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General Education Subcommittee Minutes, March 16, 2021

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GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Date
8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
Zoom Meeting

Present: *Lee Rickords, College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences (Chair)
*Greg Podgorski, College of Science
*Matt Sanders, Connections
*Dory Rosenberg, University Libraries
*Robert Mueller, Statewide Campuses/Communications Intensive
*Charlie Huenemann, Humanities
*Ryan Bosworth, Social Sciences
*Toni Gibbons, Registrar's Office
*Mykel Beorchia, University Advising
*Kristine Miller, University Honors Program
*John Mortensen, Academic and Instructional Services
*Thom Fronk, College of Engineering
*Steve Nelson, USU Eastern
*Daniel Holland, Jon M. Huntsman School of Business
*David Wall, Creative Arts
*Harrison Kleiner, College of Humanities and Social Science
*Lawrence Culver, American Institutions
*Claudia Radel, S.J. & Jessie E. Quinney College of Natural Resources
*Paul Barr, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost
*Ryan Dupont, Life and Physical Sciences
*Michelle Smith, Secretary

Excused: Daniel Coster, Quantitative Literacy/Intensive
Christopher Scheer, Caine College of the Arts
Shelley Lindauer, Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services
Sami Ahmed, USUSA President

Call to Order – Lee Rickords

Approval of Minutes – February 16, 2021 (Box link:
https://usu.app.box.com/file/776705301545)

Motion to approve the date minutes made by Bob Mueller
Seconded by Kristine Miller
Approved unanimously by voting members

Course Approvals/Removals/Syllabi Approvals https://usu.curriculog.com/

ENVS 4550 (QI)...Lee Rickords (in lieu of Daniel Coster)

Recomended by Lee Rickords
Seconded by Greg Podgorski
Approved unanimously by voting members

Discussion
Lee represented Daniel Coster who was unable to attend the meeting. Claudia Radel would be able to answer any questions.

Greg explained that he approves the course but the course description in the catalog will need to be updated. It only addresses the week-long course, but excludes the Logan campus semester-long segment.

Claudia explained the course description was submitted to the course Curriculum Committee and EPC and will be updated for the next academic year's catalog. It will also include adjustments to prerequisites.

Bob asked about the length. His concern was whether students would be doing the same amount of work in that week as is required or will be accomplished within a semester.

Claudia explained that the eight days are all day long (eight hours per day). If it qualifies as a three-credit course, it qualifies for length of time, and so it should qualify for a designation. If the committee wants to look at specific delivery types to limit for designations, that is something to address at another time. But as for now, all delivery types are open for designations.

Business

Implementation of CI Outcomes (Harrison Kleiner and Bob Mueller)

With CL outcomes defined for ENGL 1010 and 2010, the instructors of those two courses will be trained for Fall. CI is more of a challenge for training instructors in the new outcomes because there are instructors in every college statewide. That makes rolling out the implementation of CI outcomes more difficult. They are going before the EPC this month. Once the new CI outcomes are official, the Communications Committee was concerned that rolling out the new outcomes to CI faculty this semester would not have good reception across campuses due to the level of this academic year's challenges.

Another issue with implementing CI outcomes effectively has to do with the class size of CI courses. Some are as low as 25 students and most have less than 40 students, but there is one course with 400 students and a number of courses with 150 students. These larger courses have one or two TAs. A faculty member could not realistically be expected to deliver on new CI outcomes without a better student-to-instructor ratio, such as a 30 to 35 student-faculty ratio. The process of rolling out CI outcomes involves a broader conversation on how to support faculty.

Bob explained that they don't want to just broadcast the outcomes and expect the faculty to implement them in the same year. There isn't a lot of thought within some CI courses to approach the CI outcomes as a progression from CL 1 to CI. The Communications Committee has to think about how to handle the vast amount of CI courses already available and the prospect of new CI courses added each year. The Provost's Office would be overwhelmed if everyone asked for TAs and UTFs to help implement the outcomes. The question is how to bring CI courses up to the standard in stages.

Harrison said they are evaluating methods to provide more faculty support by looking at the Writing Center and the Writing Fellows Program. For a $10 - $15 course fee, you could have a Writing Fellow in the course. The Writing Fellow could provide extra writing time with students. Some courses assign a lot of writing but don't teach writing. They aren't intentionally designed to teach those skills. So there are several ways to approach implementation but it will be a work in progress.

