GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
232nd Meeting  
Thursday, October 20, 2016  

MINUTES  
Approved  

Present: A. Forgue (LAS/Student), D. Gorman (LAS/ENGL), R. Hunt (EDU/ETRA/BC), E. Klonoski (Ex-officio, Acting Associate Vice Provost), J. Kot (LAS/FL--/BC), L. Matuszewich (LAS/PSYC), B. Montgomery (HHS/FCNS), M. Pickett (Academic Advising Center), A. Polansky (LAS/MATH), M. Quinlan (VPA/ART), D. Smith (Catalog Editor), A. Stich (EDU/LEPF), R. Subramony (Office of Assessment Services)  

The meeting was called to order by Acting Associate Vice Provost Klonoski in the absence of Chair Zhou.  

I. Adoption of Agenda. Quinlan made a motion, seconded by Polansky, TO ADOPT THE AGENDA FOR THE OCTOBER 20, 2016, GEC MEETING. Motion passed unanimously.  

II. Announcements  

A. Minutes from the September 15, 2016, were approved electronically.  

III. Old Business  

A. Assessment Plan. Klonoski mentioned the draft of the assessment plan that was presented to the GEC at the last meeting. He asked for feedback. He added that the memo went out to instructors who are teaching general education courses that identify written communication as one of the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Klonoski gave an overview of the assessment plan. It will focus on general education assessment only. Initially when Chris Parker was still with the university there was a plan to expand assessment to areas other than general education. But in his absence, and with the fact that Subramony is taking on assessment in addition to her other duties with accreditation, that broader plan needed to be scaled back. The idea behind this current assessment plan is to encourage, but not require, faculty to use a rubric that is provided for them to assess their general education courses. Klonoski reminded GEC members that they also decided to pilot the written communication/critical thinking rubric this semester to get some feedback on using the rubric. Once the GEC gets feedback on that rubric, they can expand into sending out to faculty the rubrics for the other SLOs. Klonoski asked GEC members if they would prefer rolling out the other rubrics slowly or all at once. Discussion followed regarding the pilot program. Klonoski has not heard of anyone who had expressed interest and doesn’t know if Zhou, the other contact on the memo, has heard from anyone. The survey about the pilot program was discussed including when to send it out and what questions will be asked. It was decided that the survey should only ask for feedback on the rubric itself. It was also decided that the survey could be sent as soon as it’s ready in order to allow for the participants in the pilot to access it as time allows. There was also discussion that the link provided in the memo wasn’t working, nor were the instructors sent an electronic copy of the rubric. So Smith will make sure the link works and the instructors will be e-mailed a reminder about the pilot as well as an electronic version of the rubric. The committee next discussed next steps after the pilot is completed. Klonoski said that if the GEC is comfortable with a modified version of ...
assessment plan, he would like to send out the rubrics to instructors of all the general education courses. Kot suggested that anyone teaching a general education course should receive a letter describing what the plan is, i.e., the GEC is doing a pilot this semester, but will begin collecting data next semester. It was clarified that there are five rubrics, but because the eight SLOs can be further subdivided, five more rubrics are needed. Klonoski can send what he has to the GEC for their feedback, but he said the rubrics that are available have already been vetted by a lot of individuals on campus. Gorman felt it may not be a good idea to send out too much information since the GEC is still trying to figure out exactly how assessment is going to work. He suggested the GEC assess two SLOs, but also communicate to everyone else that this is coming. Gorman felt it may not be a good idea to send out too much information since the GEC is still trying to figure out exactly how assessment is going to work. He suggested the GEC assess two SLOs, but also communicate to everyone else that this is coming. The GEC discussed how best to collect data from those who are doing the pilot program as well as in the future. Several suggestions were made including sending completed rubrics via e-mail or uploading them to Blackboard. The general education rubrics could be added to Blackboard, tied to specific courses. There was also a question of who has to aggregate the data, with no clear answer. Montgomery expressed concern regarding how to separate the rubric from the gradebook. Committee members decided it would be beneficial to see a presentation of how this would work in Blackboard. Forgue asked if there’s a way to track student progress over their time at NIU and Klonoski replied that would be ideal, but there currently is no good way to track student proficiency over time.

B. Pathways Coordinators. Klonoski reported that he has been in touch with the coordinators and they are struggling to get the faculty teaching the Pathways courses together. Klonoski is hosting a meeting with the coordinators to help them get back on track. He added that he will be sharing with the coordinators a list of the Pathway courses that are being offered next spring so they know which instructors to contact.

C. Publicizing Pathways. Klonoski gave a brief overview of PLUS at NIU. Academics PLUS is the Pathways, Engage PLUS is hands-on opportunities students can participate in and get a transcript notation for, and Jobs PLUS is a program where students can gain on-the-job experiences. NIU marketing is working on promotional materials that can be distributed during open houses, and information that can be shared on webpages and through social media.

D. ARTH 361 to Sustainability Pathway. It was explained that this is already a general education course in the Society and Culture knowledge domain, but they are applying to have it added to the Sustainability Pathway. At the time of the application for the Sustainability Pathway, the wrong ARTH course was added. Pathway coordinator Konen has agreed to this addition. Gorman made a motion, seconded by Kot, TO APPROVE ARTH 361 FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY PATHWAY UNDER THE SOCIETY AND CULTURE KNOWLEDGE DOMAIN. Motion passed unanimously.

E. ENGL 117. Polansky made a motion, seconded by Stich, TO APPROVE ENGL 117 AS A GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE IN CREATIVITY AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND THE SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DIVERSITY PATHWAY. Gorman said that it aligns with the knowledge domain and it looks like they have two assignments. But it’s not clear what the assignments are measuring. It was clarified that the GEC has not asked for a single assignment for each SLO and that one assignment could measure both SLOs identified. Subramony said that it’s cleaner if an assignment aligns directly to SLOs. Discussion followed regarding whether or not to ask for clarification on the assignment. Motion passed unanimously.

F. ENGL 340. Smith reported that this is an application for the general program only, it’s not going in a Pathway. Gorman said the plan is that it will be in a Pathway, but the application
hasn’t been submitted yet. The GEC looked at this proposal but decided to wait to vote on it until the Pathway application has been received.

G. HIST 388. Gorman made a motion, seconded by Matuszewich, to APPROVE HIST 388 FOR THE SOCIETY AND CULTURE KNOWLEDGE DOMAIN AND THE GLOBAL CONNECTIONS PATHWAY. Matuszewich said it fits with the Society and Culture knowledge domain and they have a signature assignment and a collaborative learning assignment. Montgomery pointed out the statement in the description of the collaborative learning exercise that materials will arrive after class is over and she asked what that meant. Does it mean students won’t be assessed on this assignment, or is the assignment simply the act of requesting the documents through a Freedom of Information Act request? Klonoski said it looks like the documents are the product of the collaborative learning exercise. Committee members felt this was not a deal breaker for approval. Gorman added that this is a very good example of what they’re trying to do in the Global Connections Pathway. **Motion passed unanimously.**

IV. **New Business**

A. College Curricular Items.

1. Catalog changes tabled at the 9/15/16 meeting. Smith explained that these were course changes from the colleges that were not approved at the last meeting due to time constraints. Items include change in designator for a couple of FCNS courses as well as a course description revision. Gorman made a motion, seconded by Kot, TO APPROVE THE CATALOG CHANGES AS PRESENTED. **Motion passed unanimously.**

2. Catalog changes since the 9/15/16 meeting. These are changes to general education courses since the 9/15/16 meeting. Gorman made a motion, seconded by Kot, TO APPROVE THE CATALOG CHANGES AS PRESENTED. **Motion passed unanimously.**

B. MUHL 431. Gorman noted that the signature assignment seems to be that all the students make a movie, but this activity is also mentioned in the collaborative activity. So he would like some clarification on those activities. There was a brief discussion on what is meant by a collaborative activity (students work together on an assignment) as well as trying to determine exactly what these assignments entail. Montgomery expressed concern that the application includes proposed revised catalog language. Gorman, made a motion to approve, seconded by Quinlan, TO APPROVE MUHL 431 FOR THE SOCIETY AND CULTURE KNOWLEDGE DOMAIN AND THE GLOBAL CONNECTIONS PATHWAY. Quinlan asked what the consequences are if the GEC waits to approve and asks for clarification on the assignments and description. It was noted that if the course title is problematic because it doesn’t align with the knowledge domain, the course may not get approved for general education. Polansky summarized that there are two issues. The first is the lack of clarity with the two assignments as described and the second is that the course title doesn’t align with the society and culture knowledge domain. **Motion failed unanimously.** The GEC agreed to reply to the faculty who proposed MUHL 431 for general education and the Global Connections Pathway that they need clarify the status of the catalog language change; they need to give the GEC the description that’s on the books. And they also need to clarify the two assignments, specifically, how does the video fit in with the signature assignment and the collaborative assignment? Montgomery suggested that they also need to be specific about which of the larger question(s) from the Pathway MUHL 431 is planning to address.
V. Adjournment
Matuszewich made a motion, seconded by Quinlan, TO ADJOURN. The meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m. by acclamation.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 17, 2016.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Smith, Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator