

Minutes  
Curriculum and Instruction Committee  
November 9, 2016  
1:30 pm  
FAB 1270

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Present: Jennifer Hart (chair), Douglas Barnett, Smiiti Gupta, Patricia Jarosz, Diane Levine, Aaron Martin, Michele Porter, Mark VanBerkum, Barrett Watten, Erika Ruch, Meghan Courtney, Darin Ellis, Sharon Lean, Joanne Hidlebrandt.

Absent with notice: Paul Beavers

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Having reviewed the Engaging GenEd website of the General Education Reform Committee (GERC), committee members discussed a number of issues related to the ongoing process of Gen Ed reform.

First, the committee reflected on the memo sent by the Academic Senate Policy Committee to the Provost. In particular, the committee noted productive and important questions in the memo, some of which they understand are still being addressed by both the GERC and the Provost's office. Other issues are mentioned below as suggestions for further discussion and consideration within GERC. Jennifer Hart reported that the GERC Steering Committee has voted, using an anonymous ballot, on whether they approve of the committee's work thus far and endorse its continued efforts. The results of that election are still outstanding. The committee suggested that further investments in things like market studies were neither necessary nor productive given the nature of the reform process and the extensive feedback that has been and continues to be collected by GERC. Committee members suggested that such a study would add unnecessary expense and time to the process.

Among the concerns or questions identified by CIC members were the following:

- What are the costs and budgeting associated with this new curriculum:
  - Acknowledging that budgeting is not part of GERC's appointed responsibilities: When do those concerns come into play? What does the current gen ed program cost us? Collecting information about current costs now could be a necessary first step in ultimately assessing the cost and potential budgeting for the new program. It could also put concrete numbers to otherwise speculative questions.
  - GTA/PTF allocation: What implications does the new program model have for the allocation of GTAs and PTFs? Will GTAs be allowed to teach smaller class sections? And if full-time faculty are encouraged or required to teach more gen ed courses with a smaller class size, what implications does that have for our ability to provide upper-division classes to fulfill requirements

within the major? If gen ed courses can operate with a large class size, what might that look like?

- Sharon Lean, the Graduate Council liaison reported that the Grad Council is currently working to figure out new principles for allocating GTAs and more clearly defining the purpose of GTAs. That process is separate from the general education reform process, but has obvious connections. Lean will work with CIC to establish a time for the Graduate Council to present its proposal to the committee once they have finished their deliberations and have a proposal prepared.
- Peer mentors for learning communities: Who would the peer mentors be and how would they be compensated? Would there be faculty oversight? To what degree would that factor into their teaching load?
- Will there be any funding available to support program development?
- Is there a way to move toward staged implementation a bit faster? What are the potentials and drawbacks of that? For example, is it possible to reduce the overall number of credits and streamline the existing gen ed in the short term in order to prepare for the ultimate shift to the new gen ed curriculum? Or is there some way to move some parts of the new curriculum forward more quickly?
  - A faster timeline for staged implementation would keep people engaged in the process early on and prime both faculty and students for the ultimate shift to the new program. It would also allow programs to work on these processes over time, which might be of great help in avoiding or alleviating potential administrative/bureaucratic bottlenecks.
  - Darin Ellis, Administrative liaison, reminded us all that general education was codified in BOG statutes and takes a significant amount of effort to change, which makes the entire process a lot more difficult to implement and means that we likely have to wait until an entire proposal is complete in order to begin implementation. There is also a fear of burnout, in which the long process would ultimately lead to the university community giving up before full implementation is achieved, out of sheer exhaustion or convenience. This is a particular concern given how complicated and comprehensive the reform process is.
- How would course content move from development to approval?
  - Darin Ellis suggested that the approval process would follow current GEOC approval procedures.
  - The committee discussed bottlenecks and the need to expedite or streamline the process of proposing and approving courses and dealing with course numbering. Some of that will be aided by learning outcomes, which will be provided and required for each general education course category.
- Barrett Watten articulated a vision for the connection between signature and capstone courses that would provide students with sustained inquiry. Smiti Gupta noted that the gen ed proposal functions in a very similar way to a departmental minor, providing a guided track with a series of touchstones through which students can develop general competence and reflect on their own roles as global citizens and students at Wayne State University. The committee generally agreed that this was a

helpful way to think about the program and the way that the different components fit together.

- Barrett Watten put forward a motion that says: “The CIC has reviewed and discussed the work of GERC and its subcommittees and supports the continuation of this process. We also request timely information and reports as the process goes forward.” Diane Levine seconded that motion and the motion passed unanimously by all members present.

The committee members who submitted feedback, ideas, and questions for GERC are encouraged to submit that in written form, to be forwarded to the GERC steering committee.

The committee also requests that GERC provide an organization flow chart and timeline, which they suggest be placed on the GERC website. The committee also requests that the GERC sub-committees arrange dates/times to present their conclusions to the CIC.

For future meetings, the chair will solicit a list of teaching awards from both the University and College level for consideration by the committee.