University-level Advisory Committee for the General Education Curriculum

November 6, 2009
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.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 (International Affairs)
✓ 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. W. Randy 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. Javaune Adams-Gaston (Vice President, Student Life)
Dr. Steven S. Fink (Provost Faculty Fellow)
Dr. Kathleen M. Hallihan (Arts and Sciences)
Mr. Jay V. Johnson (Academic Affairs)
Dr. Alan L. Kalish (University Center for the Advancement of Teaching)

NOTES

Professor Shanda, Chair of the University-level Advisory Committee for the General Education Curriculum (ULAC-GEC), opened the meeting and gave a brief overview of the agenda for the day and plan for the quarter. Ideally by the end of the quarter, the committee should have developed program-level learning outcomes and crafted a recommendation as to what proportion of the 120 minimum semester hours needed for graduation should be allocated to general education requirements. The committee should also try to recommend a structure for discussion with the Arts and Sciences Committee on Curriculum and Instruction before sending it to the Council on Academic Affairs. To this end, the Chair indicated he would call for a non-binding vote near the end of the meeting to determine the general will of the committee.

Professor Zulauf next provided an update on the outcomes task force activities. The task force, charged to develop program level outcomes for the general education program, had met again,
reviewed feedback from the committee, and revised further the outcomes statement document. The updated draft was presented to the committee for additional comment. It is comprised of three parts: an introductory statement of learning aspirations for Ohio State graduates; a section on learning outcome statements organized by Bloom’s learning taxonomy of knowledge, skills, and attitudes/perspectives; and a final section on the distinct but complementary general education and specialized curricular programs undergraduates take. The ensuing discussion focused primarily on which of the nine skill and perspective outcomes should be listed under either the ‘skills’ category or the ‘perspectives’ category, and how to strengthen outcome statements related to diversity and citizenship. After a lengthy conversation, Mr. Usamni suggested that in the interest of time, the committee vote to accept the statements in principle while further word-editing continue. Professor Highley seconded the motion, and the committee agreed unanimously by voice vote. The task force was asked to address again the additional comments received from the committee and report at the next meeting.

Dr. Javaune Adams-Gaston, Vice President for Student Life, joined the committee to share her vision for Student Life and talk about the work of the Student Success Outcomes Task Force. She described her broad experiences at other institutions and how they helped shape her vision for Student Life at Ohio State. She pointed out that from students’ perspectives, the undergraduate experience is a broad one shaped by both in- and out-of classroom activities. It is essential then that the whole of the experience be considered when working to ensure successful outcomes. She sees Student Life as supporting and reinforcing curricular goals that faculty establish. She also shared with the committee a new brochure developed by the Office of Student Life which highlights ways in which the Office contributes to student success and development at Ohio State. Vice President Adams-Gaston also discussed the Student Success Outcomes Task Force that was established by the Provost and which she chairs. The membership includes representatives from both Academic and Student Affairs and selected college deans. They are addressing what the integrated student experience should be and will draft a white paper for the Provost that outlines ‘big picture’ goals, principles, and priorities for successful student outcomes. Examples of the types of outcomes the committee will likely propose include opportunities to apply knowledge, competency with global issues, a sense of purpose and strong vocational identity, and skills for personal and professional networking and life success. Subsequent to the white paper, another committee will be charge to help implement the recommendations.

To help clarify next action steps and move toward a recommendation, the Chair asked the committee to take a nonbinding vote on what the general education program should be under semesters. He provided them with five alternatives which seemed to have emerged from the committee’s deliberations to date. Two were variations that affirmed the current structure and requirements, and two called for change. The last recommendation was different in kind in that it suggested the committee determine by the end of the quarter only the percentage of students’ degree requirements that should constitute general education. Specific details would be determined later on. The committee asked to take a vote on either affirmation or change, with the understanding that the last alternative would result regardless. An informal count indicated approximately 16 voted for change, 2 voted to affirm the current curriculum, and 2 abstained.

As the committee considers a possible structure in more detail, members indicated it would be helpful to have examples of sample degree programs. An attempt will be made to gather examples. Members were interested in how general education requirements were met and
varied by program, particularly with respect to pre-requisites and the practice of double counting courses as both pre-requisites and general education requirements.

At its next meeting on November 13, the committee will continue its discussion on structure. Joseph Steinmetz, Executive Dean of Arts and Sciences, will also meet with the committee.