

GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING
1/27/2010
Olin 304

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 PM.

Members present: Tom Bengtson, Mariano Magalhaes, Allen Bertsche, Fred Whiteside, Anne Earel, Ashley Booth, Randall Hall, Kristin Douglas, Alli Haskill, Dan Lee, and Josh Morgan.

AGENDA ITEM I: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve minutes from the 12/16/09 and 1/13/10 meetings. 1- Allen, 2- Mariano; APPROVED

AGENDA ITEM II: NEW BUSINESS

A. "I" Suffix approval for PSYC345 Developmental Psychology (Mull)

Motion; 1- Mariano; 2- Anne APPROVED

B. Update from Academic Affairs

Margaret was not here today; no update.

C. Gen Ed's feedback to the curriculum taskforce.

Motion to submit gen ed's revised memo to the curriculum taskforce; 1- Tom, 2- Josh APPROVED

Updates to the memo included information about current PE and foreign language requirements.

D. Continued LSFY discussion

Discussion:

General education members need to represent our stakeholders (division members) as we proceed in this discussion.

Input from the registrar indicates that the overall size of AGES is generally not problematic from a students' perspective (i.e., there are sufficient seats in Perspectives courses). LCs are the only serious registration concern at this point.

A student committee member commented that some students don't understand why they need to take 3 additional Perspectives courses in addition to the 6 (one in each Perspective).

A suggestion was made that perhaps faculty should be more deliberate in their course development, syllabi, and gen ed proposals when explaining how their Perspectives course fits into the broader gen ed system. In response to this suggestion, a concern was raised that perhaps such an approach would be too contrived- even if we were to use consistent language across courses to explain aims of various Perspectives courses, students' understanding may not improve.

Foreign language/gen ed discussion:

*From an admissions standpoint, many prospective students are impressed at the variety of language courses offered at Augie.

*40% of our students do not end up taking foreign language courses at Augie because they meet our requirement in a different way

Christian traditions discussion:

*Might a “religious traditions in America” approach be more inclusive than our current model? Response: No, and it could be even more restrictive than our current model in that other areas of the world necessarily would be excluded.

-Given the church’s relationship with the college, it is difficult to imagine a model without a Christian traditions requirement. Several members of the faculty and the Board likely would oppose such a model.

*Is it possible to develop courses that contrast Christianity with other faiths? Response: Yes, there is a precedent (e.g., Christianity and Asian Religions)

-The Religion Dept. has considered pairing courses (e.g., an Islam and a Christian Traditions course).

Note: all 200 level religion courses currently carry an LP.

The Religion Dept. has found that students are pleased with having a RELG prefix on the second year required religion courses (formerly LS110 courses). Perhaps this model should be extended to the current LSFY courses (i.e., have them carry a departmental prefix instead). Perhaps such a move would make more sense to students (and perhaps some faculty) than our current model. A related suggestion was to reserve certain course numbers for LSFY/gen ed courses (e.g., all courses numbered 111 could satisfy first year general education sequence requirements.)

Response: A possible negative outcome may be that some faculty may view this as a way to recruit students into various majors.

Response: The original conception was to create courses outside the departments. This may be a valid objection. GEWG envisioned a cross-curriculum focus in these courses.

Response: Interdisciplinary courses are few on our campus- LCs certainly provide them and LSFY courses have the potential to be interdisciplinary as well. Getting rid of an LS prefix may dilute this.

There already is a lot of double dipping happening with a single course satisfying multiple requirements. Students may actually have more freedom in exploring new areas of study if we reduced the number of required LPs but still cap the number of major/single department courses.

There is considerable variability between majors with regard to double dipping and student flexibility in taking cross-departmental courses. Some majors are so prescribed that students have little schedule room to explore various disciplines whereas others do almost no double dipping.

If we keep our current LS designation for first year courses, how do we get students and faculty to become enthusiastic about these courses?

Is there an issue related to the way we have named these courses? Is there a better way to present these courses to our students and faculty?

Other concerns with our current model: our class size once again has increased to 24-26 from the 19 that was intended, which hurts the skills development.

Is there a way for a student to take gen ed courses throughout their four years at Augie? Could there be one course taken each year? A different model may be to extend LS-like courses beyond the first year.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Immersion course information is coming soon. It is coming to us for discussion only (it has not been through departmental and divisional approval yet). We will vote during finals week.

A Gen Ed Friday conversation will be held on Feb. 12.

There is a possibility that the committee may be able to meet earlier in the day during Spring term.

There will be a chair position open at the end of the year and we should plan for a vote mid-Spring.

The next meeting is scheduled for Feb. 3, 2010.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:57.