DHA, DSC, DSS, QI, and CI are not Gen Ed courses, they are University Studies courses. Gen Ed requirements are determined by R470. University Studies are a USU requirement, not a USHE requirement. The Communication Committee has requested that CI courses be brought within the Gen Ed assessments this fall to help evaluate what types of support the faculty would need and how the CI courses are fitting within the Gen Ed requirements.

Harrison and Bob would also like feedback on how the Gen Ed Committee would like to see implementation of CI outcomes.

Bob said a few years ago, there were members on the Gen Ed Committee who said their instructors aren't trained to help with feedback on teaching writing and look to CI courses to help teach writing skills. He wants to see how all the colleges and departments with CI courses would prefer to have students learn writing since all majors include CI courses. Bob has also talked to Lee about expanding the CI committee to include a broader pool of members.

Harrison said that they did have CI instructors from every college participate in developing the outcomes who could be added to the Communications Committee.

Lee said it's obvious it will take a few years to implement CI outcomes. He asked about the timeline the Communications Committee anticipates would be necessary.

Harrison said they discussed it but they haven't worked out a timeline. They have started the conversation within English to examine supports. They are trying to identify courses such as one in Ag where they have been inventive with ways to give students feedback. They are trying to identify Best Practices and courses within each college to add as examples on the website but they won't have data until next January. They hope to have these ideas in place by next year. Some programs will have CI courses with high student class sizes. That's the nature of the problem – they can't cause a bottleneck. The idea for the assessment plan is to work for continual improvement. By this time next year the Communications Committee will have conclusions from the assessment data and ways to implement them in the following year.

Bob explained that right now the Communications Committee doesn't have a lot of data. Courses are assessed with how they achieve CI outcomes. With the new outcomes, some instructors may ask to remove the CI designation. But the outcomes will also help with improving standards for instructors to achieve and assist them with meeting goals. The next steps are to gather data and then disperse information on the new outcomes. This will be a phased approach.

Kristine said that while one piece could be the Writing Center, students cannot be the ones to teach other students to write. Even the best students in peer mentoring roles cannot really teach writing. Assessing the current CI courses is a good idea to start with. The committee may also want to look at outcomes on when peer mentoring is used and identify best and worst practices on peer mentoring. But some faculty might look at peer mentoring as their solution to meet CI

outcomes so it would be important to be clear on what faculty can and cannot do to teach writing.

Harrison said that Writing Fellows are only part of the solution. Writing Fellows and UTFs create additional work for faculty and should not be the only approach. Faculty should not offload meeting CI outcomes to another source.

Matt asked that if there was a way that associate deans could help with implementation in their colleges. Department heads could be shown the outcomes in August and told that the outcomes would be the standard to reach within the next couple of years. Those that are doing well could be identified and those struggling could be looked at by associate deans to explore how to help those instructors/courses that are struggling by providing extra support and testing some solutions. They could find some models to help improve courses in focused areas.

Harrison said that he and Bob could work to develop a more defined timeline to give deans, associate deans, and department heads ways to start working on these outcomes.

Harrison asked when the committee will implement the Gen Ed Assessment Plan. Will they vote on it or is it something to look at and begin doing?

Lee said that since the committee decided to have assessments for Gen Ed a few years ago, it could be looked at that way, but the committee could take a vote to implement it for the record and it would start in the Fall.

Motion made by Bob Mueller to establish an assessment for all CI courses to begin Fall 2021 to collect data and inform faculty of student outcomes. (Lee, Harrison, and Bob clarified it would be a multi-year assessment in perpetuity.)

Harrison seconded the motion.

Greg asked for clarification if the assessment is intended for student outcomes or the assessment of outcomes taught within the Gen Ed courses.

Harrison outlined the process for assessment and explained CI assessments would follow the Gen Ed assessment model in place.

Motion approved unanimously by voting members

The Gen Ed Assessment Report

Harrison said he'd email the Gen Ed Assessment Report later that morning. He explained some of the report content.

This is the second year of the Gen Ed Assessment plan. They faced difficulties collecting data the first year so they didn't write a report. They will work on having a better experience the second year. Methods to improve data collection include:

The assessment was moved to a calendar year.

