GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
212th Meeting  
Thursday, March 27, 2014  

MINUTES  
Approved  

Present: C. Campbell (EDU/ETRA/UCC), B. Coller (EET/MEE), J. Johnson (EDU/SEED), E. Klonoski (VPA/MUSC), M. Kolb (Ex-officio, Acting Associate Vice Provost), L. Lundstrum (BUS/FINA), C. Parker (Ex-Officio, Director, Office of Assessment Services), D. Smith (Catalog Editor), K. Thu (LAS/ANTH), J. Umoren (HHS/FCNS)  

Guest: S. Wallace (Office of Assessment Services)  

The meeting was called to order by GEC chair Umoren.  

I. Adoption of Agenda  
Coller made a motion, seconded by Johnson, to APPROVE THE AGENDA. Motion passed unanimously.  

II. Approval of Minutes  
Klonoski made a motion, seconded by Thu, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 20, 2014, MEETING. Motion passed unanimously.  

III. Announcements  
There were no announcements.  

IV. Old Business  

A. PLUS Task Force. Kolb reported that the task force has finalized the models for revising general education. They are up on the PLUS website. Members of the task force have been coming around to all college councils to make presentations on the models.  

B. 2013 General Education Assessment Plan.  

1. Discuss the suggestions in the plan. The GEC discussed how to proceed with the recommendations in the document. Kolb said that there is a larger question of what should be the role of the GEC going forward regarding the revision of general education. Thu noted that with Kolb’s plan, there was a suggestion that assessment be taken out of the hands of the GEC, but that the GEC would continue to approve courses for inclusion in the general education program, no matter what model that will be. Thu added that if the GEC is going to weigh in on the task force’s recommendation, it necessitates the GEC weighing in on Kolb’s assessment plan. The GEC needs to have a clear deliberation of what the plan entails. Kolb said that the main point of his report was that NIU lacks programmatic assessment of general education and that’s what the GEC needs to emphasize. Thu pointed
out that this would tie in with the e-portfolios that are part of the task force’s proposal. Thu also said that course-based assessment is a flawed approach. Thu reported that he asked the HLC representative how can general education assessment be disaggregated from baccalaureate assessment and the response was that he was not sure how that can be done. Parker said that he agrees. Thu said that he got the sense from the HLC representative that course-based assessment isn’t necessary and Thu would like to recommend an assessment plan that gets away from course-based assessment, especially if the model that is developed has more course offerings. Parker said that what the HLC is looking for is broader programmatic assessment. However, because NIU did have a robust course-based assessment, the HLC was able to see that some assessment of the general education program was being done. Klonoski said that over the last several years there has been a lot of push back for course-based assessment. If departments are submitting assessment data it in the year their submissions are due, but are only doing it longitudinally, the data are not reliable. Kolb noted that assessment of the general education program was not something the task force discussed, but he hoped that it would be something the GEC could weigh in on as the task force got closer to finalizing one model to go forward. The GEC should definitely have a say in what the committee’s role will be. Discussion continued regarding what the GEC’s role should be (e.g., review new course submissions) and the type(s) of assessment that should be done. It was explained what programmatic assessment is.

Umoren said that when they do programmatic assessment in her program, they do collect data from individual courses. Umoren suggested that rather than focusing the course-based assessment on the categories of general education (humanities, social science, etc.), the focus could be on the separate goals and the courses that say they meet the specific goal. Kolb responded that that could be one way of doing assessment. Klonoski said that the GEC should decide if the general education program should have separate goals from the baccalaureate goals. Kolb noted that the way the models have been developed is that they address some of the baccalaureate goals, but synthesis should be left to the major. Parker pointed out that assessment should help a program (general education) see areas that are problematic so that those areas can be worked on and fixed. Thu responded that the key note speaker from the symposium suggested a mid-stream e-portfolio. Klonoski suggested that assessment should be done every year, to be sure that students are adding their artifacts all along the way. Discussion followed regarding how e-portfolios would work and how they could benefit general education programmatic assessment. Campbell and Johnson talked about how they do e-portfolios in their programs in the College of Education with LiveText. All the scoring is done by the instructor of the course. It was noted that assessment of general education will be included with the final task force report. It is also important for the GEC to consider how they will operate going forward. Thu suggested that the GEC could craft a guiding principles document that could go with the task force’s report. Parker added that the GEC should consider not just assessment, but how courses get included in the general education program. Klonoski agreed, stating that each of the proposed models is recommending that the number of course offerings be increased, so the GEC needs to discuss how courses are vetted. It was decided that a subcommittee of the GEC would work on a guiding principles document. It was suggested that GEC members who aren’t on the PLUS task force should be on this subcommittee.

C. Humanities and Arts Catalog Language. Johnson reported that he spoke with College of Education Curricular Dean Fox and the college’s position is that they would like to go with the language that the GEC initially proposed last year to address courses in Humanities and Arts from the College of Education. This is the language that the GEC ultimately rescinded due to objections by the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Visual and Performing Arts. It was suggested that the College of Education provide their proposal in writing for the record so that the GEC has something they can deliberate on.
D. Follow-up for courses not yet approved. Some of these were left over from last spring and Gorman said he would go back through his records and will contact the departments about these courses.

1. HIST 381 and HIST 382. No report at this time.

E. Core Competencies Resubmissions

1. Alternatives to MATH 101. The department was given until June to submit resubmissions for the alternates to MATH 101, so nothing more to report at this time.

2. COMS 100 evaluation. Coller said that he didn’t see any data. It was noted that the department listed and discussed what was provided, but the data aren’t in the materials. Thu noted that this discussion is incongruous since the GEC just finished a discussion on program-based assessment but now the GEC is discussing course-based assessment. Umorin responded that this is currently how the GEC handles assessment, so the committee needs to proceed according to current procedures. Kolb said that he will ask them if they have any data.

3. Subcommittee to review PLUS recommendations. See discussion under 2013 General Education Assessment Plan above.

4. Higher Learning Commission Visit and Report. It was reported that the report will come out April 22 and that during the exit interview, general education was not discussed.

V. New Business

A. Annual Assessment Update Report. Parker gave some background; this report is presented to the GEC every year. Parker asked the GEC members what information from the report they find useful and are there other data they would like to see included. Steve Wallace presented the report. He said that historically the purpose of the report has been to collect data for program review. In the past the report has focused on compliance. But the Office of Assessment Services (OAS) would like to change the focus to the quality of programs themselves and provide useful feedback. Wallace reiterated Parker’s request of the GEC to provide feedback on how the report could be more useful. Wallace said that OAS could provide the GEC with data and feedback that would really help with internal operations, i.e., is the assessment program working well. Wallace then pointed out some highlights of the report. He added that the report will be redone going forward, e.g., how data are presented as well as the types of data that are included. Discussion followed regarding what kind of data would be relevant for the GEC.

B. Submission of ANTH 103. Due to lack of quorum at this point of the meeting, this item was not voted on. However, Thu asked for feedback to take back to the department, and several GEC members told him that the submission looked good.

C. Items from the CUC. Due to lack of quorum, this item will have to be tabled until the next meeting.

VI. Adjournment
The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

The next meeting will be April 17, 2014, Altgeld 225.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Smith, Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator