

**Gen Ed Task Force
Meeting Minutes
Friday, March 23, 2007 @ 3pm**

Members Present:

Donna Brown, Matthew Cavalli, Bruce Dearden, Jay Fisher, Joan Hawthorne, Anne Kelsch, Ray Lagasse Steven Light, Helen Melland, Sally Pyle, Lori Robison, Tom Steen, Wilbur Stolt, Anne Walker and Ryan Zerr

Announcements:

- This proposal will have to go through the Senate, GERC body, and Provost simultaneously as there isn't much time left before our deadline.
- Senate presentation
 - Would like to have as many representatives from this task force as possible.
 - We are expecting to visit the Senate twice. Share the proposal in April and vote in May.
- Changes in the philosophy and structure will need to be considered to support the program.
 - Should we host forums? No, we need to meet the President's and Senate timeline.
 - Matt's committee (Department Liaison) is working on communicating with departments
- Tom and Anne updated the Provost before spring break and are waiting to hear feedback.
- What's next after this task force has served?
 - The best case scenario is if the Senate passes and the Provost approves the recommendations, then we are recommending a transition team to be developed to work on the implementation.
- Are there other ways to educate the community on this proposal?
 - University newsletter
 - OID newsletter
 - Student Senate – the past president hasn't been able to attend because of a scheduling conflict.
 - Dakota Student
- What should the length of the write-ups be?
 - A paragraph or column. Focus on task force discussions and not on the Gen Ed requirements.

1) Will the advanced communication course be number 220 or above?

- The task force didn't vote on what that meant, but the consensus from an October meeting was that it is not a Comp 1, Comp 2 or oral communication.
- A committee argument (not task force consensus) is some majors and schools already have an introduction to the major with a writing component.
- The bottom line to this question is the committee felt comfortable with the advanced communication course being a 200 level, and 200 seems to be a common introduction to the major, but a capstone could be this course. It doesn't have to be a writing class, but does have to be communication-based.

Motion

- **Moved that advanced means 200 level or higher.** So moved by Bruce and seconded by Helen.

VOTE: YES: 13 NO: 0 ABSTAIN:

2) Will a capstone Gen Ed be validated/revalidated based on achieving a specified number of goals?

- Arguments against having 1 goal?
 - The Committee imagined the capstone to be integrative and considered that to need to meet more than 1 goal. But requiring them to meet all the goals is too much.
- An advantage to 1 would be that dept could get the course underway and add to it the next year.
- A concern of the Provost was having the capstone trying to do too much and for depts with existing capstone courses may feel like they have to add more into the course.
- Should we give the depts flexibility to revalidate for 1 or more or have the preference be at least 2?

- Changing the capstone might make people nervous about complicating it more but on the other side, this could help departments be more intentional about integration, which they may already be doing.
- Nursing example. The final clinical course would be a practicum that could easily meet 2 goals.

Motion

- **Moved for capstone to meet at least 2 goals.** So moved by Bruce and seconded by Steve.

VOTE: YES: 13 NO: 0 ABSTAIN:

3) Honors and Integrated Studies paragraph location

- Do we want to express anything or put it in a different place in the text?
- The Honors program always focuses on essential studies and that is the task force intention.
- Are there other programs to include, such as study abroad? Other nontraditional study options?
 - Some aren't cohesive enough and are struggling for this fall.
 - It would be nice to highlight specialties, such as Indian Studies in advising.
 - Concern with where to departments draw the line – it comes down to publicity to the students.
- The intent of this statement, wherever it appears, is to alert students that there are other GE options and are worth researching. Therefore, this statement is located in the right spot.

4) Other issues to revisit?

