GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
188th Meeting
Thursday, March 24, 2011

MINUTES
Approved

Present: D. Chakraborty (LAS/PHYS), D. Changnon (Acting Associate Vice Provost), D. Chiros (EDU/Student), C. Douglass (Assessment/ex-officio), G. Gordon (BUS/MKTG), E. Klonoski (VPA/MUSC), J. Kot (LAS/FL&L), G. Long (Acting Coordinator for General Education), Wei Luo (LAS/GEOG), D. Smith (Catalog Editor), M. VanOverbeke (EDU/LEPF)

I. Adoption of Agenda
A. VanOverbeke made a motion, seconded by Kot, to APPROVE THE AGENDA. Motion passed unanimously.

II. Announcements
A. Electronic approval of minutes from February 17, 2011, and February 24, 2011

III. General Education Coordinator’s Report
A. Long reported on what he has been working on. He has been looking at syllabi and found that of the 146 general education courses, about 30 have syllabi posted online, but only about 15 of those are current. Very few of the syllabi mention that they are general education courses. He also continues to work on gathering assessment data, from departments as well as on the general education program as a whole. He has been working with Amy Franklin in Student Affairs and Enrollment Management on data that measure where students are meeting general education goals. He asked GEC members to let him know of any other repositories of appropriate data. He reported that he will have a distribution list of all instructors teaching a general education course to improve communication. Long and Gordon will do focus groups with students in the fall.

IV. Old Business
A. Subcommittees and resubmissions. Klonoski reminded the GEC that the subcommittees were to review the resubmissions assigned to them and to either 1) approve, 2) not approve and provide feedback for the departments, or 3) bring to GEC for discussion. Subcommittees A (FCNS 207, FCNS 280, FCNS 406, and TECH 294) had three resubmissions that need improvement and one that was acceptable as submitted. Subcommittee B (ILAS 225, ILAS 261, EPFE 201, PSYC 245) reported that ILAS 225 needs to resubmit; ILAS 261 is accepted, but in the future they will need to provide more information; and EPFE 201 and PSYC 245 are accepted and the departments should be commended for their good work. Subcommittee C (BIOS 101, PHHE 201, PHHE 206, PHHE 295) had one resubmission that was not acceptable and the others were missing information. VanOverbeke reported that he was the only one
reviewing these resubmissions and Klonoski volunteered to look at them as well. VanOverbeke added that all but PHHE 295 could be accepted. Chakraborty made a motion, seconded by Kot, to RECEIVE THE RESUBMISSIONS THAT HAVE BEEN REVIEWED TO DATE. Discussion followed to clarify which courses were approved. Klonoski will respond to the respective departments based on the feedback from the subcommittees. See Appendix A for status of resubmissions. It was also discussed what would be the deadline for departments if they need to provide more information; is it reasonable to ask them to respond in the next academic year if they didn’t have the information this year. The difference between the resubmissions and the annual collection of data was also discussed. Long reported that of the reports he has received, only two of them had any data. Committee members made suggestions for improving communication about the annual report for the future, such as send the request immediately following the end of a semester and provide resources for collecting data and assessment examples. The GEC also determined that the resubmission process needs to continue along with the annual data collection to provide a longitudinal study of general education courses. Long added that between this GEC meeting and the next meeting, he will have met with faculty in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) and will be able to provide the GEC with their feedback, which is important since the majority of the general education courses are from that college. The GEC decided that representatives from CLAS be invited to speak at the next GEC meeting. **Motion passed unanimously.**

1. Volunteers for remaining resubmissions. Kot, Long, and VanOverbeke volunteered to review resubmissions for ANTH 101, IDSP 200, IDSP 211, IDSP 219, and IDSP 225. Resubmissions for ARTH 288, KNPE 100, and KNPE 111 have yet to be received.

B. Assessment Plan.
   1. First Year Composition Report. Tabled.

C. Baccalaureate Review Process and Update and General Education Goals. Long reported he will draft a template for general education course syllabi.

D. BIOS 105 and BIOS 107. Klonoski asked GEC members to review the materials they have received for these submissions and be prepared to vote on them at the next meeting.

E. General Education Website. The website should be up early next week.

F. Faculty Development, review articles: “What is a generally educated person” and “Universal Design”
Klonoski stated that a broader discussion of what the general education program might look like at NIU is needed; especially looking at incorporating new baccalaureate goals. One question to be discussed is why is general education needed? If it is to expand a student’s knowledge and teach critical thinking, the general education program shouldn’t be the only place to achieve those objectives. The concept of preparing students to be well-rounded individuals was discussed and can there be the breadth of opportunities without general education. The need for a culminating experience and/or sequencing of courses was brought up as a way to integrate coursework. Transfer students also need to be considered as they complete most or all of their general education coursework before coming to NIU. How can it be ensured that they are also getting a well-rounded education. The concept of a portfolio, for native and transfer students, was discussed. General education at NIU has not changed in over 30 years and the general perception of both faculty and students is that it’s an obstacle. It was also discussed that it’s important to have the support of the administration for the general education program, in whatever form it takes at NIU, and how can the GEC get more involvement from the administration. Kot made a motion that the GEC ask for guidance from
Provost Alden. VanOverbeke asked if the GEC is willing to suggest general education models it might consider. Other suggestions were to invite the provost to speak to the GEC. There was discussion regarding exactly what the GEC’s role is with regards to changing the general education program and there was agreement that the GEC needed to have a clearer vision before having a discussion with Alden. Kot suggested the motion could be amended to a letter be sent to Provost Alden from Klonoski outlining the GEC’s concerns about the general education program, including listing strengths and weaknesses. It was agreed that this is a good idea, but there was further discussion regarding the appropriate timing of that correspondence. Long said he had yet to receive feedback from the administration to the report on the Baccalaureate Task Force Retreat and he is preparing a strategy for moving forward with the baccalaureate goals and learning outcomes. Changnon noted that the comments from CLAS may also provide the GEC with suggestions to send to the provost. Kot withdrew the motion until more information can be collected.

G. Submission of new course HIST 170 for general education credit (on hold until after subcommittees report on resubmission). Tabled.

H. AAC&U Conference on General Education. No report.

I. GEC meetings. No report.

J. GEC Task List and Priorities. No report.

V. New Business

A. Updated bylaws, adding General Education Coordinator as ex-officio member of the GEC

VI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:15.

The next meeting will be April 21, 2011, 12:30, AL 225.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Smith, Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator