GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
215th Meeting
Thursday, September 18, 2014

MINUTES
Approved

Present: Jahred Adelman (LAS/PHYS for D. Chakraborty), B. Coller (EET/MEE), D. Gorman (LAS/ENGL), E. Klonoski (VPA/MUSC), M. Kolb (Ex-officio, Acting Associate Vice Provost), J. Kot (LAS/FL--/UCC), L. Lundstrum (BUS/FINA), B. Montgomery (HHS/FCNS), C. Parker (Ex-Officio, Director, Office of Assessment Services), D. Smith (Catalog Editor), C. Thompson (LAS/PHYS/UCC), K. Thu (LAS/ANTH), C. Vander Schee (EDU/LEPF/UCC)

The meeting was called to order by GEC chair Gorman.

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

II. Introductions

III. Approval of Minutes
No minutes for approval.

IV. Announcements
A. Minutes from April 17 and April 24, 2014 were approved electronically.

B. UCC Committee PLUS meeting, September 19, 8:30-10:00, HSC 505. Gorman explained that all of the committees that report to the Undergraduate Coordinating Council have been invited to a presentation of the PLUS Task Force report. Thu asked about the purpose of the meeting and Kolb responded that this is an update of the work of the task force and to present the proposed model for revising general education. Kolb added that Birberick will be in attendance to also address the time line.

V. Old Business
A. PLUS Task Force. Kolb shared a PowerPoint that he will present at the meeting with the UCC committees. He also reported that the public draft of the report is near completion and it will go out for public comment next week. He would like to get the GEC’s feedback regarding the general education components of the presentation. The task force has been deliberating for about 20 months, looking at changes for general education. Kolb noted that some of the proposed changes are for the baccalaureate degree, such as high impact practices (HIPs) and writing-infused courses. The PLUS report details a lot of the changes and pedagogy. Proposed changes
to general education include adding a mission statement. Kolb gave an overview of the existing program then talked about the feedback the task force collected before finalizing a model to put forward for public feedback. The revisions stay in line with the IAI. New names of categories are foundational studies (replaces core competencies) and knowledge domains (replaces distributive studies). Thu asked if there are courses for these categories. Kolb responded that they are not populated with courses yet. It was clarified that colleges will be able to propose courses to go in those categories. Klonoski said that he has talked to faculty in the School of Art and they are working on second-year writing courses. Kot asked if students will have to take the foundational studies before they move on with their course work and Kolb responded that it is highly recommended, but it can’t be required because in some programs students start taking their major course work in their first semesters. Kolb said the task force is recommending that the current general education goals be eliminated and that the eight baccalaureate SLOs be adopted as the general education goals. The current general education goals actually align well with the SLOs. This will also allow for continuity between general education and the major studies. This is articulated in more detail in the report.

Kolb explained the knowledge domain categories and courses as well as the thought processes on populating the areas of the new model with courses. Existing courses would roll over with an application that departments will submit for placing their courses in specific knowledge domains. Thu asked if current courses would have to go through this process and Kolb responded yes because the goals are changing and departments would need to identify which goals, i.e., baccalaureate SLOs, their courses are addressing. He added that this should be a relatively easy process. Thu suggested that departments could be given ideas on where their courses would fit.

Committee members felt that this was a good idea, but departments would still need to identify the goals/SLOs being addressed. Thu asked if documentation would be required for the SLO identified, and the response was that it would not.

Kolb talked about the Pathways, a new component of general education. This would be optional for students. Students could take a Pathways curriculum that could be documented on their transcripts with either a focus or a minor. Thompson asked if this was a guided curriculum, with certain courses taken before other courses. Kolb responded that that would not be necessary, as long as the courses are tied together with the Pathways theme. Parker said that the plan was that the faculty in each Pathway would get together and discuss how they would organize the courses. Discussion followed regarding the Pathways minor. There was some concern that it would take students away from other minors, but it was explained that the Pathways minor would be completed with general education courses, so this would not prevent students from taking other minors. Parker said that he could make an argument that participation in minors could go up because there is a reduction in credit hours required for general education. There were also questions about the number of credits for the minor and why more credit hours aren’t required. A number of minors that require more credit hours were cited as examples. It was noted that the minimum number of credit hours for a minor is 18, so the Pathways minor meets that requirement. If other minors require more hours that is the choice of that department. Thu added that advising is going to play a key part with the new general education model. Klonoski said that any arguments against the Pathways minor could also be made against any other minor offered on campus. Thu said that he approves of the minor and the model since it offers more flexibility for students. Thu asked if there is a process where additional Pathways could be proposed. He also asked if courses could be placed in more than one Pathway, and Kolb responded that that would be the decision of the GEC. It was also clarified that a student could choose more than one Pathway, i.e., earning two Pathway foci.

