MINUTES

General Education Council, 3:30 PM January 31, 2017, ELL 205


II. Several students from Multicultural Student Affairs attended the meeting to discuss acceptance and inclusion in the general education curriculum. The group formed an initiative after a Facebook incident last fall. They expressed the viewpoint that even though we have diversity courses, many of them do not force students to confront current issues. Many faculty in the room expressed a deep interest and passion for their cause, and explained they do explicitly discuss different cultures, religions, genders, and sexual preferences in their courses. The students stressed the need: 1) to promote tolerance and understanding; 2) to emphasize the history of diversity less and to place more emphasis on how history informs current events; and 3) for greater student-to-student interaction. It was suggested that the group meet with the program committee to continue discussions.

III. Dr. Ward motioned, seconded by Dr. Clements, to approve the November 29, 2016 minutes. No amendments or corrections were noted and the motion passed unanimously.

IV. Old Business

a. Dr. Drzyzga reminded members to make sure departments understand the newly amended PASSHE BOG policies.

b. The memo to approve ENG 190: Special topics Contemporary Multicultural Voices as a category B1 was sent to the Registrar’s Office and provided to the GEC.

c. Last fall Dr. Hamblin was on sabbatical and Dr. Moll served as interim UCC representative. Dr. Hamblin is now interim Department Chair and has many meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays and may have difficulty making UCC meetings. Dr. Hamblin motioned, seconded by Dr. Ward, to elect Dr. Moll to continue serving as UCC representative. All were in favor, and the motion passed. Dr. Moll reported on the December UCC meeting. He noted the GEC proposal was discussed at the end of a very lengthy meeting and it did not get a whole lot of attention, just a few general questions.

d. Report from standing committees:

i. Dr. Girard reported that they met in December and they plan to review the tags proposed in the new program. At least two people are reviewing each tag so they should have a lot of feedback. The next meeting is scheduled for this Friday, and they should have a lot to report at the next meeting.

ii. Dr. Meyer reported that a grant proposal from Dr. Joe Shane was received and reviewed by the Budget Committee. The proposal asks for $500 to bring a speaker to campus. All members reviewed and approved the grant and the Budget Committee made a motion to approve $500 to fund a forum on science and religion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

iii. Dr. Ramsey was sick, so Dr. Knight read the emailed minutes from their last meeting. The Entry-Year Experience Committee feels like they are at a sticking point. They have discussed cohorts and courses that run from fall to spring, and feel strongly about inclusion of additional skills and life lessons along with course curricular material to help first-year students adapt to college life.
Until a better understanding of the revised program is set, they feel revising their proposal is difficult. Dr. Stokely confirmed participation in events like student research day, talks on campus, possibly with using ID swipe cards at events to help monitor activities would be good. The difficulty with participation of transfer students was discussed.

iv. Dr. Bergsten reported that the Program Committee had met, and the first order of business was to review a Course Catalog description change. Dr. Hamblin noted that the course should be designated a Category B2 (humanities). A motion was made to approve the changes to SPN 150: Spanish Civilization and Culture; all were in favor and it passed unanimously.

v. The second topic discussed is that the Program Committee needs to hear from each department on their review of the program revision. They will be meeting with department chairs soon and will have two Open Forum meetings for faculty in mid-February (probably the 15th and 23rd, times and locations are still being organized). They will deliver all feedback at the next GEC meeting. Two written comments were read, one from Economics and one from Human Communication Studies. Both departments were against the revised program. Economics felt it was a ghost proposal and difficult to evaluate when no specific courses were tagged. They felt the social sciences are being neglected, and they felt similar goals could be achieved with much less transition. Additionally, with leadership change, they felt this was a time of great uncertainty and perhaps not the correct time to overhaul general education. Human Communication Studies also felt that the BOG amendment does not justify such a major overall to the existing program. A short debate arose on a few of the topics, but was interrupted to clarify whether this was a fair time to refute those letters. Dr. Drzyzga reminded people that this is one of the largest groups on campus, with representatives from all departments for all three colleges, with faculty, Deans, and open access to all. He also reminded people that general education assessment is to be program-based, not course-based, and several universities are being monitored this year because of lack of program-level assessment. Dr. Drzyzga stated that he needs to hear from each department, and if they do not agree with the proposal, can they make other suggestions.

e. Dr. Drzyzga reminded a few departments that they have 3-year terms expiring at the end of this year. Departments need to elect representatives and alternates. Membership is staggered so each year there is some continuity.

f. Dr. Drzyzga reminded people that the 30th Annual MLK March for Humanities and Joe Shane’s funded forum is coming up in February.

V. Dr. Clements motioned, seconded by Dr. Burg, to adjourn. The meeting concluded at 5:03 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Alison E. Feeney