

## General Education Council Minutes,

May 3, 2011

Members Present: Conrad Shumaker (Chair), Carey Voss, Jim Deitrick, Roger Pauly, Charles Watson, Kathy French, Lori Isom, Renee LeBeau-Ford, Stephanie Vanderslice

Also in attendance: Jeff Allender

**Approval of minutes from April meeting.** Kathy French moved approval, Jim Deitrick seconded. Minutes were approved.

**Recognition of members leaving the Council:** Carey Voss (leaving UCA), Kathy French, Roger Pauly, William Friedman. Members were thanked for their service.

**Writing Department proposal—WRTG 1310.** Stephanie Vanderslice moved to approve; Jim Deitrick seconded.

Discussion: Roger Pauly was concerned about overlap with existing courses. Since the course will focus on Linguistic Anthropology, is there a conflict with the course already offered by Anthropology? Pauly recommended that the Writing Department share the proposal with John Toth and Brian Campbell of Sociology/Anthropology to ensure that they have no concerns about overlap with existing courses. Conrad Shumaker pointed out that the assessment plan included with the proposal needs to be expanded. The plan seems to address only the way in which the knowledge component will be assessed, so the Council needs to see what methods will be used to assess skills and attitudes and values.

Roger Pauly moved to table the proposal until the Writing Department addresses the concerns expressed above. Kathy French seconded. Motion to table was approved.

### Subcommittee Reports

*Assessment:* The Assessment Subcommittee has developed a matrix to be used in evaluating the assessment of General Education courses to ensure that the courses are meeting the goals and objectives of the GE program. Fourteen courses (1/4 of the total number of GE courses) are being evaluated this semester, and the Director of General Education will send a report to the provost and the chairs of the departments whose courses have been evaluated.

*Goals and Objectives:* The subcommittee is continuing to revise the goals and objectives to make them clearer. Most recently the committee is focusing on skills. The College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics is still in the process of revising their goals and objectives statements. Lori Isom shared her suggested revisions for the sciences, but the college has not approved them yet. Shumaker has also suggested that "Attitudes and Values" might better be addressed using the LEAP designation of Citizenship/Responsibility. The subcommittee will look into this possibility. In any case, Shumaker

stressed the importance of transparency in the process. The departments offering general education courses must be included in the process of revising goals and objectives statements.

### **Honors College Representation**

Shumaker pointed out that the Honors College offers four courses that count for GE credit in various ways, but it has no representation on the Council. If the Council is to ensure that the honors courses are contributing appropriately to the program as a whole, it makes sense that the college have such a representative. The appointment or election of a non-voting, ex-officio member from the Honors College seems to be a logical way to address this lack of representation. This issue will be on the Council's agenda at the first meeting in the fall.

### **Other Discussion**

There was further discussion of the question of assessment and of making sure that assessment is done and presented in a way that can be understood by the public served by the university yet still keeps our focus on foundational knowledge and adaptability instead of narrow job training. There was concern expressed that spending funds on a director of assessment does not help faculty members (including members of the GEC) in their efforts to assess courses and could further disenfranchise them in the assessment process. It was suggested that providing release time, workshops, and other efforts to help faculty with the time and skills they need might be a better approach to effective assessment.