

General Education Committee Meeting Minutes, 10/3/18

Roll Call

Members present: L. Ametsbichler, R. Fanning, K. Graham, L. Metcalf, P. Muench, D. Parson, G. Peters, J. Randall, A. Ratto-Parks, A. Sala, S. Schwarze, J. Wilkinson

Members Absent/Excused:

Ex-officio members present: B. French, N. Lindsay, M. Opitz

Guest: Provost Harbor, Cameron (Kaimen Reporter)

The minutes from 9/26/18 were amended and approved.

Communication

- Provost Harbor was welcomed to the Committee and members introduced themselves. He thanked the Committee for its work as general education is fundamental to the student experience and important preparation for life. He read several of the planning documents (Strategic Visions, AAIP) to prepare for the meeting. The campus community is interested in offering students a unique way to meet requirements. This may be through guided pathways or themed based experiences.

We have a lot of general education courses which may be confusing to students. We need to answer the question of what general education in the 21st century should be. Are we capturing all that is needed that is clear to students? Should we reduce the number of credits to align with peer institutions? Should the first-year seminar or GLI type seminars be incorporated as a potential mechanism for retention? Information literacy is an important component to provide to students in their first year.

Can students be introduced to high impact practices (such as exposure to undergraduate research) through general education? Ideally we would be able to provide a rich, empowering experience to all students. Students should be exposed to authentic experiences (internships, service learning-community participation, travel abroad, and capstone experiences). The logistics and student credit hour counting of trans-disciplinary offerings are problematic within our current structure and budget situation. The Global Leadership Initiative ran into difficulties. There are many competing goals and competition among units for general education student credit hours. There should be models at other universities that provide guidance.

The Committee would like the pilot to provide a model that can be scaled-up for all students and sustainable. This will require funding. We need to ensure there will be incentives for faculty to participate. The Provost is in the process of identifying our current procedures and policies that deter interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation in the undergraduate curriculum. It could be that we have multiple course teaching similar content. We need to

identify the overlap and consolidate to save resources. This will free up faculty time to do other unique things. The Provost encourages offering online general education courses. He has experience teaching one that received positive student responses.

There is a lot of anxiety about the impacts of cuts and staffing plans. We may not be able to afford to teach all the general education courses now available. We cannot do everything, it is not always the case that smaller courses provide a better student experience. We must offer larger sections that are effective.

President Bodnar is trying to raise external funding for initiatives around the student experience. This could potentially be used for the UM Core. As the financial situation improves, the administration will consider how to invest resources.

Another factor to consider at this time is the morale on campus. Faculty feel demoralized. Given our resource constraints and implementation issues this may not be the best time for a pilot program. We also do not have data that indicates the general education program has contributed to our enrollment problem. There is likely no correlation. Some of the current confusion about the requirements will be eliminated with DegreeWorks. ASCRC's response was fairly positive, but many members had similar concerns about the storm coming. Perhaps the Committee should develop follow-up questions for Provost Harbor.

The Committee's student member, Daniel Parson was asked to comment. He supports the liberal arts. However a lot of first generation students want something easy and are focused on the end goal of a job, not knowledge.

Communicating the importance of the liberal arts foundation is the missing ingredient. Liberal Arts Students are good thinkers. Statistics show that the major doesn't matter. Pathways could help. The Committee could charge departments to create interdisciplinary pathways outside of their silos. The majors could be instructed to address what non-science or non-business majors need to know about science or business. The administration needs to figure out how to address the procedural obstacles.

The first-year seminar could evolve around problems proposed by the Missoula Community and experts can give guest lectures. This would bring the issues home for students.

Business Items

- The following Subcommittees and Chairs were identified for the General Education Course Review. The Committee will not meet next week to allow members to review the forms. Please make sure the justification on the form is reflected in the syllabus. The subcommittee chair will present the consent agenda and contact proposers if needed for clarification. Camie will send the Box link where the forms can be found, the procedure and the feedback template. At some point the Committee will need to discuss whether the overall numbers of general education courses should be reviewed. A review of offerings by

discipline may be helpful as the Committee continues to discuss the UM Core Pilot.

Group	Count	Reviewers
Cultural & International	1	Liz Ametsbichler
Democracy & Citizenship	3	James Randall Keith Graham
Ethics	1	Paul Muench
Expressive Arts	1	Jaci Wilkenson
Historical Studies	4	Ray Fanning Anna Sala Amy Ratto-Parks
Natural Science	1	Greg Peters
Social Science	1	Steven Schwarze

At some point the Committee will need to discuss whether the overall numbers of general education courses should be reviewed. A review of offerings by discipline may be helpful as the Committee continues to discuss the UM Core Pilot.

