



General Education Council

April 5,, 2017

Deans Conference, RH104

Minutes

PRESENT: Katherine O'Meara (proxy for Amy Sage Webb), Steve Lovett, Rich Sleezer, Heidi Hamilton, Jim Costello, Shauna Shane, Mohammed Rahman, Chris Stone, Joan Brewer, David McKenzie

ABSENT: Amy Sage Webb, Kathy Landwehr, Alrick Johnson, Nkem Nwogu and Sarah Clark(graduated)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: March 22, 2017 minutes were approved with a few changes. March 8th minutes will be viewed at the next general education council meeting on April 19th.

OLD BUSINESS:

- a. Secondary Education Technology Requirement (IT360)-Brewer reviewed with the council additional questions regarding IT360. Brewer stated that the goal is to require a course designed specifically for secondary education majors that would prepare them for technology they will be expected to use in their classrooms. This course would also assist in meeting national accrediting body standards that specifically deal with technology for educators. IT360 would be an accepted substitution for the University General Education requirement for Goal 1D Demonstrate effective skills in Information Technology. This course would not be open for all students and therefore would only be available for secondary education students.

Brewer mentioned that this course would not go into effect immediately and would only be for new students enrolling for the first time in Fall 2017. Sleezer called for a motion. Motion to approve by Shauna Shane and seconded by Jim Costello. Votes were 6 to approve with 1 abstention. Course was approved to be included as an accepted substitution.

b. Editing General education Goals-New Version Review:

1. Goals 2-5: Sleezer reviewed previous work on editing the general education goals this year indicating there was still work to be done on Goals 2-5. Sleezer stated he would like to make the goals clearer and reword them so they could be assessed more easily.

Markowitz spoke about the process used to update goals when Dr. Wyatt director of general education. She talked about the time spent (many hours) working on the goals, their inclusion in the catalog, and matching them with the general education course requirements. She talked about the struggles they had with the attempts to match the goals with course requirements. Perhaps the expectation that each specific goal is mapped to a specific general education course requirement is not realistic.

Sleezer asked the council if there was anything needed to discuss before the end of the year. Massoth mentioned visiting with ASG about a new process to select student representatives on the General Education Council. One suggestion was to ask department chairs to nominate students to serve on the General Education Council. Lovett still intends to send a letter to ASG to see what their thoughts were regarding this suggestion.

Sleezer mentioned that the students from ASG have not reliable participants. Most have attended infrequently or not at all even though student participation is thought to be important. Input from students in the decision making process for general education is desirable. McKenzie thought the Chairs would have a better outcome on picking the students to serve on the council. McKenzie also stated that we need the external voice from a student perspective.

There was a general discussion general education classes and how faculty need to help students understand the importance of general education. Brewer indicated that student perception is influenced who is teaching these courses and how the course are taught. We (faculty, chairs, etc.) may not be placing a high enough priority on general education instruction in all cases. The example discussed was assigning graduate assistants to teach these courses who may not have sufficient background or experience.

Stone mentioned to the council that he had recently become aware of an article citing Emporia State as a University that is using a particularly high number of teaching assistants to teach general education courses. The council had some discussion about the impact of who teaches a course on student perception of importance and quality. The link to the article Stone cited is provided below.
<https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/the-short-list-college/articles/2017-02-21/10-universities-where-tas-teach-the-most-classes>

Lovett indicated that perhaps the council should do a better job of communicating to the University (faculty, students, etc.) the importance of general education. He raised the question, what we can do as a council to show how valuable general education is?

Brewer used college algebra as an example of the types of questions we should be asking about our general education courses “Do students need college algebra?” or is there something else that would serve our student’s better? Are we meeting the needs of today’s students in preparing them for their careers?

Sleezer and Lovett would like to form a subcommittee this summer to work on a set of policy and procedures documents. The goal would be to make all council members aware of policy and procedures and to make the information readily available to all faculty. Lovett would like to see all the general education courses reviewed to determine if these classes are the best courses to accomplish our general education goals. Lovett feels that maybe courses should be evaluated on a regular schedule (e.g. annually or semiannually).

Markowitz spoke about the Regent 45 hour articulation agreement. Markowitz will send the document in an email tomorrow. If such a model was adopted it would allow students more flexibility in choosing courses to satisfy general education requirements and it would reduce the number of substitution/exemption forms that would need to be processed. Council seemed to be in agreement that it was an option that should be investigated further.

Shane suggested that the council should edit the goals first and not worry about what course align with which goals. Every course would then have to apply to fit in that goal or category. Brewer suggest that it might be possible to develop an individual plan for each student that enrolls at ESU. If the goals were kept very broad, then it would be easier for students to choose courses that would satisfy their general education requirements that they also might find more intriguing and better suited to their academic interests.

Sleezer recommended putting together a small group to work on suggested changes to general education over the summer. The intention would be to spend the summer developing ideas and suggestion that the Council could act on in the Fall 2017.

Meeting adjourned: 4:05pm

Recorder: km