Grand Valley State University

*NOTES: General Education Committee*

Minutes of 2/3/2014

**PRESENT**: Kirk Anderson; Karen Burritt; Emily Frigo; Roger Gilles; Melba Hoffer; Jose Lara; Paola Leon; Jagadeesh Nandigam; Alex Nikitin; Laudo Ogura; Martina Reinhold; Keith Rhodes, Chair; David Vessey; Scott St. Louis, Student Representative

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

**NOT PRESENT:** Susan Carson; Gary Greer\*; Brian Kipp

\* Participating in all work despite conflict with meetings

**ON SABBATICAL**: Paul Sicilian

| Agenda Items | Discussion | Member |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Approval of Agenda** |  | Approved per consensus |
| **Approval of Minutes from**  **1-13-2014** |  | Approved per consensus |
| **Curriculum approvals for ratification** | **8225: Course Change - AAA 340**  **Returning Issues proposal (Greer, Carson, Lara, Ogura, Vessey)**  **8267: New Course - EDR 317**  **Returning Issues proposal (Greer, Carson, Lara, Ogura, Vessey)**  **8254: Course Change - ENG 384**  **Returning Issues proposal (Burritt, Frigo, Leon, Nandigam, Nikitin)**  **8483: New Course - IDS 350**  **New Issues (Civil Discourse) proposal** | **LOG 8225**  **LOG 8267**  **LOG 8254**  **LOG 8483**  D. Vessey moved to approve these courses. K. Burris second. S. St. Louis abstained. Motion carried 13-0 |
| **Curriculum items for consideration** | Do small groups feel they need more time? No. Items were very close to meeting approval. Melba Hoffer will send comments to Keith for review.  **8266: New Course - SW333**  **Returning Issues Proposal (Anderson, Gilles, Hoffer, Kipp, Reinhold)**  New classes get more scrutiny. Committee considered asking for amendment if changes were substantive, and it could be done quickly and returned to Keith, but this would need to be done ASAP, as another step would then be needed. If changes are not substantive, amendment won’t be requested.  Members’ concerns included:   * The teaching measure was reversed. However, it was clearly meant to be the other (correct) way. * How to measure student conflicts? Student team is required to create a respectful group, but how would this be measured?   Should we be picky when this is not an actual assessment plan?  Rather than wait for this to be perfect, members prefer to go ahead with approval of SW 333.  **8421: New Course - LAS 325**  **New Issues proposal (Burritt, Frigo, Leon, Nandigam, Nikitin)**  E-measures are too short and no instruction is included. Keith has everyone’s comments, will ask for amendment. It is to be returned to Keith only.  **8418: Course Change - ECO 349 (Emerging Market Issues)**  **New Issues proposal (Anderson, Gilles, Hoffer, Kipp, Reinhold)**  **8468: New Course - HNR 334/ WGS 334/ PLS 33 (Sex, Power, and Politics)**  **New US Div and Issues proposal (Greer, Carson, Lara, Ogura, Vessey)**  This one needs to be amended. Major concern: Only one reference was made to ethnicity/race, most of the focus was on sex. That would be all right as just an Issues course, but as a Diversity course it must be more focused on race. This being a major issue, it is to be returned to the GEC for review.  **8188: HNR 258 History of Science I (Historical Perspectives) - Fall**  Problem Solving, Written Communication  **8190: HNR 259 History of Science I (World Perspectives) - Fall**  Critical and Creative Thinking, Information Literacy  **8187: HNR 278 History of Science II (Arts) - Winter**  Oral Communication; Written Communication  **8189: HNR 279 History of Science II (Philosophy and Literature) - Winter**  Collaboration; Ethical Reasoning  On the whole, is this Honors sequence acceptable? Are there problems with any of the courses?  Can we rearrange where Honors is teaching skills goals? (This could be different than in the main Gen Ed program.) We care about having the skills goals distributed throughout the Honors program. Students will have other opportunities to achieve skills goals in addition to the Honors sequence. Written communication is a goal twice in a sequence because the sequence also fulfills WRT 150 & one SWS course. The courses are interdisciplinary, but try to choose the category that is the closest fit for the course, with categories covered in the sequence as a whole.  Because Honors courses may not choose the skills goals normally attributed to that category, Honors communicates how it will teach and assess skills goals via a Word document uploaded onto the online curriculum system when they arrange the goals differently among the sequence as a whole.  These Honors courses are precedents for other Honors courses only, not for other kinds of courses. Honors instructors would not be able to separate it out the way we need it done for other courses. Honors faculty will look at previous Honors courses to create new courses. We want their format to be set up properly from the beginning. If we like the way they do it, there’s no reason to comment. Since there seems to be a sentiment that we know what they’re doing and that it’s working, should we give them some deference or insist on having assessments done a certain way? Is there concern that the instructors may not take it well, that we are implying that we think they aren’t teaching?    **HNR 259** **LOG# 8190**: Some new components of information literacy were left out. Instructor seems to be using the older definition. Maybe it is intended to be general, but we don’t see development and execution of a plan included – for example, why is one taking this path to research? It seems pretty mechanical. But the rest is strong. We are confident that this is being taught, but that is not clear from the documentation. It’s okay to ask for amendment here, as Honors courses don’t go in the Handbook and therefore are not under same time pressure. Emily will write a comment to send back to them. It is to be returned to Keith for his review.  **HNR 258 LOG# 8188:** In the Content goals, they didn’t say what instructor will do, such as: “I will assign readings, discussions, lectures, etc.” It doesn’t give the student reason to sign up, as they don’t know what they would be doing. Also, passive voice was used: “this will be done” versus “I will do this”. We should ask them to use active wording so it’s clear that in the future we will be asking what the instructor will be doing.  We want honors to take ownership of this thing and see that it’s their process, they aren’t just being asked to jump through our hoops.  **HNR 258, HNR 278, and HNR 279:** Generally, content goals differ from skills goals, so it’s reasonable to think that the instructor will teach Collaboration differently.  In Ethical Reasoning, do they mean 18th century ways of thinking that arose with “new science” or contemporary ways of science thinking? This wording was used in other courses. This needs to be worded in respect to the subject matter of the class.  Committee voted to approve HNR 258, HNR 278, and HNR 279 at this time. If members want to work ahead, they can look at next Honors sequence proposals and think about them. | M. Hoffer moved to amend, to be returned to Chair alone for approval, K. Anderson second, motion carried 13-0  E. Frigo moved to amend, to be returned to Chair alone for approval, J. Nandigam second, motion carried 13-0  M. Hoffer moved to amend, to be returned to Chair alone for approval, K. Anderson second, motion carried 13-0  D. Vessey moved to amend, J. Lara second, motion carried 13-0.  **LOG# 8190**  E. Frigo moved to amend, R. Gilles second, motion carried 13-0  R. Gilles moved to approve, M. Hoffer second, motion carried 13-0 |
| **Status Report** | **SOC 366/LIB 366: Sociology of Media**  Members are okay with it but have questions. It looks like only LIB was changed, but SOC part should go through approval process rather than ride on coattails of the LIB course. Keith recommended approving it with a note regarding the SOC/LIB course changes, and asking both to assess it according to proposal  Do instructors see these two courses as interchangeable? They’re two different courses if taught by different departments. Someone will ask that they either show that they’re different courses or share resources.  The first department listed is the one teaching the course, and the other departments are freeriding. But SOC is the owner, yet it was proposed through LIB. If it’s both a LIB and SOC course, student has to take something else as second course.  This course will be taught as either SOC or LIB. Instructors collaborated to get the course on the books but they thought there was some overlap. We favor assessing both courses  Maybe we are the only ones for whom this is an issue, but we don’t want this to fall between the cracks. |  |
| **Preparing for CAR Review** | People have sent us information, and we will read, respond, and make use of it. It should be easier than the CAP reviews, as there is less volume (not all courses are being done). Keith is thinking of evaluating them on a pass/no pass basis at the first level, assuming nearly all will pass.  CAP/CAR review: A CAP is telling us how they’re doing the assessment. We didn’t reject any CAPs but in some cases did let the instructors know they’d have trouble doing the CAR based on the structure of their CAP. The CAR is their report on what they’ve done. The preliminary part covers what the instructor did to teach and how they assessed. It also contains charts. The deadline to turn them in has been extended to Feb 5. We now have 30 of them back. Currently, if there are multiple sections, only one is being recorded, so more than 30 courses are covered. What methods did they use? Keith reviewed the charts, and Collaboration versus Written Communication. There were some interesting outcomes; for example, in the writing course there were more efficient collaborators than writers. We can form different conclusions from these outcomes.  