The assessment was moved to annual reporting.

The assessment will no longer use second scoring.

Second scoring – where Gen Ed committee members review artifacts/assignments from students and score them again as a measure of how faculty are implementing their outcomes – was hard to assess since the data, scores from papers, scores from quizzes, etc. didn't get pulled over from Canvas to review using Portfolium. Some designations were not properly assessed as a result. The committee is having to come up with another way to collect data for looking at the outcome.

Data collection on assignments was changed to follow submission date, but they found some faculty are creating dummy assignments for a variety of reasons (dummy assignments are assignments not submitted within Canvas but that have a due date). 30% – 40% of assignments were not pulled over from Canvas. So John Louviere and Peter Crosby are working on how to pull data from Canvas to get a pre- and post-score on assignments students must do for their Gen Ed designation courses.

They want to look at equity gaps but the data set this year was too limited to get a good picture of that. The data took a broad look at how Gen Ed is impacting students. The report is only able to look at some of the assignments due to limitations from collecting data.

Harrison showed the committee how the data they collected from this past year showed the progress of students. It showed that 91% of students were considered proficient at the start of the semester so it was hard to show progress throughout the course.

The IDEA assessments asked students to rate their perceived progress and the scores showed how much progress they felt they made. The overwhelming majority of students felt they had made progress and feel like they are learning.

The two pieces of data show that students feel like they are learning but instructors didn't feel like their students were learning since they scored their students so high in the beginning of the course there wasn't much room to improve.

Harrison drew some conclusions and some good news. When he went to 19 departments that teach 80% of Gen Ed courses and met with faculty, he asked if they'd seen the rubric before. Almost all Gen Ed instructors were ignorant of the learning outcomes they were to achieve in their Gen Ed course. Only 15% knew they existed. Now they are more aware. And that was one goal of the plan – to make faculty and students more aware and for faculty to be more intentional in their teaching.

One takeaway from the report is the need for professional development to help faculty understand what the rubric means. Faculty are scoring too generously.

A second item of business on the report is a request for the designation committee chairs to share the report with their subcommittees and ask them to reflect on it. Then they should talk about what kind of professional development will need to be implemented to help faculty achieve the outcomes.

Claudia asked whether we know how many assessed courses used an early assignment versus a true pre-test? An early assignment might result in assessment after teaching students to have success on that assignment so the skills of students are not captured the way a pre-test would.

Harrison said they don't know that information. There is not a way to poll for that data.

Claudia said that she based her assessment in her course on the first exam and a final exam. She doesn't know how widespread the early assignment vs pretest is used by faculty.

Harrison said that students would be scored well if they met where you want them to be based on the first quarter test. Scoring the assessment only works on the rubric if student outcomes are looked at based on where they are at week two and were they able to achieve where you want them to be at the end of the semester.

Claudia questioned on how to look at student progress using assessments throughout the semester. In her course, she uses unit assessments. There was not a true pre-test. She thought she was looking at her teaching within relation to the rubric but realizes she was basing her analysis of the outcome based on the content she had taught in that first unit.

Bob said that he looked at his assessment on how students scored on their first paper vs their last paper. He realized that he needs to have a real pre-test and post-test set up. His students already had five weeks of instruction before their first paper. He wondered why his data didn't show a marked shift or improvement over time. Now he understands why that is happening based on Claudia's comments.

Harrison said the true way to assess is to have a universal pre-test and post-test for all classes. Those tests would not be tailored to particular content but assesses universal skills. Those tests aren't popular because instructors feel such tests introduce an outside influence on what their content should be. Faculty need to separate assessment of the rubric from the grades of students. For the sake of the criteria in the rubric the students need to be scored on a fixed expectation both in the beginning and end of the course.

Harrison said the homework is for area committee chairs to share the report to their area committee, discuss the report, and draw conclusions from the report to look at what professional development needs to be implemented for instructors to improve courses or at least improve the Gen Ed Committee's ability to collect assessment data. Then each committee chair should email Harrison with any recommendations and also bring them to the April meeting. Harrison will use the feedback to work on seminars that will be offered to faculty teaching courses in the fall.

Adjourned at 9:23