University-level Advisory Committee for the General Education Curriculum

October 27, 2009
8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
200 Bricker Hall

Summary Notes

ATTENDANCE

✓ Mr. Niraj J. Antani (USG, Philosophy, Political Science)
Dr. Annette L. Beatty, (Fisher College of Business)
✓ Dr. Wayne E. Carlson, (Dean, Undergraduate Education, Academic Affairs)
✓ Dr. Alexis C. Collier (Academic Affairs)
Dr. Prabu David (Communication)
Dr. Esther E. Gottlieb (Arts and Sciences)
✓ Dr. Christopher F. Highley (English)
✓ Dr. Mary Ellen Jenkins (Arts and Sciences)
✓ Dr. Thomas R. Lemberger (Physics)
Dr. Daniel A. Mendelsohn (Mechanical Engineering)
✓ Dr. Edna A. Menke (Nursing)
✓ Dr. Myroslava M. Mudrak (History of Art)
Dr. Mari Noda, (East Asian Languages and Literature)
Dr. Sally V. Rudmann (Allied Medicine)
✓ Dr. Mark W. Shanda (Theatre), Chair
✓ Dr. Elliot E. Slotnick (Graduate School)
✓ Dr. John E. Smith (Academic Affairs)
✓ Mr. Zachary H. Usmani (USG, Sociology)
✓ Dr. Harald E. F. Vaessin (Molecular Genetics)
✓ Dr. John D. Wanzer (Enrollment services and Undergraduate Education)
✓ Dr. Carl R. Zulauf (Agricultural, Environmental and Developmental Economics)

Guests:
Dr. Ann Christy (Provost Faculty Fellow)
Dr. Terry L. Gustafson (Associate Dean, Arts and Sciences)
Dr. Kathleen M. Hallihan (Arts and Sciences)
Mr. Jay V. Johnson (Academic Affairs)

NOTES

The University-level Advisory Committee for the General Education Curriculum (ULAC-GEC) continued its conversation on the content and structure of the general education program (GEP) under a semester calendar. The committee first reviewed a revised set of curricular expected learning outcomes that had been re-organized based on additional feedback. Consideration was given to re-grouping the outcome statements to increase cohesion as well as reflect typical learning outcome classification types of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The ensuing discussion centered primarily on the precision and wordiness of the statements, and what ideas should appear in an overarching statement rather than in specific objective statements. Whether ‘problem-solving’ should be included was raised. Inclusion of ‘critical and logical thinking’ verbiage was also seen as desirable. Given the need for additional refinement, the Chair asked the taskforce to continue to fine tune the statement and suggested a committee member from the Department of English provide input as well.
In response to requests from prior meetings, the committee was given summary statistics about course enrollment patterns at Ohio State. It was pointed out that approximately 10% of the 600+ courses that comprise the GEC (course number collapsed across prefixes and suffices) accounted for 65% of all GEC enrollments over the last three years. About 33% of the courses accounted for 90% of the enrollments.

Assistant Provost Jay Johnson provided the committee with a summary of general education requirements from institutional benchmark schools which showed the percentage of students’ requirements that constitute general education requirements. With one exception, and the caveat that the information may not be accurate for that particular school, Ohio State had the largest percentage of required general education coursework at 55%. For the three schools on the quarter system, the percentages were 43%, 55% (Ohio State), and 56% with an average of 49%. For the eight schools on the semester system, the range of general education requirements as a percentage of the overall requirement was 38%-53% and the average was 46%.

The Chair next distributed several examples of general education models for the committee to discuss. The first three models were variations of the Ohio State distribution model that included different assumptions for converting the curriculum from quarter courses to semester ones. The model also introduced ‘unit’ requirements in lieu of ‘hours.’ In one model, a straight conversion would increase the percentage of general education coursework work in a student’s overall degree requirements to 59%. The second model employed different conversion assumptions and reduced the percentage of coursework work to approximately 42%. A third version resulted in a further reduced set of requirements with greater student choice. The remaining three models were examples of different conceptual structures from three unidentified institutions. Two of the institutions had had the curriculum in place for more than 10 years, and one for less than five years. One was a simplified distribution model. Another was a skill based category model that focused on expression, analysis, exploration, and application. Under each of the skills there were a variety of courses or places in the curriculum that students could take coursework work to achieve the skills. The final model was a hybrid model that maintained a smaller distribution set of requirements, but also integrated designed themes to bring coherence to the program. The themes were civic life and ethics, diversity and social justice, environment, global perspectives, and technology and society. The committee began to deliberate the models, and will continue the discussion of these and additional alternatives at the next meeting.

The Chair brought the meeting to a close and announced that guests will be attending the next two meetings. Javaune Adams-Gaston, Vice President for Student Life, will attend on November 6, and Joseph Steinmetz, Executive Dean of Arts and Sciences will meet with the committee on November 13.