absent: Kathryn Wolfer (Senate Liaison) and Mary Beaudry (COHP).

11 am – 12 noon, Online

1. Approval of Agenda

Approved unanimously

2. Announcements: Summer retreat will be Thurs. June 24, 9 am to noon.

3. Consent Agenda

- Minutes for April 13, 2021
- SPAN 150 Diversity
- QL Closing the Loop Report

Approved unanimously

4. Proposals

- None

5. Discussion Items

Question:

What does it mean to approve a (lower level) course for COMW? Would it replace ENGL 150 or 250?

Perspectives:

- We could require ENGL 150 and 250, but open the COMW requirement up to allow for additional COMW courses. However, this would add to the credit load of general education.
- We should treat all general education competencies consistently, holding courses to rigorous and high standards for approval. Courses should be

approved if their intent and purpose is to deliver the general education outcomes, and there should be a high threshold for approval. As such, we don't have to treat any particular courses as special.

One potential consequence: a course is approved for COMW but the prerequisites for later COMW course do not adapt their prerequisites. Students would have to use CLEP to move on.

- One issue concerns faculty qualifications. Currently, the UGEC does not evaluate qualifications to teach general education courses. We evaluate whether the course is appropriate for general education, and hosting departments determine qualifications for teaching the course.

On the other hand, in order to assess the outcomes, one has to have some training related to the learning objectives. But what does that look like? A degree or a minimum number of credits is one possibility, but that might be too limiting.

- Another issue concerns transfer. Currently the Michigan Transfer Agreement requires 1 English Composition course and either a second English Composition course or a course in communications. Institutions tend to decide on their own what courses they want to designate for these categories.
- Are we willing to do something different? Would some courses serve industry better? If general education courses are to develop practical skills needed for employment, alternatives that target those skills might serve our students better.
- One purpose of composition, and general education broadly, should be to support structured thought. Teaching students to structure their thought should show up across our general education curriculum.

Concluding Thoughts:

This is the beginning of a wider, university-wide conversation. One question to think about: is this a problem that could be solved with more collaboration?