

**Gen Ed Task Force
Meeting Notes
Friday, May 4, 2007 @ 3pm**

Members Present:

Joseph Benoit, Lisa Burger, Matthew Cavalli, Bruce Dearden, Joan Hawthorne, Anne Kelsch, Evguenii Kozliak, Ray Lagasse, Steven Light, Patrick O'Neill, Martha Potvin, Dan Rice, Lori Robison, Keaton Sondreal, Tom Steen, Daphne Stevens, Anne Walker, Ryan Zerr

Announcements:

- Proposal passed the senate
- Thank you to Anne and Tom and thank you to everyone who attended the meeting.
- A number of people commended the Task force for their hard work and conscientious work.
- There are bridges that will need to be built into the transition with those that opposed the proposal.
- This is our last Task force meeting! Technically our charge is to deliver the proposal to the Provost – but the transition part has to be talked about

Subcommittee reports

Sustainability Subcommittee

Task force needs to discuss these points and provide a final report to Provost Weisenstein
The latest versions of the subcommittee reports provide voting points.

The 4 recommendations include

- 1) an Essential Studies office,**
- 2) an administrative position,**
- 3) an implementation/transition committee,**
- 4) an ad hoc review committee.**

Note: It is important these recommendations are faculty driven and coordinated with the GERC.

Discussion

- Could the review committee be under the Essential Studies office?
- The intention of the ad hoc review was to bring the faculty back into the oversight.
 - Could we tie the review into the Provost's department review?
 - Is 7 years too long? Revalidation is 3 years. Are these good intervals?
 - Committee recommendation could be 4 years.
- Fulltime administrator position? Most models are fulltime.
 - Task force should propose for full-time and adequate funding.
- This office should have authority and responsibility but the parameters of that authority and responsibility would have to be negotiated in terms of the GERC and the Senate.
 - The senate subcommittee should have oversight.
 - How will this proposal affect accreditation? Revalidation? Ongoing evaluation?
 - How will language be worked out to include GER oversight and spread the work?
- Is it the GER committee's charge to deal with administrative issues? No. Curriculum review and program review is more typical.
- The grad school model seems to be a good model to follow.
 - If someone proposes a change, impact study across campus needs to be done.
 - This model would assume that Gen Ed would be outside the Art and Humanities which may be inefficient.
- Is implementation part of our charge? If not, it might not need to be in the recommendation.

- If we separate recommendation 1 (an ES office) and recommendation 2 (an administrative position), we might have an office without an administrator.
 - Combine #1 and 2 for voting purposes?
 - In the original draft the two were together, so will combine for voting.
 - Would the administrator be a faculty member? Tenured?

Vote to use the language “director will have the authority and responsibility for administrative oversight for the Essential Studies program”

VOTE 1 – Endorse bullets points 1 and 2

YES: 18 NO: 0 ABSTAIN:

Discussion

Recommendation 3 – there are implementation issues that the Task force hasn’t addressed.

- GERC is written into this recommendation based on feedback to include that committee in the transition.
- What should be overlap from the Task force to the implementation committee to ensure continuity?
- If there is an administrator appointed to the fulltime position, maybe it should be up to them to establish a review process and/or committee.
- When we presented to the Senate, we stated we would include a review process in our recommendations but could leave some flexibility in procedures.
- Could Recommendation #4 be revised to be a committee for review that would be in conjunction with GERC and the Gen Ed assessment plan? If so, the assessment committee should be included in the language.
- How can we get all this done? How could the validation work get done?
 - GERC? An outside group? One year expanded GERC that would be a validation transition group?
 - A lot of the courses validated now could be validated under the new proposal.
 - A big part of this process will be the specific rubrics which need to be developed.
 - Probably transition could be directed by the expanded GERC with members who are available over the summer. They could develop the framework, practice with old revalidation requests, and train in fall workshops.
 - Codifying the framework and the items the committee would need to use should be developed together with the GERC and Task force.
 - Who should initiate this? This process will be a lot of work and sharing the work should be discussed.
 - Will the GERC be able to expand when it is going into next year with empty positions?
 - Maybe there is an issue of how the senate committees are built; people who were interested in Gen Ed didn’t necessarily get on that committee, although they try to consider member’s preferences.
 - GERC could remain in charge and assist in the transition. GERC could have 3 people working on this topic and invite 2 other people for consultation.
 - GERC is a senate committee and is not under the Provost. Wouldn’t the procedure be for GERC to form an ad hoc committee for validation and just inform the senate executives?
 - The Task force wouldn’t be involved in the revalidation process, but would help develop the standards for revalidation based on the past 2 years of work.
 - Would there still be a separate implementation team for the Gen Ed proposal?
 - Yes. The group will need to brainstorm ways to break down issues and work.
 - The transition team would check in with GERC at the various stages.