- There is a sense that some of the language is acting as a placeholder until we develop the rubric – is this the case? No.
- Question from the last meeting. Is the capstone in the major? We assume the class will be in the major, the department will have the option of allowing the course to be outside the major.
- Concern with the validation process in terms of defining the arts – should the task force make a recommendation?
 - This has been a contentious point for the GER committee and it would be nice for them to have guidelines to use.
 - This is a task for the transition team to tackle with the help of the GER committee. Transition group needs to help develop the guidelines, but the GER will administer and should have a voice in the development process as well.
 - This and other tasks will be designated for the transition team and this will be important to stress to the Senate.
- Motion to strike the word ethicality from Goal 2 for editorial reasons.
 - The word could be dropped and not cause the goal to lose its focus.
- Concern with addressing rubrics.
 - The rubrics will need to wait to be addressed after the recommendations are voted on.

5) Committee group reports

- **Visibility Group**
 - Gen Ed is mentioned in the strategic plan – priority action A Goal 2.
 - Committee feels Gen Ed is not visible on campus and have several recommendations.
 - 1) Develop an office to oversee Gen Ed
 - 2) Develop a Gen Ed website that is linked to the main page for easy location
 - 3) Work together with the sustainability committee because there are easy overlap
- **Program Support Group**
 - Proposal of 5 points to discuss at later time or for the transition group.
 - 1) Restructuring – creation of undergraduate center of education to tie resources together.
 - 2) Individual director to report to associate provost. This would follow the strategic plan.
 - 3) At the very least, designate a single person that would be responsible for essential studies.
 - 4) Establish a transition committee to sort out the implementation issues still ahead.

- 5) Establish a Review Committee.
- Discussion
 - Why designate an individual to oversee? To connect direct responsibility to them.
 - What would be GER committee role with the Review Committee? Currently, the Senate addresses Gen Ed related items. Time constraints might affect efficiency.
 - The Gen Ed Review Committee would review and report to associate provost.
 - Committee wants to balance administrative duties and maintain shared governance.
 - The Review Committee seems it would be a subcommittee or ad hoc committee.
 - Including assessment in the development of the Review Committee is good.
 - Will the proposed Review Committee help or compete? For sustainability, it would be helpful to have a group be able to stand back and analyze the assessment data.
 - There may be some changes for the GER related to this and may need to be studied.
 - Why is #1 recommendation the best? GE would be the administrator's sole focus and would tie together undergraduate aspects, perhaps housing under academic affairs.
 - In the future, would focus shift from Gen Ed back to academic majors? A committee goal is to increase Gen Ed visibility and prominence. Gen Ed is interdisciplinary and would bring departments together and address the "inertia" departments have by the nature of working together and straightforward requirements.
 - Why not create an essential studies as opposed to an undergraduate center? Because it seems the current structure of stand alone resources isn't working for Gen Ed now.
 - Is academic advising a leap to essential studies?
 - There was not committee consensus on which offices to include, but on the idea of undergraduate education.
 - Would the first recommendation be outside the purview of the Gen Ed Task Force? Maybe this is not the way to proceed, but it would be an end goal? Are we willing to step on toes to make this work?
 - Based on the third recommendation, the director and center seem connected. It seems those are separate issues- could we separate them? The leader could be a dean or chair.
- Questions/Issues for future discussion
 - 1) Office, 2) Leader, 3) Title of the leader 4) placement on the organizational chart
- Politically, this is major restructuring. Option 1 could create barriers. Option 3 would accomplish goals with a leader and location.
- Can we agree on the approximate location?
 - Would it be parallel to the writing center? OID? Reporting lines? A dean as director would give it more prestige and visibility, but would be a bigger barrier to obtain.
- Resources
 - Option 1 could require the shared resources with already established offices. Then again, this may send a message that the center does not need new resources, when there is a need.
 - A free-standing office would require new resources.
 - Examples from other schools include directors of Gen Ed with variance titles of leaders and locations. The overall impression was the universities were committed to Gen Ed.
- What do we really want?
 - An equivalent of an OID reporting to the provost (or assistant provost) in academic affairs, to ensure a good level of communication. This will come down to commitment to resources.
- Some universities have Gen Ed in arts and sciences
 - Reasons for this include that it is easier to manage Gen Ed across campus. The resources aren't out of arts and sciences, but it helps with the organization.
- Tasks for next time
 - To break down the issues and vote at next meeting to get to action steps.
 - 1) Home, 2) Leader, 3) Recommendations for success