

## General Education Council Minutes

April 6, 2010

**ATTENDING:** Shay Clark, Jim Deitrick, Kim Eskola, Kathy French, William Friedman, Lori Isom, Renee LeBeau-Ford, Roger Pauly, Ed Powers, Conrad Shumaker, Ellen Stengel, Stephanie Vanderslice, Steve Ward, and Charles Watson.  
**EX OFFICIO:** Dean Sally Roden.

Director Shumaker called the meeting to order at 1:45. A motion to approve the March 16, 2010, minutes, submitted by Ellen Stengel, was made, seconded, and approved.

The April 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, it was acknowledged, was the last for outgoing Council members Eskola, Isom, Stengel, and Ward, who were invited to remain on ongoing assessment and objectives subcommittees. The General Education Council (GEC) concurred: GEC membership issues, such as effective term lengths and appropriate policies ensuring equitable tenure/tenure-track and non-tenure-track representation on the GEC, need to be addressed by next year's GEC, perhaps with amended recommendations to be forwarded to the Faculty Senate.

At the March 16th meeting, the "Resolution to Recommend Change to the World Cultural Traditions Area Requirement" was approved. To work on the needed editing of the Rationale for the Resolution, Director Shumaker had appointed an ad hoc committee--Jim Deitrick, Roger Pauly, and Stephanie Vanderslice--whose subsequent process in editing the Rationale was explained by Jim Deitrick. The Rationale document was submitted to the GEC, resulting in a motion, offered by Jim Deitrick and seconded by Ellen Stengel, to accept the amended Rationale along with the inclusion of the current General Education checksheet (which lists GE course and Area distribution requirements). After discussion of remaining concerns about advising and about faculty staffing, the motion was passed unanimously.

The next agenda item involved the University Assessment and Planning Committee (APAC) and its Assessment Plan previously presented to the GEC in draft form. One important new recommendation is that, rather than extensive use of student surveys for assessment purposes, a student focus group system be instituted by professionals in this type of endeavor and then overseen by the GEC. A discussion of the Plan and its Rationale ensued. The Rationale offered for preferring student focus groups to surveys is that the groups would offer more complete information and capabilities for follow up and involve only Y4 students. The downside is that evaluation of information obtained in this way takes skill, thus possibly requiring expensive consultant fees or even hires unless cross-university exchanges or student assessment fee allocation for this purpose could be effected. Extended analysis of the costs versus benefits of this use of university resources followed. Stephanie Vanderslice offered a motion, seconded by Charles Watson, to accept the recommendation to include focus groups in the Assessment Plan. After discussion, Jim Deitrick offered an amendment to the motion: the focus groups should be supported by appropriate funding. The amended motion carried.

Jim Deitrick then suggested a return to discussing the Faculty Senate University Handbook Committee's recommendations for restructuring GEC membership between TT/T and NTT faculty. At the request of Roger Pauly, Director Shumaker and Dean Roden provided the background behind the recommendations, which responded to the General Education Task Force's Report and a follow-up faculty survey. According to Director Shumaker, the membership policy changes were made without complete consultation between the GEC and the Handbook Committee. A number of GEC members regard these changes as tending toward disenfranchisement of the NTT faculty, who teach about 2/3 of GE classes. In addition, the relative weighting of teaching, service, and research responsibilities in promotion and tenure decisions should enter into the discussion of the appropriate constitution of the GEC. It was reiterated that the GEC seriously needs to reconsider these issues next year.

At 2:35 PM, a motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Powers Stengel (Writing Area Representative)