

**GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
January 16, 2013  
Olin 304**

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 PM.

**Members Present:** Eric Pitts, Richie Benson, Lisa Allen, Lendol Calder, Carrie Hough, Rick Jaeschke, Brian Katz, Virginia Johnson, Stephanie Bluemle, Meg Gillette, Fred, Kristin Douglas, Rowen Schussheim-Anderson, Patrick Crawford, Janene Finley, Mike Egan, Patrick Crawford

**Guests Present:** President Steven Bahls, Dean Pareena Lawrence

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion-Gillette, Second-Katz**

**“To approve the December 5, 2012 minutes of the General Education Committee meeting.”**

**MOTION CARRIED.**

**ANNOUNCEMENT: NEW GEN ED MEMBER-**

Rowen announced that Lisa Allen will be taking John Pfautz’s place on the Committee for the rest of this term. Thank you and welcome to Lisa.

**PRESIDENT BAHLS’ VISIT**

President Bahls spoke to the committee about his goals for the strategic plan for the next five years, to be presented to the Augustana Board of Directors. Some of the goals are personal and others impact the entire school, and specifically, Gen Ed. He asked for Gen Ed’s help and input in laying out the strategic plan.

Steve Bahls said his first strategic plan was set in motion in 2005. When he arrived at Augustana in 2003 the Board had come up with their own strategic plan; subsequently, with input from the faculty and others, the first strategic plan was written in 2003; it was about 20 pages long. The Board agreed to have this be a campus-wide strategic plan. The next plan will be shorter.

Steve spoke about some of the challenges Augustana faces in the next five years, including how expensive tuition has become and how much we have to discount to get students to come here. He said we are more diverse than ten years ago. We are going to try to bring in more international students. Currently there are 2% but would like to increase that to 5%, like other similar liberal arts schools. The goal is to do so without “buying” international students. The uncertainty of Pell Grants and IMAP (Illinois Monetary Assistance Program) is also a concern.

Areas Steve would like to see strengthened in the next five years are majors and programs such as international study, internships, and other quality programs. He would like to see Augustana compete on the strength of our quality programs. He spoke about "MOOCs" [Massive Open Online Courses] and what impact they will have. Are they going to replace us? “Eat us for lunch?” Are they a delivery platform--a way of delivering or transferring knowledge as a means of teaching? Will we embrace them to a certain extent? Are they a way to have faculty get our name out, increase our scope, and possibly earn some extra money? Steve said we should use technology in ways that are effective to advance learning. He said the liberal arts will keep pace if we are smart and that the online revolution is a threat to community colleges. He said we need to continue to make the case for the liberal arts, that this is an

easy case to make to employers but harder to parents. Employers like the idea of students who have critical thinking skills. Students with, for example, engineering *and* liberal arts background are very marketable.

Steve also talked about tying learning outcomes to general education and to the major. He spoke of the “footprint of the core” and asked if the general education curriculum is currently too large or too small. He thinks it may be too large, and too expensive. Discussing partnerships with community colleges, faculty sharing, and other exchanges, he noted that 40% of students at University of Illinois started out at community colleges. Augustana needs to think about transfer agreements for students with Associates degrees, he felt. He said we need to “challenge our current assumptions.” He asked if we could transfer in students with a two year associates’ degree. “Do they need every course we require if they transfer in with an associates degree?” He asked if we could have a more vital articulation agreement with community colleges.

Steve discussed the four main foci of our marketing approach:

1. Augie Choice
2. The 4 year graduation promise
3. Our location and our ties to the community
4. “Academic All America”—students can excel in their majors and do other co-curricular and extra-curricular activities

Steve suggested Augustana should be a “P2P” school—Pupil 2 Professor. He discussed our innovative practices and suggested technology be used in appropriate ways. He also suggested partnerships for such areas as teaching Chinese, German, and Classics. Other ways to partner could include simultaneous video conferences. He would like new ideas and the strategic plan to come from the faculty, not just from the Board.

Lendol asked what Gen Ed needs to do given these concerns? He said we have a lot of data on AGES, with overall pretty good results. Some believe the Gen Ed curriculum is not helping us. Lendol said, “I think it’s dragging us a little.” If it is impacting students in a positive way, that’s good, but Gen Ed makes no sense to people. “Unless you’ve drunk the kool-aid” and know the importance of the liberal arts it’s a hard sell. Lendol said that Gen Ed needs to be coherent and more clear. He also brought up that our committee is working on defining our story and asked if we are wasting our time if the marketing people are going to have another story. Steve Bahls agreed that Gen Ed is a hard sell to parents. He urged Gen Ed to look at the composition of our majors and the composition of the general education curriculum and consider first how to improve it and then, how to market it.

Brian brought up the Pilot Program. This led to a discussion of blending the pragmatic with the ideal. Steve asked if students need to take Christian Traditions if they already have an Associates degree. Or if students can take courses elsewhere. He brought up the issue of calendar asking if the calendar does or does not support the strategic plan. Steve and Pareena agreed that partnering with other institutions is difficult with our current calendar. Virginia said if we reconsider calendar we need to prioritize so it does not become all we work on. Steve said he would like us “to flirt with MOOCs.” Maybe a student would take a MOOC in the summer, or a blended learning course from home if they went home sick. Maybe we could do something with the Arsenal? Lendol suggested “SOOCS”-- Somewhat Open Online Classes. Steve said, “I hope we’re willing to experiment. I hope we can shift the risk curve....We can’t do nothing.” Fred said he was surprised to have to go through multiple screenings

when we worked with the Western Governors University, an online Accredited school. He writes and reviews course objectives and test questions. The review process for each test question is extensive he said. The questions are written, and reviewed by a panel of college "experts" at least 3 times. It is quite rigorous process.

Brian said funding will be needed because a lot of our desktop computers need updating. He also thinks SI should be one of our Augustana distinctions, and that it is currently underfunded. Steve acknowledged this concern and discussed the possibility of bringing in some non-PhD teaching assistants to assist in labs and maybe other classes such as art classes (to allow class size to increase.) He said we may need to look at increasing class size somewhat. He also brought up "micro majors," majors within the majors, such as harp or mariachi bands in the Music Department. Lacrosse has brought in more students but Steve doesn't feel we can just use athletics to broaden Augustana. Graphic Design has been a successful new major. Public Health, Environmental Studies and International Relations are all under discussion as new majors.

Steve said he is open to reducing the size of the administration and the size of the faculty somewhat. He does not want to reduce pension benefits or salaries. 60% of the current operating cost of Augustana is the payroll. He wants to increase the endowment, which will provide a base to make investments. He said the science labs need enhancing and the fine arts building needs attention. After that he wants to shift the focus to improving majors and programs, not buildings. He would also like to see us slow down on spending so much to get merit students to come to Augustana. Mike asked if we are going to "buy international students" and Steve said he hopes we won't have to, he hopes we can attract international students who can pay. Rowen brought up that marketing consultants in the past have suggested we are doing fine things and we just need to be more intentional about it and market it better. We have heard in the past that we need to find ways to be unique, to have a certain niche. Steve responded he did not think we needed to have any "tall poles," he wants to strengthen all the majors, all the programs.

Virginia asked if the fact that our students double major makes us distinct. Pareena said our students do double major at a 5-6% higher rate than students at other colleges, so not at a major different rate. Steve said we need to make our programs understandable. Perhaps internships make us distinctive; perhaps general education could *if* we could convince families of the value of it. The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rowen Schussheim-Anderson, Chair  
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