

Augustana College

Rock Island, IL

GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE**MEETING MINUTES****October 20, 2010****Olin 304**

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

Members Present: Amanda Beveroth, Lendol Calder, Anne Earel, Mike Egan, Margaret Farrar, Meg Gillette, Alli Haskill, Carrie Hough, Virginia Johnson, Brian Katz, Anna Knepler, Jason Koontz, Joe McDowell

Guests Present: Mary Koski

AGENDA ITEM I: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion-Katz, Second-McDowell APPROVED

“That the General Education Committee meeting minutes of October 13, 2010 be approved as revised.”

AGENDA ITEM II: NEW BUSINESS

Update from Academic Affairs – Margaret informed the committee that Ellen Hay will begin attending Gen Ed meetings to prepare for Margaret’s leave.

AGENDA ITEM III: OLD BUSINESS

Learning Community Approval: The learning community proposal for Death and the Rest of Life: Theological and Literary Reflections was not submitted. No action was taken.

General Education Reform: Margaret compiled an easy-to-read list of statements the committee has reached consensus on in recent discussions and handed it out. She asked the committee what they see on this document that they agree/disagree upon, things they think should be moved to a different category, etc.

Margaret was asked to connect (Positive) bullet point 1 with (Negative) bullet point 5. Margaret explained that in the case of individual LP courses, they are evaluated initially by Gen Ed when they’re approved, but what’s actually happening in the class is unknown. There is more clarity with LSFY because of Wabash data. It would be desirable for assessment to be built in at the front end. After discussion committee concurred to move I to (Undecided) and keeping Q in (Positive).

A concern was expressed that Margaret’s document does not address Gen Ed’s charge from the 6/35 committee. Margaret said that this document is just a place to start writing down ideas. We have not agreed yet on any of these, and until then we cannot contemplate a recommendation to make to the

6/35 committee. Joe stated from a departmental point of view, he would like to see Gen Ed recommendations be made public soon so that his department can begin to shape what they do based on those recommendations. Margaret added that even just a “shell” list of recommendations may be enough to start with for departments, rather than waiting for a well developed plan. For example, to tell them that LSFY will not change, will be helpful to departments who are trying to get to their 6/35 charge. It was then suggested Gen Ed spent ½ hour deciding on one part of Gen Ed to cut so that one model at least can be taken care of. There was still some uncertainty in the meeting about what exactly Gen Ed needs to cut, and Alli stated 9 to 12 credit reduction is what’s needed. Joe illustrated up on the board that we currently require:

3 LSFY

9 LP

1 Suffix

2 LC

It was asked, for example, if you move the team-taught course idea to the first year, third term, you’d take one LSFY? The response was that, ‘No, it would take away two LCs’. A concern about the LC LSFY model is if Augustana can realistically get faculty to teach it. Many faculty like teaching LCs because it is discipline-specific and upper level. Can you get them to migrate to LSFY when we already have trouble doing that? A positive note is that there will be no net increase in cost of the program. LCs are much more expensive because you pay both teachers.

It was asked what GEWG’s original goals were with LCs. GEWG envisioned that LCs should occur in the sophomore year. It is believed that they are currently in junior and senior year because of the way the courses were. They are also modeled like honors. Alli said this discussion reminded her of an idea brought up once upon a time of keeping something like our current LSFY and putting LPs on those.

This begged the question, ‘What’s the argument against LPs?’ And, ‘is there anything wrong with them in that they don’t do anything besides provide breadth?’ Margaret asked the committee to think about if this is a legitimate goal to pursue versus focusing on the high impact learning experiences brought up in our conversations. Joe stated that students are noticing they’re getting breadth, if they are thematically linked and intentional about how they are connected.

The discussion turned to the Bates’ model and the list of 50 courses in a cluster; where we are looking at a much more focused list. Will this task be harder than we think? Would we be surprised if we don’t have 10 courses to put in a cluster? We should begin to brainstorm about the cluster ideas. Also, in these clusters, do we imagine having 6 LPs still in there that the English Department can handle? Perhaps it may be smarter to have 4 really broad categories of clusters.

Would there be a burden to students to find courses to create a cluster? If students are undecided as to their major, does the cluster idea presume coherence of interest that may not be possible as they are entering college? Since one-third of their coursework is general education, if they change their mind later, those already taken can count as their second third, and they wouldn’t have wasted any classes.

Margaret stated we should build more skills into this, and offering more skill development than we're currently doing, which is another way to build intentionality. We could look at the matrix and expand it into LPs. It was thought that there might be resistance from departments if that was allowed because we wouldn't have control with the order in which students took them. Margaret didn't think it would be so bad. Relating back to Lendol's coherent narrative idea, if our coherent narrative had the same kind of language used in LSFY, we would expect this in other courses. You'd have similar kinds of learning outcomes generated in the syllabus. You're connecting skills not content. Amanda added that you can definitely tell which professors teach both LSFY and 100-level courses because they incorporate the same skills students try to achieve in LSFY courses. The Gen Ed committee loved this comment.

Is one potential model for LSFY and cluster idea, that when we have LSFY 101 and 102, would the third course be introduction to the cluster? Margaret thought that might be more feasible than an introduction to the major, which she believes will not work. In that case, that double thing (103 taught five weeks at a time with two faculty members) could be organized like a cluster.

Brian mentioned a Religion 101 residential seminar he took with people he lived with which ran in a non-course way. It was very powerful and could fall under other ways to achieve the community element.

Margaret suggested everyone try to imagine a cluster by thinking about what they'd like to teach in, then sifting through the catalog to see if it's feasible based on current course offerings. If anyone needs help, Liesl or Susan would be happy to help. Then it'll be clearer if this is going to be hard or easy to accomplish. These would be 100 level courses and have LPs tied to them. Next week we will share our findings. Please email them to Alli Haskill.

Next week we will also try to focus on LSFY, streamlining LC and LSFY.

AGENDA ITEM V: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Koski