Grand Valley State University

***General Education Committee Meeting***

167 Lake Ontario Hall

Minutes of 11/10/2014

**PRESENT**: Kirk Anderson, Chair; Ella Fritzemeier; Gabriele Gottlieb; Melba Hoffer; Andrew Kalafut; Sarah King; Haiying Kong; Jose Lara; Paola Leon; Josita Maouene; Linda Pickett; Susan Strouse; Patrick Thorpe; David Vessey

**ALSO PRESENT:** C. “Griff” Griffin, Director, General Education; Jeanne Whitsel, General Education Office Coordinator

**NOT PRESENT:** Emily Frigo; Brian Kipp; Martina Reinhold; Paul Sicilian\*

\* Participating via email despite conflict with meetings

| Agenda Items | Discussion | Action Taken |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Approval of current Agenda** |  | Approved per consensus |
| **Approval of 10/27/2014 Minutes** |  | Approved per consensus |
| **Approval of 11/3/2014 Minutes** |  | Approved per consensus |
| **Revisiting CAR reply language for CTH 161 and others like it (i.e. sharing rubrics and feedback with students)** | The chair proposed the following be included in the CTH 161 CAR response, as the instructor was adamant about not sharing rubrics with their students due to his concern that students would find it confusing and he was unclear on how feedback should be given.  “Regarding the GE skills rubrics, we encourage instructors to share them with students at the start of the semester, pointing out that they are meant to measure students as they progress toward graduation. The rubrics aren’t intended for determining grades in the course. However, best practices in education indicate that students should be involved in the assessment process, including knowing where they stand at the end of the course. One way to do this is to post the rubrics on the Bb site for the course, drawing students’ attention to it in the first week, with a brief discussion. At the end of the course, scores can be posted, with a reminder that the scores aren’t part of the course grade, but give an idea of where the student is at this stage of their GVSU education. This is a way for students to track their own progression as they attempt to achieve mastery over time. It might help to say that assessment will be done after grades are submitted to help minimize confusion over scores versus grades. Sharing the rubrics and giving feedback on their performance lets students know where they are now and what they are aspiring to, much like content learning is scaffolded in the major.”  Should our expectation that instructors share rubrics and student progress reports with students be stressed in the “first day” letter we send with syllabus attachments? We could also email unit heads with the message “here are the rubrics that go with the goals” and ask them to distribute the rubrics to their faculty.    GE will continue to encourage all faculty to make rubrics clear to their students even if the faculty are not currently assessing.  Instead of mailing the teaching resources packet, we will put the packet materials on the GE website and send out a link to the web page. The director will modify the assessment directions and the “first day” letter to address the rubrics issue.  A GEC member reported that rubrics are being introduced to incoming freshmen during orientation along with information on the GE program. The director will confirm with Matt Boelkins whether this is done with all students, and find out what exactly they are told about rubrics and GE in general. We will invite Matt to attend a GEC meeting to fill us in. | This language was approved by consensus.  Director will:  modify assessment directions and “first day” letter;  encourage faculty to distribute the rubrics whether courses are being assessed or not; see that teaching resource materials are uploaded to GE website.  Chair will speak with Matt Boelkins about coming to an upcoming GEC meeting. |
| **Student version of the “rubrics”** | The rubrics have been modified to remove proficiency level numbers, in order to prevent confusion between rankings and grades. The following language was proposed to describe proficiency levels:  *Baseline: Level of most entering freshmen*  *Progressing*  *Proficient: Level of most graduating seniors*  *Distinguished*  We will still use the term rubric, but we will title rubrics “Skills Development Trajectory in General Education Courses”. | The proposed descriptive language was approved by consensus. |
| **Transition from Themes to Issues (numbers from Griff)** | As Themes are being phased out, fewer students are taking them each year and courses are being pared down. We need a corresponding increase in Issues seats to accommodate students now required to take two Issues courses. We want to inspire faculty to transition their courses. Director will plan a two-hour meeting to promote Issues and explain to instructors the benefits of changing their Themes courses to Issues. A GEC member reported hearing good feedback from a student on the value of his Issues course. We will recruit faculty who have received such feedback to attend this meeting.  The director will work with departments such as Psychology and History that are heavily invested in Themes. She will also meet with Nursing and Business to urge them to look for ways to create Issues courses, explaining that it is to every major’s advantage to have Issues courses. We currently do not have any in Management or Marketing.  When the online system changes, the director will hold a panel meeting in which she works with deans, faculty, and unit heads to promote Issues. She will ask faculty to provide positive student comments and may create a brochure to send to faculty whose Themes courses are declining.  Some instructors want to wait until the online program revision is complete before adding courses. Griff will encourage them not to wait but to push the changes through now. | Director will:  Plan meeting to promote Issues;  work individually with Themes-heavy departments;  hold panel meeting when online system changes, requesting positive student comments ;  encourage faculty to proceed with course transitions and talk with the curriculum committees if they are giving other advice. |
