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11-16-2021

## General Education Subcommittee Minutes, November 16, 2021

Utah State University

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DATE  
8:30 – 9:30 a.m.  
Champ Hall Conference Room and Zoom

- Present:** Lee Rickords, College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences (Chair)  
 Christopher Scheer, Caine College of the Arts  
 Greg Podgorski, College of Science  
 Matt Sanders, Connections  
 Dory Rosenberg, University Libraries  
 Robert Mueller, Statewide Campuses  
 Beth Buyserie, Communications Literacy/Intensive  
 Charlie Huenemann, Humanities  
 Ryan Bosworth, Social Sciences  
 Toni Gibbons, Registrar’s Office  
 Mykel Beorchia, University Advising  
 Kristine Miller, University Honors Program  
 Shelley Lindauer, Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services  
 John Mortensen, Academic and Instructional Services  
 Thom Fronk, College of Engineering  
 Scott Findley, Jon M. Huntsman School of Business  
 David Wall, Creative Arts  
 David Brown, Quantitative Literacy/Intensive  
 Harrison Kleiner, College of Humanities and Social Science  
 TBD, American Institutions  
 Karen Beard, S.J. & Jessie E. Quinney College of Natural Resources  
 Michelle Smith, Secretary

- Excused:** Steve Nelson, USU Eastern  
 Paul Barr, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost  
 Lucas Stevens, USUSA President  
 Ryan Dupont, Life and Physical Sciences

**Call to Order** – Lee Rickords

**Approval of Minutes** – [September 21, 2021](#)

*Motion to approve: Shelley Lindauer  
 Seconded by Greg Podgorski  
 Approved by voting members*

**Course Approvals/Removals/Syllabi Approvals** <https://usu.curriculog.com/>

**HIST 4260 (DHA) APPROVED** ..... *Charlie Huenemann*  
*Recomended by Charlie Huenemann*  
*Seconded by Harrison Kleiner*  
*Approved by voting members*



MUSC 3040 (DHA).....Charlie Huenemann/David Wall

*This proposal was moved to the December agenda. The November agenda had listed Charlie as the one who would present the proposal but David was the person who actually needed to present it as the DHA – Creative Arts chair. David will be prepared to present this to the committee in December. Lee approved moving this proposal to the December meeting.*

**Business**

1. Courses with multiple Gen Ed attributes .....Lee Rickords

Toni Gibbons explained she was contacted by an advisor in Engineering who had students registered for MUSC 3030 which has a DHA and DSS attribute. DegreeWorks allows for a course with a CI and depth attribute or QI and depth attribute to fulfill both designations. Engineering was questioning why a course is allowed to fulfill both depth requirements. Toni discussed with Harrison, However, for a double depth designation course, DegreeWorks doesn't distinguish between both depth courses because it is looking for credits, not the course and designations. DegreeWorks will show both are fulfilled after taking that course. Do we need to revise the language in the catalog? Do we need to review DegreeWorks? Do we need to review those courses with multiple depth attributes? It doesn't happen often but it happened twice last week, once with MUSC 3030 and one with the CS 3010 that has a CI, DSC, and QI attribute.

Harrison explained USU has allowed CI and depth designations on one course for a while. The catalog does say that a student must take two or more depth courses and take at least four credits in depth courses. Having a course with two designations doesn't help them because they have to take two courses in depth. We can change the catalog to say it doesn't have to be two or more courses but some of the double depth courses, not the CI or QI and depth, are causing a problem.

John said the only classes that have double depth are the MUSC 3030 course and some courses created but not taken. They are HONR 3070, 3071, and 3072 and USU 3070, 3071, and 3072 with double depth that haven't been taught.

Christopher Scheer said the course was created not to fulfill both but to give the option to two audiences needing a depth designation access to the course. Some students take it for the DSS and some for the DHA. It has to go to one or the other but it meets the requirements of both designations.

Kris Miller said when she began with Honors, they wanted to create courses that could fulfill both depth designations so they created courses that are cross-listed and team-taught by faculty from both areas of specialty who teach the courses together. Students register for whichever depth designation they need. They only get credit for one. The committee did approve this approach.

John said this semester it is HONR 2020 and 2030.

The students are in the course together but they only get one depth.



Harrison asked if students could take the course once and sign up again to get the other designation.

Kris said that had never happened. The Honors students would find it boring and they don't like to be bored. Additionally, Honors offers enough of those classes they can just do a different one.

Toni said she needs to make sure the course is listed correctly in the catalog and program DegreeWorks to fulfill one but not both depths while allowing intensive and depth to be satisfied together.

Harrison said Honors shows how to make this work. Music could do one designation on 3030 and one on 3031, make sure they are cross-listed, and tell students to sign up for the designation they need.

Chris said the committee accepted that the MUSC 3030 course meets both outcomes for the two depth designations.

Thom said that solution proposed by Harrison would help with Engineering's bookkeeping (on student DegreeWorks.)

Chris said he'd be willing to do that as long as it is a fix to what already exists. He expressed concern with having to submit a proposal that would need to go through all the approvals. The committee explained that a new course would need to go through the Curriculum Committee approvals for a new course in Curriculog per policy but that it isn't the responsibility of the instructor to submit that proposal, the department could do it. And the information on the original proposal for MUSC 3030 could just be copied and pasted onto the new Curriculog course proposal. The committee felt it could sail through Gen Ed approval without issue since it already has the designations.

Mykel pointed out that this situation creates a nightmare for advising and students. She explained that any time they have to do training to explain the "hidden" curriculum within the curriculum is a problem. If advisors have to explain to students that they cannot have both designations on a course when it is listed that way in the catalog, it is confusing for students and for advisors. This will have to be addressed in the future as well.

Harrison says the solution proposed remedies that problem. If there are two different courses listed, they will see that they have only one designation. Mykel agreed that with two courses this would help students see exactly what they are getting by registering for a specific course. Thom also agreed. Trying to explain to a student they can't get both creates problems and attorneys agree with the students to give them both designations. Splitting the course into two separate courses would really clear up the problem.

Karen asked why not explain in the catalog that you can't double dip on depth requirements.



Toni said that DegreeWorks is programmed to allow for double dipping intensive and depth, but it may not be able to make it choose one depth or another. She said that she will try to work it out with DegreeWorks if they cannot create two courses out of the one.

Chris said that this solution may also help with faculty in his department who want to create courses that fulfill multiple designations. This could help more students take these classes. But it may be opening a pandora's box.

It seems that from the students' perspective they should be able to choose which designation they want the course to fulfil when they talk to their advisor.

Toni explained her solution for Engineering was to use an exception and pull one depth designation off DegreeWorks for that course. Advisors would have to be trained to review courses with double depth on how to make those exceptions in DegreeWorks. If students have already taken a depth course, this is not an issue. It is a problem for students who have not yet taken a depth course. She can find a way to reprogram it but the solution may not be very simple.

John said that for the student perspective, it ought to be what you see is what you get. They don't look at a catalog description. They look for a course and designations it fulfills; they don't read the catalog. Creating a second cross-listed course is a good solution for students.

Harrison said for Honors courses, they are team taught. A lot of Gen Ed is having trouble meeting standards for one designation. It is ambitious to think that a course satisfies both designations with one instructor. If there are courses that are multiple designations and not team taught, can they really fulfill both? It seems that it should fulfill one designation.

Kris said this is a gate-keeping issue. It has to be monitored by the committee to decide how to grant and structure these courses. For Honors it is working because the courses have a max cap at 25 but for a big class, the chances of meeting both designations is difficult.

John said the MUSC 3030 class is the most popular depth course, probably because it has both designations. Students think they are going to receive both.

Matt pointed out that the rewrite of R470 is coming so maybe a temporary fix is good for now until we get more information from R470's impact on Gen Ed at USU.

Lee agreed that we should continue to look into this issue and see how big it is, keeping in mind the factor of how Gen Ed and R470 will impact each other. We don't have a timeline on when the R470 rewrite will be completed. Harrison said he thinks it will be done by the end of the year.

2. Gen Ed proposal process improvements .....Michelle Smith



Lee said that we want to make the process for reviewing proposals easier for committee members. One way of doing that is to streamline the process up front. Those working on submitting proposals have a need for clarity on utilizing the rubrics. They need some instructions to help simplify the process.

