

**Council on General Education Minutes**  
**September 10, 2019**  
**10-11:00 a.m., Stevenson Hall 401A**

**Presiding:** Amy Hurd

**Present:** Brian Aitken, Yun-Ching Chung, Rebekka Darner, Isaac Faamoe, Katie Fisher, Rachel Gramer, Amy Hurd, Lance Lippert, Carla Pohl, Rocio Rivadeneyra, Liz Sattler, Georgia Tsouvala, and Chris Worland

**Guests:**  
Malinda Aiello, Program Director, Illinois Articulation Initiative

Hurd called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

**Action Items:**

**1. Introductions**

Introductions were made.

**2. Overview of the Council**

Hurd reminded members that it is important that everyone attend the meetings so that the Council has quorum to take action. The Council currently needs two additional student members. Hurd asked that if anyone had any student recommendations, to please let her or Simmons know.

Hurd explained to new members that there are three committees on campus that review curricular issues. The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) which reviews undergraduate courses/programs; the Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC) which reviews graduate courses/programs; and the Council on General Education (CGE) which reviews requests involving General Education designations to new and existing courses, as well as all IDS courses and minors. She reminded members that courses involving the AMALI graduation requirement were reviewed by AMALI faculty and would not fall under the Council's purview.

Hurd went on to explain that General Education courses fell under defined categories with each category having its own outlined learning objectives. During last spring, Council members discussed the course drift that has occurred over time from these designated learning objectives. Also, as many of the current category descriptions are not clear and share almost identical learning objectives, it has become difficult for the Council to determine if courses meet certain category designation requirements.

At the last spring meeting, Council members discussed revising category descriptions during the fall semester. Hurd told members she was not sure how much effort the Council wanted to expend on the project as there are currently plans to completely revise the current General Education program. She added that she would like to see the Council serve as the governing body to oversee the upcoming review. The last major review of the current General Education program occurred almost 30 years ago. In 2004 there was a minor review and in 2013/2014 the number of hours required for General Education was reduced and the Inner, Middle, and Outer Core was collapsed into two levels.

College deans have been notified of the upcoming review process and have been asked to submit names of those individuals they feel would be interested in serving on the steering committee. The committee will have representatives from all of the colleges, academic advisors, students, and other stakeholders on campus. Hurd hopes to have a list of individuals for the committee to Provost Murphy to review yet this early this fall so that the committee can meet to discuss a plan of action as to how to collect information. In the spring, Hurd anticipates there being open forums, campus communication meetings to discuss best practices and for the committee to research what other options are available.

Hurd cautioned that it will take several years to get a new General Education program in place. It took almost six years to implement a new program at the time of the last overhaul in 1992. Darner asked if the expectation moving forward was for the Council to still review new proposals with the understanding that everything will be revised within the next several years. Hurd confirmed this was the case and courses should be reviewed under the current guidelines. She added that with the announcement of Provost Murphy's retirement in June 2020, a clear timeline is not available. Rivadeneyra asked if Murphy still wanted the review/revision to go forward or if it should wait until a replacement is named. Hurd confirmed Murphy wanted the revision to go forward and added per Academic Senate guidelines, General Education was scheduled to have been reviewed in 2018. A delay in this review was accepted at the time due to Dr. Jonathan Rosenthal's retirement.

Lippert asked what the rationale was for reviewing the General Education program. Hurd responded that it was time as it had not been looked at in quite some time. She added that for students and their parents, it is confusing and difficult to understand. It has been questioned as to why the program does not more closely match the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) program to make transferring courses easier. Hurd added the current program is very challenging to assess. During the latest Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation review, while Illinois State did not receive a finding, the University was warned that assessment was lacking in this area. Aitken added that as a staff member who works daily with the program and with students, the current General Education program is burdensome to students and has lost all of its previous intentions. It has become 13 checkboxes for students to complete in order to graduate. Darner added that it is also burdensome to faculty who wish to propose new courses as many of the categories have identical descriptions and are not useful.

Lippert asked if Hurd was aware of any examples of "good" programs currently implemented at other peer institutions. Hurd responded that last fall, Dr. Gina Hunter, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, served as an Administrator in Residence (AIR). As part of her project, she reviewed programs at peer institutions and put together a white paper on her findings. Hurd has also done research and mentioned that several institutions such as South Florida, Clemson, and Northern Illinois University had interesting approaches to General Education. Lippert asked if Hunter's research included assessment. Hurd responded that it hadn't but mentioned that she was aware of at least one institution, IUPUI, which did a tremendous job with assessment. Aiello asked if there was any interest in aligning General Education with IAI categories. Hurd responded discussions had not gotten that far yet.

Hurd asked if the Council believed a review, and possible revision, of the current General Education program should take place. Pohl made a motion for the Council to begin the process to review, and possibly revise, the current General Education program. Tsouvala seconded.

All in favor, none opposed. The motion passed.

Hurd will notify the Academic Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate.

### **3. Election of Chair**

Hurd opened the floor for nominations. Rivadeneyra nominated Darner to serve as chair. Lippert seconded.

All in favor, none opposed. The motion passed.

Darner requested that Hurd continue to preside over the meeting.

