

Council on General Education Agenda
April 11, 2017
10-11:00 a.m., Stevenson Hall 140

Presiding: Rocio Rivadeneyra

Present: Brian Aitken, Alan Bates, Febin Chirayath, Nerida Ellerton, Katherine Ellison, Amina Jinadu, Rocio Rivadeneyra, Jonathan Rosenthal and Joe Standridge

Guests: Doris Houston, Associate Professor, School of Social Work

Rosenthal called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Student members Febin Chirayath, Amina Jinadu and Joe Standridge were introduced and welcomed by the Council.

Action Items:

1. Approval of Minutes

The question was called. Rosenthal made a motion to accept the February 28, 2017 minutes. Rivadeneyra seconded. Six in favor, none opposed and five abstained. The minutes were accepted.

2. Vote on February 28 Meeting Proposals

Anthropology 297, Lost Continents and Sunken Cities (proposed for Humanities)

Due to lack of quorum, the proposal was tabled from the previous meeting.

The department agreed that it could be offered at the 100-level but wants to offer it in Anthropology rather than IDS for reasons of staffing and recruitment to the Anthropology major. There has been considerable debate over the past several Council meetings as to whether the course should be counted as Humanities.

The question was called.

One in favor, seven opposed, and three abstained. The motion did not carry.

Rosenthal will notify Chair Skibo with the Council's decision.

Sociology 240, People in Places (proposed for ICL)

Due to lack of quorum, the proposal was tabled from the previous meeting.

The department agreed to assign a new course number to eliminate confusion across catalogs. However, they requested the course remain at the 200-level. Rosenthal informed the Council that changes had already been made to the Catalog to re-instate the ENG 101 and COM 110 prerequisites so that students must be a sophomore to take the course.

The question was called.

11 in favor, none opposed. The motion passed.

This change will be effective starting fall 2017. Rosenthal will send a notice to all advisors through the advisor listserv.

English 170, Foundations in Literature for Children (proposed for Humanities)

Due to lack of quorum, the proposal was tabled from the previous meeting.

The question was called.

11 in favor, none opposed. The motion passed.

This change will be effective starting fall 2017. Rosenthal will send a notice to all advisors through the advisor listserv.

3. History 285, History Study Abroad (proposed for Humanities)

This course is an umbrella course similar to the IDS 121 Texts and Contexts courses in that it has common learning outcomes but can be offered with a broad range of sub-topics. Rosenthal thought that the department had done a good job of looking at the previous general education requirements and thought that the request was appropriate. Aitken questioned if the only difference between this course and IDS 133 was the fact that this course was 200-level. Rosenthal indicated that the difference was level but also specificity of content. He further explained that he and Sally Parry regularly see these types of requests. Parry handles the articulation requests for IAI while he is responsible for the General Education requests. Ellison asked if History means for the course to be offered only in the summer. Rosenthal commented that the course is typically offered in the summer but that it could also be offered in the fall and/or spring. Ellison commented about potential funding challenges that the course may face but that she would love to have students enroll in it. Rosenthal agreed with Ellison that we must be careful that we don't compete against ourselves and that courses like these should possibly be offered on a rotating basis.

The question was called.

11 in favor, none opposed. The motion passed.

This change will be effective starting fall 2017. Rosenthal will send a notice to all advisors through the advisor listserv.

Information and Discussion Items:

4. Diversity Requirement Discussion – Doris Houston

Doris Houston was asked by Parry to attend in order to begin the dialogue to address including more diversity/inclusiveness into General Education, as well as, adding a diversity/inclusiveness graduation requirement. The conversation stems from two places. Houston is the chair of the Climate Task Force which was created as a result of the *Climate Assessment Report*. Feedback solicited for this report showed that diverse students, especially those students of color, reported feeling marginalized, isolated and felt they received passive support on campus. The *Report* also found that the interactions with diverse populations on campus were not usually done on a voluntary basis and were more often the not, a result of a course project, assignment, etc. As a result, President Dietz created the Climate Task Force, in part, to start the dialogue on how to foster a well-educated, student body that is sensitized to issues of diversity and inclusion.

Houston circulated a handout to Council members that contained recommendations and learning objectives for the inclusion of cultural diversity and inclusiveness with the General Education curriculum. Several of the learning objectives presented are currently used by the School of Social Work as it has a required diversity class component as part of its graduation requirements. Houston suggested that regardless of a student's major and/or goals, there is a necessity to be able to work across diverse populations. The proposed learning objectives are as follows:

- Recognize and identify the strengths and contributions of diverse cultures within the U.S.
- Analyze the sources of biases influencing worldviews of cultural groups.
- Discuss the historical, social, and economic contexts that shape the lives of marginalized populations.
- Discuss the intersections of multiple Social Locations on minority experiences.
- Examine one's own level of cultural competence and areas to improve.

