
USF St. Petersburg Faculty Senate Committee: General Education: Meetings USF St. Petersburg Faculty Senate Committee: General Education

3-21-2012

General Education Committee Meeting : 2012 : 03 : 21

General Education Committee

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USFSP - USFSP - GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MARCH 21, 2012

Committee Members:

1. Kathy Arthur, Chair
 2. Erika Asano (absent)
 3. Deby Cassill
 4. Maria Luisa Corton
 5. Morgan Gresham (absent with excuse)
 6. Thomas Hallock
 7. Hugh LaFollette
 8. Deanna Michael
 9. Phillip McCollam
 10. Adrian O'Connor
 11. Patricia Pettijohn
 12. George Roy (absent with excuse)
 13. J. E. Gonzalez (Ernie) (absent)
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The meeting was called to order at 1:10pm

1. Minutes for February 29, 2012 approved
2. Kathy informed that legislation HB 7135 regarding GE was approved by the house and senate and awaits governor's signature. The new bill, if signed, would reduce GE hours to 30 and assign a state committee to determine core course options for the state.
3. The group debated about the effect of this on the committee responsibilities and on the work done so far. Defining a GE philosophy now may conflict with the set of GE classes selected by the state wide committee.
4. The group discussed whether something more than 'classic' GE philosophy is desired. For instance including a First Year Experience at the Dali and/or coursework that involves experience at other institutions. There was no consensus on this issue.
5. In addition, the group debated on how to address the GE day giving the new possible legislation. BUT the group decided to continue with plans for GE day and philosophy anyways. The belief is that it will be valuable to get the USFSP faculty to discuss some of the issues the committee has discussed so far as important for GE. Some points discussed regarding GE day:
 - Expectations of length for the meeting – about 2 hours and a half – we may add 30 min for breakfast if with include it in the agenda. We can post the philosophy in visible place so people can read it over coffee – Tom's suggestion.
 - There was discussion whether to present: 1 philosophy, several or none. There was understanding on having ONE and present it as starting point in discussion Tom and Adrian will draft a version for the next meeting.
 - There was discussion on the 'set of discussion points' to present. Some of the points follow:
 - What has/ has not work in GE, best practices
 - What is unique about the GE program
 - What does it mean to be liberal educated
 - How to preserve diversity under new legislation if signed
 - Discussion of SLOs for 5 areas
6. A draft structure for the GE day follows:

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1. *Chair powerpoint presentation – 30 min*
 - a. Current GE – what is GE in USFSP – review our current philosophy, subject raes, SLO and courses
 - b. Announcement of new legislation
 - c. An advance of our work - presenting OUR philosophy draft
 - d. Present points of discussion and distribute in tables (I guess we should explain each discussion point and explain to the group what we expect them to do AND what we'll be doing with it
 2. *Table Discussions (1 hour)*
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The meeting was adjourned at 2:35pm

Following are some notes taken by Deanna on March 7 when Geoffrey Sayre-McCord gave his speech – these notes were taken as a LITERALLY transcription of his speech, very much as a recording, so its content is not responsibility of Deanna. We decided to include them in case in the future we need to refer to them.

Geoffrey Sayre-McCord Speech on March 7, 2012

“What do we want to be true about USFSP? We are in a position to define ourselves.

Two questions: What sort of experiences do we want the students who come to USFSP have and what do we want to be true about the graduates?

Reasons to think about think about these first is because Gen Ed follows these.

Operationalize the two questions;

1. Read college guides-Fisk (?)Guide; What would you want to have in the Fisk guide? Focus on what it is like to come here and describe it. Talking about big questions and what we want people to say about us in real terms.
2. Framework—art of the possible—highly constrained. Pay attention to the facts about where we are. There are real university courses and requirements. Budget restraints in real terms. Departments and faculty have a serious vested interest in the status quo, at the same time there are faculty that are just not interested in contributing to a shared dialogue.
3. The art of the possible: tremendous room for the new and exciting in what we do as a committee, college and university. Recognize what could be your niche.—location on the water; limited class sizes; the beauty of the campus, student focus, more affordable than private liberal arts colleges, research focus different from SPC. Pick a picture of what we want to be true that will share approach to requirements.
4. Focus on incentives rather than requirements. Complementing with certain kinds of opportunities unique to our campus and put funding in that direction.

