

Augustana College

Rock Island, IL

GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE**REVISED MEETING MINUTES****September 29, 2010****Olin 304**

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

Members Present: Anne Earel, Mike Egan, Meg Gillette, Randall Hall, Alli Haskill, Carrie Hough, Virginia Johnson, Anna Knepler, Jason Koontz, Joe McDowell, Karin Youngberg

Guests Present: Mary Koski, Mark Salisbury

AGENDA ITEM I: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion-Egan, Second-Hough APPROVED

“That the General Education Committee meeting minutes of September 22, 2010 be approved as presented.”

AGENDA ITEM II: NEW BUSINESS

AS&D – AS&D is asking the Gen Ed committee for their recommendation on a last-minute student request for a PL and a PP. The original AS&D petition was passed around to each member and a consensus was made to support the students’ request. Alli will forward that information to Liesl Fowler.

A. Mark Salisbury – After Mark spoke about his new role at Augustana, he explained a bit about Teagle grants Augustana is involved in and explained the Wabash Study and MALLA (Midwest Alliance for Learning in the Liberal Arts: Alma College, Augustana College, Illinois Wesleyan University, Gustavus Adolphus College, Luther College and Wittenberg University [to study civic engagement]).

Teagle 1: to study writing, critical thinking and civic engagement skills

Teagle 2: to study the effects on student development of senior capstone projects

Teagle 3: to study how our understanding of faculty work enables or constrains our use of high-impact practices in our classes.

The Teagle 3 grant focuses on immersion terms at Augustana. They’ll compare the new immersion courses with the same courses as they were taught before they became an immersion term to try to get at what these high-impact practices are.

NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) survey’s premise is that educational quality is linked to the frequency with which students engage in activities shows to be effective in promoting student growth. Mark has a lot of data and can run an analysis of it by many ways to provide useful data to departments for the first-year experience, and encourages faculty to ask him for this data.

High-impact practice, defined by Mark, are experiences in education that students have which have an effect on increasing their intrinsic motivation to engage, e.g., having a planned activity in class, and then the students take the class somewhere you didn't think it could go, and you walk out of there and think 'that was great'. There's much research that shows certain kinds of educational experiences create those kinds of experiences. Some of these are more discrete programs (learning communities, first-year seminar courses, diversity, study abroad, service learning, collaborative learning, peer-based learning, peer mentoring, small-group projects, team-based learning), however, it's not necessarily a discrete thing, as much as it is what's going on in the course. The research is clear that these kinds of activities really do matter, not only in learning in that specific course, but in other experiences as well and spills over to students' level of engagement in future terms and as they think about their investment in their education.

Mark was asked to address the value of breadth. Research that has been done found no relationship with anything with breadth or no breadth. Research says that what's going on in the classrooms is what matters. Students either have some recollection of classroom experiences or have none. If you have breadth, but have shallow learning, you essentially have nothing. If you have breadth and a lot of connective tissue between courses or ways students apply what they've learned in one setting with another setting (integrative learning experiences), this is a powerful means of making what students learn and making it their own and sticks with them forever—they can use it and apply it in whatever context.

A scale called Levels of Academic Challenge was explained. It is a report on experiences students have had that reflect the level of challenge. Students were asked as freshmen and as seniors. A current study shows our students report their experience as freshmen as significantly more challenged and they experienced more academically than 10 years ago. Mark believes one could argue that the retooling of the academic program Augustana went through is at least partially responsible for these findings. Across all measures of pre-college students, our students are the same as 10 years ago. The idea is that it is not so much what types of classes students take, rather the connection between classes. Some schools do this with the common book theme where faculty are encouraged to fit the book into their classes. It is most commonly done in the freshman year because it's an attempt to create a connection where students become connected with peers academically. Less formal ways may be faculty talk to each other about how they can set up something where they can tag team. It's getting the individual faculty members to take the time to do this that is sometimes the challenge.

B. Learning Community Approval

Motion-McDowell, Second-Youngberg TABLED

“To TABLE the learning community: Death and the Rest of Life: Theological and Literary Reflections, RELG 209/ENGL 309 as presented.”

Discussion: The committee commented this learning community looks promising, but the syllabi were not retold to reflect they're a part of a learning community; they're still two self-contained classes. Also, there is a little bit of common experience reference in the proposal; but nowhere else. The proposal also states that the instructors are undecided about the common experiences, and this should be better defined. The committee would like to hear more about the integrative assignments. It was suggested that the English course number be changed. Joe indicated that ENGL 315: Literature for Learning Communities exists in the department. The committee would also like to see more in the way of course

description and to have it included in the syllabus that this class is part of a learning community. Also instructors should add in each syllabus that the Christian Bible is common text.

C. Learning Perspectives Approval (PP)

Motion-McDowell, Second-Johnson TABLED

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

Discussion: The committee felt that the learning perspectives proposal form was insufficiently completed, and request that the instructor answer the questions on the proposal form and resubmit.

D. Suffix Approval “G”

Motion-Koontz, Second-Egan APPROVED

to approve “G”suffix for PSYC 305: Childhood in the Developing World as presented.”

AGENDA ITEM III: OLD BUSINESS

If anyone receives feedback from their divisions, please email it to Alli Haskill. One division expressed concern about losing double majors, especially for language and theatre programs. If you reduce students’ load, they don’t have time to double major, and they think that’s essential to their survival. Maybe departments could think about assessing their contribution in a way other than majors. If the curriculum is roughly divided into thirds...if we keep gen ed at 11, students can take all their electives and put them into a second major; and if they want a second major, they may just have to buy another class. The committee may want to crunch numbers on this as they develop ideas. Another comment made by a division was that cuts to the major be equitable. Adam Kaul will be at future fall term gen ed meetings representing the 6/35 committee.

AGENDA ITEM V: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Koski