GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
192nd Meeting
Thursday, October 20, 2011

MINUTES
Approved

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

I. Adoption of Agenda
Fredericks made a motion, seconded by Wiemer, to APPROVE THE AGENDA. **Motion passed unanimously.**

II. Approval of Minutes
Gorman asked that his name be added to the volunteers for the Ad Hoc Committee meeting with College of Liberal Arts and Sciences representatives. VanOverbeke made a motion, seconded by Chakraborty, to APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED. **Motion passed unanimously.**

III. Announcements
None.

IV. General Education Coordinator’s Report
Birberick provided an update on the search for the General Education Coordinator. The ad will be placed soon with an early November deadline and a January 1, 2012, start date of a three-year appointment. The appointment will be 50% with the vice provost’s office and 50% in the individual’s department, with an additional stipend for the summer.

V. Old Business
A. Assessment Plan.
   1. Annual Assessment Reports. See discussion of assessment in V.B. below.

B. CLAS/GEC ad hoc committee. Birberick reported on the GEC ad hoc committee (Gorman and Wiemer) meeting with College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) representatives (Buller, Harris, Levin, and Thu). For now, the annual assessment reports are on hold; assessment of general education will proceed in a different way. The old system is still in place; departments with courses in the social sciences area still need to send in their resubmissions. Next year departments with courses in the math and sciences area will need to submit resubmissions. But, the GEC also needs to consider how to assess the general
education program as a whole. Birberick, Gorman, and Wiemer noted that the meeting went well overall and at the end everyone was in agreement that both groups should work together, adding representatives from other colleges, to make the general education program a meaningful program and to address the needs of external pressures. It was discussed that the GEC has a different tone than it did a number of years ago, including efforts to streamline the resubmission process. Birberick asked GEC members to think about what they want to work on with CLAS and representatives from other colleges. One suggestion from the CLAS group was that the GEC would get better response if the submission process was changed. Also discussions need to take place about where the general education program fits in with the new baccalaureate goals; how does that frame the assessment materials that are requested of departments, and how can the general education program be assessed as a whole. They also asked if the data they provide for program review could suffice for the general education program, but what the GEC needs is more at the course level and how general education goals are being addressed, rather than at the program level. Gorman added that there needs to be education on why the collection of separate data is important. It was noted that 40% of NIU’s students are transfers; how can their general education experiences be assessed. Birberick added that one of the duties of the General Education Coordinator will be to start having these conversations.

Douglass noted that despite this productive meeting, NIU still needs to address assessment of the general education program for the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). She pointed out that requests for data from Virginia Cassidy in both 2009 and 2010 were not addressed. Birberick stated that there are some data. Resubmissions were done last year for the departments with courses in the interdisciplinary area; and resubmissions will be collected over the next two years from departments with courses in the social sciences and math and sciences areas. It was decided that the departments with courses in the math and sciences area be informed that their resubmission cycle is 2012-13 (Smith will do so once the deadline for the current courses is passed). The university will be able to address some data, although she admitted it’s not enough. There is a document that outlines NIU’s response to the HLC regarding general education and four areas for which data will be submitted. Smith will send a copy to GEC members as well as what data have been collected to date.

C. Resubmissions.
1. Request for deadline extension (POLS 285). Coller reported that he received a request to extend the deadline for the resubmission for POLS 285. The rationale was that the individual teaching the course has left the university and the former chair of the department, Chris Jones, is now the associate provost for University Honors, so there is no one available to prepare the resubmission. Jones stated that he could complete the paperwork during the summer of 2012. The GEC discussed that extensions have been granted in the past, but not for this long. The decision was to give the department until January 16, 2012, so that the evaluation of the resubmission can still be done in the current academic year. Coller will communicate this to Jones, copying Political Science Acting Chair Peddle per the GEC’s suggestion.

D. Submission of new course HIST 170 for general education credit. VanOverbeke stated that the submission is acceptable. The goals they are addressing and assessment outlined are fine and they put a lot of thought into the proposal. Klonoski agreed, but noted out they are trying to assess too many of the general education goals. Coller pointed out that what they’ve listed for assessment seems vague and wondered how substantial the data may be. Birberick indicated that some of the issues with this submission may be the result of problems with the submission form, which has yet to be streamlined by the GEC and for which departments may feel like they need to address each of the general education goals. However, it was noted that
in Table 2, the department is only addressing a few of the general education goals. Regarding collecting data, Douglass suggested that the submission could be approved, but that the GEC could request samples of the instrument. VanOverbeke made a motion, seconded by Gorman, to APPROVE THE SUBMISSION OF HIST 170 FOR GENERAL EDUCATION CREDIT. Discussion followed as to whether or not the GEC would like to see the samples of the assessment instrument. Umoren suggested that the submission could be accepted with the GEC providing guidance on how to collect data. VanOverbeke amended the motion, and Gorman seconded, to APPROVE THE SUBMISSION OF HIST 170 FOR GENERAL EDUCATION CREDIT WITH THE GEC PROVIDING GUIDANCE ON DATA COLLECTION. Motion passed unanimously.

E. Revised Submission Form. VanOverbeke volunteered to work on revising the submission form before the next GEC meeting, with Douglass and Umoren agreeing to help. Birberick suggested that once GEC approves the revised form, it could be sent to department chairs for feedback. Resources that should be added include guidelines for the types of assessment the committee is looking for.

F. Baccalaureate Review Process and Update and General Education Goals. Birberick reported that guest speaker, Wendy Garrison, met with the members in the eight Student Learning Outcomes teams. They learned how to devise rubrics and were given a November 4 deadline to submit a draft of their rubrics to Dave Changnon. Birberick and Changnon will meet in January with all the team members to establish the eight rubrics. Then the testing of the rubrics begins and colleagues will be asked to volunteer to do that testing with their courses.

G. General Education Website. Committee members provided suggestions for improving the website, including examples of resubmissions, a tutorial for how to collect data, links to resources, and information on the GEC (membership, working rules, etc.). Douglass is working on an on-line tutorial, which should be available next summer. Gorman asked if there was missing information that GEC members could provide copy for. Klonoski pointed out that there are two audiences for the website--faculty/staff and students. The GEC should keep that in mind when making suggestions for improvement to the website. Birberick responded that the GEC website content will be the responsibility of the General Education Coordinator, but some of these suggestions are things that could be put in place immediately.

H. GEC meetings. This was on the agenda last year to consider the possibility of adding more meetings to not only take care of regular GEC business, but to be able to have readings and discussions in general about general education. Birberick reported that the curriculum committees will be moving to a process where they can approve some of the materials online through Novell Vibe and that this might be an option for the GEC. The game plan for the curriculum process is for faculty and staff involved to receive training by the beginning of the spring semester and to put this procedure in place when the amount of curricular changes is not as heavy.

I. GEC Task List and Priorities, Working Rules. Coller pointed out that the working rules is a work in progress that was drafted by a subcommittee of the GEC last year. There is some need to fill in some blanks and he’d like to see the work on this continue. Coller, Klonoski, Umoren, and VanOverbeke agreed to work on cleaning up the document. The task list was also discussed. Douglass asked if progress had been made to align some general education courses with accrediting bodies, the idea being that data programs provide to their accrediting bodies could be used for the general education program. Birberick stated that this could be followed-up on by the new general education coordinator. She added that she has worked on a database of instructors with Brian Brim and they are now trying to figure out how best to
organize the data.

VI. **New Business**

A. **APPM Workshop.** Birberick reported that the idea for this came out of the Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum (CUC), when they had a number of issues they wanted to see clarified or corrected for in the APPM. The plan is to do the workshop prior to the start of the spring semester and would the GEC be interested in attending. There’s the potential that there is overlap with some of the issues with the APPM. She is also considering asking the Academic Policies and Admissions Standards Committee (APASC) to attend as well. Examples of what the GEC might consider changing for the APPM are adding the new submission and resubmission forms. Discussion followed regarding whether or not the timing is appropriate given that the general education program may be changing to align with new baccalaureate goals and student learning outcomes. Committee members will think about the workshop before the next meeting.

B. **Course Revision—PHIL 101.** It was explained that this course revision needs GEC approval since PHIL is a general education course. VanOverbeke made a motion, seconded by Gorman, to APPROVE THE COURSE REVISION TO PHIL 101. **Motion passed unanimously.**

VII. **Adjournment**

A motion was made and seconded to ADJOURN. **Motion passed by acclamation.** The meeting adjourned at 2:35.

The next meeting will be October 20, 2011, 12:30, AL 225.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Smith, Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator