

GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

January 12, 2011

Olin 304

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 PM.

Members Present: Amanda Beveroth, Stefanie Bluemle, Lendol Calder, Mike Egan, Meg Gillette, Alli Haskill, Ellen Hay, Carrie Hough, Virginia Johnson, Brian Katz, Anna Knepler, Jason Koontz, Karin Youngberg

Guests Present: Mary Koski

AGENDA ITEM I: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion-Johnson, **Second**-Koontz

“To approve the General Education Committee meeting minutes of December 15, 2010.”

MOTION CARRIED

AGENDA ITEM II: NEW BUSINESS

A. Learning Perspectives Approval: GRD/ART 228 Digital Photography [PA]

Motion-Katz, **Second**-Koontz

“To approve a “PA” learning perspective for GRD/ART 228: Digital Photography.”

MOTION CARRIED

B. LSFY Course Approval: LSFY 103 Holding a Mirror to Society: Power and Privilege in Modern American Drama [Popple]

Motion-Egan, **Second**-Katz

“To approve LSFY 103: Holding a Mirror to Society: Power and Privilege in Modern American Drama [Popple] .”

Discussion: Alli noted that GPG approved this course for Spring Term 2010-2011 on a one-time basis. Gen Ed will now consider approval on a permanent basis beginning with the 2011-12 academic year. Alli reviewed the minor concerns that GPG had:

- Attendance and participation was weighted heavily. Alli noted that this is where the instructor does the *They Say, I Say* writing process teaching.
- Course Requirements section needs to indicate all major pieces are related to the essay
- Course Objectives in syllabus needs to stress importance of multi-draft paper
- The syllabus needs to be better aligned to reflect the above

Alli met with the instructor about GPG’s concerns, and received clarification about other issues:

- Class will be watching one of the plays either in person or on film (out of 5 plays)
- Instructor will correct *They Say, I Say* error in syllabus.

MOTION CARRIED

AGENDA ITEM III: OLD BUSINESS

A. General Education Reform

Alli indicated the work left to do on Gen Ed reduction is in regards to learning communities and the first-year sequence. The following questions need to be answered: Do we keep learning communities and eliminate something else? Do we try first-year sequence team teaching learning community-style?

We're at a disadvantage with the lack of assessment data on learning communities. Ellen Hay pointed out that Institutional Research is doing something with students with NSSE, looking at it as high-impact practices. Results, however, will not be in until the end of the term. Carrie Hough said that Mark Salisbury's data is intriguing which seems to be showing that we have instructors who have gotten statistically lower SRI scores in their learning communities, where they get good scores in the same stand-alone course. She taught a class by itself, and the same class in a learning community, and was rated higher in the stand-alone class. She did not teach differently; the students acted differently. She indicated there are a lot of students taking learning communities that they really don't want to take, which tells us there's something that needs to be addressed or shifted. It was noted that Mark's data is aggregated from 3-4 years ago, when there were problems with having enough learning community seats; there are sufficient seats now for students to fulfill their learning community requirement.

Anna Knepler was asked her opinion of how students felt about learning communities. She said students have a general bad attitude about them; they feel that if a class does not count toward their major, then they resent the requirement to take it. Amanda Beveroth said that getting students to take learning communities earlier would be beneficial as they would have more opportunities and choices later, and they seem to like learning communities more than seniors do.

Ellen reminded the group that the original intention of learning communities was to offer them in the sophomore or junior year; it became a senior experience just because of logistics. It was asked if there was a way to shift the LC requirement to the first or second year. Alli indicated that logistically, this is a challenge, but doesn't know if the semester model would pose the same challenge. The issue of prerequisites is a potential problem with putting learning communities in the first or second year. It was asked if there are there obstacles to the idea of attaching LSFY to the major and having the skills matrix apply? Would this work for majors outside of the humanities?

Students not being able to have ownership of their education was felt to be a major reason for student dissatisfaction with learning communities. Be that as it may, it was also felt that the majority of students do not know what major they want, or they change it along the way.

Lendol asked if the literature indicates learning communities as one of the top high-impact practices. Ellen Hay said that it does. The literature is powerful and it comes out of a much larger universe than

ours. Larger universities have a different kind of learning experience than that at Augustana. The committee commented then that perhaps it is not so powerful of a high-impact practice at Augustana.

A comment was made that then if learning communities are ineffective as a high-impact practice at Augustana, we should eliminate them and retain those that are easier.

The team-taught model being discussed in the first two years still remains attractive to some of the Gen Ed members. Ellen commented that some newer learning communities are like the immersion terms, and those have been wonderful experiences. It seems students dislike the smaller, traditional LC version, but like the “super community”. Ellen also commented that Psychology is having their 2nd year students take a one-credit seminar where they have to figure out their senior year, what they’ll do with Augie Choice money, etc. This is to help focus their senior project better. Ellen would like to see Augustana faculty and students capitalize on the Augie Choice opportunity.

Questions/ideas yet to pursue:

- Idea of sending a survey to the faculty to gauge their interest in keeping learning communities. Inquire if interest in teaching LSFY would pique if LSFY was more disciplinary.
- Could learning community requirement be folded into LSFY?
- Mark Salisbury’s SRI satisfaction data
- 6/35 seems unconcerned about Gen Ed’s attempt to reduce double-dipping (combining G and D), should Gen Ed remove this from the reduction list and reconfigure the math
- Some feel LSFY 101, 102, and 103 are of utmost importance in the Gen Ed program

AGENDA ITEM V: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Koski