

General Education Committee
September 17, 2012
9:00 - 10:30 a.m. D101

Attending: Janette Muir (Chair), Rick Diecchio, Kelly Dunne, Kim Eby, Becky Ericson, Doug Eyman ,
Marcy Glover, Stephanie Hazel, Mack Holt, Cliff Sutton, Mark Uhen, Carol Urban, Peter Winant

Out: Dominique Banville, Frank Allen Philpot, Hugh Sockett

Introductions & Checking In - around the table

Debrief from summer workshop (documents to be considered)

We need overall learning outcomes for the general education program. Over the summer break, a working group met to discuss these outcomes as well as ways to think about the program differently. There have been many rumors afterwards about radical changes to the program. We are only talking about how to improve the program, no decisions have been made.

Janette has placed several documents in the GE Summer Working Group folder on the org space. The minutes from the retreat (handout #2) are there as is Hugh's document on general education. Please review for future discussion. She has also posted a discussion on the board.

President Cabrera has been presented The Mason graduate document and he is very supportive. The document is being revised for final approval. The focus is the Mason student as self, citizen, scholar. What would a Mason graduate look like? What would they walk away with?

It was recommended that a similar vision be crafted for the Mason professor. Hugh is leading the effort on this.

The retreat minutes (Handout#2) identify some of the outcomes and the discussion around discovery and inquiry as well as future actions. The general consensus in the group is that we have too many credits. Janette is looking for creative, budget neutral ways to reduce the load. We need to carefully review grouping things together; just because it looks logical doesn't mean it is a good fit. One goal should be to develop critical thinking skills/experiences across the college career, i.e. global literacy.

Students don't see the point of gen ed. We need to do a better job of educating them on why they have to take gen ed and what they are supposed to get out it. We also need to explain that gen ed is discrete within their college education. There is no one course that students are required to take that would give us the opportunity to educate them on gen ed. A significant number of students take UNIV 100, which does give us a chance opportunity to reach them. Janette gives a talk at orientation to students and their parents about a liberal arts education. Once we have created learning outcomes for the overall all program, she will incorporate that into her talk. We have the additional problem that many faculty members don't realize they are teaching gen ed.

Many students see the program as too big; so many categories, so many courses. Ideas for reducing the size of the program: pairing down courses or collapse categories.

We need to get the learning outcomes down to five; easier to explain why you are taking it, why it is important (what you get that you don't get in your major).

TASK: Please pick five to six categories that you think are most important.

Janette would like to make changes this year, but there are challenges. One is NVCC transfer students and the lower level general education waiver. An analysis of these students transcripts, especially AS students, show that they are missing several categories of our gen ed. It would be ideal to phase out the waiver, but this may not be possible.

Agenda plans for year: Are we okay with the fall meeting schedule? Yes.

Assessment update - Stephanie Hazel

Stephanie presented the results from the IT assessment (Handout #3). 16 courses across four colleges were assessed. Most faculty said they were addressing the outcomes they were supposed to and the overall results were okay, except for learning outcome #5 (security information and defense against attacks). An interesting correlation is that courses with the highest ratings have had the most development (similar results in synthesis). Janette and Karen Gentemann will meet with the relevant chairs to discuss the findings.

It was recommended that highly marked portfolios be shared on the gen ed web page as examples for faculty to follow.

Learning outcomes for WC, OC, QR

We have three categories that still need learning outcomes approved. On the Institutional Assessment web page, the SCHEV competency language for Oral Communication, Written Communication and Quantitative Reasoning need to be reviewed and the committee needs to either approve the current language as the learning outcomes or create new language.

Quantitative Reasoning - APPROVED

After discussion, a revised version of the SCHEV competency language was adopted. The first paragraph will be posted as the learning outcomes for this category. The additional outcomes created separately for MATH and STAT courses will not be included.

Oral Communication – discussion started

The committee asked for clarification on “nonverbal” communication in item #2.

What are they measuring in #2 and #4.

Janette will speak with the COMM department and report back at either the next meeting or the one after that.

Handouts

- 1. Agenda**
- 2. General Education Overall Outcomes**
- 3. Assessment Report: IT**