

Augustana College

Rock Island, IL

GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE**REVISED MEETING MINUTES****October 13, 2010****Olin 304**

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

Members Present: Lendol Calder, Mike Egan, Margaret Farrar, Meg Gillette, Randall Hall, Alli Haskill, Carrie Hough, Brian Katz, Anna Knepler, Jason Koontz, Karin Youngberg

Guests Present: Adam Kaul, Mary Koski

AGENDA ITEM I: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion-Koontz, Second-Egan APPROVED

“To approve the October 6, 2010 General Education Committee meeting minutes as presented.”

AGENDA ITEM II: NEW BUSINESS

Update from Academic Affairs: Nothing to report.

AGENDA ITEM III: OLD BUSINESS**Learning Perspectives Approval (PP)**

Motion-Egan, Second-Hough APPROVED

“To approve “PP” for HIST 311: Renaissance and Reformation in Italy [Mayer] as updated on 10-8-10.”

Discussion: Tom Mayer provided an additional response to our request for an answer to how primary and secondary sources are addressed in the syllabus. Lendol Calder has sat in on dozens of Tom Mayer’s classes and upheld Tom Mayer’s latest explanation about primary and secondary sources in HIST 311, and confirmed that Tom absolutely meets the learning perspective’s criteria of incorporating primary and secondary sources in his courses.

General Education Reform:

The librarians and LSFY faculty gave their feedback on gen ed reform, which Allie summarized. At the LSFY meeting one participant felt very strongly that Augustana must preserve LSFY in its three-class format to ensure that all students have exposure to liberal studies. Also suggested was to come up with innovative pedagogies...neat ways to address the skills matrix, and expanding definition of skills so there’s more continuity with LSFY and other courses. These comments will be added to the other documents in Gen Ed’s supplementary materials folder. Alli reviewed Joe McDowell’s summary of the previous week’s discussion. She reviewed the specific charge Gen Ed was given: to reduce Gen Ed graduation requirements not to exceed 1/3 of total graduation requirements....41 courses down to 35

courses. Christian Traditions was briefly discussed. This required course is separate from the other Gen Ed requirements. Jason mentioned that President Bahls would be open to broadening the scope of this requirement. A religion class could potentially be one of the cluster courses.

The heavy reliance on adjuncts in the first-year program was discussed. Augustana invests a great deal in faculty development, yet the majority of teachers in the first-year program are new faculty. This is truer in LSFY 101 than in the other two terms. Teaching LSFY 101 is thought of as a very fun experience and there is a very high satisfaction rate from those who do teach it. It is a critical time in the student's education, and student feedback is very heavy. Why can't more non-English senior faculty teach LSFY 101? The committee does feel that there is a high level of satisfaction with the current teaching faculty; that's not the concern. A lot of colleges have these programs to introduce students to faculty who they hope to form long-time relationships. If we're calling it Rhetoric in the Liberal Arts, and the burden is put on humanities, what kind of message does that send? Another discussion topic to think about is the question of what's really broken in the Gen Ed program. One thing broken is the volunteer model of the program. Augustana relies on volunteers for gen ed and that may not be a good idea. At Luther it's stipulated in faculty contracts that faculty teach "x" number of courses in gen ed. Another broken piece brought up is that Augustana doesn't have the "three-minute plausible elevator speech" explaining the gen ed system that should be delivered to all first-year students. Lendol suggests the title "Rhetoric in the Liberal Arts" is also a problem. From an 18-year-old's perspective, the words don't mean anything. A title with a marketing element is needed. His idea is to start with a subject 18-year-olds are interested in; one vital to their development, e.g., sex and dating relationships, living apart from their parents, etc. He doesn't advocate a single course and single list of books....there could be themes which let students build their own disciplines to fit that container. The containers he imagines are love, money, God. What ties this all together with existing gen ed is inquiry. That would be where your talk starts. The liberal arts has a rich tradition of addressing these topics. Margaret indicated a broken piece might be the bookend experience: tying what students do in their first year to what they're asked to do in their junior/senior year; whatever is done should have a bookend. A freshman capstone experience could be called freshman inquiry. Jason Koontz brought up the Teagle group, which has tons of data from surveys with interesting results. Clearly there is a gap between what senior inquiry should be and with gen ed. Develop something to make senior inquiry more transparent for the students. Is inquiry a general theme for Augustana's gen ed? The Wooster program in senior inquiry has been around for awhile and they are reporting great success. Everything is built on their senior inquiry program. Here at Augustana, faculty are excited about SI, but students aren't. Augustana could benefit from repackaging SI from the ground on up. Incorporating a unified language, embedding it into all four years to help students see connections.

It was asked if we can provide like an honors experience for every student. Margaret reminded us, that was the question GEWG asked. The simple answer was no. A complicated answer would be to look at the Paideia program and think about its limitations and strengths. They are very much like us. Margaret would be happy to talk to them, or invites any other gen ed member to contact them. She thinks the idea at Bates is good, but seems loosely connected. She would ask them what follow-up they do to ensure students are making connections. Karin said that Luther has been doing Paideia a long time. If we here forever reconstruct our program every three years, it doesn't matter what model it is, and we should be careful we don't do that.

Margaret ended the conversation by reminding the committee to not forget Mark Salisbury's lesson that the shell of the course regarding the skills matrix matters less, and that we should be concentrating on high impact practices.

AGENDA ITEM V: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Koski