

GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
2004-2005

Minutes of Meeting: 4/28/05, 2:00 p.m. in JB-287

**Members Present:** Stephen Kinzey (Chair)—NS, Susan Finsen—A&L, C.E. Tapie Rohm, Jr. – BPA, Linda Braatz-Brown—ED, Allen Butt—SBS, Ezekiel Bonillas—ASI (Student Representative)

**Absent:** Milton Clark (Admin)

Steve welcomed the committee and asked for a review of the last minutes of March 16<sup>th</sup>.

**M/S/P** It was moved by Allen Butt, seconded by Susan Finsen and passed unanimously, that the minutes of March 16, 2005 be approved as written.

**Old Business:**

1. Review of GE Materials (Milton)

- a. Objective: To inform us as to the status of the course files and as to when the review process can begin. Individual assignments should be made.

Because Milton was not able to be at the meeting, this discussion will be postponed until the next meeting.

2. Reviewers MATRIX (Steve)

- a. Objective: To provide the committee with a tool that may be used to assist during the review process.

Steve distributed a MATRIX he created using some of the objectives for each category. He said it is quite general, but designed to be of help until changes or suggestions can be made to revise it. The reviewer can write something on each question and any other items that might work in the category.

Tapie said this is an excellent tool and will be helpful to go through it as we use it. Susan said it is a very quick way to go through the review along with the documents that are received from Milton. Then next year we can make it better.

Steve asked the committee members to check with their own College to see if they need to be nominated to serve another term for this committee, so we can have continuity next year.

3. Final discussion of the new GE category as proposed by both CSCI and INFO (Steve)

- a. Objective: To make a current decision regarding this issue based on the documents and information that is currently available.

Tapie quickly reviewed the memo requesting a Category H for this requirement. He said Computer Sciences and Information Management have made a test along with the Library, and he will send a copy of the test to the committee for review. He said it is similar to the ELM/EPT exam. Students can take the CILST three times; and if they do not pass, then will be required to take one or two of the courses (he is not certain the numbers listed on the memo are the correct ones).

Tapie gave a brief review of the reasons for the request, stating the Faculty Senate Executive Committee said they don't have the authority to do this. John Craig said if the GE Committee will state it is a good idea then it can go to the senate.

Steve said he will do the action item to see that it goes to the Senate and then it will only need the approval at the Executive Committee. He said the GE Committee should decide if a new Category H should be added and then put in the wording (using the example from John Craig). Steve will then indicate the GE Committee supports a request for a Computer and Information Literacy Skills Test (CILST). He said he was sent the charge from the Senate (Terry Nelson).

4. Discussion of current GE package as pertaining to the concerns of individual colleges  
(Steve/Tapie)

- a. Objective: To collect information based on informal surveys taken by GE committee members as to the concerns surrounding the GE package.

Tapie said the state is looking at the LDTP (Lower-Division Transfer Program) concerns and he will be at a meeting soon involving the issues of what do we want to do for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The Faculty Senate passed a motion that a Task Force was to be set up comprised of representatives from all five constituent units to write a report that identifies the major issues and concerns regarding our current GE package; but because they never met, this committee was "chosen" to do a review to address any GE concerns. Tapie said we need to determine if we are deficient in what we want our students to be competent in for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Susan said she got many comments about how GE is evaluated and other questions that include concerns that some courses may not be doing what they are designed to do and also the way the committee looks at reviews on a 4-year basis may not be often enough and not adequate by just looking at syllabi.

Capstones are the most common courses for concern because they are taught in a number of departments and her area cares very much about it (a basic skills course); is it a common course for GE mandate or is it getting away from the requirements because of the different instructors and areas teaching the courses.

GE classes are important courses, but are more often taught by part timers and a concern could be that they are loosely taught and not addressing a student's writing abilities or improving their writing. Are we using information that reflects what is really going on? Allen said 306 is the same way and raises a number of concerns and comments from his college. Susan said some are interested in the test and have concerns that if you fail and take a class and then take the test again and if you fail, what then?

Comments were made about reducing quarter units and to remove 306 from GE. The course will be taught to many people and if the course does the job, the people would come back and pass the test.

Other comments Susan received included: statements that professors do get many students that do not write well so perhaps they should be put in courses before taking the test; or make the writing exam passable and aligned with what other CSUs do. Consider putting in a second English Composition class at the freshman level because of the abundance of ESL students. Cut GE required

categories that are simply FTES generators and serve little other purpose (obviously highly political, but in some cases, the category is ok, but classes listed are the problem.) Suggestions by category were made as follows:

B.2. Category is fine but including HSCI 120 as a life science is not; taking a “health” class is ok, but not in place of an actual life science class.

B.4. Special Topics in Science and Technology (2) is purely FTES padding.

C.3. Foreign Language or Literature in Translation (4) is hardly a foreign language requirement and stated that in Liberal Studies an actual foreign language course is required.

D.4. Discipline Perspectives (4) is purely FTES padding.

