Grand Valley State University

*General Education Committee*

Minutes of 1-30-12

**PRESENT:** Kirk Anderson, Deb Bambini, Jim Bell, Susan Carson, Jason Crouthamel, Alisha Davis, Emily Frigo, Roger Gilles, Gabriele Gottlieb, Jagadeesh Nandigam, Penney Nichols-Whitehead, Keith Rhodes, Paul Sicilian, Ruth Stevens, Judy Whipps

**ALSO PRESENT:** C. “Griff” Griffin, Krista McFarland, General Education Office Coordinator, Maria Cimitile

**ABSENT:** JJ Manser, David Vessey

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| Agenda Items | Discussion | Action / Decisions |
| **Approval of**  **Jan 23 Minutes** |  | Approved as submitted. |
| **Agenda** |  | Approved. |
| **Update on Friday’s UAS Meeting** | *Griff, Roger, and others who attended can report on the meeting.*  UAS voted on GE final proposal. With a 36-8 vote, it was a definitive approval of the proposal. We will definitely be shifting to implementation mode and looking towards the future.  There were a number of people that were in support of the proposal and happy that it was approved. There was some opposition as well.    Natalie Cleary, the Student Senate president, was supportive and articulate, reminding the faculty that students want these changes.  Maria Cimitile stopped by to thank Roger and Griff. Roger always states things in the most eloquent way and represents the work of the committee very well. Griff always has the data to support everything discussed. The Provost office is thrilled and very happy for the future for students. It came about from a lot of time and hard work by the GEC. The Provost’s office will be on standby to help support implementation.    The Director read Provost Davis’ congratulatory email. Figen Mekik from UAS was congratulatory as well.  A committee member asked about student support and what, in particular, they liked about the proposal. The Chair responded that they think the goals are what they need. The Issues courses have more connection to the world as well as more choice of classes. Relevance is the key word for them. The Student Senate voted unanimously to support the proposal.  A Sociology professor was critical of AAC&U and felt there was a lack of evidence in their studies. But everything that was raised were things that GEC has talked about. The Chair noted that AAC&U Principles of Excellence gives students a compass. A big part of these goals are for faculty to tell students they are developing these skills. Faculty will have to talk about these goals in class – that is what we really want, not just on syllabus. If students know what skills they are developing, they will have a better chance to actually develop them.  A committee member attended the AAC&U conference over the past weekend. It was nice to hear that other similar universities are having the same conversations. Statistically, for the first time since the study has been done, collaboration and teamwork were the #1 skills that employers are looking for and a direct match for citizenship, so not just about jobs. This is a nice mesh for what we are doing.  The Chair added that one of the things that will happen over the next several months is for GEC to work with departments and courses that have concerns. They are all good courses, no bad courses. We will do our best to figure it out and make it work for everyone. | Now that the GE final proposal has passed we will be shifting into implementation mode. |
| **Materials for the Summer “Issues” Workshops** | *Over the next several weeks, we need to prepare documents to send to faculty potentially interested in developing Issues courses this summer. We will begin with two one-page documents, one that describes the Issues themselves and gives guidance on how courses need to connect to an issue, and another that describes the three required skills goals of collaboration, problem solving, and integration.*  *We need to develop “content goals” for each of the six Issues and determine what other guidance faculty might need to conceptualize their courses. And we need to determine exactly what (and how many) “objectives” to include in the description of each skills goal—and exactly what language to include in the assessment rubric associated with each goal.*  The Chair noted that we can now shift to summer workshops. A part of what we have talked about over the last several years is providing an assessment rubric to guide faculty in their GE assessment. This will allow us to use our data much more clearly because everyone has different assessments.  We can say here are the skills goals, content goals, and rubrics and we will ask the faculty now to come up with measures. In order for a rubric (skills goals) to be manageable and meaningful we will probably want no more than 4 criteria to assess.  A hardcopy of the upper-level goal descriptions was distributed. Collaboration has 4 bullets, Problem solving has 6 and Integration has 5.    