Pitfalls:

1. What do we want the students to know and then make a list. Then they discover that the list is too long and every cut is an insult. Result of beginning of with the list. People who come out have the capacity to learn important things. Different kinds of lists: knowledge to move through courses.
2. Thinking that the trick is getting the right rules and requirements. If you do get the right rules—if you don't have the right people, they don't work anyway. The experience that you want people to have cannot be legislated, which is abstract. Once you have to focus on the rules, you are just making it mechanical.
3. Once the rules are set up—they cannot be followed. Budgets or unrealistic expectation. Remember the art of the possible must take into account the possible—budget, faculty, classrooms.
4. The great book approach—doesn't really work. Selection of book is politically charged. You will “piss off “some people. Practically a bad idea and pedagogically a bad idea.
5. Interdisciplinary programs are great—but is suspect of requirements for interdisciplinary work. The best is opportunistic. Once it is institutionalized, there is a danger of stagnation.

Proposal:

1. Incentives: USA today example, give access to newspaper and talk about it in class. No requirement, just referral. We are small enough to do it.
2. Controversial proposal: do one of two things
 - a. First thing would make sense in free intellectual space—truly distinct and manifestly good that could become an identifying characteristic--branding. Example: a yearlong integrated humanities course that meets

requirements. Brown U dropped all requirements and it defined them. Brown has a pool of students who are well rounded and this process can work. It would be cool if we could come up with something distinctive that would be part of the brand. (Dali possibility for humanities and perhaps quantitative)

- b. Sticking with the requirements inherited from the university system and strip away courses and get a clear definition about what it is; recertify courses for involvement. Decide what will meet the ideas in reminder—meets what we want to be true. Tailored to what our aims are here. Define what the requirements mean and how we want to meet them. Which requirements fit us as an institution? The default could be attractive to those who are not interested in the dialogue.

What could cause failure? Culture of the school, faculty commitment and ability to teach the subject. Getting the right people teaching the courses is a must. Just anyone teaching the course will cause failure. You can't offer enough sections or often enough. Making a plan that we can't follow would betray the vision of who we want to be.

question- distance learning—answer: a) how we think about meeting Gen Ed; b) how we see gen ed experience in the overall experience of the students. We have to look at the purpose of the course. A great college is where when you are first there, you have an experience that is meaningful.

Distinction between core curriculum and distribution requirements—very different, success gauge different? Core curriculum gives a common experience that all other courses can assume a base of knowledge. Do we want to build a common experience with a teaching commitment that will give a common experience? Distribution requirements allows a thousand flowers to bloom, but students do not have a common experience. There are ways to compromise by a single common course.

How does the general ed requirement relate to retention and student success? We must define success and look at what we want our students to look like. If we put into place requirements with too many restrictions—sections, location, times offered. Must address recruitment and timely graduation requirements.

Geoff (or Jeff)-whatever we decide, how the dean and the upper administration react to it is crucial. Example is a dean who always talked about the vision. As we get our vision, we need to start selling it to the colleagues that care then those who don't have an interest. Part of this is the dean communicating support without the top down pressure. Naval guide to leadership.

What do we want our students to be—how do we approach this? Defined experience will attract certain students and what our graduates will look like. There is a realm that we have proper authority and another range where we have no business. The point is to get a shared vision. It may mean backing off some very important characteristics that we cannot focus on because there is not agreement. What do we want the character of their experience to be? Describing graduates without a list of traits but discursive requirements.

(Missed the question) Look at where you are literally, and what we can't do—if we cannot pay for something then we cannot offer it. Realize what we are not going to do—Art of the possible is the center of the plan.

Who we are and what students experience here. Physical geography—how important is it? Describe our environment—do you know when you are creating a brand do you yield to your physical environment? Answer: Balance is important. Involving the Dali museum; marine science involvement; focus on strengths that includes environment.

Match gen ed statement to that of colleges and university. Bland but focused. What we want the character of the experience to be and mission statement needs to be aligned. “

KATY: What do we have that is unique to offer?

- Cultural and Environmental geography

Dali, Marine Institute, USFS, All Childrens, Fish and Wildlife, Weedon Island, Fine Arts Museum, Holocaust Museum.....