Kolb then presented how the application process would work for a course to be added to a Pathway. Discussion followed regarding the role of the Pathways coordinators and whether or not they would be part of the GEC. It was pointed out that they should not be voting members of
the GEC since that could affect the balance of representation of the colleges. The GEC still needs to determine the process for appointing Pathways coordinators and their roles with the GEC. Kolb noted that new courses would have to go through a more rigorous process. They would have to apply for general education credit as well as identify a Pathway(s) they would be assigned to. Vander Schee asked if there is going to be space to accommodate new courses and Kolb said that there would be.

The assessment plan was presented. At the program level SLOs would be identified in addition to an assignment or artifact that measures proficiency of the SLO(s) being addressed by the course. Parker said that the scoring of artifacts would probably be done by a group of faculty who have the expertise. Discussion followed regarding how often artifacts would be collected. Parker said that assessment would be done on an ongoing basis.

Kolb outlined the steps for GEC responsibilities. A process needs to be identified for course placements and Pathways development, assessment review, and additional recommendation for the new program. Thu asked what are the GEC’s critical priorities. Kolb presented the time line, noting that there are already working groups of faculty for each Pathway. Another step is for the GEC to review the proposed catalog language. Gorman said that the tasks from his perspective are: look at catalog language and look at the PLUS report and what it is proposing for the GEC to do. The committee thought that another duty of the GEC would be to define when a Pathway or course should be removed from the general education program and how that would be done. Because the role of the GEC will probably change, there was a discussion for the need to make revisions to the APPM (i.e., change the GEC bylaws).

Committee members discussed the pros and cons of rolling out just two to three Pathways in the first year. It was noted that this past summer Kolb began asking a number of faculty members to come up with courses for specific Pathways in order to illustrate how that would look. Several of these faculty went the extra step to recruit additional faculty for those Pathways and fully populate each Knowledge Domain for the Pathway. Therefore, there are several Pathways that are close to being ready to go for fall 2015, where there are other Pathways that might not be ready to be offered next fall. Gorman said that not having all the Pathways should not prevent the new model from moving forward. Thu said that one of the priority tasks for the GEC is to develop the process to determine Pathways. Kolb said that other universities taking on a similar model did it with a stepped process, such as Chico State. Kot asked how much of this proposed model is known by the chairs and Klonoski said that presentations have been made to college senates and the faculty senate and there have been touch points with over 800 faculty, staff, and students through the surveys and focus groups. However, few chairs know of this particular report because it is still a work in progress.

Kolb asked for feedback on the Pathways course application form and the consensus among GEC members was that it is acceptable. The GEC will need to define each of the Pathways and the courses that will fulfill Pathways requirements. This also includes approving the faculty participants, including a coordinator, for each Pathway. Faculty in each Pathway need to figure out how to formulate the big questions for the Pathway and how different courses will address those questions. Thu suggested that the GEC could provide a model for the process. Kolb pointed to the Pathways management section of the report.

Gorman asked if GEC members needed to do anything before the next GEC meeting; does the report need to be endorsed before it is submitted for public comment. Vander Schee said that it makes a stronger argument for the report and the new general education model if it goes out endorsed by the GEC. Thu made a motion, seconded by Thompson, TO ENDORSE THE FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPT OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION REVISIONS IN THE PLUS TASK FORCE REPORT DRAFT AS PRESENTED AT THE 9/18/14 GEC MEETING.
The GEC asked when they would see the catalog language and it was noted that once the new model is finalized, the catalog language would be submitted to the various curriculum committees. Thu suggested that the GEC could also start the work on the revisions to the APPM language. Kolb pointed out the five key changes that are outlined in the executive summary. It was clarified that while a transfer student would qualify for general education credit through the IAI, they would not be eligible for the Pathways focus or minor unless they also took those courses at NIU. **Motion passed unanimously.** Thu thanked the small group of GEC members for the work they did this summer.

B. Disposition of remaining action items. Thu said that he could send the data for the Anthropology courses, but asked what would be done with the data. It was decided to discuss these items at the next meeting.

1. HIST 381 and HIST 382 (They needed to submit assessment data by spring, 2013.)
2. Alternatives to MATH 101 (They were supposed to submit by June, 2015, nothing received to date.)
3. ISYE 335. Coller was to follow-up with department to assist with revising the resubmission.
4. There are other courses for which the GEC is still needing data (ANTH 210, ANTH 220, ANTH 230, ECON 160, ECON 260, ECON 261, POLS 150, POLS 220, POLS 260, SOCI 170, SOCI 250, SOCI 260, SOCI 270)

VI. **New Business.**

A. 2014-15 Resubmissions (Humanities and Arts), update. The GEC was informed that memos went out last spring informing the departments with Humanities and Arts courses that they would need to submit assessment data this fall. However, it was decided over the summer that due to the time line of implementing the new general education program, that review of resubmissions should be postponed. The affected departments were notified that they would not have to submit data until spring 2015.

B. Discuss current PLUS document and GEC’s role. See above discussion.

VII. **Adjournment**

A motion was made and seconded TO ADJOURN. The meeting adjourned by acclamation at 2:50 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 16, 2014.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Smith, Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator