Grand Valley State University

*NOTES: General Education Committee*

Minutes of 3/17/2014

**PRESENT**: Kirk Anderson; Susan Carson; Emily Frigo; Roger Gilles; Melba Hoffer; Jose Lara; Paola Leon; Jagadeesh Nandigam; Alex Nikitin; Laudo Ogura; Martina Reinhold; Keith Rhodes, Chair; David Vessey

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

**NOT PRESENT:** Karen Burritt; Gary Greer\*; Brian Kipp; Scott St. Louis

**ON SABBATICAL**: Paul Sicilian

\* Participating in all work despite conflict with meetings

| Agenda Items | Discussion | Member |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Approval of current Agenda** |  | Approved per consensus |
| **Approval of Minutes from 3/10/2014** |  | Approved per consensus |
| **Small group meetings to review CARs and finish draft responses** | Groups worked on their reviews for the first 55 minutes. |  |
| **Discussing CAR responses** | In the blank CAR form, Question 12 reads: “The General Education Program is committed to continuous improvement based on the evidence you collect about student learning. What do you suggest to improve future student learning?”  This wording is vague - who is being asked to do what here? We will reword this for clarity for next year.  HNR 245:  It was hard to find complimentary things in this CAR to point out, so the response letter is short. Mainly, it simply isn’t responsive and informative. If a CAR is too bad, we have to depart from our intentionally positive tone this time and say “This needs to be redone.” Committee agreed that this CAR qualifies for this response. Assessment answers did not provide any useful information, so we can’t see what the instructor is doing. Honors may require special handling, as we often have problems with their assessments. The Chair may visit with the director of the Honors program, as the director seems to be on board with this process but it appears many faculty members are not. |  |
| **Curriculum items for consideration** | 8228: Course change – MGT 466  Returning Issues proposal (Committee as a whole)  This proposal needs amendment – what message shall we send? This was a fast track, but the proposal seems very disconnected. One problem is that content goal #2 is completely off. It shouldn’t take much change to get the course to work but we aren’t getting descriptions of how the goals will be met. Nothing shown teaches Collaboration skills; the instructor did not explain and connect the goal to specific objectives. Team and individual projects are there but explicit connections need to be made between what students are doing and what skill goals are being met. The Problem Solving section doesn’t address the goals. For Integration, is there just going to be a modeling of it? Examples were given, but the teaching method is harder to see. Will this teach students how to integrate? We don’t see multiple disciplines being brought together. It looks like a good project but will students make the connection between the activity and the goal? The instructor is cutting and pasting what he is doing but we want to see how each particular goal is being met and whether skills are being taught. It looks like a good course – should we accept it on that basis? This proposal is similar to others on which we’ve asked for amendment.  The Chair will consult with the professor on how to amend the proposal. He will communicate that we need to see connections between what the professor is doing and how that is meeting the goal. This will slow down the process but it seems called for here. Discussion may be helpful to the professor. If it is not fruitful, we will ask for an amendment to be returned to the committee. | M. Hoffer moved to have Chair contact professor. S. Carson second. Motion carried 13-0. |
| **Potential revisions to Collaboration description** | There is an ongoing problem with work on Collaboration that we might address by improving the description. What is the best language to use? This seems to be the most conceptually difficult for people. We need to find the best wording and use it everywhere.  Discussion ensued in which various suggestions were made to portions of the wording, with the pros and cons of using certain words to attract the readers’ attention and emphasize certain concepts. Important concepts to stress are that the activities need to occur over an extended period of time and that they include working toward a successful shared goal. Some professors are basing collaboration measures on small group discussions, but this is not sufficient. A motion was made to amend the goal’s description.  The description agreed upon reads:  **Collaboration is the process of working together and sharing the workload equitably to progress toward shared objectives, learned through structured activities that occur over a significant period of time.** People with a general education work collaboratively with others on both small and large projects. Effective collaborators are interdependent, interactive, accountable, and reflective. That is, they work interdependently within a group, interact productively with group members, demonstrate accountability for their own contributions to the work of the group, and reflect on the success of the group, including their own contributions and the contributions of others.  The above description will go into the rubric. The first sentence will be used where a shorter reference is appropriate.  Regarding issues with our instructions and descriptions, we are reluctant to react largely to small problems, as that tends to create too much confusion. Smaller issues usually work themselves out over time. However, we will address certain items if needed.  A sentence will be added to the Assessment page of the General Education website explaining the changes we are making and the reasons for them. In particular, we will address Question 13 via a statement to the effect of “Thank you for your feedback. We are making the following change in response to your input.” We will revisit the wording of our instructions more thoroughly after one entire cycle but we are already seeing that we have certain adjustments to make.  On the cover to new packets, we will put wording that makes the statement: “We’ve listened to you, and based on your feedback, this is how we’re doing things now. Here is the new and improved version.” | D. Vessey moved to amend the wording of the Collaboration goal. M. Hoffer second, motion carried 13-0.  R. Gilles moved to accept this wording. K. Anderson second. Motion carried 13-0. |
| **Chair’s Report** | The Chair will go over the last round of CAR reviews and send revisions back to members. He also asked members to consider who they would like to see as Chair of next year’s committee. This will be discussed in the next meeting. The Chair will send newly elected members invitations to the next meeting.  Older agenda items will also be brought up, to tie up loose ends. One potential agenda item will be to look at changes in the MACRAO agreement that will impact the Writing department. |  |
| **Director’s Report** | The Director presented the new Quick Guide version, which includes course titles. Themes will not appear in the catalog but Theme courses will persist for returning students. Institutional Marketing had interviewed students to obtain quotes on their views on General Education, but used the term “liberal education” instead. The Director discussed the differences between the two concepts and asked Institutional Marketing to choose the student quote most relevant to General Education. The student’s photo and quote will appear on the cover of the new handbook.  There will be two Quick Guides on the website, one for new students and one with Themes for returning students. The new Guides will be out by the end of April.  The Director thanked members for being flexible on goal changes as they are being developed. |  |
| **Adjournment** |  | 4:27 pm |