| **Handbook wording for Student Learning Outcomes** | Four options for rewording the Student Learning Outcomes were proposed. The following option was chosen (using the Health category as example):  *All Issues courses in the Health category help students learn:*  *1. How to link course material to health*  *2. How complementary and competing perspectives contribute to the ongoing discussion about health.* | S. King moved to adopt this language, M. Hoffer second. Motion passed 14-0. |
| **Curriculum items for consideration:**  **\* Log 8722: Course change – HST 230, Silver, Salsa, Coffee, and Cocaine: Latin America in World History [new to GEC]**  **- Note: The change is to add the course to Historical Perspectives (in addition to World Perspectives). The current syllabus is included in the system.**  **\* Log 8517: Course change – NUR 344, Healthy Aging: A Lifelong Journey [new to GEC]**  **- Note: The change is to move the course from Themes to Issues (Health). There are many supporting documents in the system.** | **HST 230 Log 8722:**  Members briefly discussed the title, wondering if it might be unwieldy and whether “World History” should be a part of it. While this is not our area of concern, if we ask for amendment we might consider suggesting they remove World History to shorten the title. They may have added that designation thinking we required it, but this is not something we would request.  The measures are repetitive, but that can be okay if the question is answered. The current syllabus contains detailed information, so cutting and pasting content from that would be a great way to address the questions.  We want specifics on what the instructor will do, beyond just listing “Lecture, Assigned Readings, and Class Discussion”. We also want each objective to be addressed specifically. Regarding the content and problem solving goals, we would like more detail and examples provided. We have deeper concerns about the written communication goal, which references “essays and/or exams”. Essays are needed, as exams are not sufficient to assess writing skills.  We will request amendment on the following:  - Written communication goal – the essays are needed, so the “essays and/or exams” phrase is problematic. The proposer will be asked to modify that phrase so that it can’t be read as using exams only to assess written communication.  - More detail is needed under Teach and Measure for all goals  - We will mention that it appears the answers to the first and third questions have been switched,  probably in Sail, as we have seen before.  **NUR 344 Log 8517:**  It appears a wrong box may have been filled in, as it currently shows “Junior Standing” as an existing prerequisite and “None” proposed. This change should go in reverse, as Junior Standing is an Issues prerequisite. Also, the syllabus still describes the course as being part of Theme 4.  The proposal is well written, and it sounds like a good course. However, we do have some concerns with the goals.  Collaboration: This requires a group project occurring over a significant period of time. The current syllabus clearly gives students the option of group or individual projects.  A note on the Sail system:  The collaboration definition shown is missing the sustained group effort part; it just says “Contribute to development of shared goals within the group”. The director will check to see if the current definition is in the online system. The missing part needs to be included here. Is this another Sail problem? If the correct definition was there before but is now missing, the chair will submit the problem to Sail via the online feedback system.  Integration: They need to be more specific here. All coursework cannot be used to measure each goal, as this will give them problems with assessment.  We will request amendment on the following:  - The Junior Standing prerequisite  - Group project required for Collaboration  - More specific measures required for Integration | G. Gottlieb moved to request amendment, S. Strouse second. Motion carried 14-0.  Director will check the collaboration definition in Sail.  Chair will contact them if there is a problem.  D. Vessey moved to request amendment, G. Gottlieb second. Motion passed 14-0. |
| **Decisions regarding Cultures: World Perspectives vs. Global Learning**  **- Should we change any names?**  **- Should we change any goals?**  **- Should we solicit info from unit heads?** | We are satisfied that we are meeting the IZN Task Force’s global learning goals via our World Perspectives courses and our Globalization Issues category. Definition 3 in the value rubric for global learning - “address the world’s most pressing and enduring issues collaboratively and equitably” - is embodied in our definition of Issues.  We will retain the terms Cultures and World Perspectives, and the names of our goals. We do not need to solicit feedback from unit heads, since a GEC member (D. Vessey) has already looked at each course in World Perspectives and given an Internationalization level to each.  The chair will write our response to the senate charge in the End-of-Year (EOY) report, referencing the IZN Task Force report. Members can email him if they have any suggestions; otherwise he will write this up and present it at a future meeting for review.  Rather than wait for the end of the year, we can discharge this now and just summarize it in the EOY report. If the ECS has any issues, we can deal with it while it is fresh in our minds. The chair will consider whether to do this now or wait for the EOY report.  We are going to ask faculty in the Mathematical Sciences (MS) category if they have achieved the MTA goals. We need confirmation that our MS courses fulfill what the MTA has articulated and that they are meeting our GE requirements. The director will craft an email for the committee to discuss and approve before she sends it to Mathematical Sciences departments. | Chair will draft response re: IZN Task Force charges to ECS  Director will craft email to MS departments. |
| **Chair’s Report** | The chair will send out the CAR responses. Only MUS 100 will need to come back to the GEC. | Chair will send CAR responses. |
| **Director’s Report** | The director had nothing to add. |  |
| **Adjournment** |  | 4:07 pm |