General Education Council Minutes – April 12, 2012

Members Present: Conrad Shumaker (Chair), Jeff Allender (GEOG), Jim Deitrick (PHIL), Kim Eskola (KPED), Lori Isom (CHEM), Joe McGarrity (EFIRM), Carl Olds (FILM), Kondwani Phwandaphwanda (MUS), Ed Powers (SOC), Mary Beth Sullivan (PSCI), Charles Watson (MATH)

Members Absent: Rene Crow (ECSE), Destiny Davis (SGA), Stephanie Vanderslice (WRTG), Joe Webb (SGA), Clay Arnold (ex-officio, Dean of Undergraduate Studies), Renee Lebeau-Ford (Ex-officio, LIB)

Guests: Interim Provost Steven Runge, University Director of Assessment Lynn Burley

AGENDA for Apr. 12 Meeting:
1. Proposed General Education Task Force

1. Proposed General Education Task Force
   • purpose of Task Force is an intensive review of the program and make recommendations
   • informal Apr 10 meeting concerns about Task Force were shared with the Provost
   • suggestion was made by Allender to make the TF meetings open and to publish minutes weekly

Provost was at meeting to answer questions and concerns
   • Provost also wants to make sure regular TF minutes are posted
   • he wants to accentuate the publicity and marketing of the program to students—the Gen Ed curriculum has to be REAL
   • we MUST adjust the culture of Gen Ed at UCA – not a hurdle or something to get out of the way
   • whatever we come up with has to be defensible
   • whatever we come up with must focus on students—our recommendations must have their interests in mind over territory or biases
   • he wants an open and honest discussion
   • he wants the TF to come up with a clear recommendation rather than a buffet of options
   • based on research that works for us and our students
   • Deitrick question: why an appointed TF when GEC is an elected body? Is this inefficient? How does this enable faculty to maintain control over curricula?
   • Provost answered by looking at university contexts—external forces (Act 747 and HLC report)
   • put pressure on degree programs
   • 18 programs were unable to meet 120 hour limit – must submit override plan in April to ADHE
   • we are pressured to meet standards set by other universities as well
   • we need DILIGENCE in the Gen Ed review – if we want to have 47 hrs we need data to defend that number
   • GEC hasn’t made enough progress – TF will be a GEC subgroup with specific charge and specific goals
• Provost has added names to Shumaker recommendations – needs balance between producers and consumers, programs that teach gen ed and that don’t
• TF will be smaller group with focused timeframe (10 weeks of Summer I and II) and focused outcomes not possible during the semesters
• also, UCA hasn’t had a comprehensive Gen Ed revision in 20+ years, we need to get ahead of the curve rather than respond to the legislature, otherwise the 2013 legislature will come in and tell us what to do
• When GEC reconvenes in the Fall, we will review the TF recommendation and implement a timeline
• GEC reports to the Provost, so the Provost is setting a timeline that cannot wait until Fall
• Watson question: many Gen Ed courses have little or no data to support learning/outcomes; Provost says that the Strategic Plan says we will build a culture of assessment
• Shumaker: buffet model is very difficult to assess as a program, we need to think about ways to dovetail course outcomes to learned skills; Provost said that if we are serious about program assessment, we need to work on Program Outcomes that look beyond graduation
• Burley: many Gen Ed programs require mandatory assessment; Provost said that it must be doable, sustainable, and then USABLE—we must use the data to “close the loop”
• Accredited programs do this regularly and rest of campus must adopt this culture; it is NOT the responsibility of Wingo to close the loop, it is the responsibility of the PROGRAMS (Wingo’s job is to provide the resources to do it)
• Phwandaphwanda: why is Gen Ed director a part-time position? Shumaker: director of Gen Ed should be actively teaching Gen Ed courses
• GEC should look forward to meeting more often in the Fall
• Allender: back to TF, hopes that consideration is paid to assessment in models too; Provost: it doesn’t make sense not to do both; Eskola: hopes we can find an adaptable model
• Shumaker: 747 is the elephant in the room, but it will NOT drive the TF and their choices
• McGarrity: more comfortable with TF containing administrators to decide number of hours with consultation of higher administration; Provost: real elephant in room is Gen Ed impact on resources – decisions affect faculty positions
• Points were made about flexibility in resources and models, allowing any program to meet the requirements of Gen Ed

Meeting was adjourned – Voting on Draft of Values / Outcomes Statement to be done by end of the semester