# General Education Committee Minutes, 2/6/19

## Call to Order

*Members present:* L. Ametsbichler, R. Fanning, K. Graham, P. Haber, P. Muench, Z. Nelson, D. Parson, G. Peters A. Sala, M. Stark, J. Randall, A. Ratto-Parks

Ex-Officio Present: B. French, N. Lindsay  
Members Absent: A. Akmal, V. Hopkins, L. Metcalf, S. Schwarz

The minutes from 1/31/19 were approved.

## Communication

* The Committee briefly discussed the question of whether it is the correct body to take on task of general education reform. Since it has been working on the issue, it should continue since it would take too long to get others up to speed. Members can be added to the subcommittees. It could think about suspending review of new proposals and rolling review until there is a clear direction for reforming the program. Creating criteria and assessment for the new structure will take a lot of work. The Committee will also need to think about a Chair for next year.
* The Chronicle of Higher Education’s *Reforming Gen Ed: Strategies for Success on Your Campus* indicates that effort should be made to bring more faculty into the discussion. The Committee has a lot of work to do. Chair Randall would like to have two open forums before the end of the semester. He suggests that the Freshman Seminar and Humanities sequence workgroups be combined and bring in additional members including faculty teaching the existing Freshman Seminars. Chair Randall spoke with Professor Shearer about incorporating elements from the Pedagogy Project.
* The following goals were discussed.

1. Make whatever enhancements we can to the First-Year seminar for next year. What are our best ideas that can be implemented Fall 2019 (Assign a subcommittee to this task)
2. Solicit participation and feedback from faculty and students on the Core Pilot
3. Collate feedback into a model for discussion and consideration by the Senate

Whatʼs the best way to solicit faculty and student participation?

1. Presentation of proposed structure/breakout into workshops (subcommittees) for further discussion
2. Content of the large group presentation:
   1. General Structure
      1. Competencies/Skills
      2. Divisional/Disciplinary Breadth (Big Ideas Model)
      3. Interdisciplinary Core (1 lower division course a 1 upper-division course)
      4. Freshman Seminar Component
      5. Total of ~30 credits
   2. Principles and Values for the new Core:
      1. Incorporate as many of the AACUʼs High-Impact Educational practices as possible (seems like we could hit them all)
      2. Incorporate what we can from existing successful programs at UM (GLI, Pedagogy Project, Writing Center)
      3. Our GE courses should highlight our best teachers and be adaptive to current research on best pedagogical practices
   3. Breakout Workshops
      1. Learning Outcomes and best Pedagogical Practices for Big Ideas/Interdisciplinary Core
      2. Content and Delivery of Freshman Seminar
      3. How should the divisional course requirements be divvied up?
      4. What should our areas of basic skills/competencies be?

* Chair Randall suggests that the Freshman Seminar and Humanities sequence workgroups be combined and bring in additional members including faculty teaching the existing Freshman Seminars. He spoke with Professor Shearer about incorporating elements from the Pedagogy Project. Faculty involved with new research on best practices and interdisciplinary teaching could volunteer to participate.   
    
  The Committee will need to send out invitations for faculty to participate in the Open forums. It should also provide an update on the direction of the committee to clarify some of the misinformation and ask departments to envision courses for an innovative UM Core. The faculty could be asked what they wish was possible if resources were available. Harvard has a document that offers guidance for faculty thinking about general education courses to create informed citizens. UM could provide similar guidance.   
    
  There is some concern about not using the 6 areas of excellence identified by the UPC. Members of the General Education Committee that serve on the UPC may ask for the UPC to provide input regarding Professor Borgman’s suggested Groups:

1. Arts and Communication.

Critical thinking and effective communication require a grounding in the liberal and fine arts.

The arts include the liberal arts (the humanities and sciences), the fine arts, and . . . Communication includes oral and written communication, artistic expression, and . . .

1. Environment and Well-Being.

The health of the environment and the health of the human family are inseparable.

Environment includes sustainability, stewardship, and . . . Well-Being includes health, human development, cultural diversity, ethics, and . . .

1. Science and Economy.

Data analytics, the social sciences, and the economy are shaping each other.

Science includes technology, and . . . Economy includes economics, business, entrepreneurship, and . . .

1. Justice and Politics.

Justice without politics is useless, politics without justice is ruthless.

Justice includes social justice, global justice, and . . . Politics includes policy, public service, diversity, and . . .

* + The Liberal Studies Courses were team taught and allowed faculty to be engaged with sections of the course. It created an intellectual community of ideas and was good for morale. The new courses will need to be in the schedule for freshman early April. John Douglas in CHS would like to be on Freshman Seminar subcommittee. The college has had some success with its courses. Perhaps there could be different tracks depending on the student’s needs. Athletics course is also very successful. The Committee will also need to know what funding will be available to incentivize faculty to teach the courses. There should also be coordination with the new orientation program. A coordinator will be needed for the courses. The subcommittee should put forward an ideal model for a freshman experience.   
      
    The first Forum will be scheduled on February 27th. Chair Randall will draft a campus communication regarding the current focus of the Committee and upcoming Forums.

## Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.