

Council on General Education Minutes
February 8, 2022
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m., STV 140

Presiding: Chris Worland

Present: Mary Elaine Califf, Linda Clemmons, Gregory Ferrence, Amy Hurd, Tony Marinello, Bill McBride, Taeok Park, Yvette Pigman, Rocio Rivadeneyra, Indira Robinson, and Chris Worland

Worland called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Action Items:

1. Approval of January 25, 2022 Minutes

Worland asked if there were any corrections to the January 25, 2022 minutes as submitted. There were no corrections. The minutes were accepted as submitted.

2. MUS 156 American Music as Cultural History (new course proposed for UST designation)

The course was proposed by Dr. Marie Labonville, Associate Professor, School of Music.

Worland asked for confirmation the proposal was for a new course. Marinello confirmed it was. Worland thought it seemed as though part of the reasoning for the UST designation request was that there is currently no other course within Fine Arts that count toward that designation. Marinello confirmed, at least within the School of Music, there were no other courses with that designation. Ferrence noted there were not any science courses that counted toward the UST designation as well.

Rivadeneyra thought the course presented an interesting connection to the history of America through music. She felt it presented the content in a very broad stroke manner and was surprised the course had not also been proposed for the IDEAS designation as it focused a lot on race, ethnicity, and other social issues. Ferrence thought IDEAS may not have been on the proposer's radar at the time this course had been submitted to the college curriculum committee for consideration. Hurd confirmed the course had sat within the college review process for quite some time and IDEAS had not been an option at that time. Rivadeneyra asked if the proposer would be given the opportunity to propose the course for the IDEAS designation or if the curriculum review process would need to be started again. Hurd responded the proposal could just be send to the IDEAS review panel if the proposer wished to pursue that designation as well. She will contact Labonville to see if she would like to pursue the IDEAS designation as well.

Ferrence thought the course provided an amazing lens to look at race in America as music has been at the forefront throughout. Worland thought the course met the spirit of the UST designation. McBride asked if the proposal should have more than one syllabus. Worland responded the proposal syllabus serves as a representative syllabus for the course and it is known different instructors will teach the same course in different ways. The course proposal should include the syllabus that will be used as the "anchor" syllabus, and it should be kept on file within the department to be used as a guide for future iterations of the course. Ferrence didn't believe his department kept syllabi on file and asked if another area/unit at the University archived the information. McBride confirmed it was difficult to get

information on how capstone courses were taught his department as the courses were taught wildly different and past syllabi information was not available.

Clemmons thought the coverage of the course content may be overly ambitious in that while a lot of information would be covered, it did not seem as though a deeper dive into any topic would be possible. Marinello thought there would likely be a focus on certain topics. McBride added the focus on certain topics would vary based on the instructor which is just a common idiosyncrasy for instruction. He suspected some instructors may not cover the Disney topic at all. Marinello added in reference to music, for better or worse, Disney has ruled, and its business dealings have played a large part in the industry as a whole.

Califf noted in general the Council defers to the department and/or college on questions regarding content. Instead, the Council tries to focus on whether or not the course meets the expectations and outcomes of the requested designation. Worland added typically this Council questions whether or not a course does enough to fulfill the spirit of the designation. This instance is rare in that the Council is now questioning if this course is trying to do too much. Rivadeneyra noted she was reacting to the Hispanic-related topics and thought the very specific focus of the course was interesting. She thought if the intention of the course was that it was not meant to do a deep but rather touch on points then the approach may be alright.

Ferrence pointed out that faculty change what is listed on the syllabi as topics covered at a certain time as circumstances arise, such as the recent administrative closures due to the weather. He liked to see the laundry list of topics that could be covered. Rivadeneyra felt some topics were more developed than others and was reacting to that but felt that would not be a reason to reject the course for the UST designation. McBride liked the proposer's approach as it allowed for a broad perspective/option for the instructor to select from when teaching the course. Califf agreed and thought it was good to respect the proposer's effort to give students a broad perspective on a variety of different topics within the course.

Califf made a motion to approve MUS 156 for the UST designation. McBride seconded.

All in favor, none opposed, none abstained.

The motion passed.

Discussion Items:

3. General Education Update

Hurd informed the Council the General Education Task Force had not met since October. However, there has been a lot of behind-the-scenes work done. It had been determined there was a need for more definitive definitions for several categories such as STEM and Scientific Inquiry. Work has continued to refine these definitions. Hurd added an individual had been hired to help move this background work along and more feedback was needed on the proposed changes. Hurd will take the revisions to the college curriculum committees for their feedback. She had hoped to speak to the Deans during their last meeting with Provost staff, but the meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather. Hurd will keep the Council informed of any updates.

4. General Education Assessment Rubrics

Worland informed Council members that Derek Meyers from University Assessment Service (UAS) had collected artifacts from some General Education courses for assessment purposes. He added that some, but not all, assessment rubrics had been completed already to assess each of the General Education designations.

Hurd added the assessment rubric for the UST designation was complete and shared the rubric with Council members. She explained the rubric had been developed by a group of faculty members who teach courses within the designation and were adapted from the American Association of Colleges and Universities Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) goals. Communication and English do not need assessment rubrics as they are assessed directly by the departments. Artifacts have been collected but assessment rubrics still need to be created for the following designations: M/QR, ICL, H/LH, FA, SS, and Science/SMT.

Hurd noted the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) has issued findings against the University during its review process for the lack of assessment for the program. In 2014-2015, UAS and Dr. Jonathan Rosenthal developed the current assessment process. However, the process has never been fully fleshed out. Hurd was not sure how the assessment reform should look like for both the current General Education program and for the proposed new one going forward. Hurd noted faculty would certainly need to be involved in the process and asked Council members for their thoughts.

Califf agreed ideally faculty who teach in each area would need to be involved in the process. She pointed out the HLC is looking for proof that the University is "closing the loop" and that the rubrics need to be meaningful. Ferrence thought this would be a challenging undertaking and noted there is a disconnect between assessment and the ASPT process as the process currently does not seem to compel faculty follow the assessment rubrics. As assessment is not tied to annual evaluations, it has been difficult to get artifacts from specific instructors as there is no true incentive for them to submit the information. Ferrence noted finding ways to encourage faculty participation in assessment activities need to be addressed.

Hurd agreed that it is difficult to get artifacts as faculty participation in assessment activities is currently voluntary and not mandated. UAS tries to make the process as easy as possible for faculty and can pull artifacts directly out of ReggieNet for courses if given permission. Hurd added the assessment process is part of the discussion regarding a proposed new General Education program. She added it is somewhat difficult to design the assessment rubrics as they must be broad enough to effectively cross over several disciplines.

Califf thought in order to draft the remaining rubrics, a small group of faculty members from across disciplines in each designation would need to be convened and given a good example of an already designed rubric to be used as a guide. She added the assessment and review process needs to be ongoing in order for faculty to feel ownership of the assessment process. Worland agreed and thought it would be best to have faculty design the rubrics as opposed to Council members.

Hurd thanked Council members for their feedback and will work with UAS staff to map out a plan.

Meeting ended: 10:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Soemer Simmons