

**General Education Committee
Meeting Minutes for October 6, 2017**

Committee members attending: Virginia Hemby, Teresa Davis, Zaf Khan, Amy Sayward, Karen Reed, Phil Loubere, Justin Gardner

Ex-officio members attending: Susan Myers-Shirk, Peter Cunningham, Jeff Gibson, Dawn McCormack

Guest attending: Andrew Dix and Aleka Blackwell

Business:

- **Call to order.** Amy Sayward called the meeting to order.
- **Approval of Minutes.** Meeting minutes from the Sept. 8, 2017 meeting could not be approved because today's meeting lacked a quorum.
- **Resolution by email.** Since the last meeting, the committee conducted a resolution by email. The resolution requested a change to existing language regarding the procedures for submitting a General Education course proposal. A majority of the committee voted via email to accept the following change to the "Gen Ed Course Proposals.2017-18 Procedures.docx" document:
 6. Committee members will carefully examine the proposal. When the committee meets, voting will take place by ballot, and members must be present to vote. If the proposal receives a simple majority vote of the entire voting membership, the proposal will then be submitted for discussion to all interested University constituencies.
- **Presentation of first competency report.** Dr. Aleka Blackwell presented results of the learning outcomes assessment of "ENGL 1020, Research and Argumentative Writing" for the 2016-2017 academic year. Dr. Blackwell began by pointing out that for the 2016-2017 academic year, she encouraged faculty to give scores which were most representative of a student's work (for example, she discouraged the issuance of all 3's simply because that was easiest). Dr. Blackwell described several pertinent issues raised by the English department faculty: for example, some faculty wanted Dr. Blackwell to change the language of the descriptors on the assessment instrument, but Dr. Blackwell resisted this stating that it was important to keep the instrument the same for the 3 year assessment period. Another issue was the use of multimodal presentations by some in the English department as a class deliverable in lieu of a traditional written essay. There has been a great deal of discussion in the English department regarding the use of these multimodal presentations, with a tendency for tenure-track faculty to prefer this medium versus tenured faculty who prefer traditional written essays. These multimodal presentations (for example posters, YouTube videos, and trifold brochures) present some challenges for faculty regarding consistent scoring/grading. The General Education committee discussed their thoughts on this issue, which raised an auxiliary point regarding the need to standardize the General Education courses. Dr. Blackwell stated that they all have to cover the

same outcomes, however English faculty are implementing them in different ways. The General Education committee discussed the concern that perhaps time is being spent in the General Education courses teaching technology (which students could get through other courses) versus the skills students were supposed to be getting through the General Education courses. Zaf Khan recommended that the English faculty devise a common assessment to ensure their writing target was met, as well as the specific steps required to reach this target. Amy Sayward directed Dr. Blackwell to report back to the English department regarding the committee's concerns regarding the multimodal presentations possibly taking time away from the core requirements of the General Education courses. The committee also wanted to see the English faculty using the multimodal presentations method to be included in the next round of assessment. A consensus of the committee present agreed to these recommendations by Amy Sayward, however the committee lacked the membership present to reach a quorum. Amy Sayward thanked Dr. Blackwell for her assessment work; she also noted that although grammar and syntax were an issue in last year's assessment, big improvements were made in this year's assessment. Amy Sayward also agreed on Dr. Blackwell's recommendation to stay with the same assessments and make no changes to the outcomes.

- **Presentation of second competency report.** Dr. Andrew Dix presented results of the learning outcomes assessment of "COMM 2200, Oral Communication" for the 2016-2017 academic year. In beginning his presentation, Dr. Dix stressed three main areas. The first area was in regard to data collection: the department overhauled their method, having previously used video recordings but ending this method due to many inherent problems. The department opted instead for live evaluations this year. A second area of interest was in regard to the sample of students. Dr. Dix reported that they used a mix of morning, afternoon, and evening classes. Dual enrollment classes were not included due to IRB issues surrounding the use of participants younger than 18. The department utilized a random selection of half of the available course sections, resulting in 17 morning, 10 afternoon, and 2 evening classes. All speeches within this sample population were observed. The third area of discussion was regarding the results themselves. For outcome 1, Dr. Dix suggested that this year's larger sample size, as compared to a smaller sample in prior years, possibly led to a small uptick for this year's results. Dr. Dix cited the assistance of librarian Jason Vance as an important contributing factor in outcome 3 gains. Dr. Dix said that outcome 4 is probably the least rigorous outcome due to its wording. Dr. Dix pointed out moderate to significant increases this year in outcome 5. In all, the department observed an increase across all 5 outcomes this year. Dr. Dix and the committee discussed Dix's recommendation for the re-establishment of a Speaking Center at Walker Library. Dr. Dix also recommended the addition of a third evaluator for the live evaluations. Amy Sayward noted the department's significant improvements, and agreed for the need for a third evaluator.
- **Online forum for new course proposal.** Susan Myers-Shirk discussed a problem regarding the moving of new course proposals from the old paper system to the new online Curriculog system. She stated that the old paper form does not quite align with the form that is in Curriculog. Peter Cunningham suggested a small revision in Curriculog which would take care of this problem.
- **Faculty Learning Committee update.** Susan Myers-Shirk stated that Justin Gardner, Virginia Hemby, Teresa Davis, and Zaf Khan have indicated their interest in joining the FLC group. The group will utilize a book: "The New Education: How to Revolutionize the University to Prepare Students for a World in Flux" by Cathy Davidson.

- Phil Loubere moved to adjourn the meeting. Justin Gardner moved to second. The committee adjourned at the conclusion of its business.