

**Gen Ed Task Force  
Meeting Minutes  
Friday, December 8, 2006 @ 3pm**

**Members Present:**

Lisa Burger, Donna Brown, Matt Cavalli, Bruce Dearden, Art Jones, Pam Kalbfleisch, Anne Kelsch, Evguenii Kozliak, Steve Light, Helen Melland, Sally Pyle, Martha Potvin, Lori Robison, Tom Steen, and Anne Walker.

**Guests:** Lana Rakow and Janet Moen

**Announcements:**

- Next Meeting: Friday, January 12<sup>th</sup> from 3-4:30pm in Montgomery 20. Please note this subsequently was changed to January 26, 2007.

**Today's proposal – Civic Engagement (CE) – Lana Rakow and Janet Moen**

Questions about the proposal and background information

- Why should this be a part of Gen Ed?
  - The UND mission and strategic plan and Senate recommend that civic engagement is included in General education.
  - It is fitting Higher Education prepares students to be education citizen, not just for a career, even if engagement is simply a conversation.
  - Instructors even in a political sociology class observe lack of knowledge in national election.
- Discussion on how to incorporate Gen Ed requirements versus forcing students to embrace them.
  - It is important for citizenship to be an issue and not accept a lack of engagement.
  - Citizenship is a term used at other institutions.
  - Who will be the students making decisions in public life and what is higher education's responsibility to prepare them?
- Isn't part of being a citizen critical thinking, applying skills, and knowing how to find the right information? Is there a significant value added to having a CE course requirement to achieve this?
  - We can't make the assumption that there is a connection and one doesn't have to expose oneself to critical issues and be able to know contemporary issues.
  - An example of increasing CE in class is where students said they weren't interested at the start but were at the end of class.
  - This is a different time in education. Many instructors grew up in a time that CE was a given, unlike the student of today.
- How will this CE Gen Ed requirement work in with the assessment loop?
  - An assessment plan would need to be developed and would need to look at incorporating different methods.
- Seems like it would be good methods for an indirect assessment, although hard for direct assessment. Where would this fall?
  - Across the board. The goal would include developing a kind of culture where even the faculty is engaged
- Is there an idea of how many departments require this and if this is already taking place in classes?
  - Do not have this information from across the campus because we don't have a way of identifying it but is taking place because of individual professors.
  - UND is asked to explicitly answer how service learning is being incorporated in class.

- Need to define CE. (Broadly or narrowly, readings or service learning, knowledge or acting, etc)
- Could you argue that students could be civically engaged from just service learning hours?
  - Yes, indicators would need to be established and then could lead to concrete assessment goals in not every class
  - Multiple methods would include least one 3 credit course or at least 1/3 of a course
- Honors does CE/service learning and as it has evolved. They have found they've had to step up the assessment if it's to be meaningful and it's an overwhelming job. So if the Gen Ed task force is going to take this on, it may be a tough situation and should be evaluated carefully. It may also ask more and more of the people in the committee for revalidation in the available timeframe.
  - It may not be all that different as critical thinking may seem harder to assess than civic engagement.
  - If we narrow it down, that might be as much work as if did it broadly.
  - If indicators were established and used, a department would connect student learning to civic engagement. Courses would be up to departments to put together and there are aspects of CE in most classes that departments could connect and not every class would need to meet all indicators.
- Do you think UND students now are not ready to be civically engaged? It's been mentioned that there are lots of classes that address CE – so are we not being successful?
  - Literature nationally said this is a problem everywhere.
  - It's in the curriculum and we need to connect the dots and make the connection visible.
  - We don't know what level students might achieve unless we focus on it.
  - CE is hard to define and will have to define for faculty buy-in in order to incorporate it.
  - Is this something we want to elevate?

Thank you to Lana and Janet

### Discussion

- Going back to the 2 models we've discussed before – each time we add another goal, we seem to dilute our purpose.
- We have some assessment rubrics that work and we have a breadth that would make that assessment difficult.
- Service learning is difficult to assess but is valuable in promoting participation in public life.
- Perhaps it's the method that the task force has used to review topics has led us to this point. Requirements may have been chosen or not chosen when presented together. Members of the group may be torn between adding a 6<sup>th</sup> goal and keeping simplicity.
- This seems to emphasize social sciences and why not the natural sciences? Because that is not the way we teach classes because more time is spent on technical issues and content.
- Does CE prepare students for participation or does it require that students actually participate?
  - Serving learning is a buzz word in education and hot in some subject areas, but talking about service learning doesn't cut it – they have to be in the community.
- May be other ways to assess, but our decision to accept as a goal seems to be stepping back.
- Assessment of CE seems difficult, but a set of CE indicators/definition could apply to any course.
  - We would have to broaden preparation and actual service to encompass in the umbrella.
- What does the Senate document say regarding civic engagement?
  - Gen Ed goals need to acknowledge the importance of CE, specific to experiential learning.
  - Background – Every student should have a meaningful experiential learning course before graduating. Document was a compromise and is viewed as important, but we need not make experiential education a requirement of every student.

**VOTING****1) Should CE become a goal for Gen Ed?****YES: 3      NO: 11      ABSTAIN: ?****VOTING****2) Should there be a course designation/requirement in the Gen Ed program for CE?****YES: 3      NO: 12      ABSTAIN:****3) Should we emphasize the language of CE in the Gen Ed program?****YES: 10      NO: 4      ABSTAIN: ?****Matt –**

- 9 departments provided feedback.
- Few comments got multiple mentions, although none were across the board.
- Professional departments demand a vote that credit hours are not increased.
- Revalidation process seems to be sticking point; departments want guidelines for revalidation.
- It appears to departments that revalidations could get complicated.
- Like quantitative reasons – related to a stats course
- Most people felt after the discussion that it was a big improvement, even though it's not like the original.
- There seems to be an on-going issue on what departments think English comp courses should be doing.
- Possibility for a writing placement test? This gets to the idea of what they think comp should be doing (i.e. grammar, writing)
- Breadth vs. depth debate.
- Someone should be in charge of the current system.
- Indian studies – UND has a unique position in regard to diversity opportunities. UND has the only Indian studies program as designated in the state statutes. Incorporate similar to 6 original diversity credits.
- History course to become a mandated course – suggested from aviation and music departments.

**Questions?**

- Does the report reflect the strength of the thoughts? Strongly held thoughts?
  - Lots of clarification behind the scenes and not just at the sessions
  - English Comp classes
  - Revalidation process
  - Information – more well publicized
- Thank you to committee for going above and beyond!!