

**GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
October 3, 2012
Olin 304**

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

Members Present: Stefanie Bluemle, Joe Bright, Lendol Calder, Patrick Crawford, Mike Egan, Janene Finley, Carrie Hough, Rick Jaeschke, Virginia Johnson, Brian Katz, John Pfautz, Eric Pitts, RowenSchussheim-Anderson

Guests Present: Mary Koski

DISCUSSION ON DIVISION OF DUTIES

It was clarified that for Gen Ed approvals, a LSFY subcommittee and a “non-LSFY” subcommittee will meet separately to discuss their respective gen ed proposals, but that discussion on the “General Education Story” would be a committee of the whole until the committee is ready to break into small groups.

RowenSchussheim-Anderson announced that GPG has approved several LSFY courses, and that she will send those to the LSFY subcommittee soon.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion-Katz, Second-Bright

“To approve the General Education Committee meeting minutes of September 12, 2012 and September 19, 2012.”

The 9-12-12 minutes under comments for Margaret France’s LSFY 102 proposal should say “second-term” students instead of “second-year” students.

MOTION CARRIED TO APPROVE MINUTES AS REVISED.

LEARNING COMMUNITY APPROVAL

Motion-Katz, Second-Egan

“To approve the Learning Community: Healthcare and Education in Norway’s Welfare State ENCW 304: Special Topics: Global Nonfiction [Crowe]

EDUC 260: Comparative History of Education in America and Norway [Hanson]”

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF [PH] FOR EDUC 260

Motion-Katz, Second-Bright

“To approve a PH for EDUC 260: Comparative History of Education in America and Norway [Hanson].”

Discussion: There was uncertainty that a learning perspective could be given to a one-credit course. The Augustana Academic AGES Audit indicates that learning perspective credit is given to three-credit courses.

MOTION FAILED

APPROVAL OF [PS] FOR COMM 410

Motion-Katz, Second-Finley

“To approve a PS for COMM 410: Communication, Time and Technology [Varallo].”

MOTION CARRIED

DISCUSSION OF “OUR STORY”

Lendol Calder proposed the following process to use in discussing General Education at Augustana story.

1. Why a story?
2. What stories are other people telling (homework assignment researching other college’s stories)
3. What stories does Augustana already have? (Margaret Farrar mentioned documents we currently have, work faculty has done, etc.)
4. What might be? (maybebrand new, from left field proposals to make sense of our general education program). Paint on a canvas what we think the story might be.

Lendol shared the phrase, “The world is made of stories, not of atoms” and commented how this phrase has become very important in his work as a historian. He read from a book by William Kittridge...how what we are, how our character is formed, is because of the stories in our lives...Without storytelling, it’s hard to recognize reasons why one action is more essential than another. The gen ed program needs a story because he feels students do not understand the reason why our gen ed program asks them to take certain courses but not others; that there is no story about our general education program that tells students the answer to that natural question of ‘why are we doing this?’ Our story now is “eat your vegetables because they’re good for you.” When students ask “why?” we tell them to trust us. Even though some professors have great answers to the question why, the college as a whole could benefit from a college-wide story that is memorable. Our story should be one that helps students re-invent themselves from consumers to something else that we believe in that comes from the liberal arts. Lendol distributed a flyer from a London-based institution for adult general education called *The School of Life*, a snapshot of their institution and story. This is the kind of marketing tool that Augustana can present to students and parents explaining Augustana’s general education program. The character in this story of gen ed is something with so much power that it can be told compellingly in one sentence or paragraph, and then it will be told at length in documents we produce for ourselves.

Carrie Hough commented that as an advisor, she likes asking first-year students why they came to Augustana, but so few mention the liberal arts aspect. What does Augustana do differently than other colleges that we can tell a story about, that becomes important to students and cultivates them into a liberal arts culture. She is discouraged as an advisor that the “eat your vegetables” language is what it comes down to when explaining gen ed requirements to students.

Patrick Crawford suggested that the story might have a brand or tag line. Lendol refererred back to the atom. Everyone thinks of those rings around the atom. The atom in our mind is a story and we think of that mental picture, and that is the brand.

How do we share the story so that is agreeable to all faculty, staff and administrators?

John Pfautz asked if the story will be formed out of parts that are already uniquely Augustana, the characteristics and the chapters of the book we already have, or are we re-creating Augustana to fit into the story? The committee agreed that if we already have a story, it is the liberal arts. How it is packaged can be more attractive than raw vegetables. The story should be marketed to students looking at public universities so that we can explain that we are different and this is why we are different. Unique features we already have can be used: our mission and history statement, our successful alumni, etc. Augustana has a culture of community. We are related to our past community and we anticipate a

future that has to do with tradition and vision. These “buzz words” can provide a focus for the story. A backwards design to figuring out the story is a suggested approach to take.

Augustana does not know if the general education outcomes are what we want them to be. A broader narrative framework would be helpful to use in going back and assessing all the gen ed pieces to know if they make sense and are cohesive.

Rick Jaeschke advocates in favor of clarifying what we are doing and creating that story that makes it concrete. Virginia added that the program must be coherent as well. All of our gen ed pieces were chosen because they are all good, but not because they work well together. Mark Salisbury has shown research that indicates that the checking off the boxes approach are not good indicators that critical thinking is happening.

Joe Bright expressed concern at taking anything out of the current gen ed requirements, and believes the core curriculum is quite good. He feels students do not take the time to think about why the different general education components tie together into courses throughout their four years.

Eric Pitts, who works in Admissions and meets prospective students and their parents on a regular basis, commented that he has never once been asked to talk about Augustana’s general education program. He expressed concern that if the story becomes too narrow, that some prospective students will not want to become part of the story and will choose another college. It needs to be as broad as possible. Lendol added that the story must be appealing to 18-year-olds, their parents, current students and alumni, yet be consistent with what we want to do as a liberal arts college without using language that scares people off.

Virginia shared that her answer to ‘Why a Story?’ Because it is how humans best create and understand. It is a way to create coherence. It is a way to appeal to 18-year-olds and their parents and other constituencies. It is a way to guide intentionality.

Rowen asked that as people research other schools, to share their findings on the shared google chart. Schools need not be limited to those on the list, or to just peer and aspirants. Any college with a story can be shared.

NEW BUSINESS

Lendol Calder suggested that the committee compile a General Education Committee handbook which can be given to new Gen Ed members, much like the book Ellen Hay compiled and distributed to first-year advisors after AGES was implemented. Included should be all documents and related materials needed for a member to be able to conduct business of the committee. Consideration of a General Education Committee webpage where this documentation could reside was also suggested as an alternative to paper copy. RowenSchussheim-Anderson added that all faculty would be interested in such a “document” and will begin working on this.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion-Katz, Second-Pfautz

“To adjourn the meeting at 5:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Koski, Academic Affairs