Concerns with the another committee developing the standards after having not been involved in the discussions and research that the Task force has done over the last 2 years.

- Do we separate items out?
 - GERC committee could responsible for specific procedures
 - Task Force could be responsible for the standards and criteria.
 - But there doesn't seem to be a lot for the GERC work with in terms of procedures.
 - Some of the issues that would be under the GERC may include:
 - How would GERC manage the old and new standards?
 - What would GERC do with people who are already validated, but want to be validated in a new standard?
- GERC does need to be involved in writing the requirements because they need to be satisfied with the standards as they are the ones that deal with this.
 - On the other hand, there should be some assurance that the Senate-approved proposal will be upheld.
 - Someone needs to be on the GERC committee to give background information into the decision made from the Task force.
- In the MST discussion, most points were addressed, but what happens if this is reinterpreted in a few years that is completely different.
- There is a senate official GERC and the Task force is appointment by the Provost. We have to figure out a transition because it is common for innovations like this to dissipate.
- #3 – Do we need to change the language?
 - If the transition team has a significant percentage of GERC members, would that be acceptable involvement?
 - A joint GER/Task force would lead to educating the GERC members on the background information.
 - Need to include language that specifies the Essential studies as approved by the Senate on May 3, 2007. It has been approved and need to be implemented.
- Could the proposal have language that asks the Provost with help from the Task force chair and GERC to appointment implementation committee and work on transition this summer?
 - Would this be like asking the Provost to extend the Task force into the next phase?

Vote 2 - For the Provost to select the transition team with the help of the chairs of the GERC and Task force and to implement the Task force proposal that was approved by the Senate on May 3, 2007.

YES: 17 NO: 0 ABSTAIN:

Recommendation #4

- Who should establish the review committee? Provost? Senate? Administrative position? Implementation team? Should the Task force have input?
- The administrative position could be in conjunction with the GERC and implementation committee for review, but in the future this might be a Senate committee.
 - Does the director report to the senate? No. It is similar to the Provost responsibility to the program review.
- In essence this would be creating a new department in the Provost's office, but analysis of the work to be complete by the GERC.
- Could we add language to have the review committee convene every couple years with whatever standing committee would be appropriate at the time?
- Is there a program review for the entire graduate program as a whole?
 - There isn't a tool for total review right now.

- Closest may be the 5 year comprehensive evaluation of the dean
- The intention of #4 was to periodically reconnect faculty, similar to Task force to evaluate changes.
 - Review would have to include effectiveness.
- Is there a process for faculty to recommend changes now? GERC.
- Graduate school doesn't have common goals for all graduate students, but in essence we are developing that for undergraduates.
- Should the ad hoc committee be under the director or as a separate item?
 - The intent was to keep it separate- didn't want too many years to go by without review.

VOTE 3 – The administrative direction position with the implementation committee and GERC would develop a review process for periodic review to assess overall function and effectiveness of the newly established Essential Studies program.

YES: 18 NO: 0 ABSTAIN:

Visibility committee

- The main recommendation is the Essential Studies program has a dedicated person with an office to update the website, which was already voted on.

Building Bridges

- next question is how to build bridges, especially with the MSP faculty
- Open communicating will be needed
 - Op Ed piece in the Herald may give a general overview of this week's events and this may help to start discussions.
 - Conversations are more important, but the Op Ed piece may help the discussions to start.
- Campus buy-in is needed, but cannot be obtained by simply telling faculty what Essential Studies is
 - Open meetings when discussing what Essential Studies courses mean, but don't want to give one department more ownership than another.
- Department meetings are needed, not just open meetings.
- Task force needs to be proactive – help departments to vent and then move on to help develop the standards.
- How should we organize this?
 - Originally thought to organize around the new goals, but based on yesterday and the last few weeks, the structure could be by the 4 categories in the distribution system.
 - Need lots of input on how to define where courses will fall – it might be one way to start discussions.
 - But if structured around the goals, then there is the opportunity to break down barriers.
 - One problem might be to get people to recognize that they could relate to a goal.
 - Maybe start with disciplines because this is where faculty are and where the resentment lines are.
 - Important to have both by goals and discipline – it's important to allow for the maximum flexibility.
- We'll need to distinguish between efforts to bridge to those opposed and to others on campus.
 - If you know of people the Task force members can start talking to, please let Anne know.

Continuing to help with the group

- Would you like to continue with the Task force or transition team?
- Do you have particular interests in certain area or are you willing to help with anything?
- This will help Anne and Tom get organized for this summer.