GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
195th Meeting
Thursday, January 19, 2012

MINUTES
Approved

Present: A. Birberick (Vice-Provost, ex-officio), D. Chakraborty (LAS/PHYS), B. Coller (EET/MEE), E. Fredericks (BUS/MKTG), D. Gorman (LAS/ENGL), A. Keddie (HHS/NURS/UCC), E. Klonoski (VPA/MUSC), D. Smith (Catalog Editor), J. Umoren (HHS/FCNS), M. VanOverbeke (EDU/LEPF), K. Wiemer (LAS/PSYC/UCC), J. Wilson (LAS/GEOG, for W. Luo)

I. Adoption of Agenda

II. Announcements

November 17, 2011, and December 1, 2011, minutes were approved electronically.

III. General Education Coordinator’s Report

Birberick updated the GEC on the status of the search for a general education coordinator. She asked for the committee’s feedback on the job description, which she based on the qualifications the GEC suggested last year. She added that the CLAS ad hoc group suggested that a requirement for the position be openness to innovation. Gorman asked about the coordinator being the primary liaison between the GEC and the provost; it is his understanding that the GEC is the liaison to the provost. Klonoski responded that the thinking last year was that the general education coordinator would be overseeing the general education program and, as such, would report to the provost. Keddie asked about the wording that preference will be given to those who hold tenure at the rank of associate or full professor. She suggested that for this position, it should be required that the individual hold tenure as an associate or full professor, and GEC members agreed. There was additional discussion on how to incorporate the CLAS ad hoc group’s suggestion. Edits will be made based on all of the discussions. Birberick reported that she will advertise the position through NIU’s HRS website and direct mail to NIU employees. She asked the GEC what they thought about also advertising for the position in the Northern Star. Committee members felt this would be appropriate. Wiemer suggested that Birberick also announce the opening to department chairs asking them to encourage qualified individuals to apply. Birberick responded that she will report the position to the Council of Deans and ask that they share the information with their chairs. Birberick next asked for feedback on the composition of the search committee. Initially she thought the GEC could be the search committee, but now she feels that representation from other areas, such as co-curricular activities, should be included. She added that during the interview process, the entire GEC would be involved. Several GEC members agreed that adding a representative for co-curricular activities, such as engaged learning, is appropriate as long as that person understood the relationship of the co-curricular activities with the general education coordinator. Other areas to be represented on the search committee are the advising and curricular deans, the CLAS ad hoc group and/or LA&S chairs, students, and GEC committee (at the very least Coller as the GEC chair). VanOverbeke suggested that there should be at least one
representative from every college. He added that the posting of the position as well as the interview process should be an opportunity to build an interest in general education.

IV. Old Business

A. Assessment Plan. No report.

B. CLAS/GEC ad hoc committee. The group met last week to further the general education discussion as well as get feedback on the revised submission form for general education credit. General Education Committee members present at that meeting were Birberick, Coller, Klonoski, Luo, and Wiemer. Coller reported on the positive points of the meeting. There was a good discussion on how to structure general education differently, adopt the baccalaureate goals, incorporate co-curricular activities, and move away from the menu system. Klonoski stated that they are open to having general education dispersed throughout all the colleges. Coller added, however, that they still had concerns about the reporting on general education courses being too burdensome and is the work required worth the effort to have a course included in the general education program. One of the issues of the CLAS representatives are policies that are in place without input from LA&S chairs who bear the burden of preparing the reports and resubmissions. They requested that the resubmission process be minimized and possibly follow the model that is used when a course from a community college is accepted as a general education requirement (i.e., a simple syllabus review). The GEC’s response was that there is some validity to the CLAS request for simplicity. However, the GEC has the responsibility of maintaining the quality of the general education program and not to jeopardize accreditation, therefore more substantive review of courses needs to take place. The CLAS representatives also felt that university-wide assessment, such as the CLA, is an acceptable alternative to course-based assessment. The CLAS representatives did provide feedback on the new submission form. They asked why the GEC needed to know who teaches the courses (e.g., teaching assistant, instructor, faculty) and if a procedure is in place for treating multi-section courses consistently. They also requested that the section asking about assessment be reduced. It was noted that the CLAS representatives know what has to be accomplished for the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), but they are also looking at what changes can be made to the general education program in the future. There was a broader discussion regarding what could be changed on the form and if there is a better way to assess courses. Birberick has noticed that programs that have to meet accreditation standards do not seem to have a problem with providing assessment data for general education because they are already collecting those data.