### **4. Approval of April 9, 2019 Minutes**

The question was called. Aitken made a motion to accept the April 9, 2019 minutes. Rivadeneyra seconded. Six in favor, none opposed, seven abstained. The minutes were accepted.

### **5. Approval of April 24, 2019 Minutes**

The question was called. Worland made a motion to accept the April 24, 2019 minutes. Pohl seconded. Six in favor, none opposed, seven abstained. The minutes were accepted.

### **6. Review General Education Category Descriptions**

Based on earlier discussion, Rivadeneyra made a motion to table the review of the General Education Category Descriptions in lieu of an overall review/revision of the General Education program. Sattler seconded.

All in favor, none opposed. The item was tabled.

### **7. MQM 120 Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity in the Workplace (new course proposed for ICL)**

Hurd explained the course review process to the new Council members. Members should look for clear course descriptions which will help determine if the course fits in the requested category designation. She suggested members look to see what types of prerequisites are listed as most General Education courses, especially 100-level courses, should not have many prerequisites. Members were asked to review course syllabi as all faculty who teach General Education courses are required to include the appropriate designated learning objectives on the course syllabi. Faculty are reminded to do this at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters.

Hurd also suggested members look at assignments/exams that are scheduled on the syllabus as being due during Success Week. University policy prohibits any assignment or exam that constitutes more than 10% of a student's grade being due that week which will be monitored more heavily this year by the Student Government Association (SGA). Lippert asked if the discovery of an assignment/exam on the syllabus during this week meant that the course should be denied for General Education. Hurd responded that it should not but that she would contact the instructor and department/school to discuss. Hurd also noted that courses that are selected for IAI review, will have a checkbox selected on the curriculum proposal so Council members will be able to identify those courses as well.

Hurd informed Council members that the MQM 120 and HSC 206 course proposals were reviewed by the Council last spring. As the Council had difficulty determining the correct course designation, both proposals were tabled until fall for further discussion. Both departments requested the courses be approved without the General Education designation so that they could begin offering them. UCC approved both courses without the General Education designation.

Darner asked if either course was offered this fall. Aitken and Rivadeneyra did not believe so. Aitken believed MQM 120 would be offered in fall 2020 as it was approved for the 2020-2021 catalog. Rivadeneyra though HSC 206 would first be offered in spring 2020. Hurd added that HSC 206 was approved for AMALI credit by UCC and the AMALI faculty committee.

Lippert asked that aside from General Education courses, what other types of courses or programs was the Council responsible for reviewing. Hurd responded the Council reviewed IDS minors as well but that there were not many of those. Chung asked if courses were approved at the department or college level prior to coming to the Council. Hurd confirmed this was the case. Rivadeneyra added that for IDS courses and minors, the Council serves as the department/college approval. Chung then asked if the Council provided feedback on proposal course objectives. Rivadeneyra responded if the objectives were in relation to General Education, it would be under the Council's purview.

Rivadeneyra added that as many of the objectives are similar between category designations, it is helpful to look at heading descriptions. She advised new members to consider what is meant by "general" education and noted that in some cases, proposed courses are very major-specific in their content and focus. Hurd added that General Education courses are for all majors. Worland added that new members should look at course syllabi to evaluate the types of assignments that will be required. He added that when reviewing course proposals, new members should consider if a student with little or general background knowledge in the course content area could expect to be successful in the course. If not, the focus of the course may be too major-specific and not a good fit for a General Education designation.

The proposal was tabled to the next meeting due to time constraints.

#### **8. HSC 206 Global Health (new course proposed for SS and AMALI)**

The proposal was tabled to the next meeting due to time constraints.

#### **Information Items:**

#### **9. IAI Overview**

Aiello informed Council members IAI is a state-wide program that has been in existence for over 20 years and consists of 110 public and private institutions. All public institutions must participate and offer a full general education package for transfer students. Aiello noted that some transfer students transfer from a community college prior to completing their degree but may have still completed coursework to fulfill the package requirements. Transfer students who complete the package, but not the degree, are still able to transfer and have their general education requirements met at the new institution.

The course approval process is a faculty-driven process. Schools can submit proposal requests to the major panel. The panel then reviews the course using established course descriptions and approval documents. Aiello noted that panels can typically review 80 course proposals in a season and that panels typically meet from 10am-2pm over the course of a day. She added that except for Composition II courses and several math courses, IAI panels will not approve a course for an IAI designation if the course has prerequisites.

**10. EAF 205A01 Social (In)Justice and Schooling (proposed for ICL)**

Council members were asked to review documents as this proposal will be an action item at the next meeting.

**11. IDS 121A22 French Cinema: Art, History, Culture (new course proposed for LH)**

Council members were asked to review documents as this proposal will be an action item at the next meeting.

**12. IDS 133A28 Study Abroad: Bologna, Italy (new course proposed for H)**

Council members were asked to review documents as this proposal will be an action item at the next meeting.

**13. IDS 213 Comics, Graphic Novels, and Society (new course proposed for SS)**

Council members were asked to review documents as this proposal will be an action item at the next meeting.

Tsouvala made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Rivadeneyra seconded.

Meeting adjourned: 10:49 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Soemer Simmons