MINUTES
Approved

Present: D. Chakraborty (LAS/PHYS), B. Coller (EET/MEE), D. Gorman (LAS/ENGL), E. Klonoski (Ex-officio, Acting Associate Vice Provost), B. Montgomery (HHS/FCNS), M. Quinlan (VPA/ART), D. Smith (Catalog Editor), B. Stone (LAS, Student), C. Thompson (LAS/PHYS/UCC), K. Thu (LAS/ANTH), C. Vander Schee (EDU/LEPF)

The meeting was called to order by GEC chair Gorman.

I. Adoption of Agenda
Thompson made a motion, seconded by Coller, TO ADOPT THE AGENDA FOR THE APRIL 23, 2015, GEC MEETING. Gorman asked that Program Prioritization be added under New Business. Motion passed unanimously as amended.

II. Approval of Minutes
Chakraborty made a motion, seconded by Thompson, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 16, 2015, GEC MEETING. Motion passed with one abstention.

III. Old Business

A. PLUS. Gorman summarized that at the last meeting the GEC decided on tasks that need to be accomplished by the end of these semester and over the summer (see also III.A.2. below).

1. Update on Pathways Development. No report.

2. List of GEC duties. Klonoski presented the GEC with a list of duties that need to be prioritized. He said to let him know if GEC members had anything else to add.

   a) Pathway application rubric. This needs to be done before the end of the spring 2015 semester.

   b) Define Pathway Coordinator position. There was discussion on whether or not this needs to be done before the end of the spring 2015 semester. It was decided that this should be done sooner (spring semester) rather than later for the benefit of the faculty who are preparing Pathways proposals.

   c) Time table for application process. This needs to be done before the end of the spring 2015 semester. Thompson made a tentative proposal for a time line and will send to the GEC something in writing. The tentative time line is: 1) Pathways proposals are due a week prior to the first meeting of the GEC in the fall 2015 semester, which would be about September 10, 2) at the first meeting (tentatively September 17), the GEC will be introduced to the Pathways proposals and rubrics, with any new GEC members being provided background on the Pathways proposal process, and the proposals will then be divided up among subcommittees of about
three GEC members each, 3) subcommittees (to be made up of no more than one new GEC member each if possible) will then review the proposals and provide ratings and comments on each, to be made available prior to the second meeting, 4) at the second GEC meeting, all of the proposals will be ranked and discussed with the aim to approve the Pathways that will go in the 2016-17 catalog, but also with the flexibility to provide feedback for improvement, 5) Pathways coordinators will be informed of the GEC’s decisions at the second meeting and will be given a deadline if they need to improve their proposals as well as all the comments to assist them in improving their proposals, 6) any outstanding proposals will be reviewed at the third GEC meeting, which will still fit into the curricular approval deadlines for the 2016-17 catalog.

d) Decide whether new general education courses must be in a Pathway. This needs to be decided this semester because there are faculty who are starting to develop proposals for new courses in general education. If the GEC waits to make a decision, then there may be a delay in proposals for new general education course and they may not make it into the catalog for 2016-17. The intent of this guideline from the Task Force’s perspective was to ensure that the Pathways were populated with an appropriate number of courses. Klonoski said that he could provide the GEC with data on the number of courses for the Pathways that are in development, but he is less concerned at this point in time about populating the Pathways. Thu said that applicants for new general education courses should be given the option of whether or not they want that course placed in a Pathway. Montgomery agreed that it should be a choice. Thompson said that right now there are no approved Pathways, so how would a new course proposal be able to select a Pathway to go into? Thu made a motion, seconded by Montgomery, THAT THE GEC NOT REQUIRE THAT NEWLY PROPOSED GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES BE PLACED IN A PATHWAY. Discussion followed regarding if there would be a time limitation on this policy, i.e., once the Pathways have been approved, would the GEC then require new course be placed in a Pathway. Thu amended the motion, seconded by Montgomery, THAT THE GEC WILL ACCEPT NEW COURSE PROPOSALS THAT MAY OR MAY NOT BE PLACED IN A PATHWAY. Motion passed unanimously.

e) Create Pathway application. This will be worked on over the summer with volunteers from the GEC.

f) Create an application for courses to become general education offerings. This will be worked on in early summer. There will need to be separate forms for new courses that are to go in a Pathway and new courses that will not go in a Pathway.

g) Develop a process for vetting equivalent foundational studies courses. Coller suggested that this not be considered this coming fall due to the work load for the GEC. There was discussion about how to communicate with departments that may have been encouraged to submit courses as foundational studies equivalent courses. It was noted that the GEC is not saying that they won’t consider additional courses for foundational studies requirements, they just need to defer until at least the spring 2016 semester. In fairness, this is something that needs to have time devoted to it, and to include it on the agenda for the fall would not allow for the proper time to develop an appropriate plan and policy.

h) Decide whether to allow individual courses to reside in more than one Pathway. Thu said that this is a question he is being asked by CLAS faculty. He added that he isn’t suggesting that one course be allowed to be in a lot of Pathways; he suggested that up to two would be acceptable. Thu said that there are general education courses, and could be many more to come, that could easily fit in more than one Pathway, and he asked why should the GEC limit that. It was discussed that course proposals for more than one Pathway would need to include how the courses would
be transformed for both of the Pathways they would be placed in. There was also
discussion that if the GEC did allow courses to be placed in more than one Pathway,
would that happen this year or in coming years. There was concern regarding the
work load for faculty who would propose this, but it was decided that faculty who
are willing would need to make a reasonable proposal for why they would want a
course placed in more than one Pathway and agree that it would need to be
transformed for both Pathways. There was discussion about multiple sections and
Klonoski said that if a course is in a Pathway, that every section of that course needs
to be taught as the transformed version. There were also reservations about making
any changes to the procedure for course proposals since the Pathways model is new
to NIU, but Thu suggested that there be a lot of flexibility for course proposals for
that reason. Faculty need to be allowed to do innovative things. To clarify what the
thinking of the Task Force was, Klonoski read from the PLUS report: “Ordinarily,
a course shall participate in only a single Pathway. Exceptions to this rule shall
be arbitrated by the GEC as long as any single course adequately demonstrates
it capability of meeting the criteria and expectations of the Pathways it
contributes to. Any single course may only ultimately count towards a single
Pathway focus or Pathway minor.” Thu made a motion, seconded by Quinlan,
THAT THE GEC ADOPT THE LANGUAGE FROM THE PLUS REPORT AS A
WORKING RULE. If the GEC allows this, it was suggested that there would need
to be an additional course evaluation rubric and it would need to be addressed in the
GEC working rules to be sure that courses that want to go in more than one Pathway
are carefully considered. Thompson said that faculty were told that a course could
only be in one Pathway, but if the GEC decides to change this, how is that
addressed? Motion passed with one vote in opposition.
i) General Education working rules regarding PLUS. This will be worked on over the
summer with volunteers from the GEC.

3. Evaluation Rubric. Klonoski presented the GEC with a draft of the rubric for Pathways
evaluation. The GEC decided that the potential appeal to students is important to
consider. Klonoski said he would work with the Student Association to get a panel of
students to review the Pathways proposals, specifically the names of the Pathways. The
timing for getting student feedback was discussed and Klonoski said that he could try to
get that done yet this semester in order to provide feedback to the Pathways developers.
Klonoski explained that the rest of the rubric was taken from the Pathways grant
application. Gorman said it looks clear-cut. Klonoski said that once the rubric is
approved it will go out to Pathways leaders so they know what are the expectations of
the GEC. Vander Schee suggested that a minimum total score for approval be added.
Thu said that part of the approval process should include providing feedback to any
weaker proposals and allow for time to make improvements and resubmit. The GEC
discussed the pros and cons of having a cut-off number and other points of the rubric.
Due to time constraints, Gorman asked GEC members to send to him any additional
suggestions for the rubric, which he will compile then provide a final version to the GEC
before the end of the semester to vote on.

B. Subcommittee for GEC reorganization. No report.

IV. New Business.

A. Election of Chair. Gorman said that traditionally what the GEC has done is to ask for
volunteers to serve as chair. But since it has been more difficult to get volunteers in past
years, he reached out to several GEC members whose terms continue into next year. Vander
Schee said that she would be willing to serve as chair, but she will be on sabbatical in the fall. Then Gorman was able to find another GEC member who would serve in Vander Schee’s place as chair for the fall. Thompson made a motion, seconded by Thu, TO NOMINATE VANDER SCHEE AS CHAIR OF THE GEC FOR 2015-16. **Motion passed unanimously.** Thu made a motion, seconded by Thompson, TO APPOINT COLLER AS THE SUBSTITUTE CHAIR FOR VANDER SCHEE WHILE SHE IS ON SABBATICAL IN FALL 2016. **Motion passed unanimously.**

B. Program prioritization. Gorman asked how program prioritization will that affect general education. Thu said that all programs will be evaluated and general education is a program. Gorman said that it is his understanding the every program will have to present their programs, but who does that for general education? Klonoski said that the general education program falls under the vice provost office, so those staff would probably be making the presentation for general education. Gorman asked what he could do to assist this and it was suggested that he contact Carolinda Douglass, who is helping to oversee program prioritization and is very knowledgeable about the process.

V. **Adjournment**

Thompson made a motion, seconded by Quinlan, TO ADJOURN. Motion passed by acclamation. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 17, 2015.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Smith, Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator