

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

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- 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