**General Education Advisory Council**

*Friday, November 17th, 2023*

10:00am – 11:30am

MINUTES

Recorded by: Jamie Votraw

Attendance:

Dani Peterson, Steve Chase, Rebecca Harris, Randy Moffett, Joyce Rollins, Mary Schultz, Don Ransford, Elijah Pritchett, Alex Schimel, Cara Minardi Power, Elizabeth Schott, Jamie Votraw, Suzanne Biedenbach, Esmaeel Samaliazad, Ken Belcher, Tim Bishop

1. Approval of the minutes from the last meeting (October 20th, 2023)
   1. The minutes were approved.
2. Information Items
   1. Membership updates:
      1. Professor Peterson announced Dr. Jennifer Grove membership on GEAC.
3. Action Items
   1. New Course Proposals with General Education designation: MGF 1130, MGF 1131
      1. Professor Ransford explained that the two liberal arts math courses MGF 1106 and MGF 1107 were updated to suit a more modern liberal arts educational program, now MGF 1130 and MGF 1131.
      2. The changes make the courses more suitable as general education coursework by including curriculum that aligns well with the pathways.
      3. The general education designation falls in line with state requirements.
      4. Dr. Pritchett asked Professor Ransford for his expert opinion about this proposal.
         1. Professor Ransford explained that there are no concerns.
      5. Professor Moffett made a motion to support the two new courses as general education courses.
         1. Professor Peterson took a vote and the committee voted in support of MFG 1130 and MGF 1131 holding a general education designation.
   2. New Course Proposal with Writing Intensive designation: ENC 2210 Technical Communication
      1. The proposal for the new course ENC 2210 is slated to have a general education and WI designation.
         1. Dr. Harris noted that she believes a course must be a general education course to receive the WI designation.
      2. Professor Ransford asked if this would be a core general education course.
         1. Dr. Harris said it wouldn’t be core. Only ENC 1101 is a core course. However, to meet the formerly named “Gordon Rule”, this course could fulfill the second requirement – students could take ENC 1102 or ENC 2210 – to complete the composition requirement.
         2. Professor Ransford asked for clarification - if ENC 1101 is the pre-requisite and a student takes ENC 2210 as the second composition course, would it effectively be a core course? Dr. Harris confirmed yes – it could be a core course, but it isn’t a required core course if a student opted for the current composition course ENC 1102.
      3. Professor Ransford made a motion to support the proposal, and Professor Biedenbach seconded the motion.
   3. Updates on SB 266 / Florida Core Gen Ed Classes
      1. Professor Peterson reviewed the General Education Core Course List (previously shared by Dr. McClinton).
      2. Professor Peterson announced that at the Board of Governors meeting in November, board members voted to remove SYG1000 from the Core Gen Ed list.
      3. The State Board of Education is set to meet in January to vote on this list.
      4. Professor Moffett noted that the addition of AMH 2010 in the Social Sciences list affects FSW. On academic program lists, students are directed to take either AMH 2020 or POS 2041, however, this will no longer be correct because AMH 2010 will also be accepted. Therefore, the catalogue needs to be updated to include the AMH 2010 course option.
         1. Professor Moffett also noted that sociology was taken off the core list but explained that he didn’t find any programs that were affected by this change after reviewing FSW programs.
         2. Director Schimel asked when we expect these changes to take effect. FSW can expect these changes to be implemented in the Fall 2024 program.
      5. Possible General Education Program Change Proposal to cover all proposed changes to GE (resulting from changes to Florida Core Gen Ed List)
         1. Dr. Harris suggested that these various curriculum changes – MGF, ENC, SGY, civic literacy, etc., - could be proposed as one comprehensive general education program proposal, rather than via individual general education change proposals. She mentioned that she and Dr. McClinton prefer this approach and expect the proposal to go to the curriculum committee in February after the Board of Governors meeting.
            1. Professor Ransford expressed his support for one general education proposal approach.
            2. Professor Peterson agreed that waiting for January/February will allow us to confirm there are no other last-minute changes to consider.
         2. Director Schimel asked if the civic literacy changes could possibly take place before the 24-25 academic year.
            1. Dr. Harris explained it’s most likely a 24-25 change.
         3. Professor Peterson asked might there be a ripple effect of these changes?
            1. Director Schimel explained that a second civil literacy option will be a good thing, and that the majority of the upcoming work will largely relate to updating paperwork, etc.
   4. Professor Peterson noted that it would be valuable to have a GEAC representative at January Curriculum Committee Meeting
      1. Follow up on MGF 1130 and MGF 1131
   5. Discussion about Writing Intensive Designation: Should this designation be available outside of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Composition courses?
      1. Professor Peterson had several people reach out to her about this idea prior to the meeting. The primary concern with other academic areas offering WI courses was the courses might just be designated as WI based on word count, rather than through the teaching of technical writing skills.
         1. Dr. Harris explained that writing instruction in the current WI courses is not necessarily more advanced than the writing instruction in other academic fields.
         2. Professor Ransford explained that it would benefit students to get WI experience in contextual classes.
      2. Dr. Pritchett pointed out that it is unlikely Science or English courses will be cut from general education, and therefore, the WI courses in Humanities offers Humanities coursework a secure place in the general education program.
      3. Professor Moffett noted that all professors, outside of composition studies, are experts in their subject area, but not in writing specifically, so if faculty are teaching writing now in the non-technical writing courses, why shouldn’t we allow non-composition faculty the opportunity to teach WI courses as well.
