GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
196th Meeting
Thursday, February 16, 2012

MINUTES
Approved

Present: A. Birberick (Vice-Provost, ex-officio), D. Chakraborty (LAS/PHYS), B. Coller (EET/MEE), C. Douglass (Assessment Services), D. Gorman (LAS/ENGL), A. Keddie (HHS/NURS/UCC), E. Klonoski (VPA/MUSC), S. Locke (EDU/Student), 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

January 19, 2012, minutes were approved electronically.

III. General Education Coordinator’s Report

A. General Education Coordinator Search Update. Birberick reported that the search is up and running. The ad has been running on the NIU website with a close date of February 24. An email and a direct mail notification were sent out to faculty and staff advertising for the position. There will also be an ad in the Northern Star. The search committee is in place with a good representation of all the colleges and other units such as engaged learning as well as student representation. Serving on the search committee from the GEC are Coller and Umoren. Birberick asked GEC members to encourage their colleagues to apply for the position.

IV. Old Business

A. Assessment Plan. No report.

B. CLAS/GEC ad hoc committee. Coller reported that he recently had a good conversation with one of the CLAS chairs, Kendall Thu from Anthropology. His main concern with assessment is how to disaggregate the data to specifically address general education goals. Coller also reported on the Association of American Colleges and Universities meeting. Both he and Thu were especially impressed with one of the speakers, Vincent Tinto. Tinto talked about how success and retention begin in the classroom at the very first moment and that engaging students should start in their first semesters.

C. Baccalaureate Review Process and Update and General Education Goals. Birberick reported that the task force charged with developing rubrics for the eight student learning outcomes has finished their work. In March, the rubrics will be presented to the university community and the task force will be asking for faculty to test the rubrics. She said this can be done with actual or hypothetical student work. The testing is just to see if there are any problems with
the rubrics, not for evaluating actual student work. She added that ideally they would like to have each rubric tested at a low, medium, and high or senior level of course work.

D. Resubmissions.

1. Subcommittee A: ANTH 120, ANTH 210, ANTH 220, ANTH 230, GEOG 202, GEOG 204, GEOG 253. Keddie reported that she reviewed the courses, but there were some data for the Anthropology resubmissions that only one member of the subcommittee received. Smith explained that those data were stacks of pre- and post-tests that she sent to Fredericks, asking her to forward those on when she was done reviewing them. However, despite having provided data, Anthropology didn’t provide an analysis. For ANTH 210, 220, and 230, the department will be asked to provide the data analysis by fall, 2012. ANTH 120, however, is acceptable. Keddie also reported that the Geography resubmissions were great and Chakraborty agreed.

2. Subcommittee B: ECON 160, ECON 260, ECON 261, FCNS 230, PSYC 102. Gorman reported that FCNS 230 and PSYC 102 are acceptable. He added that PSYC 102 is exemplary and could be used as an example. Keddie noted that the resubmissions from Geography also were good enough to use as examples. Douglass reminded GEC members that any example should be using the data to improve the course. Gorman reported that ECON 160, 260, and 261 should be rejected. They only provided syllabi for the last two terms the courses were offered, there is nothing in the resubmission about assessment, and they did not complete the resubmission form. Umores noted that ECON 160 was last taught in 2007. Discussion followed regarding how long a general education course can go without being taught before it should be eliminated from the general education program. Birberick agreed this is something the GEC should discuss, but suggested that the conversation be held at a later time. That discussion could also include what happens to a course if the resubmissions either aren’t submitted or aren’t acceptable. Smith added that she has not seen any guidelines in the APPM where a course is eliminated from the general education program unless it has been at the department’s request. Klonoski suggested that when Economics is told their resubmissions need to be redone, they could be provided examples of excellent resubmissions for guidance. Umores expressed concern that assessment is not being done for these courses since they are required in other programs that get accredited by organizations that want to see assessment data.

3. Subcommittee C: HIST 381, HIST 382, SOCI 170, SOCI 250, SOCI 260, SOCI 270. Umores reported that regarding the Sociology courses, they did not have any data, but they have a really good plan. Klonoski noted that in the cover letter, Sociology admits they haven’t been collecting direct assessment data and that is why they have developed the plan for collecting data. Wiemer had a concern that they are not coordinating across sections, and Klonoski added that they only provided one syllabus. There was discussion regarding how much standardization needs to occur among the different sections. Douglass noted that objectives should be the same, but individual instructors should be allowed some flexibility within their own courses. However, she stated that there needs to be evidence that objectives have been met for each section. There was also discussion regarding how to respond to resubmissions that have no data but have a very good plan for collecting data going forward. Smith noted that the GEC has in the past asked for interim data in similar cases so the GEC would not have to wait until the next resubmission cycle for data on these courses. Umores felt that Sociology would have data in the future since that is what they stated in their cover letter. Birberick agreed that if they have a plan, they should be able to provide data for an interim report by fall 2013. Klonoski reported that the History resubmissions are fine with the suggestion that they provide specific
assessment data, not just examples of the tools. He didn’t see actual data or evidence of how they changed the course based on the data. Wiemer agreed. It was decided to also ask History to provide an interim report that would include their data by fall 2013.

4. Subcommittee D: POLS 100, POLS 150, POLS 220, POLS 260, POLS 285. VanOverbeke reported that POLS 285 is fine, but they need to discuss how they’re using their data. Wilson agreed, but added that they don’t discuss how the data are used to improve the course. POLS 100 is also acceptable. For POLS 150, they don’t seem to be collecting data, but they do have good oversight for multiple sections. For POLS 220, they don’t have data, but they do have a viable plan for collecting data. For POLS 260, the self-reporting instrument (student evaluations) isn’t useful, but there also is a plan for this course. The GEC decided to ask Political Science to provide interim reports for POLS 150, 220, and 260. And since the other interim reports are due fall 2013, the GEC discussed staggering the receipt of interim reports. Therefore the Political Science interim reports would be due spring, 2013.

E. General Education Website. No report.

V. New Business

A. There was no new business.

VI. Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to ADJOURN. Motion passed by acclamation. The meeting adjourned at 2:00.

The next meeting will be March 22, 2012, Altgeld 225.

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

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

- Core Competency
- Distributive Area
  - Humanities and the Arts
  - Sciences and Mathematics
  - Social Sciences
  - Interdisciplinary

### 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

Is the course currently being taught?

What is or will be the method of delivery (check all that apply)?

- [ ] Face to Face
- [ ] Online only
- [ ] Blended
- [ ] Other
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Who teaches/will teach the course?</strong></th>
<th><strong>Primary instruction is/will be provided by (fill in the percentage for all that apply):</strong></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>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>_____ Graduate assistants</td>
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<td>_____ Other (specify)</td>
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<th><strong>How many sections are/will be offered in a typical semester and year?</strong></th>
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<th><strong>What is/will be the average class size?</strong></th>
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<th><strong>For courses with multiple sections: what procedures are/will be in place to ensure consistency across the various sections?</strong></th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Relationship to General Education</strong></th>
<th><strong>The goals are provided on page 4.</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What general education goals does the course emphasize?</strong></td>
<td><strong>For reporting purposes, highlight 1 to 3 goals.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Explain how the course addresses each goal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Describe how the course is taught.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide a syllabus.</td>
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<td>If there are multiple sections of the course, is a standard syllabus used?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does the course address issues of accessibility for students with diverse learning styles?</td>
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<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>
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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.