University-level Advisory Committee for the General Education Curriculum

January 5, 2010
8:30 a.m. - 10:30 p.m.
385 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. Peter L. Hahn (History)
✓ Dr. Christopher F. Highley (English)
✓ Dr. Mary Ellen Jenkins (Arts and Sciences)
✓ Dr. Thomas R. Lemberger (Physics)
✓ 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. Steven S. Fink (Provost Faculty Fellow)
Dr. Terry L. Gustafson (Associate Dean, Arts and Sciences)

Dr. Kathleen M. Hallihan (Arts and Sciences)
Dr. Alan L. Kalish (University Center for the Advancement of Teaching)

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NOTES

The Chair of the University-level Advisory Committee for the General Education Curriculum (ULAC-GEC) confirmed that the committee would be meeting twice in the current week and early in the following week to try to finalize initial recommendations for presentation at upcoming meetings of the Arts and Sciences Committee on Curriculum and Instruction (A&S CCI) and the Council on Academic Affairs (CAA). Based on input received at the previous ULAC-GEC meeting, the Chair presented members with a revised General Education (GE) template for discussion.

The template was presented using two formats. The first format showed GE requirements organized by five groupings, A-E, in which the previous descriptors of Expression, Analysis, Interpretation, Language, and Expansion had been removed. In addition, the revised template
clarified distinctions in the requirements for a B.S. vs. a B.A. degree. The result was a set of 14 course and language proficiency requirements that summed to 44-58 ‘units.’ The required units would constitute 36%-48% of the minimum 121 units required for graduation. The second format contained the same information but in a list without the groupings.

The main topic for discussion was whether there should be any additional content/skills requirements without adding separate course requirements, i.e., ‘0’ course-count requirements. This can be accomplished by designating a course as meeting more than one requirement, sometimes referred to as adding ‘lucky charm’ notations. There are three ‘0’ course-count requirements in the current GEC: one for Social Diversity in the United States (U.S.); and two for International Issues requirements, one of which must be for Non-Western Global along with a second option in Western, non-U.S. Given that diversity and international issues are now embedded in the curriculum, the question was raised as to whether the requirements still needed to be explicitly fulfilled by students, or could the lucky charm notation be removed to simplify the GE. Members pointed out that the ‘0’ course-count structure was already in place and working well. There was also concern that if the requirements were not explicit, students may not take the diversity/international issues courses because there are a number of course alternatives that do not include these components. Members emphasized the importance of these topics for student learning. The committee therefore affirmed the current diversity and international issues requirements along with the in-place embedded topic or ‘0’ course-count approach for fulfilling them.

The committee next considered additional skills and knowledge areas that had been raised for possible inclusion in the GE requirements. The skills areas were technological literacy, visual literacy, and moral reasoning, and the knowledge/thematic areas were sustainability and health. The committee also considered whether these additional skill and knowledge areas might be achieved through the embedded or ‘0’ course-count delivery method. Currently these topics and skills are not part of the GEC, so courses for them with approved GEC status do not exist. Nonetheless, the committee thought it likely that most students encountered these topics at some point in their curricular studies so they need not be explicitly required. Members pointed out that learning goals and expected outcomes for all of these areas had not yet been articulated. Further, little information is available as to current student experiences in these areas. The committee thought it would be useful to assess the present status of student learning in these content areas before adding them as requirements, and then to use the assessment information to inform future ULAC-GEC decision-making about potential new requirements.

For the next meeting, the Chair asked that members consider any further refinements to the proposed curriculum, and the preferred format for sending their recommendations forward.