

GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
252th Meeting
Thursday, November 21, 2019

MINUTES

Present: R. Caughron (BC, Chair), J. Hathaway (BC), C. Maher (BS), J. Pendergrass (BUS), R. Sinko (EET), B. Montgomery (HHS), S. Sharp (LAS/SS), E. Kuby (LAS/H), S. Self (Student/CLAS), M. Pickett (Director Academic Advising Center), R. Subramony (AVP Academic Assessment), C. Zack (Associate Director Academic Assessment), D. Halverson (Curriculum Coordinator/Catalog Editor)

The meeting was called to order by Rod Caughron, Chair.

- I. Adoption of Agenda:** Montgomery made a motion for adoption. Self seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

- II. Approval of Minutes:** The October 17, 2019 minutes were previously approved via email.

- III. Announcements:** Halverson introduced the new student representation from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Sabrina Self.

- IV. Member Reporting on work of the Sub-committees:**
 - A. The Data Review sub-committee presented the results of a survey that was sent out to currently enrolled NIU Undergraduates who do not have a compact agreement. With data from 167 respondents, Shane Sharp tabulated and visualized results. The survey showed that more than 60 percent of the respondents were not aware of the Pathways. For respondents that were aware of the Pathways, they had learned of them through their advisor, the NIU website, or at Orientation with almost equal frequency. Slightly above 10 percent of the respondents were currently pursuing a Pathway.

A second survey was sent out to NIU undergraduates who have taken at least 2 courses in a Pathway. With 109 respondents, Sharp tabulated and visualized the results. The Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Health and Human Sciences have the highest engagement with Pathways. This engagement was not intentional with slightly less than 75 percent of the respondents unaware of the Pathways. For the roughly 25 percent of respondents who are aware of the Pathways; 62 percent are not planning to complete a Pathway, 24 percent are currently working toward a Pathway credential, and 14 percent have completed a Pathway credential. For those respondents engaging with a Pathway, 50 percent felt the credential would help with job placement or an advanced degree. 91 percent of those engaged with a Pathway are very/somewhat satisfied with the experience and 91 percent would be very/somewhat likely to encourage a fellow student to pursue a Pathway.

Bobby Sinko presented data on which majors can easily complete a Pathway within the framework of their degree requirements. This analysis looked at programs with 2 or 3 Pathway courses. There are 11 undergraduate majors that have a combination of

required and elective courses that could automatically fulfill a Pathway. The Global Connections Pathway aligns with 5 of the 11 majors. 20 percent of the students with 2 courses completed towards a Pathway are in these 11 majors. For students in many other majors the Pathways are functionally out of reach due to major demands. Additional cost and time are hindrances that make the Pathways less desirable in the cost/benefit analysis for these students.

John Pendergrass presented an analysis of course frequency and visualized the data from the report presented at the 10.17.2019 meeting. This led to a discussion of how frequency likely impacts Pathway completion potential. Pendergrass also discussed how the lack of marketing for the Pathways program is a key factor for its low enrollment and student intentionality. There was member agreement on this issue.

- B. The Course Analysis Sub-committee, comprised of Bette Montgomery and Colette Maher, presented two options for a decision-hierarchy flow analysis to utilize in assessing general education courses. Montgomery and Pendergrass discussed process issues including frequency analysis but the discussion was truncated by Caughron stating the necessity to move on to the next sub-committee presentation. This was dictated by the need for multiple members to leave for another committee meeting.
- C. The Pathways Coordinator role review interviews were conducted by Ed Klonoski and Rod Caughron. Caughron presented the findings from those conversations. There was a feeling of disconnection from the Pathways program for the Coordinators. They wanted more data and more direction on their role. The coordinators communicated that academic advisors needed a more active role in the Pathways process. They wanted to see a semester and yearly schedule for Pathway courses to be engage with students. The coordinators also felt there should be more engagement with the College Deans and Department Chairs to reach higher levels of intentionality on the part of students. The elimination of the coordinator position was mentioned by one coordinator and internal marketing as a replacement was suggested.

Maher address the issue that advisors are not engaged with or promoting Pathways. She indicated the reality for many students is cost and time. They are not going to take classes if they don't have to. Pathways must meet the needs of our student population. In CEET there is no easy way to a Pathway. Maher suggested that we need to engage with the less represented colleges and departments to get more courses in to the Pathway framework to overcome this issue.

- D. The Pathways Coordinator framework review sub-committee comprised of Michelle Pickett and Janet Hathaway briefly summarized their work with no time for discussion due to loss of quorum. Key points of their analysis stressed the need for onboarding of coordinators with training and oversight by the GEC. Pickett also stressed that while the advisors have a role in this process, student learning outcomes are not an advisor function. Hathaway concurred that the Curricular Deans have a role to play in the success of this program. Pickett suggested that a good time for advisors to have a discuss of the Pathways with students was during the first semester when planning second semester courses. This would make students aware of the program and give them the connection with the appropriate coordinator.

- V. **Adjournment** – Caughron called for a motion to adjourn due to loss of quorum. Self made the motion and Sharp seconded. **The motion passed unanimously** to adjourn

at 1:24 p.m. and the meeting closed.

The next meeting of the General Education Committee is scheduled for January 16, 2020.

Respectfully submitted by Denise Halverson, Curriculum Coordinator/ Catalog Editor.