

Council on General Education Minutes
January 15, 2019
10-11:00 a.m., Stevenson Hall 140

Presiding: Rocio Rivadeneyra

Present: Brian Aitken, Rebekka Darner, Amy Hurd, Carla Pohl, Rocio Rivadeneyra, Benjamin Stiers, Gary Weilbacher, Chad Woolard, and Chris Worland

Guests:

Dr. Mark Hoelscher, Professor, Management and Quantitative Methods

Dr. Laurie Thompson-Merriman, Emeritus Faculty, College of Fine Arts

Rivadeneyra called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

Action Items:

1. Approval of December 4, 2018 Minutes

Due to lack of quorum, this item was tabled until the next meeting.

2. Minor in Entrepreneurship

This item was tabled from the previous meeting for further discussion.

Rivadeneyra expressed concern regarding e-contracts, specifically what they were and how they would be counted toward graduation requirements. Darner thought they may be similar to Honors contracts but expressed concern as to how faculty with no expertise in a certain area/discipline, would be able to oversee these contracts. Merriman-Thompson responded that it would be the responsibility of the Illinois State Fellows to teach faculty how to teach those courses and both groups would need to work together to create appropriate business plans. Rivadeneyra also wondered if e-contracts would count toward minor requirements as currently, Honors contracts do not.

Hoelscher explained the purpose of the Coleman Fellows was to promote a passion for entrepreneurial education across campus. Illinois State has had a relationship with the Fellows for at least 16 years and currently has approximately nine Fellows on campus. He went on to add discussions regarding the creation of the minor began a little over five years ago. Since that time, the Illinois State Fellows have been working on issues regarding time to degree and revenue neutrality, as well as, the creation of needed courses in order to be able to propose the minor.

MQM 128, Entrepreneurial Business Fundamentals, was created a little over a year ago and was offered in spring 2018. According to Hoelscher, the course will be offered again this upcoming fall and will then be offered every year in the spring. Hoelscher did not yet know the proposed rotation for the other minor course, IDS 113, The Entrepreneurial Mindset. The rest of the courses comprising the minor would be discipline specific and not just limited to College of Business coursework.

Merriman-Thompson noted the College of Nursing was the only college on campus that did not have a Fellow and acknowledged there would be concerns about e-contract issues. She explained IDS 113 would serve as the introductory course to the minor as most undergraduates now have the mindset of how they can market what they will study. MQM 128 will serve as the “nuts and bolts” course in the

minor and will introduce students to more of the business aspects surrounding entrepreneurship. The final course, MQM 328, will serve as the culmination of the program in which students will be expected to create a viable business plan.

Merriman-Thompson explained e-contracts would be utilized during the time between when students take MQM 128 and MQM 328. Students could explore their entrepreneurial interests by approaching current professors within their major, similar to an independent study. The e-contract could be drafted in such a way to focus on specific topic(s) that the student would like to explore with the approval from faculty to validate the work was relevant.

Darner mentioned within Biological Sciences, the field of molecular biology is the largest draw with biotech quickly drawing more interest. She felt there was a large interest in biotech and could foresee quite a few upstarts in this field. Darner questioned how the department would get help with e-contracts to allow students to pursue this topic.

Hoelscher responded the Coleman Fellows was always open for new members and recruited every year. He added that in Darner's example, they would hunt for someone on campus that would be a subject expert in biotech. Once identified, the Fellows would then connect the student(s) with that individual and would provide any guidance or assistance as needed. In addition, the Means Center has a program in place to provide mentors and funding campus-wide to that there is a network of support.

Darner questioned if an e-contract would allow students more flexibility than a traditional course to which Merriman-Thompson responded it definitely would. She went on to explain that when the Fellows looked at the menu of available courses offered at Illinois State, it was realized there were not enough available. The use of e-contracts would give students more options to focus on specific areas of interest.

Weilbacher asked if the Fellows regarded e-contracts as distinct entities or as nine credits long for students. Merriman-Thompson responded it was possible that a large project within an e-contract could span over more than one semester. However, they would need to see the proposed e-contract. Weilbacher then asked if e-contracts were to be considered more of a process than an accumulation of credits. Hoelscher felt it was more of a process with guaranteed outcome at the end. He added the Coleman Fellows had been successful thus far even without the minor and that over half of the students interested were from outside the College of Business.

Merriman-Thompson added the addition of the minor would be a great selling tool for the University and its creation was worth fighting for students. Hoelscher agreed as entrepreneurship is a hot topic in today's society, the minor could be used as a recruitment tool for the University and the minor had buy-in across campus.

Aitken questioned how credit for an e-contract would relate to credit in a course. For example, if a student passed a course with a grade of A, but did not meet the requirements of the e-contract, how would this impact the credit for the e-contract. Hoelscher was not sure if the scenario had been fully developed by the Fellows and his initial thought would that it would need to be handled by the instructor. Merriman-Thompson added the student must sign the e-contract and if the final result was not met, they could not get credit for the contract.

Rivadenebra then asked what would happen if the student fulfilled the terms of the e-contract but failed the course. She explained that for Honors contracts, in order for the student to earn credit for the contract, they must earn a grade of C or better in the course itself. Aitken added Honors courses have special designations and both Honors students and faculty are aware of the expectation that those students will do more work while non-Honors students have different expectations. Rivadenebra believed a contract would be needed outlining requirements and potential consequences of these different scenarios.

Hoelscher mentioned students could possibly choose to take independent study courses as a replacement for an e-contract. Worland asked if that meant students could take an approved three-hour independent study and then only six hours of e-contracts, along with the required courses. Merriman-Thompson thought the option could be viable. Worland asked who would approve the content of the independent study to which Merriman-Thompson replied the Means Center would be the approving body.

Weilbacher asked if students could then use work-related experience, such as internship, to count as an e-contract. Hoelscher replied the experience would need to be more structured than typical internships/professional practices. Hoelscher asked if there was a limit on the number of independent study hours that could be applied toward graduation. Aitken believed there was a limit of three hours that could be applied toward minors.

Woolard asked if the minor would designate electives as students may not know what they need to know until it is too late. Merriman-Thompson questioned how all the information could be included in the *Undergraduate Catalog* copy. For example, would copy then read:

- 3 hours of departmental elective
- 3 hours of Independent Study
- 3 hours of e-contract

Woolard then asked if juniors and seniors were the target for the e-contracts to which Merriman-Thompson confirmed they would be the most likely target.

Hurd and Rivadenebra expressed interest in the minor and both felt there were programs on campus that would like the minor which would give it a strong potential for growth. Hurd added however, it would be quite a bit of work to set the program up and thought it would be labor intensive to manage. Rivadenebra asked about plans for additional staffing. Merriman-Thompson responded if the program grows as anticipated, the Coleman Fellows would then need to have administrative assistance. Currently, the program is being supported by 8-9 Fellows. She added the group has a summer retreat planned and has bi-monthly meetings.

Aitken asked if students pursuing the minor must be outside the College of Business. Hoelscher responded that was correct and would most likely stay that way as students within that college have their own opportunities provided by their respective majors.

Hoelscher and Merriman-Thompson will revise and re-submit the proposal to include more information regarding e-contracts, as well as to address different scenarios and concerns provided by Council members. Rivadenebra will reject the current proposal so the routing system will work correctly.

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

Meeting adjourned: 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Soemer Simmons