C. Baccalaureate Review Process and Update and General Education Goals. Birberick stated that the GEC should move forward towards updating the general education goals and should not wait until a general education coordinator is in place. She suggested that a general education steering committee could be created with Provost Alden giving the charge. Gorman asked why the GEC shouldn’t be the steering committee. Initially the GEC was going to review the general education program until it was decided that the baccalaureate goals needed to be revised first. And since that has been done, the responsibility of revising the general education goals and program is now back with the GEC. Birberick asked if the GEC had a broad enough representation. Fredericks wondered what the GEC’s responsibilities would be if revising general education was assigned to a different group. She added that the GEC has been waiting for the baccalaureate review process to be completed so they can move forward with the review of the general education program. Klonoski stated that this is a large task that shouldn’t be limited to just the GEC and that greater buy-in from a larger representation of the university community is needed. VanOverbeke suggested that there could be several groups
involved, but that the GEC should be responsible for overseeing the review process. The GEC
could create the charge and a list of what should be done. Then subcommittees made up of
other members of the university community could be assigned those tasks. Gorman stated
that he is in favor of the most efficient way to accomplish the review of general education. He
added that the GEC has spent a lot of time over the last couple of years discussing general
education and looking at successful programs at other institutions and he suggested that some
of that work could be used in the discussions at NIU. Birberick felt that if there was a steering
committee outside of the GEC there might be a greater chance of buy-in to any revisions to the
general education program. Klonoski noted that the baccalaureate goals also represent what
the general education goals should be and Birberick responded that maybe the work of the
GEC could be to focus on a certain level of the rubrics already developed for the baccalaureate
goals and further refine those for general education. However, she added that these are
discussions that should be held with a greater university population. Fredericks also noted
that buy-in is important to increase interest in general education and to change the attitudes
towards it. Birberick offered to prepare for the next meeting what a university-wide general
education steering committee might look like as well as what needs to be done with regards to
the HLC accreditation requirements and the Illinois articulation agreement. Gorman added
that reviewing the general education goals serves at least two purposes. First, it needs to
clearly be articulated in the catalog what are the general education goals and outcomes so
students have access to that information. Second, the general education goals are what the
submissions and resubmissions to the GEC are based on. Other GEC members discussed how
NIU has grown out of its current program and that the menu model no longer works.

D. Revised Submission Form. Coller reported that he has received positive feedback from the
areas that are planning to submit courses for the general education program and have been
waiting for the new form. Gorman made a motion, seconded by Keddie, to APPROVE THE
REVISED FORM FOR SUBMISSION OF A COURSE FOR GENERAL EDUCATION
CREDIT. The committee discussed the CLAS ad hoc group’s feedback (see report on
CLAS/GEG ad hoc committee above). Also, regarding the question about multisection
courses, it was suggested that a number of syllabi should be included to provide a better
sample. A couple of GEC members asked if the questions that didn’t directly relate to the
general education program could be deleted. The majority of the GEC members determined
that all of the questions on the revised form have a purpose either for background information
and/or for specific general education program requirements and should not be eliminated. It
was also noted that this form will be revised again once the review and/or revision of general
education goals is completed. Birberick acknowledged the work that went into the form.
Since this form also needs additional approval, that procedure was explained. All six of the
standing committees of the Undergraduate Coordinating Council (UCC) must submit their
minutes to be received by the UCC. When the UCC receives a committee’s minutes, they are
approving the decisions made by that committee as reflected by the minutes. If the UCC does
not receive all or part of a committee’s minutes, they will send it back to that committee to be
reconsidered. Birberick gave the example of the +/- grading system that was voted down by
APASC, but which the UCC asked them to reconsider because of the strong faculty support
for the new grading system. Birberick added that both Keddie and Wiemer are members of
the UCC and are at those meetings to answer questions about the GEC. Motion passed with
one abstention. (See Appendix A).

E. Resubmissions.
1. Request for deadline extension (POLS 285). Coller reported that the department has sent
their apologies for missing the new January 16, 2012, deadline, and they hope to have the
resubmission sent by January 23.
2. PSYC 225 review. Coller reminded GEC members that this resubmission is being done during the GEC meeting to calibrate the evaluation rubric. Committee members reviewed the resubmission with the evaluation form and found that everything was complete and met expectations. Klonoski pointed out the pre- and post-tests and this is a good example of assessment. He added that the entire resubmission should be posted on the general education website as a good example. Coller then reported that GEC members will work on a small group of resubmissions in subcommittees. Smith will send out those packets early in the next week. Coller asked subcommittees to try to complete their work before the next GEC meeting (February 16, 2012). Klonoski said that last year each subcommittee reported that the resubmission was either acceptable, not acceptable with the reasons why, or they had areas that needed to be discussed by the GEC. It was decided that this would be the procedure to work with again this year. Coller added that in his experience, not all resubmissions are as well done as the PSYC 225 resubmission. Klonoski added that of the 21 resubmissions submitted last year, only one was using direct assessment. The GEC decided that a resubmission without direct assessment should be discussed beyond the subcommittee review. Birberick stated that it will be helpful to have substantive assessment for the HLC. It was also decided that departments that are not providing direct assessment will be asked to do so before the end of the spring 2012 semester. Gorman made a motion, seconded by VanOverbeke, to APPROVE THE RESUBMISSION FOR GENERAL EDUCATION FOR PSYC 225. Motion passed unanimously.

F. General Education Website. No report.

V. New Business

A. Update Review Cycle. Committee members discussed the proposed review cycle. Gorman asked why an off year wasn’t included and no one could remember why it was included in previous review cycles. It was also discussed that this review cycle is just a guideline and could be updated if need be, it was proposed that it be approved as is. Klonoski made a motion, seconded by VanOverbeke, TO APPROVE THE UPDATED REVIEW CYCLE. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. Adjournment

VanOverbeke made a motion, seconded by Keddie, to ADJOURN. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 2:45.

The next meeting will be February 16, 2012, Altgeld 225.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Smith, Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator
## Course Placement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department:</th>
<th>Course number, title, and credit hours:</th>
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### Check One:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Core Competency</th>
<th>Distributive Area</th>
<th>Humanities and the Arts</th>
<th>Sciences and Mathematics</th>
<th>Social Sciences</th>
<th>Interdisciplinary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Catalog Description:

Briefly explain why this course should be a general education course and why it fits in the distributive area checked above (see the last page for explanations of the distributive areas).

### What are the prerequisites for this course?

## Delivery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is the course currently being taught?</th>
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What is or will be the method of delivery (check all that apply)?

- [ ] Face to Face
- [ ] Online only
- [ ] Blended
- [ ] Other
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who teaches/will teach the course?</th>
<th>Primary instruction is/will be provided by (fill in the percentage for all that apply):</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>_____ Professors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>_____ Associate professors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>_____ Assistant professors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>_____ Instructors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>_____ Graduate assistants</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>_____ Other (specify)</td>
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<th>How many sections are/will be offered in a typical semester and year?</th>
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<th>What is/will be the average class size?</th>
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<th>For courses with multiple sections: what procedures are/will be in place to ensure consistency across the various sections?</th>
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<tr>
<th>Relationship to General Education</th>
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<th>What general education goals does the course emphasize? For reporting purposes, highlight 1 to 3 goals.</th>
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<tr>
<th>Explain how the course addresses each goal.</th>
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<tr>
<th>Describe how each goal is assessed in the course? Be as specific as possible. Include associated rubrics, assignments, embedded test questions, etc. used for performance assessment.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe how the course is taught. Provide a syllabus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If there are multiple sections of the course, is a standard syllabus used?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the course address issues of accessibility for students with diverse learning styles?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent, if any, does the course incorporate diverse and multicultural perspectives in philosophy, content, methods, or people? Include, as relevant, the ways in which the course addresses issues of race, ethnicity, culture, social class, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and physical disability.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
General Education Goals

The General Education program at NIU will help students attain a sound liberal education and acquire sufficient general knowledge and intellectual versatility to enable them to become informed and resourceful members of society.

The four broad learning goals of the general education program are:

a. Students develop habits of writing, speaking, and reasoning necessary for continued learning.
   i. Students communicate clearly in written English, demonstrating their ability to comprehend, analyze, and interrogate critically.
   ii. Students communicate in a manner that unites theory, criticism, and practice in speaking and writing.
   iii. Students perform basic computations, display facility with use of formal and quantitative reasoning analysis and problem solving, and interpret mathematical models and statistical information.
   iv. Students are able to access and use various information resources.

b. Students develop an ability to use modes of inquiry across a variety of disciplines in the humanities and the arts, the physical sciences and mathematics, and the social sciences.
   i. Students demonstrate a knowledge of the historical and prehistorical development of societies and cultures, and of the relations of such development to the present.
   ii. Students demonstrate an ability to articulate the significance of the arts and an ability to apply analytical and interpretive skills to the critical examination of the social/cultural values and aesthetic qualities found in the arts and popular culture(s).
   iii. Students demonstrate a knowledge of the cultural traditions and philosophical ideas that have shaped societies, civilizations, and human self-conceptions.
   iv. Students demonstrate an understanding of the scientific method and an ability to use scientific methods and theories to understand the phenomena studied in the natural and social sciences.

c. Students develop an understanding of the interrelatedness of various disciplines by integrating knowledge from several disciplines and applying that knowledge to an understanding of important problems and issues.

d. Students develop social responsibility and preparation for citizenship through global awareness, environmental sensitivity, and an appreciation of cultural diversity.

Distributive Areas

The Academic Policies and Procedures Manual (APPM) (consult Provost’s Office website at www.niu.edu) lists the following guidelines on inclusion in the distributive studies areas (pending approval).

Humanities and the Arts. The Humanities and Arts expose students to the broad range of human cultural endeavor from historical, philosophical, artistic, literary, and linguistic perspectives. (1) Courses in the Humanities enhance understanding of the ideas, traditions, and events that have shaped cultures, civilizations and human self-conceptions. Imaginative and critical capacities are developed through a study of sources from diverse times, cultures, philosophies, and religions, and through the development of ideas in discussion and writing. (2) Courses in the Arts provide students with historical and cultural understanding of fundamental modes of aesthetic expression and some of humanity’s most notable achievements in the visual and performing arts. (3) Foreign language
courses are appropriate provided the foreign language component is used as a tool for acquiring knowledge about other societies and cultures, and skill in the foreign language is not the sole basis for evaluating students.

**Sciences and Mathematics.** Science and mathematics courses introduce students to logical thought processes based on the scientific method and the deductive patterns of mathematics. (1) Courses should build upon a background of science and mathematics from high school and the mathematics component of the core competencies or upon another course in the science and mathematics list (two courses in sequence or a course in one department with a prerequisite from another department). (2) Science courses should utilize mathematics and involve some quantitative treatment of physical properties and phenomena. (3) Courses may provide a clear in-depth perspective of one area of science or mathematics, or may present an integrated study involving several scientific or mathematical disciplines; however, both breadth and depth of course coverage are expected.

**Social Sciences.** (1) The social sciences consist of various disciplines that share common methods, concepts, and principles of science to study the origins, evolution, historic development, and contemporary patterns of all human behaviors and conceptual representations of the world. Human behaviors and conceptual representations are studied in their full diversity of social forms including individuals, families, societies, groups of individuals, organizations, institutions, nations, and global patterns. (2) Courses in social sciences are offered by the Departments of Anthropology, Economics, Geography, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology, but may be offered by other departments as well.

**Interdisciplinary Studies.** Interdisciplinary courses provide an opportunity to integrate information from two or more areas; they afford a stimulus to innovative, exciting, and challenging new courses; and they provide an opportunity for students to broaden their cultural outlooks. Interdisciplinary studies should include only courses that integrate knowledge from at least two disciplines. Interdisciplinary studies should include (1) courses in which certain disciplines can be brought together into an inclusive and unified system through pervasive ideas, principles, or methodologies; and (2) courses that cross-relate and synthesize central findings of separate disciplines.