# General Education Committee Minutes, 10/5/16

## Call to Order / Roll Call

Members present: L. Ametsbichler, S. Bradford, B. Clough, B. Durnell, R. Fanning, C. Greenfield, P. Muench, J. Randal, T. Ravas, G. Weix, T. Wheeler, L. Yung  
Ex-officio members present: B. French, N. Lindsay

Members Absent/ Excused: B. Holzworth

The minutes from 9/21/16 were approved.

## Communication

* The Committee was informed of the general education forms submitted. Members were organized into subgroups to conduct the review.

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| Group I Social Science (4) + follow-up Historical& Cultural (4) [2 renews] Indigenous & Global (1) | Ray Fanning Laurie Young Chase Greenfield |
| Group 2 Ethics (9) Democracy and Citizenship (3) | Paul Muench Brad Clough G.G. Weix |
| Group 3 Natural Science (5) Language exemption (1) | Travis Wheeler Sue Bradford |
| Group 4 Literary and Artistic (4) Expressive Arts (2) Language (1) | James Randall Liz Ametsbichler Bailey Durnell Tammy Ravas |

The groups may want to reach out to additional faculty teaching in the general education group to help with the review. The subcommittees should come up with a consensus on initial readings and then reach out to instructors for clarification. Any difficulties can be brought back to the full committee to discuss. The review should be completed by the end of November.

* The MUS Core Audit letter was sent. A follow-up message will go out next week.
* Associate Provost Nathan Lindsay summarized the assessment report. The first year pilot involved Natural Science courses. Last year’s pilot included Mathematics and Ethics. There was an initial meeting with the participants then follow-up by email communication. The Natural Science participants met 3 or 4 times. The report identifies five elements that should be included in General Education Assessment reports.
  + Course description
  + Course student learning goals, and how they are connected to the General Education Learning goals
  + Method(s) of assessment, and an achievement target for the assessment(s)
  + Results/findings, and interpretation/analysis of the data
  + Action steps based on the findings.

The findings from the 6 courses involved in last year’s pilot indicate the courses were meeting the outcomes. Additional reports are pending for three ethics courses. The goal of assessment is to try to see across students in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and strategies to improve the course, the learning outcomes, or the general education program.   
  
Currently there are not adequate qualitative models. The Committee will need to decide which group to pilot this spring. A subcommittee is needed to formulate a proposal to transition the pilot into practice that can be used to meet the University’s accreditation requirements. Professors Bradford and Weix, Associate Provost Lindsay and Chase agreed to serve on the subcommittee with an open invitation for others. Faculty that participated in the pilot will also be contacted. Associate Provost Lindsay will reach out to the Assessment Committee for additional members. The subcommittee will flesh out the important components of the proposal. It is beneficial to have a meeting of faculty members that teach in the same general education group, similar to the UPWA retreat. It may also be helpful to have a sample of rubrics that might be used.

* The Historical and Cultural Workgroup reported on its progress. It will be meeting again next Wednesday. The draft rewrite was sent to members for feedback. Eight courses have been identified with overlap based on title. Once the revision has been accepted, the faculty teaching these courses may need to be contacted.   
    
  It was noted that all the groups should be transitioned from the current structure which contains criteria and learning goals to a description with learning outcomes.

## Business Items

* The Committee discussed the various concerns associated with offering upper-division general education courses. It tentatively agreed that some upper-division general education courses should be retained, but criteria are needed that clearly articulate the appropriate rationale.

The courses must meet the learning outcomes and not have too narrow a focus. The language “broad and foundational” specified in the preamble may need to be evaluated. Some credit heavy majors do not have a lot of flexibility. Motivated students will take the courses that interest and challenge them. Some upper-division general education courses serve transfer students that need upper-division credits to satisfy the 39 credit requirement. These students may have received AP credit. Often Professional Schools are limited in the number of general education courses they can teach. The committee does not have data showing students do not venture outside of their major to meet general education requirements so should not make the assumption that this is a problem. There seems to be more upper-division courses in Ethics than other groups. This could be a holdover from the old 6 credit Ethics requirement. Students from a variety of majors take the upper –division Forestry Ethics course: *Climate Change Ethics and Policy*.

There are only 10 courses at the 400 level. The Subcommittee consisting of Professors Fanning, Randall, and Yung and Chase will attempt to identify the patterns / justifications of these courses while it works on the rationale for when upper-division general education courses are acceptable.

## Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:37 p.m.