

**GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
October 10, 2012
Olin 304**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM.

Members Present: Stefanie Bluemle, Joe Bright, Lendol Calder, Patrick Crawford, Kristin Douglas, Mike Egan, Margaret Farrar, Janene Finley, Meg Gillette, Carrie Hough, Rick Jaeschke, Virginia Johnson, Brian Katz, John Pfautz, Eric Pitts, Rowen Schussheim-Anderson

Guests Present: Mary Koski

LSFY COURSE APPROVALS (Farrar, Calder, Jaeschke, Crawford, Hough, Gillette)

1. **Motion**-Jaeschke, **Second**-Patrick

“To approve LSFY 102: From Enlightenment to Social Media: Is Anybody Listening? [Lederman]”

Discussion: This course has one-time approval from GPG, as it will be taught this coming winter term. Meg Gillette shared that Gillian may flesh out the syllabus further once the course has been taught. The committee’s comments:

- Course seems too harsh; potential of having no audience with our students
- Course lacked connections and the objectives and goals are not clear
- How will instructor ask students to make these connections in class?
- The common thought of social media can be explored in greater depth. What is the research showing? Could make the class stronger and students can use that for reference source.
- Why relate social media and technology to an era, and why that era of all eras?

Margaret Farrar added that something that has never been resolved with LSFY is if the course is to be disciplinary or something that both the instructor and the students come at it new. Gillian’s course seems like the latter. The committee would like the course resubmitted in the spring once it is fully fleshed out. Rowen or Meg will forward the committee’s comments to Gillian.

MOTION FAILED

2. **Motion**-Gillette, **Second**-Johnson

“To approve LSFY 102: From Ellis Island to Post-9/11: Exploring the Development of Immigrant Fiction [Al-wazed]”

Discussion: This course has one-time approval from GPG. Meg Gillette indicated that Umme was receptive to the suggestions given by Gen Ed and GPG to improve her course proposal (grammar issues, course more geared towards 103: more modern melting pot vs. diverse and changing world). Margaret Farrar reported she searched historical documents unsuccessfully to find a better description for LSFY 102. Anything official has not had those historical parameters descriptions in it. Meg Gillette will ask the LSFY 102 instructors group to see if they have any document they have kept to themselves.

MOTION CARRIED.

“G” SUFFIX APPROVALS (Pfautz, Katz, Finley, Egan, Benson, Bright)

1. **Motion**-Katz, **Second**-Egan

“To approve a “G” suffix to CLAS 330: Women in Rome [Day]”

Discussion: Committee felt course was similar to an ARHI course. They expressed disappointment with the brevity of the answers; proposal needs a more explicit explanation to questions. Western society has a root in Europe. How valid is the argument that this is examining something other than U.S.?

MOTION FAILED

2. **Motion-Egan, Second-Pfautz**

“To approve a “G” suffix to SPAN 321: Peninsular Culture & Civilization I [Arbesu]

Discussion: Committee liked the connection to the IDEA Center in the syllabus. Pre-requisite has D and G. The questions on the proposal form were not answered sufficiently.

MOTION FAILED

DISCUSSION OF “OUR STORY”

The “LP-PLUS” subcommittee discussed the story prior to the two committees reuniting. Definitions of “liberal arts” were discussed: Multiple lenses, competencies, dispositions, has to “do”, liberal arts is the scaffold to build on.

Lewis Menad book says any subject can be a liberal arts subject or a technical subject; it depends on how you teach it.

Parallel programs:

- Liberal Arts in Action – Knox
- Train for a career. Prepare for life – School of Life
- Building inquiring minds
- Learn to ask questions
- Together. Let’s find out

The entire committee reconvened to continue the discussion. No committee member brought forth examples of other institutions “stories” that really spoke to them. Luther College’s tag line communicated a lot more of the absence of that program. Roanoke undercut their actual academic requirements. Margaret Farrar indicated that many stories do not in fact match the reality of what is going on.

Lendol offered that our story should be catchy, compelling, expressed in a phrase or sentence, able to be given in a three-minute speech, and satisfying to a faculty audience. Brian recalled that Lendol mentioned in a previous meeting **“Entering the great conversation”** has those elements: it’s catchy and possible to expand on.

Carrie recalled discussions years ago about re-envisioning the Gen Ed program when the idea of clusters came about. That discussion was about connectivity which is missing in the way we talk about stories. When we talk about what we want students to be able to do, we don’t say a breadth of knowledge, but drawing out those connections is important, and not much is done to facilitate that. It is a big missing piece. Carrie identifies this as her story. Rowen added that the clusters discussions were also about integrative learning and umbrellas. The umbrella could provide some framework for the Gen Ed story.

Rick observed connections from the Board of Trustees meeting and Gen Ed’s discussions. He suggests Gen Ed discussions may have to go back further so that sense can be made of what the meaning of liberal arts is at Augustana. John Pfautz added that a simple definition of liberal arts is beyond our grasp and perhaps should be. A liberal arts-educated person sees that and knows it is more than black and

white. Lendol's approach is that we don't have to teach the seven different historical understandings to the liberal arts to our students. We are not working with Ph.D. students and shouldn't be that complex. There is a way to make it simple and powerful. Carrie Hough said the conversation should be more like What does a liberal arts education allow you to do? What are the competencies, the dispositions of a liberal arts-educated person? Margaret Farrar mentioned that in the Louis Menand book, the author says any subject can be a liberal arts subject and any subject can be a technical subject. It depends on how you teach it and how you approach it, which gets to the how, which gets to the action. Margaret added it is important that we not view this topic as the liberal arts versus pre-professional programs.

Meg Gillette pointed out that it may be a mistake to talk about liberal studies to students instead of pitching it as something first-year students relate to. Margaret Farrar did find that Beloit College's phrase did just that: "**Liberal Arts in Practice**", which gets to the idea of the use of it and what you do with it.

Mike Egan shared a catch phrase for consideration which is influenced by last week's discussion—Perry's model of development for 18-20-year-olds: "**Toward Commitment**"; commitment being the final stage that Perry speaks of, wherein this messy world where things are complicated and we start to wonder if all perspectives are relative. If a student comes out of Augustana ready to commit to something and they possess good oral communication skills, good written communication skills, and perspectives on how others look at things, etc. then we have succeeded.

Brian Katz on liberal arts: Either the world has meaning and we do not have direct access to it or the meaning comes from our interaction or interpretation of the world. As a result, much of knowledge is constructed and it is different lenses represented by different disciplinary approaches to accessing that meaning the world has. That the goal of liberal arts is to free individuals from one particular lens so that in the new context they can use the appropriate one and they can question the lenses that they bring with them and make a much more nuanced approach.

Knox College uses the phrase "**Freedom to Flourish**".

Rick Jaeschke commented that pursuit of the mind, or the connections, looking at perspectives and how they connect has meaning to him.

John Pfautz asked if the committee is thinking along the lines of imagining a structure, a skeleton, a scaffold, something we are building upon. If liberal arts is this image, then upon that is built the whole educated person. We try to imagine we are building upon something that starts on day one and intentionally grow and build upon that structure.

Lendol said he is attracted to other schools and people who have totally ditched the normal way of talking about general education and are instead way outside the box. He indicated that this is the direction he has been going. He feels it is a mistake to talk "eduspeak" in any of these statements that go out to other audiences. For example, we should not talk about general education in this new dispensation because general education to our students means wasted education. We need a new language. Lendol suggests **The School for Life** instead of calling it Augustana general education. The tag line would be **Train for a career. Prepare for life**. That recognizes that the liberal arts would be a set of mental disciplines that prepares you for life. Our students come here for a career, so that is where our story begins. It continues with: don't forget to prepare for life, which is what we think they will end up doing. Rick asked Lendol what about using the word "vocation" rather than career. Lendol thinks for the short version, "vocation" does not communicate very well; everyone knows what "career" is.

Rick Jaeschke pointed out the at the Board of Trustees meeting, much talk was going on about marketing, getting our message out to parents. The Gen Ed committee should, in turn, come up with its story to share with the greater campus community. He asked if the President should be in invited to a Gen Ed meeting to discuss.

Rowen reported that Sarah Lawrence College has virtually no gen ed requirements. Margaret Farrar added that Grinnell and Brown are the same way. Lendol added that they actually do have requirements, it's just that they depend on the majors to define the requirements, and because of the nature of the institution, the majors do a good job creating liberally-educated graduates that way.

John Pfautz researched College of Wooster and found an acronym on the website, CTCL, thinking it was their buzz word. He found the information interesting (advising, leadership, and all kinds of things built in). they list what they do in the first year, second year, third and fourth; not just general education course work separate from this, but a lot of things Augustana talks about that we hope will happen throughout the four years (interdisciplinary, service learning, leadership training, etc.). Rowen added that Wooster's buzz phrase is "Independent Minds Working Together".

Relating to that, Margaret Farrar reported the CEC is working on the Compass idea, where we identify student experiences we want students to have which results in them graduating with a clear sense of who they want to be or what they want to do after graduation, helping them become that whole person. It is housed in Advising. There are parallels between our gen ed discussions and Compass, and whatever Gen Ed builds, it would be good to be in conversation with Compass. John Pfautz updated Ellen Hay with current Gen Ed discussions and the overlaps our discussion have with CEC initiatives. Ellen suggested to John that Gen Ed go to the "Outcomes, Values, and Visions" statement to use as a starting place.

Lendol presented another idea that has the advantage of being something we already have, and that is building general education around the idea of inquiry. The University of Chicago's tag line for one of their gen ed programs is "**It's not what you know, it's what you want to know**". Lendol thought this perfect for inquiry. John Pfautz supported that idea. He threw out that every syllabus could have its own overarching question that seems way too vague or too hard to answer, and that topic would be discussed in class. Brian Katz said that this is what Ken Bain advocates. Meg Gillette added that Duke's first-year inquiry program has in each class a question that the class works on to answer. Carrie Hough added that this lends itself to the cluster model where you have students taking courses oriented around questions approached from various perspectives, e.g., "What is it to be human?" Because this is already established at Augustana, Margaret finds it attractive. It would be easy to make connections to the major because we know what disciplinary inquiry looks like. If we write departmental statements about inquiry, it would be easy to make those connections and get people talking in that language. New language is needed in order to make this work well. "Inquiry" is not an enticing word.

Virginia Johnson offered her tag line: "**Augustana...let's find out**" or "**Together, let's find out**". It is an invitation and very simple. She advocates for the inquiry route.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion-Katz, Second-Pfautz

"To adjourn the meeting at 5:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Koski, Academic Affairs