

Council on General Education Minutes

April 2, 2024

10:00-11:00 a.m., STV 140

Presiding: Gregory Ferrence

Present: Brian Aitken, Allison Antink Meyer, Gregory Braswell, Linda Clemmons, Gregory Ferrence, Amy Hurd, Josh Newport, Brian Rejack, Rocio Rivadeneira, Chris Worland, and Haiyan Xie

Guest:

Malinda Aiello, Program Director, Illinois Articulation Initiative

Ferrence called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Action Items:

1. Approval of February 20, 2024 Minutes

Ferrence asked if there were any corrections to the minutes as submitted. There were no corrections. The minutes were accepted as submitted.

2. Approval of March 5, 2024 Minutes

Ferrence asked if there were any corrections to the minutes as submitted. There were no corrections. The minutes were accepted as submitted.

3. General Education Revision Proposal

Ferrence reminded Council members that the proposal was discussed at the previous week's meeting as a discussion item and outlined the possible actions the Council could take regarding the proposal. Rejack asked what the nature of the discussion was at the previous meeting as he, and another Council member, were unable to attend the meeting.

Ferrence noted that various matters were raised. Among these were the consequences, if any, the revision would have on IAI. He explained that with the new proposal, no discipline would have a lock on courses and suggested the new proposal was flexible while setting a framework that helped students meet their educational goals.

Antink Meyer thought for her, one of the positives of the proposal was the removal of sacred cows. She thought the proposal was forward thinking, removed department and discipline-specific requirements and opened opportunities for other departments who have been somewhat excluded in the current curriculum. Hurd added that when working on the proposal, the Executive Committee wanted to make sure that departments would not be decimated or lose personnel.

Ferrence thought the proposal shifted to a more holistic approach toward general education and would be a better way to attract students while maintaining enrollment. Rejack agreed with opening things up so general education was not linked to specific departments or disciplines. However, he was worried about the risk of losing a liberal education's focus of having a shared curriculum/experience for students.

Council members discussed Rejack's concern. Aitken, Rivadeneyra, Worland, Newport, and Ferrence felt that while there was not one course that everyone would be required to take, the shared experience comes from the overall vision and learning outcomes of the program. Newport thought there was still a shared common curriculum just a shift in the focus. Antink Meyer believed the proposal was more equitable and reminded everyone of Dr. Jonathan Rosenthal's belief that one course does not a curriculum make.

Rejack believed he was drawn toward conservatism toward the proposal and wondered if the revision leaned toward a "have it your way" mentality. He was receptive to the idea of giving students what they need but wondered if the program needed to be a little prescriptive. Newport thought the program allowed students to have a choice and yet there was prescription in these choices, which provided a balance for students.

Rejack questioned the category construction and felt they may be overly broad. He added he was unsure of what some of the categories meant and noted one could make an argument that every course could fit within a category. Antink Meyer the category descriptions and learning objectives would help guide how courses would be proposed for specific categories. She added that with students having so many diverse backgrounds/experiences that it feels more respectful/honest to go this way. Ferrence added that with courses scheduled to be reviewed and assessed every five years under the proposed revision, concerns of appropriate designations can be addressed more easily than with the current model.

A motion was made by Worland to approve General Education Revision proposal and forward it to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee for review. Braswell seconded.

Nine in favor, one opposed, one abstained.

The motion passed.

- 4. IDS 121A12 Texts and Contexts: Place as Text: Europe (new course proposed for LH designation)**
- 5. IDS 121A13 Texts and Contexts: Place as Text: Africa (new course proposed for LH designation)**
- 6. IDS 121A14 Texts and Contexts: Place as Text: Latin America (new course proposed for LH designation)**

The courses were proposed by Dr. Linda Clemmons, Director, Honors Program.

Council members elected to discuss action items 4-6 together. Ferrence noted all three courses were related to study abroad experiences and asked Clemmons to provide additional context to the Council. Clemmons explained the courses were part of study abroad experiences for the Honors Program. In the past, the Council has reviewed and approved decimalized courses for each location. The courses would then go off the book after four years. Clemmons explained she was trying to make the course proposals broader by creating four categories going forward so the course numbers could be re-used. Ferrence asked if the fourth category would be Asia. Clemmons confirmed it would be and that she would propose a new course for that area once a study abroad experience was planned.

Ferrence asked if the courses were writing intensive. Clemmons confirmed they were and reminded the Council the course experience had been approved by the Council before for the LH designation. She added the proposals for IDS 121A13 and IDS 121A14 were also proposed for the AMALI designation and would be reviewed by that committee.

Worland asked if Latin America included from Mexico down south. Clemmons confirmed. Xie asked about the origin of the course title. Clemmons and Rivadeneyra explained it was based on the trademarked model that is used for the experience. Rivadeneyra expressed concern in having completed the Honors Mindset course as a prerequisite as it would limit enrollment for the courses to Honors Program students only. Hurd added the prerequisite could be removed from the course and enrollment control could be handled by a registration block instead. Clemmons agreed with the suggestion and added she did not want to limit enrollment to only Honors students.

A motion was made by Rivadeneyra to approve all three proposals for the LH designation pending the removal of the Honors Mindset prerequisite. Aitken seconded.

10 in favor, none opposed, one abstained.

The motion passed.

Meeting adjourned: 10:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Soemer Simmons