In a previous discussion with Houston, Parry suggested a "domestic" diversity requirement could mirror the AMALI requirement. Houston explained that while she may not be as familiar with the General Education curriculum, this would be a good time to discuss, and possibly implement, a domestic diversity requirement as a graduation requirement. Houston believed that the next steps would include the creation of a task force or committee to review the General Education curriculum and to research diversity best practices at the national level. She also suggested reviewing IAI diversity guidelines and conducting peer institution research in order to be able to draft an informed proposal that would be successful. Houston provided Council members with language currently being used at Eastern Illinois University which spoke to the importance of students having a cultural understanding as responsible citizens.

The student members were asked what their thoughts and/or concerns were with adding an additional graduation requirement. Standridge questioned the timing of when students would be expected to take the course. Houston said the best fit would need to be decided but she would like requirement to be taken as early as possible so that as students matriculate, their level of understanding toward their peers will grow.

Rivadeneira asked where the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) was in regards to the AMALI proposal. Rosenthal gave a brief background of why AMALI was created for Council members. While the Council is working toward increasing diversity and inclusion, we haven't spoken to diversity in some time and Rosenthal agreed with Houston that the timing is excellent to begin these discussions. He pointed out that while diversity is across all areas of the General Education curriculum, the two areas that speak the most to race, gender, class, etc. are courses falling under United States Traditions (UST) and Individuals and Civic Life (ICL). Rosenthal recommended that faculty who teach in these two areas, as well as any faculty/staff that Houston recommends should be included in these discussions.

Aitken asked how the Council should proceed and noted that some majors do not have the capacity to include an additional graduation requirement. Houston believed that we already have the infrastructure in place with existing courses and resources but they would need to be leveraged more strategically. Rivadeneira asked how indigenous people within the United States would fit in as opposed to how AMALI defines indigenous people. Rosenthal explained that when the AMALI requirement was proposed in 1998, it was quite specific to non-European countries. At the time, the administration renamed AMALI as global studies as they feared AMALI would be unknown outside of the University setting. This caused confusion as global studies implies the inclusion of European, as well as, areas not specifically covered by the requirement. The UCC will be voting this week on AMALI to expand the requirement to accept fourth semester language courses and certain study abroad courses that meet specific requirements as they include a "cultural competence" component.

Ellison agreed with Houston that the University could work efficiently with existing resources. She expressed concern regarding faculty rotation and pointed out that those faculty who specialize in these diverse courses are not always available. If new courses would need to be created, it could become logistically difficult to maintain these, as well as current courses. Houston noted that on occasion, the School of Social Work will hire an adjunct faculty member who has expertise to teach a certain diversity course.

Rosenthal reminded the Council that transfer students will be impacted if the domestic diversity requirement is added as a graduation requirement. The University would need to let transfer students and community colleges know of the additional requirement so that transfer students are not at a disadvantage. Rosenthal noted that he liked how the goals are woven throughout the different courses and categories and hopes that people do not think a new requirement would be a “one and done” approach to diversity. Ellison expanded on Rosenthal’s comment further by mentioning that we need a diverse student body in the classroom and asked how the Office of Admissions is working toward this goal. In the past, Ellison has run into obstacles for prospective students due to their ACT scores. Houston mentioned that there has been a great deal of improvement by Admissions in admitting a more diverse student population and that diversity is not necessarily limited to under-served income communities. She believed that the University has admitted a more diverse class the past several years and the issue is the retention of these students which circles back to having a more diverse and welcoming climate which then circles back to curriculum.

Rosenthal reported that the University does track retention by ACT and we admit students who have a score as low as 18. However, if we do not support these students, we will not be able to retain them. Houston agreed that increasing diversity does not mean that the University has to lower its academic standards. Rivadeneyra reported that the Honors Program has seen an increase in diversity. However, competition for these students is at an all-time high which makes recruitment that much more difficult. Having an actual requirement would help to show that the University is serious about diversity. Rosenthal also mentioned that there would be a need for additional staff development and told Council members that work is currently being done on a new Five-Year Enrollment Plan which would include retention. This Plan looks at supporting, coaching, tutoring, etc. and the funding needed to help maintain and increase recruitment and retention efforts.

The Council then discussed next steps. Ellison recommended looking at course descriptions for current classes to see which ones could potentially qualify for the domestic diversity designation. Rosenthal and Soemer Simmons will do a keyword search of the catalog and request course syllabi for review. Aitken asked if the requirement could be met exclusively within General Education courses or if departments could have major courses that would count as well. It was suggested that we would need to include major courses as well so that the learning would be infused across the curriculum. Rosenthal will contact the respective College Curriculum Committees to ask for their suggestions regarding major courses that would meet the criteria for this designation. Following this, a sub-committee would most likely be created to discuss.

Meeting adjourned: 10:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Soemer Simmons