

**Academic Affairs Committee
November 11, 2009
Minutes**

Committee members in attendance:

Kathy Menzie (chair)
Keith Mazachek
Lori Khan
Paul Byrne
Kanalis Ockree
Jeanne Catanzaro
Debbie Isaacson
Cal Melick
Robin Bowen (ex officio)

Guests:

Mike Russell and Rob Weigand, representing the General Education Task Force
Nancy Tate, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs
Howard Faulkner

Kathy Menzie called the meeting to order.

Rob Weigand presented the report of the General Education Task Force to the committee by first reviewing the entire report and explaining the General Education Advising Worksheet. The Advising worksheet prototypes are included in the report beginning on page 7, with examples on pages 8 – 10. Learning assessment rubrics are provided in Appendix 2, pages 11-16.

ITEM 1

Section1: Proposals Close to Being Ready for a Decision by Full Faculty

Proposal 1: General Education Statement

Summary: Recommended change in General Education Statement.

Discussion: The committee reviewed the Gen Ed Proposal for a change in the General Education Statement.

Action: No action taken

ITEM 2

Section1: Proposals Close to Being Ready for a Decision by Full Faculty

Proposal 2: – General Education Learning Outcomes

Summary: General Education skills in WU General Education program be replaced with five Learning Outcomes:

1. Communication
2. Quantitative and Scientific Reasoning and Literacy
3. Information Literacy and Technology
4. Critical and Creative Thinking
5. Global Citizenship and Diversity

Students would be required to complete a minimum number of credit hours (yet to be specified) in each of the five Learning Outcomes categories.

Discussion: Each Gen Ed course would have one learning outcome identified by the faculty member or department (further discussion under the next item).

Action: No action taken

ITEM 3

Section1: Proposals Close to Being Ready for a Decision by Full Faculty

Proposal 3: Learning Outcome Descriptions

Summary: Descriptions of the learning outcomes in each of the five categories are provided in the Gen Ed Proposal. Examples of learning assessment rubrics are provided in Appendix 2, page 11.

Discussion:

Faculty members would identify the learning outcomes for the course they are teaching. The Gen Ed Committee then would become more of a “friendly helper” to help with the assessment plans of the faculty.

The Learning Outcomes don't have to be completely met by CAS distribution hours; a maximum of 3 hours per Learning Outcome could be from different schools. The Gen Ed Task force is trying to establish the general guidelines for learning outcomes.

If EN 300 is no longer a requirement, would this mean possible loss of money to the university? This would depend on how many major programs will be moving away from the university requirement. If EN 300 becomes a requirement for a major or degree you don't necessarily remove it, but it would make it easier for transfer students.

If there is a course the faculty determines meets a specific learning objective (only one learning objective per course), would this be identified in the course catalog, and if so how would it be changed? Perhaps this would be a better department decision. Careful writing of learning outcomes determines the effectiveness of the assessment processes

Action: No action taken

ITEM 4

Section1: Proposals Close to Being Ready for a Decision by Full Faculty

Proposal 4: General Education Distribution Requirements (Breadth of Knowledge)

Summary: The General Education program is designed to provide all students with a breadth of knowledge in the traditional areas of 1) Arts and Humanities; 2) Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics; and 3) Social Sciences. In the Gen Ed Report, these areas are referred to as the Liberal Studies Distribution Requirement. It is recommended the total number of credit hours required to complete each category be determined by the individual's specific degree programs and majors, although establishing some minimum number of credit hours for all students may also be appropriate.

Discussion: The committee discussed whether current Gen Ed courses should also meet these requirements and how this would be addressed. Further discussion was needed in this area.

Action: No action taken.

ITEM 5

Section 2: Proposals for Additional Campus-Wide Conversation (*Gen Ed Task Force is still working on these*)

Proposal 5: Courses Satisfying Learning Outcomes

The committee recommended adding one sentence for clarification to Proposal 5. "It is recommended that instructors engage in a collaborative process with their individual departments to reach consensus regarding the appropriate Learning Outcome for each course offered by the discipline."

Proposal 6: Using Major Courses to Satisfy General Ed Learning Outcomes

Proposal 7: University Requirements

Proposal 8: Core Courses

Proposal 9: Transferring Gen Ed Credit Hours from Other Institutions

Discussion of Proposals 5-9:

Q: Would AA degree transfer students be required to satisfy all 5 learning outcomes? Rob Weigand said this is under discussion and requires additional conversation. He said most of the work was with the 4-year degree in mind. This appendix needs to be further expanded and clarified.

Q: Could a course have more than one learning outcome? Perhaps a student is trying to fit the matrix and may have one course classified in a couple of categories. This needs additional conversation. If one exception is made, it would be hard to stay where this stops and could make the process very complex.

Q: Are the worksheet grids filled out by degree or by major? The school/college would need to determine this. CAS could have many different sheets. There was discussion regarding the best approach (degree vs. major) as some majors may require different gen eds.

Additional faculty meetings would be required to determine the minimum requirements to go forward to the first meeting in January to the Faculty Senate.

Discussion of Committee Action on the Gen Ed Proposal

The committee discussed the advantages of taking action on the first half of the proposals (1-5). They noted it may be difficult to get approval by faculty if the second half is still under debate.

The committee had already voted on recommendation regarding PE198 and EN300. The transfer committee dealt with specific courses, not the overall policy, which is not in conflict with the Gen Ed Proposal.

In the previous meeting, the Academic Affairs committee decided not to send forward the Transfer Committee's recommendation regarding Gen Ed requirements until the discussion at this meeting.

Nancy Tate pointed out that if the first part of the Gen Ed went forward this year, it could create problems with banner due to all the changes that would be required, and especially if the changes are being made for only one year. The way Gen Ed courses are identified would have to be changed in Banner to eliminate overlap etc. If Gen Ed courses remained non-course specific, it would not make as much difference.

The committee decided more discussion was necessary before they could make a recommendation to the Faculty Senate.

No action would be taken on the Gen Ed Proposal until further discussion.

Transfer Committee recommendations

There was consensus to send forth the two recommendations from the Transfer committee as written in the proposal presented at the last meeting as there may be some benefit to students now if this first part of the proposal is approved.

No action required on this item as it was already voted on last meeting.

Next Meeting will be:

Thursday, December 3rd
8:30 – 9:30 am
Baker Room (BTAC)