

Augustana College

Rock Island, IL

GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE**MEETING MINUTES****October 6, 2010****Olin 304**

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

Members Present: Amanda Beveroth, Mike Egan, Margaret Farrar, Meg Gillette, Randall Hall, Alli Haskill, Carrie Hough, Brian Katz, Jason Koontz, Joe McDowell

Guests Present: Adam Kaul, Mary Koski

AGENDA ITEM I: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion-Koontz, Second-Hall APPROVED

“That the General Education Committee meeting minutes of September 29, 2010 be approved after correcting spelling of word ‘classes’.”

AGENDA ITEM II: NEW BUSINESS

Update from Academic Affairs: Margaret informed the group that the “Why We Must Change: The Research Evidence” piece written by Lion F. Gardiner is up on Moodle. This is Ellen Hay’s source on breadth referred to in a previous meeting—a nice article summarizing his work. Margaret quoted from the document the specific words we use and reference:

“For tens of thousands of students in a large national study, specific curricular design had little effect on most of 22 general education outcomes examined. The types of breadth of courses, specific courses available, or relative flexibility to choose among courses had little impact on these outcomes. On the other hand, a core curriculum had salutary effects on many developmental outcomes. And a number of dimensions of students’ satisfaction with their college experience were, in large degree, ‘uniquely attributable to having a true-core curriculum’”.

Margaret also reference Derek Bok’s book which claims that the more choices students are given, the better they like the program; the fewer choices, the less they like it. Bok claims the same is true for faculty.

AGENDA ITEM III: OLD BUSINESS

Learning Perspectives Approval (PP)

Motion-Egan, Second-Farrar NOT APPROVED

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

Discussion: Tom Mayer provided a document entitled “How to write summaries” in response to Alli’s request that he clarify his responses to questions 2 and 3 on the PP application (questions of how primary and secondary sources are treated in the course). The committee reiterated that their primary

objection to approving this proposal is that the application was submitted incomplete and questions were not answered, especially questions 2 and 3. The committee was made aware that they have approved other proposals where the questions were not answered specifically as part of the application proposal form and that precedence has been set. In response, it seems wrong for the committee to have a tendency to say there is precedence, and therefore make approvals based on that fact. Also, if proposals were completed thoroughly, then the committee could get through its approval process much more efficiently. Faculty submitting proposals should also realize that answers (or lack of) that may seem common sense to them, may not be interpreted the same from faculty on the gen ed committee in different disciplines.

General Education Reform:

- Would Luther's Paideia program be feasible? It's like our LSFY program, but everyone teaches the same kind of courses...humanities heavy....might be problematic, as it won't touch on Q suffix, but may meet diversity requirement. Having more common text in first-year program, like Paideia; easier to do in semester model. In LSFY 101 much more commonality among the sections of it than in 102 and 103. If we went to two-course system of 101 and 102 would it be easier to come up with 101 using common texts and skills set? It would be tough for many students that first year if they've done summer connection over the summer—they're in chemistry and foreign language.
- Find way of rewarding students who choose interdisciplinary paths; reward them for things we are already doing (e.g., having an Africana Studies minor...)
- Joe McDowell suggested reducing LPs to 6. Students could choose 6 out of a menu of 10 intentionally-designed, preselected/preapproved courses in thematic groups taken in freshman or sophomore year so as to remain with same cohort of students. This allows more of a buy-in for students' designing their own education. It would have more community and the intentional criss-crossing of themes that we currently have in our learning communities. Potential concern: advising...something we don't do very well.
- Would learning communities have an option for these clusters?
- What if we have rhetoric in liberal arts thing and then a LC built into first-year sequence to get intentional interdisciplinary.
- Could LC be moved to fall term? It would be important to keep the skills the same, as a continuation of skill development. What content would be cut: rhetoric in liberal arts? These are questions to decide. Is it possible to collapse first-year experience into two terms? If not going to semester system, are those three courses kept, or can skills development be effectively reduced? It might be simple if it was an LC term, folding in LC experience into first-year experience—like getting students into multidisciplinary ideas right away. Looking at ideas from more than one perspective seems to be more important than the skills.
- Some faculty might not be willing to adopt the changing their learning community. They could be encouraged to rethink this as an immersion term. Or, perhaps current LC could be folded into options and those connected clusters to address these peak experiences that we don't require in our perspectives courses. Or if LC went away, in its place could be something on top of the cluster (e.g., "In order to take this course you must take __, __, __, __, __, __"). Margaret reminds the committee not to forget the suffixes.

- The literature indicates that having learning communities earlier helps freshman retention.
- Have two faculty and two perspectives in learning community. Have two faculty members share two classes 50/50 for 3 credits. Each teaches two sections of each class and is responsible for half of the class. Students would sign up for one class and would take 3 credit learning community and stay in that all year, and another group of students would take a different section of the same thing.
- Joe McDowell drew up the model on the board and his summary is an attachment to these minutes.
- Learning Community built into first-year sequence, fall term – intentional interdisciplinary
- Margaret said in looking at the overall reduction in sections and how that impacts majors, we need to look at tenure track lines in any calculations and indicated that it's time to write up a model, do the math, and see where we have gaps.

AGENDA ITEM V: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Koski

Attachment

A snapshot of our GenEd thoughts
10/6/2010

- I. First Year Program
 - Under a trimester system:
 - a. LSFY101—more or less as currently designed
 - b. LSFY102—newly designed. Skills and dispositions redistributed across the 3 trimesters.
 - c. LSFY103—a team-taught LC-like course. Two sections of each thematically considered course will be taught in 5-week increments by two faculty members.
Example:
 - a. LS103-01, McDowell first 5 weeks; Kaul second 5 weeks
 - b. LS103-02, Kaul first 5 weeks; McDowell second 5 weeks
 - Under a semester system:
 - a. A new LSFY101 which absorbs some of the skills and dispositions of the current 102.
 - b. A new LSFY102 would be taught on the model of option (c) above.
- II. Perspective Cluster
 - a. a group of courses would be organized thematically. Students would take 6 courses that correspond to today's "perspectives." These courses may be from a collection of 6-10 courses taught by faculty who have agreed to coordinate their courses around a theme. Some suffixes may also be satisfied. If they are not all available in a given cluster, suffixes will be required from other classes.
 - b. A list of courses will be made available from which a student will produce a core liberal arts minor. Ideally, this will happen with the help of a re-invigorated advising system. Each student's program will be vetted by a faculty body, such as Gen Ed.
 - c.
- III. Suffixes

We will keep the current 4 suffixes. Some can be fulfilled by "double dipping" in courses from the cluster. Any not fulfilled in that way must be fulfilled by courses taken outside the cluster.
- IV. LC/Capstone?

The LC requirement will be fulfilled by the team-taught last course of the First Year. Faculty who want to offer LCs on the current model are encouraged to do so. One hopes that students volunteering for such double offerings will be more interested and happier with their choice.

This reduces the GenEd load for students and perhaps fixes some perceived weaknesses in our current offerings.

1. The "perspectives" load is reduced from 9 courses to 6 courses.
2. The perspectives are now thematically linked, correcting the problem of "randomness" or cafeteria-style course selection

which has been a concern. Our research shows that connections between courses in different disciplines is more effective and meaningful than a simple “breadth” requirement.

3. The LC is moved into the first year experience. Students will not be as annoyed at having to pick whatever LC they can fit in their schedule at the end of their college career. Community happens best in the first year, before individuals head off into majors.
4. Making the LC one of the 3 credit courses of the first year sequence also reduces student load by one more course.