GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
209th Meeting
Thursday, November 21, 2013

MINUTES
Approved

Present: C. Campbell (EDU/CAHE/UCC), B. Coller (EET/MEE), J. Johnson (EDU/SEED), M. Kolb (Ex-officio, Acting Associate Vice Provost), S. McDonald (LAS/BIOS/Student), B. Peters (LAS/ENGL), D. Smith (Catalog Editor), J. Umorena (HHS/FCNS), K. Wiemer (LAS/PSYC/UCC)

Guest: J. Wolfskill (LAS/MATH)

The meeting was called to order by GEC chair Umorena.

I. Adoption of Agenda
Coller made a motion, seconded by Johnson, to APPROVE THE AGENDA. Kolb recommended that the Old Business addressing the MATH course be moved to the top. He also asked that the items from the CUC be addressed early since those need to be approved for the next catalog. Motion passed unanimously as amended.

II. Approval of Minutes
It was announced that the minutes from the October 17, 2013, GEC meeting were approved electronically.

III. Announcements
There were no announcements.

IV. Old Business
A. MATH 211 and MATH 229. The revisions for these courses were tabled at the last meeting for clarification of the language that students would not be allowed to earn credit for both courses. An e-mail from John Wolfskill addressing the issue was provided to GEC members. Coller said that the concern was that the GEC interpreted that the catalog language states that students cannot earn credit in both MATH 211 and MATH 229. Wolfskill confirmed that this is the case; this has been what has been enforced in the past. The catalog revisions are to bring in line what the practice has been. Coller asked if students can get credit in both courses, but that only one would count towards graduation credit and Wolfskill responded that is correct. Coller said that the GEC is wrestling with the original intention--these courses have a lot of overlap--and why students aren’t allowed to use both for graduation. It was clarified that if the GEC accepts the catalog revisions as proposed by the Department of Mathematical Sciences, students could earn general education credit for both if they took MATH 211 for the core competency requirement and MATH 229 for one of the Sciences and Math credits. Coller said that a lot of the GEC members thought that if these courses are similar enough that students should not be able to earn general education credit in both. Wolfskill responded that the courses serve different student interests,
the philosophy is different. Wolfskill said that the objective with the course revisions is to make the catalog as truthful regarding what is actually done and make it as clean as possible. He added that there aren’t many students who take both MATH 211 and MATH 229, so he would not have an objection if both could count for general education credit. It was his opinion that it is better to not have that restriction there. Discussion followed regarding different scenarios where students would take both courses. Coller then said that there is merit to not add additional restrictions and was inclined to let the course revisions move forward. Peters made a motion, seconded by Coller, TO APPROVE THE COURSE REVISIONS TO MATH 211 AND MATH 229. Motion passed unanimously.

B. General Education Visioning Task Force, moving forward, timeline. Kolb, reported that the task force had a retreat (November 15) where task force members discussed a variety of issues, including the general impression from faculty and students, as well as from college senates, of what’s working with the current general education program and what’s not working. Kolb said that the responses received from the colleges and the library were quite disparate, but there were common themes. The discussion ended with the development of some very rudimentary models. The task force will meet December 6 to further develop the models. On December 13, the task force will meet with President Baker and Interim Provost Lisa Freeman. Among the issues the task force will be discussing with Baker and Freeman will be administrative support for the implementation of a new program. On January 29 the task force will be holding a general education symposium and the plan is to reveal the three potential general education models at that time. There will also be a guest speaker. Kolb presented some results from the faculty and student surveys, including a breakdown of where the SLOs can best be addressed, major, general education or both. There was a discussion on how cocurriculars could be incorporated into general education program, if at all, and exactly what are cocurriculars. It was clarified that any credit bearing activity, such as study abroad, is not considered a cocurricular activity. Examples of cocurricular activities are Research Rookies, USOAR, etc. Kolb also showed the GEC a SWOT analysis that was done by the task force prior to the retreat. One of the areas of concern is the higher cost of taking general education courses at NIU as compared to the community college. But one thing NIU can do to address that is the value added of a general education course offered at NIU versus one offered at a community college. The responses from the colleges regarding general education were discussed. Umore asked if individual departments were approached and it was clarified that Kolb reached out to the colleges and left it up to each college how they wanted to respond and whether or not they wanted to reach out to their respective departments. Kolb added that he did receive comments from some departments to enhance the college responses.

C. 2013 General Education Assessment Plan. Kolb reported that the report has been submitted to the HLC Self-Study Committee. He urged the GEC to look at the recommendations and take up one or two of them at some point in the spring.

D. Humanities and Arts Catalog Language. It was reported that the GEC needs to send a letter to the College of Education asking them to propose alternative language for the Humanities and Arts section. Johnson said that he told them to expect a memo and suggested the correspondence be addressed to Associate Dean Connie Fox.

E. Digitize evaluation rubric. Kolb reported that this is now online in Vibe and GEC members can begin using it.

F. Follow-up for courses not yet approved. Smith is working on compiling the responses needed from the departments with outstanding courses.

G. LGBT 350 Submission. An updated submission was posted to Vibe for GEC members to review.
Wiener said that their assessment is thoughtful, but they need to specify how to quantify the data. The assignment seems good and the rubric is adequate. Coller noted that they have reduced the number of goals they are planning to address with the course from all of them to just C and D. Wiemer added that it looks like a strong course with good depth. Campbell asked about the grading for reflection papers. Umoren said it fits well into the Interdisciplinary section. McDonald agreed that it sounds like a very interesting course. She likes that it’s online with a good pace. Online courses are more ideal for her. It was also noted that for 300- or 400-level general education courses, there are additional recommendations per the APPM: a strong writing component is included, small sections are offered, and sections are taught by faculty. Peters said that it is not entirely taught by faculty. But when it is not taught by faculty, it is taught by more experienced teaching assistants. The online nature of the course was discussed. There was a question of access and the need for some face-to-face interaction. Peters said that to offer an online course in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, a proposal is submitted through external programming. He added for this course there is an interactive component; students meet face-to-face several times throughout the semester. Committee members discussed the merits of faculty receiving training for teaching an online course and it was noted that the Office of Faculty Development offers such training. Campbell reported that there is a proposal from her department for a certificate of graduate study in online instruction moving through the curricular process. Umoren asked if there was any policy about online general education courses and Smith said she didn’t think that there is one. Coller made a motion, seconded by Wiemer, TO APPROVE LGBT 350 AS A GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE IN THE INTERDISCIPLINARY SECTION. Motion passed unanimously.

V. New Business

A. Items from the CUC
   1. TECH 245 is changing the title and description. Coller made a motion, seconded by Wiemer, TO APPROVE THE COURSE REVISION FOR TECH 245. Motion passed unanimously.
   2. ILAS 225 is changing to SEAS 225. SEAS stands for Southeast Asian Studies. Wiemer made a motion, seconded by Peters, TO APPROVE THE COURSE REVISION FOR ILAS 225. Motion passed unanimously.
   3. ARTH course revisions. Committee members were provided with additional documentation regarding the revisions to the ARTH 282 and ARTH 292 and the deletion of ARTH 291. ARTH 282 was originally a nonmajor course. The school decided to redo some of their curriculum so majors can now take ARTH 282. Kolb reported that the CUC approved of the changes after hearing a presentation by School of Art faculty. The GEC members expressed concern that the changes will reduce the breadth of the content that used to be covered by ARTH 291, ARTH 292, and ARTH 282. There was discussion regarding how the courses fit into the general education program as revised. Coller pointed out that the GEC’s responsibility is whether or not these courses are still valid general education courses and he felt that they are. Kolb said that the faculty representatives assured the CUC that the material will still be covered. Wiemer said that the new titles better reflect the content. There was also discussion why the school didn’t put ARTH 282 through as a new course since the course revision reveals substantive changes. Smith explained that there is more involved with a new course proposal then with a course revision, so often departments will put through substantive changes to an existing course with a course revision. Smith said that the CUC accepted the school’s explanation of why this was put through as a revision and not a new course, but the GEC can still send this back to the school. Peters made a motion, seconded by Coller, TO APPROVE THE COURSE REVISIONS TO ARTH 282 AND ARTH 292 AND THE DELETION OF ARTH 291. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Core Competencies Resubmissions
1. Alternatives to MATH 101 under the core competencies. Kolb explained that the only resubmission received to date was for MATH 101, which is the mathematics requirement for the core competencies. However, there are other math courses that can be used as alternates to MATH 101 for the mathematics core competency requirement, but the department chose not to send resubmissions for those courses. Kolb and Smith followed up with the department and asked why there are no resubmissions for the other math core competency requirements, and they were told that since MATH 101 is the core competency requirement and the others are alternates, they didn’t feel that they had to submit resubmissions for the other courses and that this is the position the department has taken in the past. However, the department chair said they would welcome advice on the issue. Umoren said that if the other courses are to be acceptable alternates, that resubmissions should be provided for those courses as well; the department should be collecting assessment data on all of the courses that fulfill the mathematics core competency requirement. Discussion followed regarding how the GEC should respond. Kolb suggested that the department could submit a supplemental document that provides justification for not submitting the other resubmissions. Coller asked what would the GEC accept as an appropriate justification. Umoren suggested it would be acceptable if they could show the assessment for the other math courses and show how they meet the goals for core competencies. Peters suggested they could send in the objectives/outcomes for the courses and elaborate on why they are appropriate alternates to MATH 101. Umoren said they would not need to complete the resubmission form, just explain why these courses are acceptable substitutes. Committee members agreed that additional documentation is necessary. Umoren will contact the department for that information.

2. COMS 100 resubmission. This resubmission was provided to the GEC on Vibe and committee members were informed that they would evaluate the resubmission at the next meeting.

VI. Adjournment

Coller made a motion, seconded by Campbell, to ADJOURN. The motion passed by acclamation. The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

The next meeting will be January 16, 2014, Altgeld 225.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Smith, Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator