

Minutes of the General Education Committee

Wednesday, September 17, 2014

Hawai'i Hall 208

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m.

Attendees: Ron Cambra (OVCUE), Pete Garrod, Nicole Iwasaki, Bob Joseph, Joy Logan, Kapa Oliveira, Mike Nassir, Todd Sammons (GEO), Amy Schiffner, Kiana Shiroma, Ryan Yamaguchi (Admissions)

GEO support staff: Dawne Bost, Lisa Fujikawa

Absent: Stacey Roberts (SEC)

1. Minutes from the September 3 meeting were approved as written.

2. Liaison Reports

- E Board (Kiana): The Board met last week and discussed the proposal approval process. They also discussed the Institutional Learning Objectives Implementation Committee (ILOIC)'s E assessment/norming session that was held over the summer, and how the results of the session will apply to UH.
- H Board (Bob): The Board met last week and discussed one Fall 2014 proposal that had been submitted because of an instructor change. There were some question about how the course showed the intersection of Hawai'i with Asia and/or the Pacific. The Board recommended including the HAP Explanatory Notes on the proposal form, since the notes address the "intersection" requirement more clearly than the Hallmarks do. The Board wasn't ready to approve the proposal, and the Chair will be contacting the instructor for more information.
- O Board (Joy): The Board met earlier this week and discussed several proposals, most of which were for a change of instructor. The Board also agreed to put explicit comments in Laulima for any proposals that require GEC approval so that the GEC has an explanation for the Board's recommendation.
- W Board (Amy): Amy was unable to make the meeting, so Todd reported on the Board's meeting that was held earlier in the week. There were several absences, but the Todd was able to meet with the two new members prior to the meeting for a "mini orientation." The Board had a good discussion on digitizing the proposal process. Pete said that he has also been talking to Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (VCAA) Reed Dasenbrock about the same topic.
- F Board (Mike): The Board met last week to review three transfer credit requests. There was also a report on the Quantitative Reasoning Working Group (QRWG). Because it doesn't look like the Board will have any proposals to review this semester, they discussed possible directions for the semester. One idea is to review the FW Hallmarks to see if more departments can offer FW courses. The Board plans to meet once a month.

3. The O Focus Exemption request for Elise was unanimously approved by a vote of 8-0-0. There was a short discussion about paid versus unpaid experiences. It was agreed that either type of experience can be used to apply for a Focus Exemption, especially since it is often unclear whether money is involved.

4. Information Items

- **Handbooks** are still being updated. Returning members have their handbooks updated when they are brought to a GEC meeting.
- A revised **Fall 2014 Focus calendar** was distributed to the Board.
- A draft **2014-15 Gen Ed roster** is posted in Laulima for GEC reference. Hard copies will be distributed when all members have been appointed. (A student representative to the GEC is still being sought.)

5. Focus Exemption

Question: Currently, students can earn exemption from only one Focus requirement. Can/should it be possible to earn exemption from multiple Focus requirements? If so, would students be able to use the same experience to request multiple exemptions, or would multiple experiences have to be used?

Discussion:

Pros

- As long as the Hallmarks are being met, students should be given the exemption(s). They would just have to present arguments for each Focus area for which exemption is being requested.
- Courses can have multiple Focus designations, so it seems reasonable that one experience can be used to request multiple exemptions.
- Allowing students to apply for/receive multiple Focus exemptions may help with retention and graduation.
- Multiple Focus exemptions could be especially helpful for students who are in programs that don't offer Focus within their majors and who have little or no room for electives. The primary concern is fulfilling the E and O Focus requirements.
- E and O experiences outside the university may be even more powerful/effective than taking a Focus course in that area.

Cons

- The GEO believed the reason for currently allowing only one Focus exemption was the desire to have students fulfill the majority of their Focus requirements at Manoa. Because the requirements are prorated for transfer students, it's possible that allowing multiple exemptions would result in few or no Focus courses for some students. How many credits do we want students *not* to have to take?
- There is also the question of how many Focus Exemption requests the GEC can reasonably review each semester. If multiple requests are allowed, will the number become unmanageable? Ryan said probably not, if we assume that the majority of requests would come from returning students. (There are usually only about 100 returning students each year.) If the work becomes too great for the GEC, one possibility is to create a subcommittee to do the review/approval. One suggestion was to include representatives from the Focus ; however, the current practice is not to involve the Boards with Focus Exemption review.
- With students already being able to get exemptions and waivers for certain requirements, is there any point in encouraging the development of new Focus courses if students will now be able to get multiple exemptions for Focus?

General

- **Multiple W requirements.** Can one experience be used to request exemption from multiple W Focus requirements? And what about upper vs. lower division requirements? The GEC previously agreed that it is the School's/College's responsibility to decide whether W exemptions given fulfill upper or lower division requirements. No decision was made on whether one experience could be used to fulfill multiple W requirements.
- **Relevance to major.** The hope is that E, O, and two W requirements will be fulfilled within the major. Do we want to allow students to be able to fulfill these requirements with experiences that may not be related to students' field of study? Members agreed that fulfilling the requirements within the major (or with an experience related to the major) would be ideal. However, until there are enough courses offered in each major, students need to be given other options. This includes giving Focus exemptions for experiences that may or may not be related to the major (though the hope is that it's the former).
- **Focus options in the major.** Can/should Boards be asked to do more outreach to departments to try to expand current Focus course offerings? Or should this be the GEC's or the Gen Ed Faculty Administrator's kuleana? Some majors are "farming Focus out" to other departments and should be encouraged to help their students by offering Focus courses in the major. Todd plans to go talk to some departments this semester.
- **Focus seat availability.** Are there enough Focus seats being offered each semester? According to enrollment data, not all Focus seats are filled each semester. However, it is unclear whether those unfilled seats are in the majors that need them.

Decision: The GEC unanimously (8-0-0) approved a motion to allow students to apply for up to three Focus Exemptions. Students can use one or multiple experiences to apply. This policy will be reviewed in three years, in Spring 2017.

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 1 (11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., Bilger 106)

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Submitted by *Lisa Fujikawa, Recorder*