

OFFICIAL MINUTES

General Education Committee Meeting 3rd Meeting/Academic Year 2023- Teams

Thursday, November 16, 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); Baker, S. (COE); Davis, S. (CVPA)

Voting Members Absent: A. Zaker (CBUS Student); Saravanan, A. (NURS); Miles, D (CHHS Student).

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

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 Stanton. Motion to adopt was **APPROVED**.
- III. **Approval of Minutes** – Jefferson motioned to approve the minutes. Sharp seconded. The minutes were **APPROVED**.
- IV. **Announcements**
- V. **DISCUSSION AGENDA –**
 - A. **College of Business – No Curricular Items**
 - B. **College of Education – No Curricular Items**
 - C. **College of Engineering – No Curricular Items**
 - D. **College of Health and Human Sciences –**
 - **COMD 433 – Creativity and Critical Analysis Designation**
 - Sharp motioned to approve the proposal. Lowe seconded. Caughron explained the proposal and discussion centered

around the course potentially being too narrow of a focus for a general education course. Discussion also included potential gen ed courses that could satisfy a similar area, but be more general (ex: Intro to Neurodivergency) than narrowly focusing on autism services. Other topics included: 400-level courses as Gen Eds and how prerequisites (Intro to Psychology) may be needed to get the most out of the course; advising steering students away from higher level courses their freshmen/sophomore years for student success reasons; guiding principles of IBHE and Gen Ed Discussion included: Caughron, Sharp, Schatteman, Buhrow, Lowe, Jefferson. The motion to approve the CHHS proposal(s) for Gen Ed designation WAS NOT APPROVED. 8 Nays, 1 Yea, 1 Abstain.

E. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences – No Curricular Items

F. College of Visual and Performing Arts –

- **MUSE 341, 345, 342 – Creativity and Critical Analysis Designation**
- **MUSE 330, 332, 342 - Creativity and Critical Analysis Designation**
- **MUSE 350 - Creativity and Critical Analysis Designation**
- **MUSE 372, 373 - Creativity and Critical Analysis Designation**
- **MUSE 321, 370, 371, 375 – Society and Culture Designation**
 - Sharp motioned to approve the CVPA proposals. Lowe seconded. Glendening (guest) was present and explained the rationale of the MUSE proposals seeking general education designation. It was explained that these courses are ensemble courses and that they were grouped in different ways to align with the Gen Ed designations. Glendening explained that they are one credit hour course and that they would not receive Gen Ed credit unless they satisfied 3 credit hours of ensemble courses. Glendening indicated that this designation would support students looking to maintain their musical skills who might be non-majors and also indicated that ensemble courses not counting for gen ed has been a barrier for non-majors to take the ensemble courses. Glendening reinforced that being a part of a musical community can increase retention, support student success, educate students on cultures, and can support music majors as well. Discussion included: Glendening, Schatteman, Jefferson, Sharp, Lowe, Caughron, McGowan, Stanton, Buhrow. Discussion topics were expansive including: 1 credit hour courses counting for Gen Ed, that they were bundled, and the feasibility of that; prerequisite

components and how much or little experience is needed to enter the course given instrument/musical skill proficiencies/auditions; general philosophy of Gen Ed courses and that any students should be able to take a Gen Ed course; potential student success concerns of students thinking they are proficient in an instrument/musical skill and then failing/withdrawing/dropping out of the ensemble; feasibility of other Gen Ed courses (ex: Intro to Playing Flute); Potential assessment concerns. For additional discussion on the proposals, the following topics were also discussed: potential concerns about intentionality (building a gen ed course versus seeking gen ed designation for current courses); administrative concerns; the technicalities of voting to approve some proposals for gen ed versus others – this point concluded that the courses were submitted as a packet and all should be considered together. The motion to approve the CVPA proposal(s) for Gen Ed designation WAS NOT APPROVED. 8 nay, 0 aye, 2 abstentions.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Discussion on Philosophy of NIU General Education Program and Standards

- **Section A – Format of General Education**

- Schatteman highlighted the importance of Gen Ed, supplemental resources/articles, and the importance of keeping programs less curricularly complex for student success. Discussions also included reviewing existing Gen Ed courses for Gen Ed and how to navigate that. Schatteman proposed a subgroup for the Gen Ed committee to review the philosophy of NIU Gen Ed and how it could align with NIU's mission and values. This discussion included: Sharp, Caughron, Schatteman, Buhrow, Jefferson, Lowe. Schatteman highlighted that student retention sees the largest drop from freshmen to sophomore year and the Gen Ed program is a large part of the student experience during that time – strengthening the Gen Ed program becomes pivotal for student retention.

- **Section B – Research in Illinois Public Universities**

- Gawron briefly explained the research conducted on Illinois public universities concerning their general education programs. The overall conclusions were that they ranged considerably in required credit hours and requirements in general, but the overall consensus was that Gen Ed programs are a considerable part of a student's program.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned approximately 1:50 pm.