      4. Professor Cara Minardi Power described how many colleges lack writing experience in their discourse/discipline and argued that many faculty – in higher education institutions everywhere – often confuse style with correctness. She offered an example: In Biology, you might teach that you can never start a sentence with “because”. She noted that this would be a style issue, not a grammatical correctness issue. Thus, she stated, it is a great idea to teach writing in a meaningful way; a writing in the disciplines approach is beneficial for students because what constitutes quality writing depends on the discipline and the audience.
      5. Professor Joyce Rollins noted that her baccalaureate students often cannot meet basic writing skills that they should have learned in their AA program.
         1. Professor Cara Minardi Power added that most citizens only read up to a 6th grade level and that nothing is more important than literacy.
      6. Professor Ransford explained that it might be useful to offer PD for faculty who want to teach a WI course – to offer support and instruction about what it means to teach a WI course. He added that regarding the concern for Humanities in remaining in the general education program, at FSW specifically, he doesn’t foresee Humanities being removed.
      7. Dr. Pritchett explained that although he agrees, a quick change could water down the value of Humanities – especially when Florida is one of the few states left that requires it for general education.
      8. Professor Moffett pointed out that adding WI in other areas doesn’t change the required number of hours students need in each given academic area.
      9. Dr. Harris added that if a faculty member, in science for example, wanted to change their course to a WI course, they would have to submit a course proposal. She also pointed out the other colleges in Florida already do this.
         1. Dr. Biedenbach commented that if a science teacher wants to have a WI course, that it is great for students.
      10. Dr. Schott explained that their students often write, such as in lab reports, and making it more formal would be helpful. She noted, however, getting a course to reach the 4000-word level, however, is different.
          1. Professor Votraw responded by asking if the current non-WI courses are already teaching about the writing techniques specific to their field, then why is it important or necessary to attach the WI designation to additional courses? If the student receives the training regardless, what purpose does it serve to add the WI designation on paper?
          2. Professor Ransford replied that there’s only a few WI, so students must choose from the limited options.
             1. Dr. Pritchett pointed out that all humanities courses are WI, however, noting the potential draw away from humanities enrollment by expanding WI to other areas.
             2. Dr. Harris pointed out, however, that a student could take a WI literature course, which technically allows them to avoid taking a Humanities course. She added that in the AA program, students generally don’t take elective courses because most classes they take are general education courses. Expanding WI course options could theoretically open more possibilities for other non-WI courses.
      11. Director Schimel mentioned that from an advising perspective, an overwhelming number of students take the same WI course, and with little to no room for electives, they don’t have much free choice in their academic selections. This change would allow students some greater choice to select courses aligned with their interests when fulfilling the WI requirement.
      12. Dr Pritchett asked shouldn’t the goal of general education be on breadth, rather than specialization via elective course options.
          1. Dr. Harris agreed that is true for science and math students with a rigid program plan, but for many other pathways that give students more flexibility, the options for elective courses are too minimal. For example, a literature student doesn’t have any options for literature electives because the department must spend all its time teaching the core courses.
          2. Director Schimel confirmed that students often take general education classes as electives because there aren’t many options. He added that this is why students are drawn to Capstone even when they aren’t ready to take it -because they want a course in their target field.
      13. Professor Ransford asked if we should make a proposal that WI be open to all fields, or first present this discussion to a bigger audience of people, such as introduce this to faculty senate. This would allow a broader voice on this from those outside of the meeting.
          1. Professor Peterson mentioned that she just briefly told faculty senate that GEAC was considering this idea.
          2. Dr. Pritchett said he hasn’t had a chance to discuss this with the department, so more time would be helpful.
      14. Professor Votraw asked if it is possible to require a PD session for faculty interested in developing a WI course, and pointed out that Blooming with Zoom is required for faculty to teach online courses and DEV 101 is required for faculty to develop new online courses. She suggested that a similar training session to guide faculty in understanding what constitutes WI instruction seems like a reasonable prerequisite if we’re to expand the designation to other departments/schools, noting should be an easy task for a faculty member excited about adopting a WI designation to teach discipline specific writing skills while also not threatening the current WI courses.
          1. Professor Cara Minardi Power commented that a required PD could be a deterrent and argued that we’re not going to survive if we don’t have more people teach WI courses.
          2. Professor Ransford stated that we could benefit from providing an opportunity for faculty to learn what WI means.
          3. Professor Peterson recalled from her time on LAC, while some people often have fears about assessment, others have fears about enrollment. She acknowledged that there is a lot involved in this discussion, and suggested we take it to our department before proposing any formal changes.
4. Reports/Updates from departments or committees
   1. Professor Ransford mentioned that OTOC is meeting shortly to select the next theme.
5. The meeting adjourned at 11:22pm.