

GEC Minutes: September 15, 2009

Present: O'Mansky, McManus, Crist, Miller, Munro, Bonhomme, Gergits

Absent: Chen, Horvath, Mullins, Armstrong, Ritchey, Stringer

Not yet appointed: BCOE representative, two students



- The GEC members approved the minutes from last spring (moved by Mike and seconded by Matt) and the minutes with repairs from September 1 (moved by Brian and seconded by Mike).
- Phil noted some problems with the Banner site. We'll take that up at the next meeting (see below).
- Julia discussed problems with the current GER:
 - HLC noted poor implementation (about 50% of YSU students graduate without having completed the GER) and the inability to assess the effectiveness of the current program.
 - Focus Groups with faculty members in the spring 2009 pointed to problems in the freshman composition courses and personal and social domain.
 - Faculty surveys reinforced that problems exist with freshman writing; faculty voiced dissatisfaction with how students write in their disciplines. The surveys indicated that faculty members are uncertain what's being accomplished through the current GER.
 - They also noted in the comments that the entire program was too complex and confusing. Several people were very assertive in their call for a complete overhaul.
 - Selected Topics fails entirely as a domain.
- General discussion ensued:
 - Phil argued that revising the current learning outcomes to make assessment convenient is a poor way to proceed. It would be best to revise for the best pedagogy and ideals and take up assessment after. Julia noted that we made a mess for ourselves in 1999 when we accepted thirteen learning outcomes and many domains without considering assessment issues. It was pointed out that assessment requirements have changed.
 - The new community college, although definitely in its infancy, may make changes necessary or desirable.
 - Ohio's transfer module provides some constraints. Julia has put a PowerPoint with links on the Banner site for the committee to consult. All Ohio four-year institutions are required by law to comply with the transfer module. All include more than the minimum, so anyone transferring into that university would have to complete the requirements, but it's a good way to get a sense of what's out there.
 - The same PowerPoint includes some other universities' learning outcomes. Julia asked the committee members to do some research before the next meeting—look for sets of—or even individual—LOs that look especially relevant and well-stated.
 - Brian asked whether the committee had decided whether to pitch the entire system and start again or to revise what we have. Julia said that we haven't really decided that—that we were beginning with problems and the learning outcomes, but we can still decide to go in either of those directions.
 - Although big portions of general education look the same from school to school, some items have changed direction: freshman seminars (part of the first-year experience) are now common, as are diversity requirements. Sustainability goals and requirements are cropping up, as are civic engagement goals and requirements.

- An obvious problem is that we cannot make the present GER any larger than it is; in fact, there is a pretty strong push to make it smaller. Any additional requirements need to fit into the current total credits in the model. It may mean making more “open” requirements specific.
- Any way we go, turf will be an issue, as will practical matters of staffing, scheduling, and advising.

GEC Meeting Schedule Fall 2009

September 1, Provost's meeting room	Tuesday, 3:00, October 27, Stambaugh
September 15, Stambaugh, Kilcawley	Tuesday, 3:00, November 10, Stambaugh
Tuesday, 3:00, September 29, Stambaugh	Tuesday, 3:00, November 24, Stambaugh
Tuesday, 3:00, October 13, Stambaugh	Tuesday, 3:00, December 8, Stambaugh