

OFFICIAL MINUTES

General Education Committee Meeting 2nd Meeting/Academic Year 2023- Teams

Thursday, October 19, 2023

12:30p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Voting Members Present: McGowan, B. (Libraries); Lowe, C. (Academic Advising); Sharp, S. (CLAS); Caughron, R. (COE); Ehsani, S. (COB); Arnold, S. (CLAS); Takai, S. (CEET); Brown, D. (CLAS); Jefferson, H. (CLAS Student).

Voting Members Absent: J-C Wang (CVPA); A. Zaker (CBUS Student); Baker, S. (COE); Saravanan, A. (NURS); Miles, D (CHHS Student).

Ex-Officio Non-Voting Members Present: A. Schatteman (Vice Provost Academic Affairs); Young, D. (Office of Registrar), Buhrow, A. (Assistant Vice Provost); Gawron, I. (Curriculum Coordinator/Catalog Editor).

Ex-Officio Non-Voting Members Absent: N/A

- I. Meeting Call to Order by Chair** - With a quorum present, Chair Caughron called the meeting to order at approximately 12:40 p.m.
- II. Adoption of Agenda** - Lowe moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by Arnold. Motion to adopt was **APPROVED**.
- III. Approval of Minutes from 2023.03.23** – Minutes were approved by online vote.
- IV. Announcements**
 - A. Curriculog**
 - Schatteman briefly shared an update about how the implementation team met with Curriculog and implementation has formally begun. Additional updates will be given at the next GEC meetings.
- V. Overview of General Education Committee, Standing Committee of the BC**
 - A.** Schatteman gave an overview of the General Education Committee, it's a standing committee of the Baccalaureate Council that we report through the BC. Anything the GEC does is advisory. The GEC proposes to the BC for their review to decide to do something with it or not.
- VI. DISCUSSION AGENDA –**
 - A.** College of Liberal Arts and Sciences –

- Gawron briefly explained the changes being requested and indicated that the agenda item should be more editorial/expedited in nature given that they are removing a course from General Education that is being deleted entirely, as opposed to the initial thought that the course was being removed from General Education for more specific General Education-related reasons. Due to this, the item was not voted on and is considered approved.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Pathways

- Schatteman and Caughron led the discussion on the history of the Pathways and previous actions/decisions by the GEC related to the program. Topics included prior research into the Pathways, current data for students on track in the Pathways, and next steps. There were concerns expressed about how nobody is designated as coordinating the Pathways program currently, and little promotional resources to get students into pathways. Young shared current data on students in Pathways and essentially concluded that students in the Pathways are few in number barring approximately three Pathways. Lowe shared the advising perspective on how Pathways are not pushed and it is more accidental if a student earns a Pathway. There were discussions, led by Young, indicating that printing Pathway information on ARRs (advising reports) made them cumbersome to use and during orientations advisers would actively tell students to ignore the Pathways portion. Sharp shared research he conducted briefly on the Pathways and how 1.) students did not know about it 2.) they were accidentally earning Pathways 3.) Even faculty who have courses in the Pathways did not know they were teaching a Pathways course. Sharp advocated for cutting the whole Pathways program. Sharp motioned a vote to eliminate the Pathways program for the 2024-2025 academic catalog. McGowan seconded the motion. Caughron reiterated the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the program and how it took NIU resources away from other priorities. There was a brief discussion about if the program will be replaced. This discussion included Brown, Caughron, and Schatteman. The conclusion was to not replace the Pathways program given it is not a graduation requirement and that there was nothing before it. They also discussed that some General Education courses will most likely lose their general education designations. Buhrow shared the assessment perspective and how it will relate to the HLC visit in the spring. It was overall concluded that this change should make future HLC visits/assessments easier. Brown shared history that Pathways was partially created as a compromise and it affected lab enrollments. It was essentially concluded that, after Pathways is eliminated, updates can be made accordingly and that there will not be automatic reinstatements of courses in General Education. The motion to eliminate the Pathways program effective 2024-2025 passed UNANIMOUSLY.

B. Assessment of General Education

- Buhrow led the discussion and primarily indicated that a pilot

assessment is being proposed for general education courses and learning outcomes so that better data can be created. Buhrow indicated that the goal is not to create additional hurdles for faculty, but to better quantify learning outcomes already presented in the course. The pilot would involve 1 faculty member per college. Caughron shared his perspective and experience with assessment. Significant discussion occurred on the importance of assessment for reporting to external bodies, such as HLC, and potential consequences for not doing proper assessment (such as losing general education designation on a course). This discussion included: Buhrow, Sharp, Caughron, Schatteman. The overall conclusions included a carrot/sticks approach, the importance of faculty buy-in, and clear communication. There was a brief discussion on finding initial volunteers for the pilot program.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion on the Philosophy of NIU's General Education Program

- Tabled until the next GEC meeting

IX. Next meeting of GEC - The next meeting of the GEC will be October 19, 2023, on Teams, and invited GEC members to submit any requested agenda items to the curriculum coordinator one week before the meeting.

X. ADJOURNMENT - Having concluded the business on the agenda, Schatteman called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Sharp moved to adjourn, seconded by Caughron. Meeting adjourned at 1:13 p.m.