

General Education Council Meeting
Tuesday, February 1, 2011

Members Present: Conrad Shumaker, Cary Voss, Jim Deitrick, Destiny Davis, Roger Pauly, Kondwani Phwandaphwanda, Stephanie Vanderslice, Ed Powers, Kathy French, Lori Isom, Kim Eskola and Charles Watson.

Members Absent: Austin Hall, Kathy French, Stephanie Vanderslice, Rene Crow, Bill Friedman, Renee Le Beau-Ford

Observing faculty and staff: Peter Mehl

Meeting called to order at 1:45.

Minutes from December meeting were unavailable for this meeting.

1. Proposal from History 2310 – online
 - a. Info item – not necessarily for our commentary
2. AR Student Success Symposium (info item)
 - a. March 30-31
 - b. ACCU representation – Deborah Humphreys
 - c. State wide general education issues
 - d. First step toward a statewide conversation on general education
3. WCT Proposal
 - a. Turned down by the Council of Deans
 - No official response given yet
 - b. Provost comments
 - Questions about assessment of WCT and the fact that assessment plans were not attached to the proposal
 - Justification could be stronger. It currently seems to strengthen the other programs
 - c. Discussion:
 - Assessment plans are already in place for those courses
 - Jim stated that we could have answered their questions if we had been asked.
 - Lori Isom stated that no one in the room (at the council of Deans meeting) represented the Gen Ed Council. Some of the issue have been blamed on lack of communication but more than that seems to be going on here.
 - Conrad asked, “should we request that we be represented at the Council of Deans meetings when voting occurs on one of our proposals?”
 - Lori Isom made the following motion: The General Education Council recommends that the Director of General Education or a designee chosen by the director be present at Council of Deans meetings when a proposal from the General Education Council is being presented. Kim Eskola second the motion
 - Roger called the motion to a vote and it was passed unanimously.
 - Kondwani P. asked if there is anything specific in the proposal that suggests we should add more.
 - Conrad stated that the Provost said we would receive a report from the Council of Deans but we have not received it yet. The provost assured that it was forth coming.
4. Discussion on Assessment Plan

- a. Conrad reported from his meeting with the provost that the assessment fund is being put into the general (ENG) use budget.
 - b. Conrad believes that the assessment should be our priority because students are being charged for something for which their funds are not being used.
 - c. It was asked if we could place a timeline to find a date at which this money could be sued. There is a meeting on Wednesday to address assessment timeline.
5. Addressing the issue of the General Education Program at UCA
- a. The provost supports/ appreciates our efforts to envision the General Education program as a program, not just a list of courses.
 - b. There is a perception that there is pressure from the legislature, ADHE, UCA board of trustees and transfer students to roll back the number of general education courses UCA students have to take.
 - c. Conrad said he did a bit of research and the pressure from the ADHE and the state legislature does not seem to be aiming specifically at general education.
 - d. Mike Schaefer has heard the head of ADHE say that they are most interested in increasing graduation rates without watering down the educational programs.
 - e. Roger and Jim pointed out that cuts in general education would not be a cost-saving measure and might end up costing the university more in research-based faculty.
 - f. Conrad stated that the provost told him that the administration will not impose cuts in general education.
 - g. Roger asked if we need to be more forceful about the priorities we've been charged to address (aka, assessments/ quality education)?
 - h. There is a perception that the legislature wants to limit majors to 120 hours and go back to a "core" (state ordered core) of gen ed courses
 - i. Roger – Mike Schaefer says there are no bills pending in the legislature about this. Could this be a smoke screen?
 - j. Conrad felt that if there are rumors that the legislature is going to do this then the university will argue the old argument that we need to get ahead of the change and do it ourselves which could be changing something when it is not necessary.
 - k. Mike Schaefer cannot find any proof that anything of the kind is happening in the legislature.
 - l. Robert Mauldin from Chemistry has pointed out in an email to several colleagues, including the provost, that the gen ed program at UCA has remained stable; majors have added requirements. We need to look at why certain programs requirements are changing and not do away with general education courses.
 - m. Jim stated that he is very concerned about this. It seems like the proceedings have been far from fair, inclusive or transparent.
 - n. Roger made the request that we contact Jeff Pitchford who is the UCA legislative liaison to see if there is anything supporting the concerns about cutting gen ed courses.
 - o. Lori Isom asked what would be lost by returning to the state mandated core. WCT and Health Education would be lost. UCA's distinctive program would be cut.
 - p. It was noted that the HCL and SPARC links were removed from the UCA main page
 - q. Roger proposed that Conrad contact Jeff Pitchford to pull any introduced or pending legislation related to general education.
 - r. It was moved by Roger Pauly and second by Lori Isom.
 - s. The motion passed unanimously
 - t. It was suggested that transparency could be at least partially restored through the provost stating in a public forum that there are no plans afoot to reduce the general education requirements.
 - u. Kondwani stated that the bottom line is that there are people out there who think it takes too long for students to graduate.

- v. Lori echoed his statement by saying that we are now being asked to put out “3 year Plans”.
 - w. Charles pointed out that graduation rates are an issue. If you can pin it on gen ed (in a negative way) maybe that is what is killing general education. It is the easy answer because it is not the major.
6. It was moved by Lori Isom to adjourn the meeting. Ed Powers seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 2:55.