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General Education Committee Meeting : 2017 : 02 : 20

General Education Committee

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Meeting of the USFSP General Education Committee
Monday, 20 February 2017 2:00-4:00pm
HRB 131
Proposed Minutes

- Committee members
 - Morgan Gresham, chair (CAS--English)- attended
 - Hugh LaFollette (CAS--Philosophy)- attended
 - Adrian O'Connor (CAS--History)- attended
 - Kathy Carvalho-Knightin (CAS--Chemistry)- unable to attend
 - David John (CAS--Biology)- attended
 - Kathleen Gibson-Dee (CAS--Mathematics)- attended
 - DeAnna Michael (COE)- attended
 - Rick Smith (KTCOB)- attended
 - Tony Stamatoplos (Library)- unable to attend
 - Cyndie Collins (*ex officio*, Academic Advising)- unable to attend
 - Julie Harding (*ex officio*, Academic Advising)- unable to attend
 - Michelle Madden (*ex officio*, Institutional Effectiveness)- attended
 - Liz Southard, graduate student assistant to General Education- attended
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- ❖ Discussion on USFSP and Sarasota/Manatee needing to increase the number of programs to boost student retention
 - questions regarding whether Tampa's restriction on duplication of programs still applies
 - more majors/programs at USFSP would produce more students for more specialized graduate programs and help with retention
 - Reviewed list of majors in latest edition of MAP
 - Mathematics major/Math-Physics Department: a lot of pressure to finish this; went to Faculty two years ago, then to System Faculty Council, and is currently being followed up on

- ❖ Minutes from February 3, 2017 Meeting:
 - Need to add exceptions part/language to General Education Core Course Review Process and 5-Year Cycle and Course Applications
 - (Following this Meeting, I found information pertaining to this issue/needed change) February 25, 2017- Liz edited/clarified two things in the Minutes from February 3rd meeting to include the following language used by Hugh LaFollette during the motions and subsequent GEC approval:
 - "a motion to propose the general guidelines and timelines for the General Education Core Course Review Process developed by the GEC to the Faculty Senate. If the Faculty Senate has no

objections, the GEC will act on the assumption. Next year's GEC will begin to make arrangements for exactly how to do it with Math"

- Course Application Clarification Discussion added to Minutes from February 3rd GEC meeting that also included Hugh LaFollette's language and motion on when GEC will accept course applications:

" a motion to reaffirm the old decision, that new courses will be entertained ordinarily only at the end of a GE Area Evaluation Cycle, but we understand there may be extraordinary circumstances that warrant exceptions" (the ones discussed were a change to state-mandated courses or a significant shift in department staffing/change in department priorities)

- ❖ Discussion on Various Types of USFSP Students/Exit Courses/GE Day
 - Three types: All USFSP GE Courses, Some USFSP GE Courses, No USFSP GE Courses
 - If Exit Courses are going to serve as an assessment of our GE Program, then there will need to be a way to look at each of these types of students.
 - Issues:
 - How do would we get this information?
 - David suggests one of two ways 1. We use Exit Courses as a means to assess GE competencies and you put the students in the categories/three types mentioned above. Student data would need to be filtered by these categories/types, possibly via registrar? Because it would be hard having the faculty assess student performance and report data separately.
 - Adrian agrees that it would be very difficult to have faculty report three different sets of data. Suggested possible way via Canvas, similar to first day attendance or mid-semester grades, and presumable the program could then filter by U number and that could filter out into the three types. In the end, it is not a grade rather it is the student's competency and inputted as met or did not meet.
 - David's other suggestion: Scrap the idea about Exit Courses and have some other kind of assessment that you only apply to the students that took their Gen Ed at USFSP.
 - Has anyone talked to the registrar? Is there a way for it to be tracked in Banner? Unsure, if possible

- Brings up good point on Exit Courses- Ignoring that we have three distinct types of students that enroll in Exit Courses, obscures/complicates the story being told and assessment of the GE Program (student competency in each GE Core Area then at the end student competency in the broader Liberal Arts and Sciences)
 - Hugh suggests that data without the students separated into types can still be meaningful because it tells whether the student has a General Education regardless of where they got it.
 - Registrar can tell if a student has transfer credit, but they are not able to tell which students are coming in with credit for Gen Ed courses through IB, AP, ACE and CLEP. They can tell us if they have taken any full enrollment credits and First-Time-in-College. But even if FTIC/dual enrollment they could still be entering with credits that take away from Gen Ed courses that would be required of them.
 - Still have issue with faculty member's being unaware of this information and whether it is ethical to give this information out
 - Need program that would take from individual student assessment information from Canvas and then pulls information of the student from Banner or wherever and then summarizes it. But then it would need to go back to into Banner. Seems these is an IT issue
 - New Assessment Programs might be able to help with this; unsure whether price quotes included these types of assessment packages/add-ons. Michelle did remember it was not included for Campus Labs or TracDat and was unsure on Weave. Michelle suggests talking to registrar because they have ability to pull all sorts of information from Banner
 - Exit Courses appear to be a good measure of assessing student competencies, our issue seems to be tech-related
 - Goal: Are USFSP students "educated non-specialists"? We want to know how the History major is doing in a Bio Exit Course.