With the knowledge goals there is a lot of anxiety. Do we need to give more explanation? It is not quite enough to have a knowledge goal, so if want to keep things consistent (and we do) we will have to develop content goals. Assessment will be for both content and skills. There was a previous mention and recommendation to have two generic content goals to fit each category. Along with this would be a few expressions of what students should develop in that Issue.  The director added that one reason for having two content goals, as opposed to one, is for assessment purposes. You don’t just want one goal and it is a manageable number. In terms of content goals for Issues, two content goals will be more tractable because the skills goals will be three or more.  A committee member commented that when content goals were made for the current GE Themes program it was by faculty that we creating a specific Theme. It makes sense to give some vague guidance to those working in the summer. They get to create content goals for all courses in category. The Director responded that the faculty over the summer will be designing at the course level, so they won’t have time to work on skills and content. It will also be difficult to get groups together for each Issues topic, so it seems the best way to expedite the process is for GE to come up with what we want from the Issues courses so that they are ready for the summer groups.    The Chair read the Earth and Environment goals from the Handbook as example. They are pretty simple expressions of what we want students to learn. A committee member agreed that GEC should come up with simple goals and they can always be adjusted as the summer work groups meet.  The Chair added that the categories are so big and varied that the content goals will have to be large and broad.  A committee member added that it is important for students to recognize their own contribution to the discussion  The Director added that the biggest content of all is that it is a major issue with dominant questions.  The Themes didn’t have knowledge goals, so each of Issues will have to develop content goals based on the new Knowledge Goal #3.  A committee member asked if we even need content goals. What is their purpose, what do they do. Instead do we need to come up with a definition for the Issue? The Chair responded that the goals provide consistency through the program. It will help faculty understand what they are doing in these courses. It is a necessary way to guide people.  A committee member asked if GEC should define the Issues, for example Globalization, or should we be asking our colleagues. A committee member responded that if GEC defines it, it will be inclusive. We want it to be broad to allow different perspectives. If we ask for input we could be discussing it for another ten years.  A committee member read an example from AAC&U – history, causes and implications. She thought it was possible for GEC to find the language for each Issue that can provided a broad framework for faculty to think about. This would also help faculty see where their course fits into the Issues.  The Chair added that we are going to need some faculty input to describe these categories. We won’t be able to do this until we see some of these courses as examples so that we can describe in the Issue paragraph.  A committee member was also struggling with the content goals. Students are not studying globalization, but rather the topic within. How can the Issues be defined and meaningful, but not restrictive.  A committee member gave the example of a course about Great Lakes. It is specific, but the courses still has to show how they are linked to Globalization.  The Director asked everyone to stand way back to and look at how we want to assess how students have achieved academic success; that is what you want the paragraph is what you want content goals for.    A committee member suggested having more focus on particular Issues. The content of the course is on finding particular problems and applications for the students to confront on these bigger issues. The Chair added that knowledge goal #3 is the connection. A committee member thought there was a danger of turning the focus on a course to be a disciplinary study on that Issue.  The Chair suggested starting with some language to discuss.   |  | | --- | | Comments from board:   * ~~An understanding of major issues and dominant questions related to~~ * ~~An understanding of how multiple perspectives and disciplines contribute to the ongoing conversation about X, including the student’ s own place in that conversation~~ * ~~Display self-reflective awareness of their role as citizens in a global community~~ * ~~Understanding course content in relation to X~~ |  |  | | --- | | CHANGED TO:   * ~~Analyze and synthesize course content in relation to major issues and dominant questions related to X~~ * ~~Analyze and synthesize complex and competing perspectives that contribute to the ongoing conversation about X, including a self-reflective awareness of their role as citizens in a global community~~ |   A committee member thought that 2nd point is what we did under integration, so it is almost replicating a skills goal.   |  | | --- | | CHANGED TO:   * ~~Analyze and synthesize course content in relation to major issues and dominant questions related to X~~ * ~~Evaluate complex and competing perspectives that contribute to the ongoing conversation about X,~~ * ~~Develop a self-reflective awareness of their responsibilities as citizens in a global community~~ |   A committee member asked if calling content goals, then what is the content. A committee member responded that you have to assess if students have the knowledge, what do they have to know in order to assess.  The Director added that you can change from content goals to knowledge goals, but if you are evaluating courses, the first bullet seems something like what you are talking about in GE and describing for issues. The second bullet is also fine, but it is not certain what the content is for the third bullet.  The committee reviewed the description of GE Knowledge Goal #3.   |  | | --- | | CHANGED TO:   * ~~course content in relation to major issues and dominant questions related to X~~ * ~~complex, complementary, competing perspectives that contribute to the ongoing conversation about X,~~ * ~~a self-reflective awareness of their civic responsibilities in relation to X~~ |   A committee had two concerns. The first was with “dominant questions”. It implies that they have a couple of weeks to focus on. Second, the responsibility as citizens in a global community. She didn’t think all courses would l be globally focused. A committee member responded that in the Globalization category you would be. The Chair agreed that the term global might be confusing.     |  | | --- | | CHANGED TO:   * ~~course content in relation to issues and dominant questions related to X~~ * ~~complex, complementary, competing perspectives that contribute to the ongoing conversation about X,~~ * ~~a self-reflective awareness of their civic responsibilities in relation to X~~ |   A committee member thought that the first two seemed like what a course will do and the 3rd bullet is what a student will do.  The Director added that the 3rd bullet point about civic responsibilities could be a part of the descriptive paragraph. The Chair agreed that it is part of knowledge goal #3. The 3rd bullet should be deleted so there are only two content goals.  The committee was in agreement for the following two content goals.   |  | | --- | | CHANGED TO:  All courses in the X issue help students learn:   * how course content relates to issues and dominant questions related to X * how complex, complementary, and competing perspectives that contribute to the ongoing conversation about X |   The Director asked if the GE Handbook should all be changed to have this stem. For example, Life Science would be “All course in the Life Science help student learn: ”  Griff and Krista will work on updating Content Goals for Foundations and Cultures in the Handbook. | The committee agreed on language for two broad content goals for Issues (see table in Minutes).  Griff and Krista will work on updating Content Goals for Foundations and Cultures in the Handbook. |
| **Plans for the Summer “Issues” Workshops** | The Chair asked if we invite people to summer workshops, will the one-page Issues handouts (hardcopy was distributed) be enough.  A committee member thought that some examples of what is meant would be helpful. For example, Privacy as it relates to the Information, Innovation, and Technology Issue.  A committee member thought that for content it is sufficient, but that the rubric will be more important to skills goal. The one-page handout for skills goals was referenced.  The Chair used the collaboration goal for an example. The intent was that the list of bullet points would be assessable. A single criterion for collaboration will be in the bullet and then a rubric could be created out of that. We will need to see if can do the same for Problem Solving and Integration. He would be in favor of having four bullet points for all, so that all of the rubrics look the same. We will review and discuss Problem Solving and Integration in our next discussion.  The rubrics will also need to be one of the conversations going forward.  Sample of Collaboration rubric from the white board:  COLLABORATION   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | RUBRIC | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | Interdependent |  |  |  |  | | Interactive |  |  |  |  | | Accountable |  |  |  |  | | Reflective |  |  |  |  |   Julie Guevara will be attending the February 20 GEC meeting, so it will be kind of nice for us to wrap up this discussion before she comes. | Problem Solving and Integration bullet points will be reviewed and discussed at the next meeting.  The rubrics will continue to be discussed going forward.  Julie Guevara will be attending the February 20 GEC meeting |
| **Adjournment** | Motion to adjourn; seconded. | Meeting adjourned at 4:24pm |