

**GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**3/31/2010**  
**Olin 304**

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 PM.

**Members present:** Tom Bengtson, Anne Earel, Kristin Douglas, Alli Haskill, Dan Lee, Margaret Farrar, Carrie Hough, Allen Bertsche, Dan Conway, Virginia Johnson, Ashley Booth, Josh Morgan, and Randall Hall

**AGENDA ITEM I: APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes from the 3/24/2010 were not sent to the committee in advance of the meeting, so they will be up for approval in the 4/7/10 meeting.

**AGENDA ITEM II: NEW BUSINESS**

A. Update from Academic Affairs

1. Augustana's new Director of Institutional Research has been selected. Mark Salisbury will begin this position on August 1<sup>st</sup>. He will help the General Education committee think about assessment and other pertinent issues. Mark is a Teagle fellow. He is a PhD student from University of Iowa; he has extensive experience with the Wabash Study and other related projects. He has diverse educational and work experience that is relevant in particular to Gen Ed initiatives.

2. The General Education committee is in need of a new chair to begin next year. An informational sheet detailing the responsibilities of this position was distributed to the group. Interested individuals are encouraged to contact Margaret or Kristin in the weeks ahead. On a related note, if members have suggested revisions to the Responsibilities sheet, they are encouraged to share them.

**AGENDA ITEM III: OLD BUSINESS**

A. Continuing AGES Discussion (LSFY)

*Review:* Following the past weeks' discussions of LSFY options for us NOT to consider, we are left with 2-3 possible models: 1) status quo; 2) moving from 3 to 2 LSFY courses (retaining LSFY 101 similar to its current form and in lieu of 102 and 103 offer a FY inquiry course that addresses the current skills matrix); and 3) keep 3 LSFY courses and turn the third into a departmental offering with an LP.

*Discussion:*

Regarding the model that would involve retaining a 3<sup>rd</sup> FY course to be departmentally linked/LP'd, one concern is that some majors do not currently have a 100 or 200 level intro course that could be readily adapted for such a purpose.

Another option is that perhaps all departments/majors could be requested to develop a first year offering that could be LP'd.

Historically, many departments have not responded well when they have been required to develop gen ed offerings. This would present a major practical challenge for some of our largest departments on campus.

One option not on the table but that may be viable is an option involves a mandate for departments to participate in the LSFY program.

If we kept the status quo, would it be possible to raise the class sizes for 102 courses which do not have the writing demands (e.g., multi draft research paper) that 103 has?

One instructor who has taught in both 102 and 103 reported that 102 was equally time intensive and writing intensive (though different assignments were involved) so a class reduction only for 103 may not be helpful or equitable.

Response: It may be mistaken to assume that all 102 and 103 courses are taught in the same manner.

A practical reality exists that we must address: even with raising the class sizes next year to 22, we still are facing a staffing shortage.

Two questions were raised: What is wrong with our current gen ed system? What's right with the current model?

One instructor responded that there was a feeling of being constantly behind. We have added numerous elements to our original writing focused rubric (e.g., oral communication, quantitative skills, etc.) our skills matrix is too overloaded.

What recommendations could we make for all 100 and 200 level courses across the campus? How might other faculty (beyond those teaching in gen ed) help share the responsibilities?

The consistency piece has been working well in the LSFY sequence. We are uncertain if we would lose some consistency if we were to reduce the first year AGES program to include only 2 courses.

Ashley emailed SGA representatives to gauge their perceptions of the gen ed program. She reported that seniors had different responses than first year students. Many of the first year students seem to be picking courses that they perceive to relate in content to their anticipated major. Most of the complaints were about the additional required 3 LPs and not about the LSFY courses. Students from the Honors program tend to appreciate the community aspect (same students across terms) as well as the continuity across terms.

Perhaps we should try to survey students at all levels. Generally we have only surveyed first year students near the end of their first year.

Sequential courses are attractive for many reasons, however, they pose major challenges (some may change their mind mid-sequence and drop; others want to add; students in foreign language and chemistry courses find it difficult to schedule other sequential courses.) We also would lose the choice option that tends to be a positively received aspect of our current program.

RWC tutors report liking the common language supported by *They Say I Say*- it helps them have a common lexicon with the students with whom they work.

We should collect data on this question: would reducing LPs from 9 to 6 enable additional faculty members to staff additional LSFY sections?

What other data do we need to present alongside whatever proposal we end up advancing? Some suggestions included the following:

-Why don't instructors currently teach in gen ed?

-Survey responses from larger student group would be helpful including, perhaps, students who have graduated.  
-Some of our existing data (skills development data)  
-Is there any evidence that LPs are effective? (data do not exist)  
Other information sources to consider (sources that reflect what our current program does well).  
*The Essential Learning Outcomes* document from AAUP—our current program covers many of these outcomes.  
Article from *Inside Higher Ed*, “Third Way in Liberal Education”

Recommended future timeline based on our successful LC model from last year:

Have data ready to present at the August faculty retreat;  
End of fall/early winter- present clear model for a faculty vote

Among other things, the data should address these questions:

How do we assess LPs?

How could we weave LSFY skills into the second and third year?

How would decreasing LPs from 9 to 6 impact the ability of new faculty to teach in the LSFY program?

In sum, we are left with 2 primary LSFY options to continue to discuss:

- 1) Status quo or modified status quo for LSFY courses
- 2) 2 course model w/ a FY seminar and 101 equivalent

## **ANNOUNCEMENT**

The next meeting is scheduled for April 7, 2010.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:08.