In some cases the instructor may have sent the wrong version or just not done it well. At some point we have to say it doesn’t pass and they have to redo it. We don’t know where that level is yet; we will review and decide how to make those judgments. Then we’ll provide feedback. On the passing proposals, we will keep it simple. We’ll tell the others what we want to know and what we would most like to see from them next time. We will make one report, and tell them what we liked – what were the best teaching methods, the most productive assessment methods, etc. We’ll also keep a record of what was left out, places where they misread instructions, discrepancies noticed, etc., and provide process feedback. We could make a spreadsheet, giving GEC members access to it so they can highlight good examples as models. We can note if CARs are being done well for certain courses, talk to those instructors about why their CARs are good, and share what was good about them with the other instructors. The first time through, we’ll want to focus on what’s right, provide positive reinforcement. We also need to consider where we have to make extra effort beyond the instructors just writing the materials correctly, and think how to refine process going forward.  Dividing the Committee into groups of three makes the most sense for distribution of workload and having multiple sets of eyes on each report. There are 120 sections that collected data; if there are multiple sections, they are collapsed into one report. We can have five groups of three, with Scott looking on as a student member to observe. Keith will do an overview, not be member of a group. Each group will take 1/5 of the courses and provide a brief, simple preamble and one page of response for each. These need to be finished by the end of the term. Curriculum looks like it may slow down a bit now – he already has the Issues courses people want. (Also suggested: having teams of two, with each pair having fewer reports, but consensus seemed to favor groups of three.)  Member suggested that going forward the Committee hold its general meeting during the first hour of its scheduled time and have the small groups meet during the second hour. That way all can be covered within three weeks. There are 45 total courses, giving the groups nine each. All agreed. This will begin on Monday, Feb. 17. Next week the committee will discuss some of the courses together and Keith will set up teams. No one will review a CAR in his or her own department. CARs will be evaluated on a first come, first served basis.  Another Honors sequence will be on the table next week. If we get other proposals back we will bring them up for discussion. |  |
| **Chair’s Report** | We still don’t have assessment data for one Art course. There may be some emergency proposals coming up. We’re discussing having more artistic experience courses in Gen Ed, in which the students actually create artwork. More courses like that will come in. They’ll still have to fulfill the basic Arts Foundation requirements. |  |
| **Director’s Report** | The Quick Guide is being redesigned to include course titles, as requested.  All faculty members are being required to collect data. Christy noticed too many fours in the ratings; she will help with quantitative issues. Some said they didn’t realize they were supposed to do the assessments, so Griff offered to let them collect in Winter, to which they agreed. Some are on sabbatical, others missed some of the goals, there are some gaps, some turned in what they thought was right. Some will be asked to reconsider their submissions and do better next time.  Griff presented the new Gen Ed upper division Issues courses at the AAC&U conference in Washington, D.C. Due to inclement weather, two of the panelists didn’t show up, so Griff was able to speak for the entire time. The peer review featured integration, and we were asked to write a piece on that. Griff will forward the piece to the other members. Both abstracts were rejected because we didn’t work with other schools to present, even though GVSU is much larger than the other schools.  Some schools are having a common first year experience. Griff was able to advise them of problems with the processes they were using. We’re ahead in many areas. |  |
| **Adjournment** |  | 3:45pm |