

Council on General Education Minutes
February 26, 2019
10-11:00 a.m., Stevenson Hall 140

Presiding: Rocio Rivadeneyra

Present: Brian Aitken, Amy Hurd, Sally Parry, Carla Pohl, Rocio Rivadeneyra, Kimberly Schneider, Jean Standard, Chad Woolard, and Chris Worland

Guests:

Derek Meyers, Assistant Director, University Assessment Services

Rivadeneyra called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m.

Action Items:

1. Approval of January 15, 2019 Minutes

Standard suggested minor grammatical revisions to the minutes.

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

2. Approval of February 12, 2019 Minutes

Standard suggested minor grammatical revisions to the minutes.

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

3. MAT 113A01 Elements of Mathematical Reasoning (new course proposed for Mathematics)

The course proposal was submitted by Dr. George Seelinger, Chair, Department of Mathematics.

Rivadeneyra asked if the course was meant to be taken as a co-requisite with the IDS 114, Mathematical Principles for Learning which the Council approved last April. Aitken confirmed this was correct as students take both courses for additional math support. He added the creation of this course was in response to a Campus Solutions limitation in that the system could not determine which students enrolled in MAT 113 should also be enrolled in IDS 114. By creating a decimalized version for MAT 113, it will be easier to maintain correct enrollments.

Woolard asked what the criteria are for taking IDS 114. Rivadeneyra responded students who received a score on the ALEKS placement exam just slightly under the requirement for MAT 113 and needed additional support would be eligible to enroll in both courses. Aitken added the content for both MAT 113 and MAT 113A01 is the same. Worland asked if the IDS 114 co-requisite served as a lab. Aitken responded the course was offered on a NC/CR basis similar to a lab and served to build parallel skills in math, as well as other skills.

Rivadeneyra questioned if MAT 113/IDS 114 had been offered yet, and if so, how enrollment looked for the course. Aitken confirmed the courses were offered last fall and this spring and enrollment for both semesters has been good. The course has really helped Nursing students and Aitken estimated approximately 80% of last fall's enrollment was made up of Nursing majors.

Pohl asked how students registered for both courses. Aitken responded students register as they normally would through Campus Solutions. However, they must register for the IDS course first before the system will allow registration in MAT 113.

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

4. Environmental Systems Science and Sustainability (ESSS) (QR Category Exemption Request)

The exemption request was submitted by Dr. Dagmar Budikova, Chair, Department of Geography, Geology and the Environment.

Rivadeneyra informed Council members the ESSS major was relatively new. Parry added this was the first year for the major. Prior to the meeting, Budikova had been in contact with Aitken regarding the exemption request to determine which designation exemption would make the most sense for the major. Based on course criteria, it was determined an exemption from the QR designation would be appropriate.

Rivadeneyra reminded Council members certain majors are allowed an exemption from a specific General Education designation as required coursework within the major fulfills the spirit of the requirement. Pohl asked if majors were only allowed to have one exemption. Aitken confirmed only one exemption was allowed per major.

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

Information Items:

5. General Education Assessment Continuation – Derek Meyers

Based on Council member's suggestions from the last meeting, Meyers distributed a revised *General Education Student Survey* for review.

At the last meeting, it was suggested having the student's courses listed on the first page of the survey would be helpful as students may not readily know which courses count toward General Education requirements. Meyers proposed the following two statements to address the suggestion:

During the [fall/spring] 20xx semester, you are enrolled in the General Education course(s) listed below. If you respond, please consider your experiences in these courses...

or

During the [fall/spring] 20xx semester, you are enrolled in the course(s) listed below to fulfill General Education program requirements. If you respond, please consider your experiences in these courses...

Meyers added it was semantics in regards to the text options and that the courses would be listed as bullet point items pulled from a mail merge when Pohl asked if the system could accurately pull individual student course information. Rivadeneyra believed the first statement was clearer. Aitken agreed the first statement sounded better.

On page 2 of the survey, Meyers added an introductory paragraph with language pulled from the catalog to better explain what the General Education program is. In addition, based on Council member recommendations, Meyers revised the wording of one of the questions from *General Education courses are easier than courses required for my major* to *General Education courses are easier than introductory-level courses in my major*.

Schneider recommended removing the last sentence from the introductory paragraph, *Students will take most General Education courses during their freshman and sophomore years, along with some course in their major or other elective courses*. Rivadeneyra agreed with the suggestion as she felt the sentence was not necessary. Parry also added the statement is not always true depending upon the student's program of study. Standard also suggested deleting the catalog reference statement as students will not care what catalog year the information is from.

Woolard asked Meyers if the first question in the first rubric was the only one that asked students about instructors. Woolard believed during the last conversation, faculty were assessed by students during the course assessment process and suggested the reference to instructors in the question may need to be removed. Meyers asked Parry if she recalled if a survey went out to students regarding faculty. Parry did not believe so. The item was revised from *General Education instructors challenge students to think about how General Education courses are relevant to students' majors and/or future careers* to *General Education courses challenge students to think about how those courses are relevant to students' majors and/or future careers*.

Meyers asked if members had any other suggestions or questions. Woolard asked if any of the questions were reverse-coded for flagging purposes in case students submitted the same answer for every question. Meyers believed the questions were all positively worded. Parry added the survey could be launched and tweaks to future surveys could be made upon seeing what happens.

Meyers asked if question four on page 2 of the survey should be re-worded to remove the double negative. Rivadeneyra agreed that question was confusing. Standard suggested changing the wording from *"If General Education courses were not required by **ISU, I would probably not enroll in these courses."* to *"If General Education courses were not required by **ISU, then I would probably still enroll in these courses."*

Meyers asked if the survey should be sent out to all students or piloted first in classes whose instructors were willing to participate. In either case, Meyers felt the survey could be distributed after spring break. Parry suggested sending it out to everyone to see what would happen. Aitken and Standard agreed with Standard adding based on results, it could always be adjusted the next time the survey is distributed. Parry thought it would be interesting to see if certain groups were more likely to respond to the survey. Meyers will give an update to the Council when survey results are available.

Meyers then distributed a draft report of the United States Traditions (UST) course category review. He informed Council members the UST category was the only category that had enough course assignments submitted to review this year. University Assessment plans to work with faculty who teach in the course category to get their perspective on the assessment rubric and outcomes. Meyers proposed having brown bags and informal conversations so UST instructors can share and discuss the process over the spring and summer and added the reviewers had also made suggestions for tweaking the rubrics. One

of the goals is to align rubric categories with actual learning outcomes as this is not always obvious to map out.

Parry pointed out that two of the course syllabi reviewed did not include the goals or learning outcomes for the UST category. She wondered if this was just an observation or if anyone had followed up with those instructors and requested they include the information on their syllabi. Meyers responded that he and Dr. Jonathan Rosenthal had reviewed the syllabi and mentioned that while the spirit is to have consistency when reviewing the syllabi, there is not a specific plan as to what happens following the review. He added an email is sent to faculty prior to the beginning of each semester asking them to include the learning outcomes on syllabi and said the results seen from the UST syllabi review is fairly consistent across the other course categories.

Parry thought there should be some type of follow-up or the process is not useful. She added the message did not have to be heavy-handed but some type of directed message to those faculty should be sent out by either the Council, Hurd, etc. to address the issue. Parry added the first time she participated in a syllabus audit, many of them did not even mention General Education. Standard added progress has been made and that CTLT provide links to good syllabi for faculty to use as examples when creating their own.

Meyers asked if he could proceed with determining a feedback mechanism for the report to which the Council agreed he should start. Rivadeneyra thanked Meyers for his work and for addressing the Council's questions.

6. Misc. Item—NS/SMT Lab Requirement Discussion Continuation

At the last meeting Darner had asked Council members where to find more information regarding the lab requirement for Natural Sciences (NS) and Science, Math, Technology (SMT) courses.

Parry asked if the question was if SMT courses need prerequisites. Aitken replied the opposite was true in that did all NS courses need labs to earn the designation. Rivadeneyra asked where this requirement was in writing as members have been unable to locate the rationale. Standard agreed currently all NS and Natural Science Alternative (NSA) courses have lab requirements but where that documentation is kept, she did not know. Parry added in the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) curriculum, two science courses are required but only one has to have a lab component. She thought the information may be located in one of the boxes Rosenthal left for Hurd.

Standard mentioned if the lab component was not required the NS/NSA designation, some courses could be dropped immediately because of the cost associated with running them. She pointed out CHE 102 consumes a lot of resources in terms of staff and materials. Aitken added it was the desire to change the designation for BSC 145 from SMT to NS that started the conversation. Parry responded that if the course could be taken by freshmen and passed, it makes more sense to have it as an introductory course.

Standard believed the initial lab design was to provide students an introduction to the hands-on approach to the scientific method. Based on information provided by Darner, students may perform hands-on activities that would traditionally not be considered as part of a "wet lab" but still provides the same type of learning experience. Standard asked how many labs need to be done in the course to qualify it as a lab course and pointed out there was a lot of wiggle room in existing courses. She suggested it may be time to take a fresh look at the designation. Parry suggested a possible solution

would be to require students to take one lab course and leave the other NS course as their choice in regards to if the course contains a lab.

Woolard asked how large classes in the NS category tended to run. Standard replied CHE 102 has a large lecture and ran smaller labs of around 25 students each. Aitken added lectures in the category consisted of around 210 students. Parry mentioned this goes back to retention as while the lectures may be large, students connect and receive more individualized attention in the smaller lab sections. Meyers pointed out that all three designations, NS, NSA and SMT, have the same course outcomes.

Council members agreed the issues needs to be looked at in more detail in the future.

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

Meeting adjourned: 10:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Soemer Simmons