

GEC Minutes: October 19, 2009

Present: Armstrong, Chen, O'Mansky, McManus, Crist, Miller, Mullins, Munro, Bonhomme, Ritchey, Gergits, Stringer, Horvath, Koneval

Students have been appointed, but not the BCOE representative.



- The GEC members unanimously approved the minutes from September 29 meeting.
- We welcomed the new (and returning!) member, Joni Koneval, one of our SGA appointees.
- Nate Ritchey continued the discussion of the University College initiative. What follows is a summary of what he presented to the committee:
 - The committee charged with developing the proposal for a University College (UC) is Nate Ritchey, Jonelle Beatrice, Cheryl Bosley, and Jane Kestner. They worked together on the Student Success committee that submitted its recommendations this past summer.
 - The proposed structure for the UC includes the general-education coordinator reporting to the new dean. No other part of the GEC structure would change since it is a senate- and provost-appointed committee and included in the Senate bylaws.
 - The UC will have a dean and two associate deans; new advisors will be added. The Center for Student Progress will move under this administration, as will the Writing Center, Math Center, and Reading and Study Skills Center.
 - The Board has approved the initiative and a budget has been discussed.
 - What, exactly, the new college will house is still under discussion. It began as an initiative to support at-risk and undeclared students; it has evolved to include far more offices and divisions, including the general-education and honors programs. The University of Toledo includes honors in its UC. The Senate will help to articulate the parameters of this college.
 - Just assuming that at-risk and undeclared students would begin under the UC, more than half of YSU's students would be affected. The development committee doesn't want to take pre-major students from their colleges (pre-nursing, pre-education, etc.), but those students who are really not going to succeed in their "pre" field should be moved. Transfer students, particularly those who are at risk, should be moved.
 - Some degree programs might be moved: General Studies, for instance. Nate mentioned that some UCs include graduate programs.
 - A proposal that articulates the proposed structure, chain of command, and which groups/programs should migrate will be presented in the next few weeks.
 - The goal is to formalize this partnership between academic and student affairs.
 - The rationale for including honors and general-education is to make the college more broadly based, not a "loser college."
- A fruitful question-and-answer ensued:
 - When asked if this isn't actually a dressed up "loser college," Nate replied that the overall mission of the UC has evolved from simple and straightforward (to help those at-risk students) to more complex and hard-to-articulate. As it has assumed more divisions, its mission has become mixed.
 - It was suggested that the UC needs positive reasons for programs and divisions to move—some demonstration of how they'll benefit. Nate said that gen-ed, for instance, suffers from few resources and little support. If it were moved to the UC, there would be a staff to help with initiatives such as freshman seminars. Changes that aren't possible under the current structure would be possible.
- Members of the GEC wanted to know if they were to vote, but we haven't been asked to voice an opinion on the proposed changes. Gergits noted that if the administration wishes to make this change, it's in their power to do so. Administration controls the structure of the institution. Faculty controls most aspects of curriculum and some small aspects of administration, but they have little say in structure. If the powers-that-be want a new college, they can create it without faculty approval.
- Several members said they liked the idea and thought it would help immensely with the freshman initiative to improve engagement and retention. Others were concerned with how quickly this new college has been developed and prepared for presentation to the campus. It's not clear when this UC might be operational.
- It's not clear how the GER revision should proceed. If the UC is created quickly, it will have a direct impact on what might be possible in a new GER. Without that structure, coherent, focused freshman seminars are more difficult to implement.