University-level Advisory Committee for the General Education Curriculum

January 8, 2010
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
200 Bricker

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)

Ms. Sarah N. Lang (Education and Human Ecology)
Dr. Gene E. Mumy (Social and Behavioral Sciences)
Dr. Valarie L. Williams (Arts and Humanities)

NOTES

The Chair of the University-level Advisory Committee for the General Education Curriculum (ULAC-GEC) reported that he had given an update of the committee’s work to the Arts and Sciences Committee on Curriculum and Instruction (A&S CCI). He also distributed two formats of an updated General Education (GE) template that incorporated ‘0’ course-count requirements in diversity that had been affirmed at the previous meeting. The updated template also included notes on the committee’s desire to assess aspirational aspects of the curricular experience in technology literacy, visual literacy, moral reasoning or ethics, sustainability, and health issues for potential future GE changes.
The Chair asked the committee to confirm the number of courses that would be required for International Issues, and for any other suggestions to simplify the requirements. Because of the institution's focus on international issues coupled with the committee's view that facilitating students' understanding of the global world is essential, members recommended through a straw vote that two "Global Studies" courses be required under the '0' course-count format. Currently the International Issues diversity category has two subcategories: non-Western Global and Western non-U.S with at least one course required in non-Western Global. The committee did not support the current subcategory requirements. They did recommend that course-taking patterns along the current subcategory dimensions be monitored if the proposal is approved. The Chair asked the committee and guests from the social sciences to consider whether the current three subcategories for the Social Sciences category, Individual/Groups, Organizations/Polities, and Human/Natural Resources, could be condensed or further simplified. The curricular Associate Dean in the Social Sciences division of Arts and Sciences indicated he would take the idea to faculty representatives in the division and report back to the committee.

The committee next considered a proposal from the Department of History that the historical study course requirement be met only with a 300- or higher-level history course. While 300- or higher-level history courses have a 100-level history course pre-requisite, the pre-requisite can be met with Advanced Placement (AP) or testing (EM) credit. Members pointed out that the pre-requisite essentially added another course requirement to a particular category, and were generally opposed to doing so. In addition, the view was that it should be possible to fulfill general education requirements without pre-requisites. The Chair reported that the same proposal had been shared earlier with the A&S CCI and received comparable feedback.

The committee also discussed whether the AP test information should be used to solely 'place' students rather than have specified scores count toward either elective credit or specific general education credit. It was pointed out that the intent of the Legislature and Ohio Board of Regents was clear: institutions in the University System of Ohio were required to accept AP credit scores of '3' or better so that the credit could be applied to general education requirements in order to expedite student time to degree and reduce student costs. Students also voiced that being able to apply AP credit toward meeting specific requirements was a large factor in selecting which institutions they would attend. Another member raised the possibility of having the 'writing requirement' specified as two writing requirements at the institution regardless of the level. Others pointed out again that the intent of the Regents requirement for AP credit is to permit students to earn credit for general education requirements.

The committee briefly addressed whether there should be true elective requirements as part of the curricular experience given the proposed reductions in general education requirements. Because so many major programs requirements result in more than the 121 minimum hours to graduation, adding elective requirements did not seem viable.

In preparation for sending a proposal forward, the Chair led a discussion about what format to use, keeping simplification in mind. The format which provided a single list of requirements seemed to be preferred because of simplicity. However, others advocated for a format that had requirements organized around conceptual themes to help students understand the rationale for the requirements, and/or a format that explicitly linked course requirements to the expected learning outcomes. Otherwise, the requirements will be viewed as a shortened check list of courses to mark off (e.g., course 10 requirement is met). The Director of the University Center for the Advancement of Teaching offered to create a curricular map to help link the current
requirements to the learning goals articulated in the Curricular Experience statement for review at the next meeting.