- The Committee approved the symbolic systems requirement for the Geography BS prior to 48 credit rule implementation. Members were sent the details of the request prior to the meeting. The symbolic systems requirement for the Geography BA was statistics, but the understanding of the program was that the suggested requirement for the Geography BS was Calculus. Unfortunately a form was never submitted for review to set up this requirement in the general education section of the catalog. Other programs satisfied the requirement with Calculus. Several Geography majors are using the 14-15 catalog for graduation since it does not require language. Students should not have to file a graduation appeal because the department's error.
- Chair Randall shared the results of the poll on the models. Document appended and available on Box. Changing the First-Year Seminar is not something the General Education Committee oversees. It can make recommendations to the administration and the Faculty Senate. Students need a common experience spring semester of their first year as well. The VP of Enrollment and Strategic Communication is also changing the orientation model.
- Professor Ratto-Parks is working on a proposal to change way intermediate and advanced writing. She has shared it with a few colleagues and the Chair of the Writing Committee. After she receives feedback, she will send it to the Committee.
- Professor Schwarze described another model idea (40/40/40)

Mash-up of Paul's 3-4-3 and Gregs' #3 (aligned with Ways)		40/40/40	
	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Present Groups</u>	<u>Long-term considerations</u>
		<u>Changes/notes</u>	

Ways of Communicating				
Oral Communication	3	A	COMX 111 moves out of A; aligns w/Transfer Core	Potential integration or reformulation, to include emphasis on critical inquiry and info & media literacy
Written Communication	3	I: Writing	WRIT 101	
World Languages	6-10	III: Languages	No Language Exception	Credit load
	<i>12 to 16 cr</i>			
Ways of Knowing			<i>Embed Interm Writing across Knowing and Living; must take one course with Writing designation</i>	Generate "pathways" within Ways of Knowing
Historical Reasoning	3	H	Aligns w/Transfer Core	
Humanities	3	L; some A, X, H?	For pilot, limit to L or list of curated courses. Aligns w/Transfer core	Revise category definition.
Natural Sciences (w/Lab?)	3-4 cr	N/NL	Reduction in credits	
Quantitative Reasoning	3	M	agnostic on including CS	
Social Inquiry	3	S	Aligns w/Transfer Core	
	<i>15 to 16 cr</i>			
Ways of Living				
Cultural Diversity (X)	3	X	Aligns w/Transfer Core	
Ethics and Citizenship (E)	3	E, Y	Combines E & Y	Revise category definition; place at 300-400 level as integrative, interdisciplinary, problem-solving
Expressive/Fine Arts (A)	3	A	Aligns w/Transfer Core	
	<i>9 cr</i>			
Total	36-41		lower than current GE	

Adv: shaves credits from existing GE; closer alignment with Transfer Core, while disentangling History/Soc Sci and Hum/FA; coherent groupings that capitalize on Ways; preserves distinctive UM characteristics in Living; potential to add themed pathways in Knowing; no need to create new "rubrics"

Disad: missing FY Seminars in credit total (as are others); prioritizes existing categories over interdisciplinarity and elegance; somewhat less flexibility for students than other models SS: Personally, I think we should be comfortable with a target of ~40 credits not 30.

- 1) It's clear that at UM, we think there is more to GE than what the Transfer Core requires;
- 2) it is consistent with a common approach of 1/3 GE, 1/3 major, 1/3 electives.
- 3) Realistically, most students will take fewer credits as they double-dip these with major requirements.

- ASUM created a Taskforce Chaired by Eli Brown, a member of ASCRC and the Writing Committee to gather feedback from students and alumni.

Professor Wilkenson volunteered to work on a Qualtrix survey to collect feedback from Faculty. The Committee should think about this soon given the pilot needs to be available to incoming students and Admissions starts communicating with them in March.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

POLL RESULTS

Option 1 - 6 votes
Option 2 - 1 vote #
Option 3 - 2 votes %
a` la carte – 2 votes ^, *

*Steve: A combination of Options 2 and 3 + Freshman Year (see proposal on Box)

#Paul: Any option that reduces credits but doesn't sacrifice language or ethics

^Ray: A combination of all three options; prefers getting away from old categories

%Greg: Might be productive to consider a model that starts with MUS Core and adds in what we consider distinctive and important at UM.

Considerable Consensus: Freshman Core Experience

Committee Goal: Let's map it out. What are viable models?

Some Consensus: A "Pathways" model to offer students advising tracks to complete their GE requirements in coursework relevant to their interests and/or paths of study

Committee Goal: Begin mapping some models. We already have a few of these available from GLI (Global Themes) and ESP (Exploratory Studies)

Little Consensus: How and where to reduce GE credits, and whether to realign or reinvent existing GenEd categories. There's some energy toward rethinking writing requirements at the intermediate and advanced levels.

Action Item: Propose viable models (we have a few already); find a way to identify which model is most popular. Propose models for rethinking writing credits.

Relevant question from Amy: "How many credits students actually take to graduate. If students are really double and triple-dipping their ways to a 30-credit GE load, then I think our first step is to communicate that better."

Other Action Items

- How will we select students for the Pilot Program?

Possibilities: Incoming GLI students? Incoming students who haven't declared majors? (might be a good way to measure pilot's success with retention)

- Listening session? Are there other ways to gauge the popularity of individual options?

Appendix of Comments

Amy

- I like option 3 – with the additional First Year Experience requirements. I think that a more structured First Year Experience is vital to everything we're working on with recruitment, retention; many transfer students might not need some of these experiences and we should make space for that, but some will want them anyway. A planned FYE could allow for a stronger continuance of registration via OSS and ideally, it will help them complete a lot of their GE courses. I imagine it as FY Seminar, Math, Writ, and Comm + a course related to their major interest, though I'm guessing Brian will have a lot of insight to offer in this area. However, knowing what students will likely take 1) allows us to anticipate their needs and 2) increases the likelihood that they will connect with other first-year students in various courses. Both of these things help retention.
- However, before we change anything, I think we need to know how many credits students actually take to graduate. If students are really double and triple-dipping their ways to a 30-credit GE load, then I think our first step is to communicate that better.
- I also like the provision that courses in your own major don't count toward your GE work; it allows us to reduce credits, enhance choice, and retain intellectual diversity.
- It's difficult not to want to cut writing credits because 9 seems so high. However, if we are going to cut a GE writing requirement, I would argue hard for it to be the Advanced requirement. I think that faculty who are motivated to teach their students to write/ value it for their degrees will teach writing-based courses in the way that best serve the students in that discipline. However, the Intermediate Writing requirement is not truly as "intermediate" as one might imagine these days. The Writing Committee has spent countless hours in the past year discussing how to respond to deal with the influx of students who "have taken" 101, but can barely write a sentence. (I would be happy to

- share an anonymous collection of 1-page summaries from my WRIT 201 course this semester and I think that, alone, would be persuasive. ☺)
- I actually think we should keep the 9 credits there and say that we want students to take at least 9 credits in “communication” which is 3 beyond the WRIT courses; they could take language or Comm Studies.

MARY

Being that time is of essence, I like the Options in the current order, with number one being the strongest model. As soon as we get more direction probably things might get easier to work on.

LIBBY

Option 1 is my preferred path forward. With some tweaking and deliberation, I believe it will achieve our goals of reducing credit and making a meaningful GE experience. I also appreciate the streamlined freshman seminar. I hope this will also give us a platform to streamline all the 1 credit classes that are randomly being offered on campus. I also like the seminar modeled after GLI. But I would want to make sure we don't tie it to the GLI. Meaning, I would want all faculty across campus to feel they could participate and make it a true interdisciplinary course.

On option 2 (Harvard) I am not supportive of the language requirement. It makes me really uncomfortable (even at this preliminary stage) to have no wiggle room with language from a STEM perspective. However, I am supportive of broadly requiring courses focused on cultural diversity (which could also include language).

PAUL

My preference is for any model that simplifies/reduces the total credits without sacrificing two things that are distinctive at UM (either nationally or at least in Montana): ethics and foreign language.

I'm not opposed to improving the freshman experience but I think it's a mistake to yoke this to gen. ed. Many of our students will need to take gen. ed.s when they are not first years. We should design our offerings so they can be taken by them all, increasing flexibility and choices for them.

Montana ways could be used or something more like the Harvard model. The two could also be combined. The four ways could be four perspectives. We could require two courses for some perspectives. We could also add competencies alongside the four ways.

I think it would be great if we found a way to do away with double dippers. Either by not allowing a course to occupy multiple categories, or by not allowing them to satisfy more than one category for a student. Analogous to how for a major a course might fulfill an upper-division requirement or an upper-division elective but not both.

GREG

1) I know this doesn't really help meet our obligations, but I am pretty happy with the GenEd the way it is. I think it is unique, well thought out, reasonably clear, and that a few double-dippers don't diminish academic rigor as much as combining and eliminating categories. I think the credit load is manageable. When I hear students express frustration about UM I seldom hear, "there are too many GenEd credits" as a complaint.

