

Council on General Education Minutes
October 20, 2020
10-11:00 a.m., Zoom Meeting

Presiding: Chris Worland

Present: Brian Aitken, Mary Elaine Califf, Rebekka Darner, Katie Fisher, Amy Hurd, Stella Liao, Sally Parry, Carla Pohl, Liz Sattler, Gabby Thompson, Georgia Tsouvala, Gary Weilbacher, Tina Williams, Amy Wood, and Chris Worland

Guests:
Malinda Aiello, Program Director, Illinois Articulation Initiative

Worland called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Action Items:

1. Approval of October 6, 2020 Minutes

Worland asked if there were any corrections to the October 6, 2020 minutes as submitted. There were no corrections. The minutes were accepted as submitted.

2. Review of CGE Charge edits from Academic Senate Rules Committee

Worland noted the language changes proposed by the Rules Committee were made in an effort to make the wording clearer. The changes were in addition to earlier changes proposed by the Council.

Hurd explained the Council had been asked to review its charge two years ago. At that time, the Council made necessary updates and sent to the Rules Committee for review and approval. The Rules Committee is now reviewing those suggested updates. While most of the Rules Committee's additional edits were close to what the Council originally submitted, Hurd noted one substantial update was the Council's chairperson be selected by the Council's nine faculty members as opposed to the whole Council.

Aitken asked what that meant for those faculty members who held administrative positions. Parry noted a similar request had been made for the chairperson of the Council on Teacher Education (CTE) to be a faculty member. CTE added an additional seat that could be either an AP or faculty member. Hurd noted the chair of CTE was the Dean of the College of Education who Parry pointed out was technically an AP position. Hurd did not know how other Senate external committees were chaired. She added the issue was moot with the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) as it is comprised of all faculty members and Hurd is a non-voting member.

Califf believed the reason for the change was just to make sure faculty were involved on the Council. Aitken noted that as a non-faculty member, he was not offended by the request and both he and Darner wondered if the Council could push back on the Rules Committee edits. Hurd believed the Council should be able to in the spirit of shared governance.

Williams pointed out that even though the Honors Director is an AP position, the position always is filled by a faculty member. She wondered if the Rules Committee would consider the person in the position as part of the nine faculty members. Califf did not believe the Committee would consider the position

as part of the nine voting faculty members. Parry pointed out many faculty members are AP as well due to the administrative positions they may hold. Darner wondered how Human Resources would officially define these professionals.

Williams asked how much significance the faculty-only deliberation made and wondered if the edits were made as part of the Committee's "pet peeve" or if there was proof of a significant difference. Aitken pointed out Darner served as the Council's chairperson last year and wondered if she would be considered as either an AP member or faculty member. Worland pointed out the edits specifically noted the decision be made by faculty from the nine colleges/areas and added Rocio Rivadeneyra served as the Council's chair for several year. Worland noted by sharing capacity and responsibilities with all members of the Council it represents what shared governance should be.

Califf noted in the case of Darner and those other members who were both AP and faculty, there was an issue with the language proposed by the Committee. Aitken added that the Council had previously discussed adding the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) representative as a voting member to the Council. He wondered if this change should be requested at this time. Hurd noted that would be significant change and would most likely be a Bylaws change as opposed to the Charge. The process to change the Bylaws is different and believed the Academic Senate Blue Book was revised every five years.

Darner added the edits suggests of a policy that would hamstring the ability for faculty to assume administrative positions. Service on committees is considered as part of the ASPT process. If faculty are going to be limited going forward due to the AP status, the ability to fulfill this requirement by faculty will be affected. Califf believed the Council should ask what the purpose of limiting the decision to just faculty is, and Parry believed the council should push against it.

Hurd noted originally the Rules Committee sent back edits that stated the chair had to be selected from among its nine faculty members. Hurd sent the document back stating the Council valued its entire membership and allowed any voting member to serve as chair and to vote for the person wanting to serve in that role. The Rules Committee sent back the updated document currently being reviewed and explained the original version sent to Hurd was in error. Hurd also noted the review of IDS majors needed to be added and Simmons noted College of Fine Arts needed to be updated to Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts

A motion was made by Worland to send the edits back to the Rules committee requesting the removal of the language that only the nine faculty members voted on the chairperson position. Parry seconded.

14 in favor, none opposed, none abstained.

The motion passed.

Hurd will inform the Rules Committee of the Council's decision.

Information/Discussion Items:

3. IDS Major Revision

Hurd shared a document with Council members outlining the current University Studies and IDS Major programs as well as changes currently being considered.

Hurd told Council members the University Studies and IDS majors are both overseen by University College and that she serves as the chair and dean of both programs. The University Studies major requires 60 hours and a 2.0 gpa. It is made up of three sequences and that each have different requirements. The IDS major is made up of three sequences. The Individualized Sequence is for those high-achieving students who wish to “build their own major.” Hurd added the Human and Educational Services (HES) Sequence is primarily used for those students in the Department of Special Education (SED) or the School of Teaching and Learning (TCH) who no longer wish to teach but still want to graduate from Illinois State.

Hurd noted there was a fair amount of confusion and overlap between the majors and the IDS major sequences which was also pointed out in the major’s program review two years ago. Staff has been looking at both programs to determine if both majors are still needed. It was suggested that the University Studies major be deleted. Regarding the IDS major, it was determined that the Individualized Sequence should be kept with changes to its current requirements. It was also suggested to keep the HES Sequence while replacing the Multidisciplinary Sequence with a Liberal Arts Sequence.

Parry asked if students were required to complete 36 hours of coursework in a major for IDS major, why would the student just not then complete that major. Aitken and Hurd noted there were several programs that would not allow students into the major, even with that many hours completed. Parry suggested those programs should be scrutinized more heavily during program review.

Hurd informed members the only change to the HES Sequence was changing the required gpa from 2.5 to 2.0. This change would keep the sequence in line for consistency sake with the other programs and would cause no issues as the sequence would not lead to licensure. Hurd met earlier with the College of Education to find out if they would like to take the administration of the sequence back from University College. They had initial concerns as they did not want students who did not receive licensure to earn a degree from the College of Education. However, they are currently discussing it and will let Hurd know once they have made a decision.

Hurd told the Council she wanted to run the proposed changes by the Council for feedback before submitting the full proposal and noted there would be no course proposals. Since IDS does not have its own curriculum committee, the CGE would serve in that role. Parry believed changing the gpa for the HES Sequence would make things consistent and would help those students who are struggling and in need of another option besides teaching. Hurd thought so as well and both she and Weilbacher anticipated the College of Education will not want to take over the administration of the sequence.

Regarding the University Studies major, Hurd pointed out the negative stigma associated with the major among students and employers. Darner noted liberal studies is a term used across most institutions but could have a negative stigma as well. Hurd believed the IDS major was different in that students have direction and implies they can choose their own direction. Califf believed to a certain extent that was true but cautioned the University must make sure to allow those students doing the Individualized Sequence should still be recognized and are not lumped in with the “scrabbly” degree students.

Hurd explained students completing the Individualized Sequence are the only ones who have their specific theme appear on their transcripts. Weilbacher asked what constitutes a theme. Hurd responded the students meet with a faculty mentor to outline a theme for their course of study. Aitken

added students cannot pursue themes such as Nursing or Education so not to appear as if they have earned a degree in those majors.

Weilbacher agreed that information should be kept off transcripts as it may be confusing to future employers and might give those students an unfair and incorrect advantage. Califf agreed as well and noted the School of Information Technology (IT) would be concerned if a sequence theme made it sound as though a student had completed a major or had training in that area as it may have a detrimental effect on IT's reputation. Parry added the University would want to be very careful regarding education majors as well as different states have different licensure requirements.

Darner asked why we have students in their last year of college just realizing that the major was not for them. She wondered what the University is or is not giving to them to be able to make a more educated decision regarding their career paths earlier on in their academic career. Parry noted that while all education majors must complete 120 clinical hours prior to student teaching, the experience is different than actually student teaching. This experience leads some students to discover the career path is not for them. Hurd added in some cases, parents want their student in a specific major and the student discovers they are not happy pursuing it.

Darner thought the University needs to do more career education earlier in the student's career and noted it should be embedded within the curriculum. Aitken agreed it was a broader issue and noted that while some majors offer coursework in career education, it often occurs in the student's junior year which is too late. He thought every major should require coursework and offer it earlier in the student's academic career, so they have the opportunity to explore different paths. Califf noted that depending on the major, it can be harder to understand the career path. She gave student teaching as an example.

Hurd thanked everyone for their feedback and asked if anyone had any other questions or concerns to please let her know. She expects the Council will receive the curriculum proposals later next spring or early next fall.

4. Course Modality/Equity Concerns

Discussion was carried over from the last meeting. Worland noted it was a very big and important discussion and touched upon very specific ideas that explored what General Education, as well as the curriculum in general, looked like post-COVID. He questioned the appropriateness of asking the UCC to make changes to the curriculum course proposal form to ensure that instructors think about different course modalities. In addition to course modality, Council members would like to see instructors be asked to consider how they offer assignments/approach coursework.

Hurd cautioned that the Council had to be careful not to get too far into the weeds regarding specific assignments. Parry agreed that the Council had to be careful not to impinge on faculty's academic freedom to teach as modality is not within the Council's purview. Califf responded that there were ways to encourage faculty to think about the reality of student lives when setting course requirements. Traditionally Illinois State has been an all residential campus. As instructors go forward and think about their course assignments, it must be with the realization that this will not necessarily be the case.

Aitken believed higher education as a whole will look differently following the pandemic. Darner agreed and added the pandemic could provide an opportunity for the Council to consider how it approved courses. Currently, the Council approves courses which are then never reviewed. Over time, course

content/purpose can creep from what it was initially approved. Part of this creep can be due to modality changes. While Darner would hate to create additional bureaucracy, but she suggested a course should be reviewed when changing modality to verify it is still equivalent to what it was when originally approved.

Worland noted it was not up to the Council to review and approve specific assignments. However, it could and should look at ways to encourage faculty to think of different ways of doing things. He added there were so many hidden requirements within higher education, such as out of class assignments. If an instructor is going to require co-curricular or extra activities outside of the classroom, students need to be made aware of that fact at the time they are registering for the course. Faculty also need to be willing to make reasonable accommodations as needed.

Sattler agreed this is an important issue but thought it may be outside the Council's purview. She suggested it may be a better fit for the General Education Review Committee. Hurd thought the Council had good points but was unsure of the best way to conduct a review. The suggestion was made that courses should be reviewed by the departments/schools. Hurd noted IAI had a five-year review process for all courses and suggested General Education courses be reviewed in a similar fashion, though this will cause a lot of work for the Council moving forward.

Parry liked the idea of having a review process as courses change over time. She suggested conducting the review process on a cyclical schedule by course designation. Darner suggested that courses could be reviewed five years following their approval date.

Darner made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Pohl seconded.

Meeting adjourned: 10:59 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Soemer Simmons