

**GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
**238<sup>th</sup> Meeting**  
**Thursday, September 28, 2017**

**MINUTES**  
Approved

Present: E. Klonoski (Ex-officio, Associate Vice Provost), L. Matuszewich (LAS/PSYC), B. Montgomery (HHS/FCNS), C. Ornelas (HHS/Student), N. Newman (LAS/Student), J. Pendergrass (BUS/OMIS), 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), L. Sunderlin (LAS/CHEM), Z. Wang (EET/ISYE)

The meeting was called to order by Associate Vice Provost Klonoski in the absence of a chair.

- I. Introductions. Klonoski went over the agenda. Introductions were made.
- II. Elect Chair. Polansky was approved as the GEC chair unanimously.
- III. Adoption of Agenda. Montgomery made a motion, seconded by Pendergrass, TO ADOPT THE AGENDA FOR THE SEPTEMBER 28, 2017, GEC MEETING. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- IV. Approval of the April 27, 2017, minutes. Minutes from the April 27, 2017, GEC meeting were approved electronically.
- V. Announcements. There were no announcements.
- VI. Old Business
  - A. Assessment Plan. Klonoski gave an update. Over the summer he had a graduate assistant working with him to process some of the assessment information that was collected last spring through the Blackboard system. Klonoski also reached out to College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Associate Dean Dave Ballantine to collect additional assessment data that is available for some of the departments in that college. Matuszewich said she can provide data for PSYC courses. Klonoski added that the graduate assistant has been working on visualizations for the data. He reported that a letter has been sent to all instructors teaching general education courses this fall asking for assessment data and he has been going around the university making demonstrations on how the system works in Blackboard. He added that little by little the assessment process is gaining momentum. He has not gotten a lot of push-back on the Blackboard system yet. He did hear there are issues with some lag time in Blackboard, and he will check on that. Subramony asked about how many courses was data collected from and Klonoski replied that it was about 40, which is a lot more than the GEC has gotten data from in the past. Klonoski said that if there is substantive data from this semester (fall 2017) and next spring (2018), there should be sufficient data to provide to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) for the interim report. Subramony mentioned that data could be obtained for the writing SLOs from the University Writing Project (UWP). Subramony added that data collection for the UWP would happen this fall and next spring. She noted that there are readers who use a rubric to evaluate the writing samples. She

reported on a webinar on general education that talked about assessment of a general education program at a particular university. What stood out for her was how this program involved faculty without putting a lot of burden on the faculty. They have groups of faculty doing assessment like NIU does with the UWP. They also push out the data to share their findings and ask how faculty can be supported based on what the data say. She will send the link to the webinar to Smith who can share it with GEC members. Montgomery asked if Klonoski was still looking to get feedback from faculty on the Blackboard process. Klonoski responded that he has been getting positive feedback as well as suggestions for improvement. Montgomery said the rubric didn't work well for her so she had to create her own rubric. Klonoski said that other departments are doing something similar and that's OK as long as the modified rubrics line up properly with the rubrics that are being provided. Montgomery also noted that there are faculty who could still use some training on the use of the rubrics. Klonoski said that there's a guide for how to use the rubrics that went out with the letter to the general education instructors. He has yet to get any feedback on that letter. Maybe the GEC can decide how to gauge the level of faculty participation.

#### B. Pathways Coordinators.

1. Coordinator letter. Klonoski presented a draft of a letter that would go to six of the seven Pathways coordinators reminding them of the second year of their appointments and what their responsibilities are. Montgomery suggested some edits and also asked if the responsibilities are the same. Klonoski replied that they are. The memo mentions the HLC mid-point review in June, 2018. Subramony clarified that it is a midpoint assurance review and the report should be completed by February, 2018. Sunderlin asked who gets contacted if instructors aren't submitting assessment data. Klonoski replied that if the course is in a Pathway, that coordinator should be notified. If not, the GEC has the ultimate authority to remove a course from the general education program if need be. If a Pathways coordinator isn't fulfilling his or her responsibilities, he or she can be removed in consultation with the vice provost. And this scenario did occur last spring.
2. Memo of Understanding. This was presented to address a change of coordinators. Klonoski explained that the coordinator for the Origins and Influences Pathway stepped down because he felt he could not keep up with the responsibilities. Sue Deskis from the Department of English will step in. Also, it was determined that the coordinator of the Sustainability Pathway was not fulfilling the responsibilities. So, after consultation with the vice provost, he was told he would not be completing the second year. Holly Jones from the Department of Biological Sciences will take over that Pathway. Edits to the MOU were suggested.

#### C. Pathways Minor.

Klonoski provided some background. The GEC curriculum consists of four areas of study. The first is foundational studies, including quantitative literacy, writing, and oral communication. Any department may submit a course for these areas. Then there are the three knowledge domains: creativity and critical analysis, nature and technology, and society and culture. Students have the option of completing a portion of the knowledge domain requirements through one of seven Pathways. The Pathways are arranged around a set of large questions. Courses in each Pathway come from the three knowledge domains and look at the theme of the Pathways from one or more large questions. If students take one course from each knowledge domain in one pathway they can earn a Pathway Focus, which gets noted on their transcripts. The next step for the Pathways is to try to get a minor approved. The minor would be six courses in the Pathway, one lower-division course from each of the knowledge domains, plus three upper-division courses from at least two knowledge domains. What has been presented to the GEC at this meeting is a request for approval of a subdivision of a major, a form that has to be filled out to get a minor approved. Montgomery

asked transfer courses and Klonoski said that if they transfer in for general education credit, they can be used for that. However, transfer courses cannot be used for the Pathways due to the nature the vetting of courses for each Pathway to make sure they are addressing the theme of the Pathway. So, all 18 credits for the Pathways minor would have to be earned at NIU.

Sunderlin asked how many students are participating in the Pathways. Klonoski pointed to item 10 in the proposal, which has student enrollment data. However, the numbers don't represent unique students. Matuszewich asked about impact to other departments and their minors. Klonoski replied that courses that count towards a Pathways minor can count towards another minor. It is the hope that the Pathways minor would serve as a conduit to another minor. It was clarified that there would be an assessment plan for the minor. Polansky asked if there was a way to get the numbers on unique students enrolled in Pathways courses and Klonoski replied that he can get those data.

Matuszewich expressed concern over where the minor would be housed. During Program Prioritization, it was noted a number of times that minors needed to be housed in a department. Klonoski said the proposal is based in part on the minor in Urban Studies, which is housed in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Students are instructed to see their major advising office to declare the minor or, if they are undeclared, they go to the Academic Advising Center. Pickett asked if there is the ability to track the number of students in the minor and Klonoski replied that Registration and Records can do that tracking. Discussion followed regarding the level of advising that would be needed and concern was expressed about the varying levels of advising that students might get about the minor. Sending students to the lead advisor in each college isn't necessarily a solution; that may overburden them. Pickett suggested that someone needs to be the contact person for the minor and for tracking students. Students should be going to someone who is well-versed in the requirements so they get the very best advice on the minor.

Polansky asked what is the motivation for this minor. Klonoski responded that it is an extension of the Pathways focus and was part of the General Education Task Force recommendations. Students were very receptive about the idea of a Pathways minor to get more out of their general education courses. He added that students should already be getting advice about the Pathways, so adding a minor should not affect advising. They should be informed that there's a form to complete if they want to do the Pathways minor and they can turn the form into the college advising office. Matuszewich asked how many students are expected to pursue the minor and Klonoski replied that there is no way to estimate those numbers at this time. And the only way to get students to participate is if they're properly advised about the option. There were concerns expressed about the process, such as where do the forms go, how much training do other advisors need to get, and who will be tracking the number of students in the minor.

Polansky asked about the difference between the Pathways focus and the Pathways minor. It was noted that it looks good on a resume and transcripts if a student has a minor. The annotation for the focus would not mean as much to employers. Matuszewich noted that with Engage PLUS and Jobs PLUS, there are specific offices that students can be sent to. That is not the case with Academics PLUS/general education/Pathways. Klonoski said he will be presenting the minor proposal to the Advising Group to get their feedback as well. There was further discussion on where the minor could be housed. The student representatives gave their input. Newman said that as a transfer student, he has no interest in the Pathways, but it is a discussion he has had with others. Ornelas said that she would have wanted to take general education courses that would also count toward her major. Polansky said that the GEC should try to implement the minor and fix any issues that may arise once it's available.

Several GEC members want to take the proposal back to their departments to get additional feedback. Klonoski asked GEC members to be sure their departments understand this is only a draft proposal.

VII. New Business

- A. APPM (Academic Policies and Procedures Manual) changes (for submitting changes or deletions of general education courses). Smith explained that the proposed changes bring this section up-to-date with the new general education program and for how to submit a change or deletion for an existing course. Edits were suggested. Committee members were encouraged to send additional edits to Smith before the next meeting.
- B. Bylaws Changes. The suggested edits are to align the language with proper titles and to allow for persons in those positions to appoint designees. Montgomery made a motion, seconded by Polansky, TO APPROVE THE REVISIONS TO THE GEC BYLAWS. It was suggested to capitalize the first title. **Motion passed unanimously as amended.** See Appendix A.

VIII. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m. by acclamation.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 19, 2017.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Smith, Catalog Editor/Curriculum Coordinator

## Appendix A

### 15.6.2 General Education Committee

#### 15.6.2.1 Composition

##### (A) Faculty Representation

1. Three faculty representatives from the Baccalaureate Council shall be chosen by the faculty of the Baccalaureate Council.
2. One faculty representative shall be appointed by the curriculum committee of each undergraduate degree-granting college except the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.
3. Three faculty representatives shall be appointed by the curriculum committee of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, including one from the humanities, one from the social sciences, and one from the other sciences.
4. The chair shall be elected by the voting members of the General Education Committee and shall serve a one-year renewable term beginning in the fall semester.

##### (B) Student Representation

1. Three student members shall be selected by the General Education Committee from nominees submitted by the student advisory committees of the undergraduate degree-granting colleges.
2. No more than one student shall be appointed from any college.

##### (C) Administrative Representation

1. One advisor shall be elected by and from the persons with overall responsibility for undergraduate advisement in each of the undergraduate degree-granting colleges and the Academic Advising Center. The person shall serve ex officio without a vote.
2. The following shall serve ex officio without a vote: the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs responsible for undergraduate education or his or her designee; the Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs; and the Associate Vice Provost for Academic Assessment the Director, Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation or his or her designee.

#### 15.6.2.2 Duties

- (A) To monitor and evaluate the university general education program.
- (B) To recommend policies and procedures to manage both the general education program as a whole and individual components of that program.
- (C) To make suggestions to colleges and departments regarding improvements that can be made in the general education curricula.

(D) To approve the addition or removal of courses from the general education curriculum.

(E) To oversee the improvement, including the design, of the general education program and of individual components of that program.

(F) To report its work to the Baccalaureate Council.

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## **15.6. Standing Committees of the Baccalaureate Council**

### **15.6.1 General**

15.6.1.3 Faculty members appointed to a standing committee by a college curriculum committee shall serve a three-year, renewable term beginning in the fall semester. Terms of college appointees shall be staggered.

15.6.1.4 Student members on the committees shall serve one-year, renewable terms beginning in the fall semester.

Rationale: To align the language with proper titles as well as have an option for the individuals to appoint designees in their places.