

UNIVERSITY GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

March 19, 2012

11:00 – 12:30 p.m., Mason Hall, D101

Attending: Janette Muir (chair), Rick Diecchio, Kelly Dunne, Kim Eby, Doug Eyman, Marcy Glover (recording secretary), Mack Holt, Kammy Sanghera, Hugh Sockett, Cliff Sutton, Mark Uhen

Absent: Frank Allen Philpot, Carol Urban (sick leave), Peter Winant (study leave)

Guest: Stephanie Hazel, Institutional Assessment

Call to Order

The meeting started at 11:03 a.m.

New Business

Information Technology/Math/Natural Science subcommittee - Cliff reporting

NCLC 203

They have not had a chance to review yet.

CDS 102 – NATURAL SCIENCE, LAB – RETURNED

Not in the proper format – no learning outcomes. However the content of the course is acceptable and it is anticipated that the course will be passed when submitted in the correct format.

Assessment and the Global Understanding category – Stephanie Hazel, Institutional Assessment

There are 78 courses approved for the Global Understanding category and in the FY 09-10 assessment cycle, 14 courses were evaluated. Several fell short of the mark and the Board of Visitors has asked that the general education committee reassess the category and adjust as necessary. The assessment revealed that most courses did not clearly articulate to the student what the learning outcomes were and assignments were not linked to the learning outcomes or were not obviously linked. As stated previously, the category has a large inventory of courses to choose from, disbursed among many departments and disciplines. This makes consistency difficult to achieve.

Some recommendations for addressing this issue were: identify the bottom third of the courses assessed and contact the coordinator and offer to assist them in mapping learning outcomes to assignments; invite units to remove courses from the inventory.

The question was asked what happens to a course that does not qualify as good or excellent? The course will be sent back to either be fixed or removed.

After general discussion, it was agreed that Janette and Marcy will request a copy of the most recent syllabus for each global understanding course to begin the process, tentatively scheduled for this summer.

Changes/trends in General Education

Janette handout a proposal on a new way to think about gen ed (will be posted on organization page).

One example is a discussion at Virginia Tech to move away from an IT requirement and toward a computational thinking requirement, possibly fulfilled by an interdisciplinary minor.

Janette asked, “If you could change one thing about gen ed, what would it be?”

Hugh: Find a way to make the program more coherent to students. They see it as a bunch of courses, no ethos, no connection; they already did this in high school, why are they doing it again.

Rick: Why do we do it at all? Is it remedial work, an overview?

Mack: We are so discipline based in how we are organized that it prevents us from double-dipping.

Hugh: It would be helpful to move away from a list of boxes to tick and instead have themes, engaging the natural world, arts, society and ethics (see Hugh’s proposal posted on organization page).

Kelly: Why do we have gen ed? It is not required by the State or SCHEV (Janette).

Mack: Decrease the number of gen ed credit hours to allow students more electives.

Janette: We currently have a problem retaining sophomores to juniors. And the average time to graduation is now six years. Virginia is looking at this problem and a pathway for the Virginia student: high school to college to employment.

Rick: Faculty have not bought into the program; many don’t realize they are teaching gen ed.

Kammy: Move toward problem solving either as an individual or as part of a team (as a core competency).

Cliff: How does the large transfer population figure into our discussion?

Mark: We have a cafeteria system currently – should focus on what everyone needs to know.

Hugh: It’s an intellectual experience; skills as much as knowledge.

General comment: We need to be more selective in the courses we approve.

General question: How much of a four degree does gen ed cost?

Summer Retreat

Janette proposed an all-day retreat this summer to discuss these issues. There will be readings to discuss, a stipend and lunch. The theme will be how to move forward with the program we have.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.