

Faculty Affairs Committee

December 2, 2016

Present: renée c. hoogland, Krista Brumley, Katheryn Maguire, Kypros Markou, Ellen Tisdale, Jinping Xu, Linda Beale, Rita Casey, Abdulrahman Suleiman, John Vander Weg, Karin Tarpenning,

Guests: Monica Brockmeyer, Darin Ellis, Thomas Fischer

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:35pm.

The agenda was adjusted in light of the gen. ed. discussion with guests. Items 5. (online courses), 6. (student survey), and 7. (SET) were tabled until the next meeting.

2. GERC/GEOC

DE introduces himself and explains that the Provost & Policy choose the members of the BOG-GEOC-cttee. GEOC has met three times in the F16 semester. All information on their discussions is available on the cttee.'s Blackboard site. GEOC operates in close communication with GERC. GEOC has expressed their support of the GERC's work. They also discussed the math competency issue.

MB presents a review of the process so far. All of the data are posted on the website [Engaging Gen. Ed.].

TF gives the same presentation he did for the Academic Senate. The main reason for trying to overhaul the gen. ed. program (apart from it not having been done for almost 20 years) was that students did not see the point of it and think that the only purpose is to get money out of them. What they learned along the way will lead to principles that will serve as the basis for course design. The GERC follows LEAP (Liberal Education and America's Promise) as developed by AAC&U [<https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/liberal-education-and-america's-promise>]. AAC&U provides learning outcomes and rubrics. The annual meeting about gen. ed. has proved to be very valuable. The LEAP essential outcomes can be found on the GERC website.

The beginning of the conversation focused on the (ideal) curriculum, which should embrace:

- meaningful engagement
- prepare a diverse student body to thrive
- diversity and inclusion

The goals:

- student success & retention
- increase the connection between students, peers, faculty, the university, and the community
- make it an attractive program

The proposed curriculum comprises a total of 33 credits. The 1st year constitutes the core of the program; breadth categories include social studies, arts & humanities, and the natural sciences.

LB takes umbrage at MB's comment that we are "cramming stuff" in. We need to incentivize/ rejuvenate faculty. The key question is why students are NOT excited about the current gen. ed. offerings?

rch wonders how we are going to "fix" this problem. Students more or less know what the purpose of gen. ed. is. The problem seems to be that they only want to take courses that contribute to their major. How is the new program going to solve/ remedy this?

AS explains:

- students want small classrooms
- want to be able to tailor their gen. ed. courses
- give students the feeling that they are learning something they can apply
- lack of specialized major courses means that students have to wait and take alternative courses instead
- there have been dramatic improvements in recent years
- gen. ed. reform is seen as important
- the university should re-allocate resources to make the new program a success

KT posits that students are exhausted because they work too hard.

LB comments that the problem is that our students' life circumstances may reasonably require more than the typical 4-5 years to graduate. Gen. ed reform should start with identifying the specific problems our students face and consider how to address them, rather than starting with a top-down "revise the curriculum" approach.

KGM asks if there will be a document bringing all this information together — we need clarity on "problem solution."

rch asks if there has been some peer institution evaluation of existing or recently reformed programs.

MB refers to LEAP: there is a handout available.

KB asks if these comparisons to "true" peer institutions, e.g., Georgia State. R1's have way more resources than WSU.

The guests are cordially thanked for taking the time and leave the meeting.

3. Approval Minutes November 3 , 2016.

rch points to the proposal to have a senate representative on every single one of the gen. ed. sub-ctees. There has been no answer from the Provost.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

renée c. hoogland, Chair