- We already have student involvement in faculty research and students conducting their own research under faculty guidance with these institutions and museums and centers, so we are not reinventing the wheel

USFSP is located directly on the coastal shores of Tampa Bay yet is in the heart of St. Petersburg providing faculty and students with the opportunity to learn, conduct research, and exchange ideas with nationally and internationally renowned institutions, museums, and centers. Within walking distance of campus and through faculty connections and research, students have access to Poynter Institute, Tampa Bay Times, Salvador Dali Museum, Mahaffey Theater, Museum of Fine Arts, Morean Art Center and the Chihuly Collection, US Geological Survey, the Marine Institute, Fish and Wildlife, Cousteau Divers, Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center, Fort Desoto, Holocaust Museum, Districts and neighborhoods recognized by US National Register of Historic Places, All Childrens Hospital, Pediatric Asthma Coalition, Bay Pines VA hospital, Boley Center I am sure there is much more to add here if there interest in pursuing this

USFSP General Education will draw on these exceptional opportunities to facilitate student learning:

- a. Student classroom learning is enhanced and reinforced through experiential learning
- b. Many of our students gain experience through conducting research with faculty which is highlighted during research month, through this event and their research they develop skills in communication, writing, and statistics
- c. It helps students receive experience in areas that they think might be of interest for future careers to help them better determine if indeed this is the direction they want to take
- d. Provides students with experience that helps them to build networks and bolsters their CVs and their letters of introduction to facilitate job/graduate school applications.

TOM - I realize that I'm contributing to a flood of speculation on the email. But two experiences over the past few days proved relevant. One, another facebook comment "in my experience in higher ed, professors stand out as the most lasting and life-changing influences: professors who care about their students, are passionate about their subjects, and (perhaps most important) are supported by their institutions so that they have the time, energy, and mental space to be those kinds of generous mentors. many, many professors have the first two elements down, but many institutions are forgetting the importance of the last."

Second: I just returned from a three day/two night sail with my nature writing class. Three things about our campus became clear to me. (a) The waterfront. What a resource!!!! We have the facilities to take students on multi-day excursions that provide hands-on learning in physics, ecology, history, literature, economics -- the list goes on. And (b), **THE BONDING THAT HAPPENS ON THESE TRIPS**. Students from a staggering range of backgrounds formed a genuine community of learners-colleagues-friends. We would be fools to overlook this resource. (c) That the range of experiences makes our students special. On this trip, there was a 21-year old who lives at home, grandmother who spent the late 60s in San Francisco, a good ole boy/EnviSci major from the 'Glades ... the list goes on. We were talking about the range of experiences as if it were a problem, and from a logistical experience it can be, but isn't the fact that our students come from so many "ages and stages" what makes our classes really cool?

General Education Curricula Reform Schedule:

SPRING 2012

1. *Senate Charge 1*: reviewing and revising the philosophy of the General Education requirements at USFSP
2. *Senate Charge 2*: evaluating the existing list of student learning outcomes (SLO)- working and Ernie to collect this data.
3. *April 13*, Assessment Day will become GE Day

FALL 2012 AND SPRING 2013

4. *Senate Charge 3*: examining the suitability of GE courses and the rationale for how these courses support the learning outcomes;
 - Research methods/process used by other institutions
 - National and regional data
 - Process deciding SLOs other than state and System and their meaning
 - Process/procedures for add, change, delete courses
 - will each course cover entire aspect of SLO
 - process of communication with faculty
 - meetings with faculty
 - possible guest speakers
 - implementation date

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5. *Senate Charge 4*: Our fourth charge is making suggestions to improve GE assessment.
 - Research models for different types of assessment

Detailed Work Plan – Spring 2012

Meetings will be 1 ½ hour

10 minutes- Chair intro new issues

1 hour- 5 minutes for each member's contributions

Write ideas on board

½ hour- discussion

Feb 8—Bring together ideas for mission and philosophy from our hearts and minds of committee members

Feb 29- bring together research by committee members from author's of books, philosophers, etc. national and local data

March 7- Guest speaker Geoffrey Sayre-McCord and bring together research by committee members of missions from other institutions that may be inspiring

March 21 – extraordinary meeting to discuss GE day

March 28- GE day discussion continued

April 4- extraordinary meeting - Put final touches on statement for faculty wide reveal.

April 11- Put final touches on statement for faculty wide reveal. Discuss org. of GE day

April 13- GE day