- Confusion on SACS expectations... Continual Improvement... 5-Year Review Process...Discussion on proposed SACS requirements.
 - SACS looking for something every year, like ALCs, except with the Gen Ed Program (not just courses/areas)
 - It appears the change is a sweep up... moving past the course level evaluations/assessments and looking at it as an area and then as a program. Then seeing how each individual course is wrapping up to the goal, how each area is wrapping up to the goal, and how the entire

program is wrapping up to the goal, overtime. Getting the feedback that says we've done the assessment, we haven't just met the goal, and what's the next thing we are going to do, we can't just stop at having met the goal. This is the part that has changed and is explicit in this proposed SACS change.

- Draft SACS changes 3.3.1.1- sounds like ALCs and 3.3.1.2- SLOs for Gen Ed Competencies -“provides evidence of actively seeking improvement”- if framed like Hugh suggested, three levels of review/mutually reinforcing forms of information that shows the adequacy or the limitations- David points out it is not just about adequacies and/or limitations, but we need to show how we are using that to seek improvement (not just getting the information but how does it close the loop). What is our method for feeding this back into course improvement? This needs to be connected to faculty and deans.
 - We need to ask SACS whether we need to have an annual document/report of continual improvement.
- Adrian suggests that “GE Day” goes away and instead we have “Exit Course Day”. Every year faculty teaching Exit Courses would come together and review the information from the Gen Ed Core 5-Year Review Process and re-tool it as “Close the Loop” Day that could take the function of a structural reflection on what we are doing and give rise to a report on areas of strengths, weaknesses, and critical areas that require attention and that served as the yearly version of Exit Course reviews. Might answer questions/concerns about thinking programmatically
 - GE Day currently has spotty attendance, formatted as a round-table discussion, questions and answers, not necessarily focused on what we are talking about now and might not produce results we would like and need for SACS. David agrees with Adrian's idea of “Close the Loop/Exit Course Day” and suggests that assessment information be sent to department/program chairs
 - SACS seems like it is looking for evidence, so what needs to be done is, a. provide a framework for how we are going to close the loop, provide evidence that we are collecting useful data, provide evidence that we are actively working on providing that data back to someone in some way that would allow for continuous improvement. Lastly, while we may not know at this point the exact problem, we also need to demonstrate that we are going to do something based on the analysis of the collected data (“Closing the Loop” part)
 - Revisit asking SACS about whether the 5-Year Review Process is enough or if we need an annual review. Additionally, they want to see different measures (not just standardized tests) and USFSP has and/or is working at having these in place. So

as long as we document it and show that we have these things as evidence.

- ETS Proficiency Profile Test could be used as another measure, take a random sample of students with varying numbers of hours (completion of freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior year). Kathleen suggest since it is already being done with QEP courses and could be expanded to GE Courses
 - Issue with incentive for students to well, if not taken seriously could do harm. But this is where the faculty member comes in and emphasizes how important it is for assessing how well we are teaching
 - Concern that a standardized test will become the only piece of assessment triangulation that is meaningful-concern about students that don't care about the standardized test and "Christmas tree" the whole thing
 - Use ETS results that are already being gathered from QEP as a measure for the GE Courses it already applies to just to bolster our forms of assessment/pursuit of continual improvement
 - Concern: Standardized test scores become dominant measure and can be misused. Suggestion: should have built in protection structure for Gen Ed curriculum if standardized tests become the norm
 - What percentage of USFSP students take graduate or professional exams upon graduation? Gather this data? But this data is skewed, cherry-picking students
- These are the types of conversations that need to be had amongst the entire faculty in regards to closing the loop. Including: what type(s) of things do we see as valuable means of assessment, do we think that standardized tests are helpful or not helpful, do we think that other disciplinary tests are helpful or not? (Chemistry uses one)
- Adrian suggests that our structure could be quantitatively driven assessment on Gen Ed Core and a qualitative assessment from Exit Courses; both have structural imperfections but these imperfections differ. But when synthesized by the GEC and, possibly along with "Exit Course Day", there is "Gen Ed as Part of USFSP Day" where members of the committee gather data and discuss with Deans pedagogical priorities. Our proposed three independent means of assessment, each of which when taken as a whole should give us a sense of whether we are doing a good job and, if not, then what needs improvement and develop the means to improve

