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General Education Committee

Annual Report

2001-2002

Executive Summary of Annual Report 2001-2002

Membership:

Faculty: Gene Fliedner (Business Administration), Judith Hovey (Nursing), Madelyn Kissock (Linguistics), Marc Lipman (Mathematics and Statistics), Robby Stewart, chair (Psychology), Kathryn Wagner (Theatre)

Ex-officio: Susan Awbrey (Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education), Steve Shablin (Registrar), James Woolcock (Advising Steering Committee)

Student Representative: Victor Helb

Meetings: The General Education Committee (GEC) met 5 times during the Fall 2001 semester (once via email) and 6 times during the Winter 2001 semester. The committee corresponded via email regularly and was, occasionally, able to complete its business without face-to-face meetings.

New Courses & Course Revisions:

MUS 334, History of Film Music, was approved for the Arts area, effective May 1, 2002

Petitions of Exception for the General Education Requirements:

The GEC reviewed 35 petitions of exception for general education requirements, approving 28, denying 7.

Triennial Review:

During the 2000-2001 academic year courses in the areas of Western Civilization, International Studies, and Social Sciences areas were examined and discussed by committee members. All courses were retained.

Problems and Concerns:

Communication. In concluding the Triennial Review the GEC asked departments to:

[1] place statements on syllabi indicating the course satisfied a specific area of the General Education requirement;

[2] conveyed to review their General Education courses rather than provide individual reports; and

[3] reviewed the conclusion of the current Triennial Review.

Assessment.

Given the current articulation of the purposes and goals of assessment and the renovation of General Education the GEC committee did not take any actions in this

domain. We are certain that new assessment plans will be developed once the recommendations of the first and second General Education Task Forces are considered and moved through governance.

New Courses.

As in the previous year, the GEC actively discouraged new course proposals and encouraged departments and faculty to wait until curricular changes proposed by the task forces are moved through governance.

General Education Committee Annual Report 2001-2002

Membership

Faculty: Gene Fliedner (Business Administration), Judith Hovey (Nursing), Madelyn Kissock (Linguistics), Marc Lipman (Mathematics and Statistics), Robby Stewart, chair (Psychology), Kathryn Wagner (Theatre)

Ex-officio: Susan Awbrey (Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education), Steve Shablin (Registrar), James Woolcock (Advising Steering Committee)

Student Representative Victor Helb

Meetings

The General Education Committee (GEC) scheduled 7 meetings during the Fall semester and met 5 times; two meetings were canceled due to lack of business. Eight meetings were scheduled during the Winter 2002 semester and the committee held 6 of these meetings. The committee corresponded via email and was able to complete some of its simpler business without a face-to-face meetings. The agenda and minutes of scheduled meetings are presented in an appendix to this document. [appendix available in Academic Affairs Office]

The GEC work is outlined in its charge from the Senate:

To recommend to the Senate general policies and requirements for undergraduate education, to function as a curriculum committee for a university-wide program of general education, and to respond to petitions of exception relating to the program, in accordance with Senate authorizations, to communicate through regular exchange the minutes with the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction, and to provide information on petitions of exception regarding General Education to the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction for preparation of a university annual report on petitions of exception.

Early in the 2001-2002 academic year the GEC committee met with the Advising Steering Committee to discuss general petition procedures and to set a foundation for efficient intercommittee interactions. We have no doubt that this increased communication between the committees has contributed positively to reducing both the number of petitions of exception received by GEC and the amount of time necessary to consider these petitions.

New Courses & Course Revisions

MUS 334, History of Film Music was approved for the Arts area, effective May 1, 2002.

Petitions of Exception for the General Education Requirements

Between July 1, 2001 and May 9, 2002 the GEC reviewed 35 petitions of exception for general education requirements, approving 28, denying 7. When compared with the numbers of petitions reviewed in the previous year it is evident that increased communication with the Advising Steering Committee has resulted in a decrease in the number of petition submitted, especially those leading to denial decisions:

Approved	2001-2002	2000-2001
advisor error	1	4
1 credit waived	8	3
substitute coursework	17	22
distance learning/remote site	1	0
upper-level coursework completed	1	4
TOTAL	28	33
Denied		
petition sought more than 1 credit waiver	0	0
claim of advisor error not documented	1	5
course not appropriate	5	9
life experiences insufficient	1	3
TOTAL	7	17

Triennial Review

During the 2001-2002 academic year courses in the areas of Western Civilization, International Studies, and Social Sciences were examined and discussed by committee members. Results of the review were communicated to the chairs of the appropriate departments. (Reports are attached [available in Academic Affairs office].) For the review, the faculty teaching each course were asked to provide syllabi and course materials and to respond to an instructor's questionnaire discussing how the course, for example provides an understanding of how people express through the arts their experience with the world. The department chair was asked to complete a statistical questionnaire about the frequency of offering and enrollments. Copies of the guidelines and questionnaires are appended to this document.

The GEC recognized a number of situations that were common for all courses under review this year. The following were provided as a set of general recommendations for all departments:

1. It would be helpful if the course syllabus reminded students that the course is a general education course and what category (area) of the General Education Requirements the course satisfies. It would also be helpful if the course objectives pertinent to the general education requirements were summarized on the syllabus.

GEC, 2001-2002 3

2. It would be helpful if faculty members within a department met occasionally to review the course objectives and procedures for a given General Education course. Too often we received review statements where one faculty member indicated that the content of a given course content was determined entirely by the instructor and another faculty member indicated that the same content was determined either by the department curriculum committee or through a joint decision of instructors. We noted what we perceived to be rather large variances between section in course policies and practices, and were left to wonder whether the faculty members involved or their chair was aware that these variances existed. Please understand that our goal is not a strict, inflexible standardization of all General Education courses; instead we believe that we would be in a better position to understand and evaluate between section differences if we knew that the faculty and chair involved were aware of the differences and accepted them.

3. The GEC would appreciate it if department chairs would share the conclusions of the triennial review with their respective faculty. Too often we found replies to our query "What changes in the course were made after the last triennial review" indicated that faculty did not know if any recommendations had been made or that they simply assumed that none were made.

4. The GEC would like to ask faculty members who complete the assessment questionnaires to review their own comments with some concern for internal consistency. We often found statements describing how students were involved in writing (Item A.6), but then were unable to find any information explaining how this writing was used to evaluate the student's performance (Item C). Indeed, it was often the case that writing exercises described in responses to Item A.6 were not even mentioned on the course syllabus provided. Obviously, faculty members are free to base their evaluations of students on a number of different things, and the GEC is free to wonder just how involved a student may be in writing that apparently has no impact on their success in the course.

The results of the triennial review by field category are as follows:

Western Civilization

Retain on the list: HST 101, HST 102, HST 114, HST 115, HST 210, HST 292, PHL 101, PHL 103, PHL 204, PHL 205, PHL 206, PS 377

Delete from the list: none

International Studies

Retain on the list: IS 210, IS 220, IS 230, IS 240, IS 250, IS 260, IS 270

Delete from the list: none

Social Sciences

Retain on the list: AN 101, AN 102, AN 300, AN 307, ECN 150, ECN 200, ECN 210, PS 100, PS 115, PS 131, PS 323, PSY 100, PSY

130, SOC 100, SOC 206

Delete from the list: none

Problems and Concerns**Assessment.**

The assessment of student outcomes for General Education has been a problematic issue for a number of years. Given the current articulation of the purposes and goals of assessment and the renovation of General Education itself the GEC committee did not take any actions in this domain. We are certain that new assessment plans will be developed once the recommendations of the first and second General Education Task Forces are considered and moved through governance.

New Courses.

As in the previous year, the GEC actively discouraged new course proposals and encouraged departments and faculty to wait until curricular changes proposed by the task forces are moved through governance.

Summary of Accomplishments

- ◆ regular triennial review of courses (Western Civilization, International Studies, Social Sciences). Recommendation to retain all 34 courses currently on the list
- ◆ review of one new courses submitted for consideration during the 2002 academic year; accepted for Arts area
- ◆ examination of/decision on 35 petitions of exception for General Education field categories

Submitted by Robby Stewart, Chair



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