E.1. Remove NSCI 110 as an option because it has not been taught in years and KINE 205 would seem to be ok to replace it.

E.3. Physical Education (2) is purely to keep a large FTES in that department because every student in Kinesiology already takes KINE 205.

The committee realized some of these are unpopular comments, but all suggestions should be considered or at least seen by the committee. The discussion went back to what can we do to make our students write better.

Linda asked with the stipulation that students have to pass the test or take the course, is it the same for all grades (Education students are all graduates); and the answer is yes, it is.

Allen asked how we got the English GE test so different in each college. There was a brief discussion outlining that the last task force committee about 1989-91 made this decision. The change from 5 to 4 units was a big change for our campus and it used to be a writing class and had very small class sizes (17-20). Going from the RUMML plan which had a lot of writing in it and changed and reduced the units, then FTEs became a question by each college and students doing more work with fewer units. Then everyone wanted to get a piece of the package, so it became very political.

Steve mentioned the committee agreed that students cannot write well, and we do not remediate the problem without extra writing components, but also the faculty were being taught how to teach writing.

A little bit of history was discussed of Capstone requirements, papers and giving students feedback on their writing of papers; we do ask for papers, but the larger classes are asked for only 5-7 pages or less and a review is optional. The 306 course is different for our students who are transfer vs. freshman; and transfer students are about 2/3 of our student population and they have the writing and Capstone completed from the community college, yet the students are still not prepared to write at the college level.

Steve’s area said keep the classes but make sure everyone who teaches knows how to teach, and having it the same across the curriculum and departments is critical.

Allen said regarding Information Literacy and writing he was asked by his college, “Who wants to know?” It is the Executive Committee of Faculty Senate that has requested a review because a senator on the floor recommended that a task force be set up to look at all GE (Terry Nelson).

There was a brief review of how this came about. Tapie said the state-wide committee answers to the people of the state-wide senate who reports to the Executive Chancellor, statewide. Now, in addition, the state committee has been asked to find out what we want our students to know for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The State will make their mandate to the campuses, and each campus has a GE committee which determines the interpretation. This committee decided last year not to reduce the GE package and some questions were raised from that decision. The State said students are taking too many units for their 4-year degree; and they reduced all degrees to 180 or 120 units because students were sitting in extra, unneeded classes and there are new students waiting to get in that are being turned away.

Because there is no money to build more campuses, decreasing units from GE or other areas does not justify extra units for a degree. GE is basically helping fulfill the degree and the state wants more students to be able to get into the system. The quality of the education for students has been reduced because we just can't handle the number of students, so BOE said get students out faster and each area has to come up with a roadmap for each student to show them how to get out in four years. The mandate is now becoming the same for each campus. The mandate will be that each campus must come up with common classes for every area, and every campus that doesn't like it will be required by the state to follow their mandate.

A common lower division course numbering system is now going to be required across the system and each campus will be told if they don't develop it themselves, then it will be mandated by the state.

For our campus, Tapie is looking at the wording to come up with a degree that in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has our conclusions of what all students need to know – this will come out as a letter to the community colleges who will look at the CSU recommendations. Because the AA degree courses don't match our GE package, it is considered a problem and another reason it is being looked at by the State.

The GE Committee's recommendation has to be made to Faculty Senate.

Steve outlined some of the things that need to be done because of the time constraints.

Susan has received feedback but said it would be a good idea if each member gets feedback from their college and e-mails the suggestions to each other. Then everyone can see them before the meeting rather than spending time reviewing each one during the meeting. The committee can then clearly determine the common questions from each area before the next meeting.

Linda said the ELM and Math for K-12 at community colleges are being looked at by university representatives and P14 education with a link that is looking at math problems. When students graduate from high school they have to take an exit exam and then the entry exam at a community college; then if they don't pass the test, they have to take classes to raise their math skills, and then when they come here, it all starts all over again and they have to take math courses here to get caught up to take the exam and pass it here.

Susan asked if this is a disconnect or are these classes in alignment or can they be aligned or are these people just not really prepared from high school. Also community colleges course descriptions may sound the same, but we don't really know if the material is the same; and maybe there are definitions at each level.

Linda asked if there is an alignment of the California community colleges and is there a way to articulate that to the students so they don't go backward instead of forward. In other words, were you taught x and now y is required, or were you taught x and you don't really have what is needed for x after all? Discussion followed. Tapie said now the new SAT and ACT tests will have a writing component which even adds a new twist or problem.

**New Business:**

1. GE Curricular Proposal (Susan)

- a. Objective: To provide initial feedback on the development of a course that will be proposed as an inclusion to the GE package.

Susan said she received a request proposing a new Capstone course on the society and culture of classical civilization (Greece and Rome); and asked the committee to review it informally and make suggestions back to her, so she can let the professor know if it is even plausible.

Allen asked that the committee talk to their colleges before anything goes to Faculty Senate, so the committee can up-date the action memo if the colleges have suggestions that should be considered or included in the Action memo.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, May 11, 2005 at 3:00 p.m. in JB-404.

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