Michelle explained that many proposals are not passing this year. Originators submit a Curriculog proposal and then she looks at the proposal to check the form and attached documents to be sure everything opens and is included. Afterwards it goes to the subcommittee. Ideally the subcommittee should be able to review the proposal and evaluate the rigor of the course for a Gen Ed designation, not seek more information. Comments from committees on rejections state that a course is rejected for things originators should have been told up front. The subcommittees are asking for items to be included in the syllabi that they didn't indicate to originators prior to submitting a proposal or include as instructions, such as listing out the assignments, adding more writing or oral assignments, including more information on the amount and type of assignment feedback, etc. We need to provide more direction to originators regarding the minimum standards necessary for a successful proposal.

Sometimes subcommittees had proposals sit in their queue for a long time, and it turns out they were seeking more documentation from the originator. They shouldn't have to seek more documentation. Better, more clear instructions should be provided up front. Rubrics need to be clearer as well. They can be hard for someone outside the Gen Ed committee to interpret. We are getting feedback that the committee needs to provide more clarity and communicate what is needed on a proposal or what type of documentation will be required before creating and submitting a proposal. We will be creating a website that can include instructions for faculty submitting a proposal for Gen Ed.

Lee proposed that we will send out the document with comments from subcommittee rejections that was created by Michelle and asked subcommittees to create instructions for a proposal submitter and for the committee reviewing the proposals.

Bob Mueller commented that there may be people who want clarity and everything spelled out up front for proposals, but with communications, they have tried to remain flexible and resisted putting down specific details like page counts, minute counts on presentations, etc. The more structured we get takes away some flexibility and could be self-defeating.

Lee said that is a good point. He clarified that we don't need to make extremely detailed instructions but anything we can add to help with clarity is important. What can we do to explain how to submit a correct proposal?

Charlie said that there are 7000 ways a proposal could go wrong, and so often the rejections are not cases of failure but they are cases of conversation. The general point is yes, if we can be clearer so submitters have an idea of what they need to do is helpful but if we impose a detailed cookie cutter, we will put ourselves in a bind when we go to approve designations.

Lee said yes, but there is a problem with proposals coming through presently that need to be addressed.



Harrison said that we have a hidden curriculum within Gen Ed that affects faculty making proposals. But maybe committees can reflect on the fact that we are in the weeds and know what the words mean and we review these things constantly. If area committees can look at where is the hidden curriculum, and keep in mind that 75% of proposals are being rejected, leading to frustration where faculty and deans are going to the president's office because they feel the committee is being too stringent on gate-keeping.

Beth said they don't want a cookie-cutter proposal but they do want better documentation on how the course will meet outcomes from the rubric included with the proposal.

Harrison said that on the website being created for Gen Ed, subcommittees could create a three-minute video explaining what may be helpful in order to submit a successful proposal.

Lee said the question at hand is whether subcommittees would be willing to look at their approval process to see if they could find a way to provide more instructions and clarity. He said it would help Michelle because she is having to do a lot of work even before the subcommittees see the proposals.

*Other Business:*

Beth pointed out that since the CI Committee has been looking at outcomes, it used to be that the oral component was just one assignment. Now with Gen Ed assessment taking place at the first half and second half of a course, they need to include at least two examples of assignments, one at the beginning and one at the end. So that is something to think about.

Matt said that if there is extra time on an agenda coming up, it might be good to take time to review USU's Gen Ed so that when we do have to change outcomes with the rewrite of R470, we are aware of the current situation and the committee can be ready to tackle that situation.

Lee said that other than John Mortensen, not many members of the current committee were a part of the process 20 years ago when USU had to create band-aids between the previous requirements and the new requirements. It is a good idea to review the concepts of Gen Ed.

John said that we have requirements above and beyond Gen Ed, and that if we add to the requirements of Gen Ed, we look at decreasing the depth especially for Engineering.

Harrison said that he has had conversations with Provost Galey regarding the fact that when the Gen Ed rewrite comes out, we will have to look at the whole program.

**Adjourned at 9:21 a.m.**