2) I would cast a preliminary "vote" for the third option you listed. I like the idea of supporting more choice from among existing categories if we must reduce credit load. I would support, per Paul's request, adding the E as a required category in the "Living" WAY and remove it from the optional list.

3) To consider: Many of the proposals we've developed with reduced credit have reduced H, S, and N credits to the point that they are not MUS transferable. I know I am biased in support of science education and that the 6 credits seem to always appear an obvious place to trim, but MUS core GenEd does require 6 science credits. The plans that reduce science GenEd to 3 credits will not meet the goal of transferability withing MUS.

4) What would happen if we started with the MUS GenEd and then prioritize additions until we had to stop because of credit load? Could we use MUS as a baseline and then make our GenEd unique by adding our E, maybe some language, and some choices from among other categories? Start with the most important addition and continue adding until it just before too much. It seems that if MUS transferability is an important goal, that is what we will end up having to do no matter what, and could make a pilot program easier to develop.

BRIAN

I think my preference would be for option 1, but to blend the two Freshman Seminar courses so that the first semester course would be more than 1 credit. Perhaps 2-credit Freshman Seminar courses for both fall and spring? The current 1-credit sections do not provide enough time to cover the necessary topics during the first semester and I think we have a real opportunity to leverage the Freshman Seminars to promote the pathways and interdisciplinary learning, campus resources, experiential components and other opportunities to encourage student engagement. All of these would positively contribute to student retention and we need as much of this to occur during the first semester as possible, considering we lose at least 10% of our entering first-year students after each fall semester.

Jaci

Option one has my support, James. We haven't talked very much, from what I've seen, about the idea of taking any GE courses pass/fail (this is in the Harvard model) but I would be interested in talking more about that feature. I am supportive of it and think it could be considered a retention/marketing tool. It shows a measure of grace and support for those who want to try something new or who fear certain disciplines. I am also mindful of our rising first-gen student population and the anxiety and fears that follow them into their college experiences.

Steve

Here's one more that tries to build on all of our models, with some notes about short-term and long-term considerations.

If you tack on a 3cr FYS to this or any of the other models, we're around 40 cr, which I think is reasonable. If we are serious about shaving more credits, then I think we need to really engage Liz or others about the credit load for the language courses. There seems to be support for collapsing E&Y and embedding the Interm Writing across categories, so languages are the remaining source of credits beyond the Transfer Core.

So, I guess my vote would be for something that moves in the direction of 2 and 3, but also including a substantive FYS.

Ray

To get students, faculty, staff and administrators to look at general education with fresh eyes I think it's important that we develop new terminology rather than use the names of our current perspectives and categories. I think we should also lose the term general education.

In terms of the pilot, it seems to me that there are a couple of things we could assess:

1-Some kind of freshman seminar, perhaps a combination of large lecture and small group seminar. I would lean toward a unifying experience for incoming freshmen.

2-creating a new class that would be a model for moving away from the 101 thinking about general education perspectives: Science and Society, Art and Society, Humanities and Society, Technology and Society, etc.

I don't think it would be possible to assess an entire new gen ed plan in one year.

I keep going round and round and it's difficult to land on one option.

I have mixed feelings about pathways. I worry that they could narrow the scope of general education, but I think they would also help students make sense of the requirements.

I guess I prefer a combination of 1, 2 and 3.

I think the freshman class from 1 is important for the pilot.

Two and 3 are fairly similar. I like the different language used in 2... although I can't get behind aesthetics as a category heading.

And, I like using the "ways" categories in 3

But, I think both of them need to reduce the credit totals a bit more as 1 has done.

Keith

My vote is for Option 1, with some changes. I would eliminate Public Speaking, because I think it is impossible to scale it where every student takes the class. I agree it is important but hard to do this for everyone, without substantial investment.

Notes on Ways of Living

If I read your Ways of Living numbers correctly, I think the total should be 9 credits not 6, as you have Ethics and Human Values, 3 credits, Democracy and Citizenship, 3 credits, and Cultural and International Diversity, 3 credits, making the total 9.

So, if we eliminate Public Speaking and if Ways of Living is a total of 9, we still meet the sweet

spot of 30 credits.

Also, I'd change the Freshman Experience to fall semester as a large lecture and small 20 person discussion groups. In the spring, discussion groups only, much like the Freshman Interest Groups (FIGS) we had for a while. Think this will help with retention. I do like the idea that these will be interdisciplinary classes, but geared toward a student's desired interest (I think we can do this with a small pilot group - may be a problem when we talk about scaling it to the entire freshman class).