

**Gen Ed Task Force
Meeting Minutes
Friday, November 17, 2006 @ 3:00pm**

Members Present:

Joseph Benoit, Donna Brown, Lisa Burger, Matt Cavalli, Bruce Dearden, Joan Hawthorne, Jay Fisher, Anne Kelsch, Kim Kenville, Evguenii Kozliak, Ray Lagasse, Steven Light, Pat O'Neill, Martha Potvin, Lori Robison, Tom Steen, Daphne Stevens, and Wilbur Stolt.

Announcements:

- **Two open campus meetings were held** – Goals are to 1) invite feedback, input, suggestions, concerns from across campus and 2) provide a venue for the task force to distribute information.
 - Thursday, November 16th – 5 in attendance
 - Friday, November 17 – 9 in attendance
- Issues raised:
 - Music Dept - creative thinking is missing and will bring a proposal to the next meeting.
 - Lack of civic engagement from Lana Rakow – she will submit proposal to the task force at next meeting.
- **Timeline for campus discussion** – Need to balance gathering input with meeting deadlines.
 - December – collect feedback on proposals and concerns.
 - January – review of all proposals and concerns by the task force.
 - February – finalize and distribute to departments.
 - March – submit to Provost for review and feedback and submit to Senate.

Issue surrounding the open campus meetings

- Remember not to react, but instead be inviting and recognizing feedback.
- Music Dept issues will be addressed at the next meeting.
- The task force has done a great job. The next step is ensuring opportunities for feedback.
- It seems hard for people outside the task force to commit, respond or give effective input because they do not have the broad context and goals of the task force to meet their department goals.
- We need to have better, clearer, simple information on general education – but we are not there yet.

Feedback from Thursday session

- There was confusion on how department goals can fit into state guidelines. Requested a matrix.
- Concern that the task force would simply not add more credits.
- Concern on revalidating highlighted that the task force needs to focus on revalidation process.
- Concern on how departments will assess classes to determine if they meet gen ed requirements.
- Some form of an ethical component was favored. Where does the task force need to focus on ethics?
 - National accreditation, etc.
 - Weaving ethics into a course – can departments validate that?

Feedback from Friday session

- Again people were concerned about increasing credits.
- Music dept had strong, specific concerns that art programs could suffer a decrease in students.
 - 1) humanities given some emphasis, but the arts are not given emphasis.
 - 2) negative effect on credit distribution.
 - Important to encourage departments to pose general concerns, not department-specific concerns and to focus on the overall issues.

Today's proposal – Ethical Reasoning from Provost Weisenstein

- This proposal was developed by Joan, Tom and Libby and format was similar to recent proposals.
- Goals – needed to define ethical reasoning in order to establish goals that would fit at UND.
 - Reviewed information from the web, references from Oxford conference, Stanford, Santa Clara, Duke, and Indiana (IUPUI).

Discussion

- There was no basic definition of ethical reasoning found. This is of concern since other guidelines are defined. There are sport ethics or applied ethics that might lend to sample frameworks.
- A national struggle to find or establish definitions balances teaching because it's the law (plagiarism) or teaching the broader philosophical basis.
- There seem to be 2 schools of thought on ethical reasoning:
 - 1) Critical thinking approach – a skills approach that attaches reasoning to situations.
 - 2) Normative approach – “should have” approach (Santa Clara).
- How should the parent's point of view be considered?
- There seems to be 2 issues surrounding the development of this guideline:
 - 1) information distribution.
 - 2) deciding what ethics or ethical reasoning will look like at UND?
- Different meaning led to discussion on the differences between ethical reasoning and ethics.
- Can ethics be considered under critical thinking guidelines to not only understand ethical principles and then use critical thinking to make decisions?
- Is ethics a passing fad that will fade out or a new norm in education that is crucial at every level?
- Where should ethics gen ed requirement be met? Graduate/undergraduate or departments or both? At freshman or senior levels or throughout a student's education? Through specific gen ed classes or throughout all department courses?
- How does UND produce a responsible scholar, regardless of the ethics knowledge of the student when they start at UND?
- Will accrediting bodies start to require ethics or ethical reasoning guidelines and should UND focus on ethics before accrediting bodies start to require them?
- How can the task force implement “multiple hits” in incorporating ethics education? What percentage of a class should be devoted to ethics in order to make an impact? Should there be a variety of freshman classes to choose from that would all include ethics, but in the context of that department content? Could ethics be incorporated element into a class, but not the sole focus of it and still be effective?
- How will ethics education affect a student considering they may have set values, or that evolution of thought may occur with increasing reasoning skills?
- How will the committee keep simple straightforward gen ed guidelines if we keep adding to them and using unclear language?
- How do we declare that we are ethical reasoning, when we know it's hard to set outcomes for that?

Voting

1st vote – Does the task force adopt a goal in ethical reasoning?

- YES: 10 NO: 7 (But do not have 2/3).

2nd vote – Does the task force adapt a course requirement?

- YES: 8 NO: 9

3rd Vote - Does the task force want to embed in gen ed language?

- YES: 15 NO: 1 ABSTAINED: 1

- This means that ethics/ethical reasoning will be embedded language in more than one goal, but not an individual goal. This will provide direction to the proposal writers and the task force will review again in January.
- If it were a subcategory – what would that do?
 - Example– instructor of a gen ed course chooses critical thinking and as a subset could focus on critical thinking on ethical issues. It would be up to the department and mean that students wouldn't all take that course.
- The issues listed here not necessarily limited. This discussion can be used as lifting the issue as well as addressing Provost Weisenstein's request.

Next task force meeting

- Concern of meeting timelines with issues that will come up from the department sessions. We may need one more meeting to ensure that all issues are addressed.
- **Friday, December 1**
- **Friday, December 8** (Reading and Review Day)

Meeting adjourned.