- If we are going to require application process for Exit Courses... then we need to tell Faculty ahead of time that Exit Courses are going to be used to assess the Gen Ed program and you will need to look at the SLOs associated with Exit Courses and see if you can incorporate them into your course.
 - Document needs to be created and circulated about what Exit Courses that states what Exit Courses are, what Exit Courses should be, We expect the following from these courses.... We expect following forms of assessment for these courses...
 - Exit Course numbers are duplicates with Tampa and Sarasota/Manatee so students can take Exit Courses at any campus... One thing to avoid having to re-number all Exit Courses, look at those that are taught at the other campuses and change those first
 - Adrian suggests having a meeting devoted strictly to all the data that Liz has gathered/generated and talk about whether a review and/or pairing and/or reinforcement of the program will look like
 - Hugh suggests a survey/questionnaire be sent out asking if the lack in an Exit Course in a department rotation was the result of a faculty member on sabbatical, etc.
- ❖ Morgan proposes that our next meeting focus on all the data that Liz has gathered on Exit Courses and write up how we would like to proceed with Exit Course
- ❖ Hugh and Adrian's Document- (last page of minutes)
- Information Item for the Senate- SLOs for Exit Courses in draft form, but the rest of the document is the description we would like to use for Exit Courses. If we sent that and said that some of this is dependent on SACS requirements but this is how we intend to use Exit Courses pending any minor revisions on the SLOs. DeAnna asks that we add pending language for the SLOs to the document for the Faculty Senate to review at upcoming March 3rd meeting. GEC would like approval of the new idea behind Exit Courses (the document) and then will work on SLOs
 - Hugh would like to reaffirm the decision of last year in favor of understanding that the exact wording of the SLOs may change in light of the final version of the SACS guidelines but that GEC would like to proceed with Faculty Senate approval of the idea for Exit Courses.
 - David John seconds
 - All members approved the motion.
- ❖ Meeting Schedule for the rest of the semester

- Next Meeting: Friday, 24 March 2017 11:30 – 1:00 CAS Conference Room
- Need to Figure out about last meeting of the semester

GE, “competencies,” and exit courses

While the SACS COC meeting with Dr. Cuevas included a reprieve from needing to generate General Education assessment data for the upcoming 5-year review, it left us with a new and not insignificant task: identifying and assessing student “competencies” for the decennial review (SACS “Principles of Accreditation” §3.5.1).

It also provided us with an opportunity.

Over the last year and a half, we have discussed the purpose of exit courses in the USFSP curriculum and whether the General Education committee should evaluate them. In light of our meeting with Dr. Cuevas, it seems that there may be good reasons for us to do so. Exit courses are an upper-level complement to the General Education program *and* an appropriate mechanism for assessing student “competencies.”

When creating the General Education philosophy, SLOs, and curriculum, we wanted GE courses to contribute to a robust culture of learning, one that encourages students to think across disciplinary silos, helps them to develop and nurture their intellectual curiosity, and prepares them to continue their intellectual, cultural, and personal development long after college. This requires not only that students master particular subjects and develop particular skills, but also that they learn how to bring specialized knowledge to bear on wide-ranging and far-reaching questions. A similar ambition is articulated in the Liberal Arts requirements described in the USFSP undergraduate catalog and is embedded in the exit course requirements (particularly in the requirement that students take at least one of their exit courses outside of their “disciplinary cluster”). In short, the way to meet the SACS requirement that we measure student “competencies” is implicit in our existing exit course requirements.

We should formalize this by adopting Student Competency Standards (SCS) to be assessed and reported by each exit course. Those data would serve as the basis for the university’s “competency assessment” report in compliance with section 3.5.1 of the “Principles of Accreditation.” To make this assessment substantive but still flexible enough to be incorporated across the many disciplinary clusters, we could adopt two competency standards based on the language in the faculty-approved GE philosophy and the undergraduate catalog, with each standard serving one branch of the exit course curriculum (1. Major Works and Major Issues; 2. Literature and Writing):

(SLOs Pending GEC Approval; Awaiting SACS Clarification)

SCS 1: Students will demonstrate competence in understanding, reflecting upon, and communicating about major works and major issues in the liberal arts as defined in the USFSP General Education philosophy.

SCS 2: Students will demonstrate competence in understanding, reflecting upon, and writing about important works of world literature.