

Minutes of the General Education Committee
Wednesday, April 28, 2010
Hawai'i Hall 208

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:33 p.m. by Chair Scott Rowland.

Present: Ernestine Enomoto, Lynne Higa, Susan Hippensteele, Mike Nassir,
Scott Rowland, Todd Sammons, Galen Sasaki, Mamoru Sato,
Carolyn Stephenson

Ex officio: Ron Cambra (AVCUE), Ryan Yamaguchi (A&R)

Support staff: Tom Hilgers (GEO), Lisa Fujikawa (GEO),
Jo-Anne Nakamoto (GEO Recorder)

Excused: Garrett Inoue (A&R)

ACTION AND INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Ryan Yamaguchi, newly-appointed Assistant Director of A & R, was introduced to the group.
2. Minutes of April 21, 2010 were approved with the following corrections:
 - Mamoru Sato was absent (excused) and therefore not present at the April 21st meeting.
 - Action/Info Item #3, 6th bullet: replace “it” with “the material” (“If MATH 100 classes were smaller, would ~~it~~ *the material* be easier to understand?”)
 - Action/Info Item #3, 10th bullet: delete “Math is” (“~~Math is~~ *They claim that MATH 100 no longer appears to be* the ‘killer course’ it was once known as.”)
 - Action/Info Item #3, 12th bullet: delete “or padding of courses with credits” (“Question: is it the caliber of students, student preparation prior to admission to UHM, ~~or padding of courses with credits~~?”)
 - Action/Info Item #3, 13th bullet: replace “fast-tracked” with “condensed”. (“Could Math courses be ~~fast-tracked~~ *condensed*?”)
 - Action/Info Item #3, 15th bullet: reword statement to read, “Chair Rowland asked Nassir if he could provide a revised summary/update *to be included in the GEC’s report presented* to the Manoa Faculty Senate, *as an appendix.*”
 - Action/Info Item #4, 2nd bullet: reword sentence to read, “Some *discrepant* practices are being tolerated at other ~~autonomous~~ campuses.”
 - Action/Info Item #4, 3rd bullet: replace “this” with “Diversification issues”. (“Currently no system-wide board to police ~~this~~ *Diversification issues.*”)
 - Action/Info Item #4, 3rd bullet, 3rd open bullet, 1st block: replace “lab” with “tab” (Suggested adding to #4 that a course cannot have a dual Diversification designation unless the course has an inbedded ~~lab~~ *tab.*”)

3. Foundations Data

- Fujikawa distributed handout with revised data: there were 3,778 students entering in F03, of which 1,223 completed all their Foundations requirements by the end of the first year (includes 512 that entered with all their Foundations credit completed). Of those, nearly 30% had not graduated by F09.
- We cannot say there is a causal link between completing Foundations in the first year and higher graduation rates; there could be any number of factors.
- Rowland distributed a handout indicating that most of the F03 first-time freshmen did graduate in 2006, and most completed their FS requirements on time.
- Is graduation rate the only data to be concerned with?
- What can we look at to give us a better idea if courses are foundational? Courses are foundational to give students context for which to base their learning. Perhaps the only way to assess is to enforce; would we see an increased rate of graduation?
 - The freshman experience has many variables, many of which are qualitative. How do you quantify?
 - While students are trying to schedule courses for the entire year rather than semester-to-semester, perhaps UHM could block registration to help first-year students get the courses they need/want. An Oklahoma State University study indicated that students who didn't succeed in their first semester were more likely to drop out.

In addition, drop-outs included those a) with low high school GPAs, b) who didn't meet with an advisor, c) who had financial issues, d) who didn't do well academically the first semester and got discouraged.

- What courses to take becomes critical; we are feeding the retention issue if we are going to force students to take Foundations (some "killer courses") in their first year.

4. "What is FS?" Working Group Report (Nassir)

- FS report mirrors what's going on in retention committees. Faculty and staff must be educated about retention.
- The bigger the barrier students face, the harder it is for them to graduate.
- MATH 100 seems to have no relationship to the needs of some students' majors (e.g., stats). It is not clear how much of the course covers quantitative skills.
- Recommendations that can be taken to the Faculty Senate:
 - Enforced requirement for completion of FS in 2nd year.
 - UHM Catalog language (p. 11) has a description of what constitutes college-level Math but is not always in synch with what is offered at UHM.

- We have the data stating 50% of students take MATH 100 or PHIL 110 fail the class. Without better/other options, FS enforcement might have a negative impact on retention and graduation rates.
 - GEC discussed hypotheses about a) teachers, b) size of classes, c) preparation of students, d) “misplacement of students” who are not college-ready?
 - Students should be consulted and asked why they did not pass the course in question, and whether the course was useful or not.
 - Can we request the Assessment Office to do a survey to see why 59% of students in F09 didn’t pass MATH 100? (Other 100-level courses had an approximate 20-25% failure rate.)
 - Could we contact other institutions and see how they are dealing with same problem?
 - Nationwide, students are supposed to exit high school with certain competencies. Are we providing introductory courses that bridge the gap between high school and college?
5. Report to SEC on Revised Articulation MOA (Rowland)
- Changes will be incorporated into the final report.
 - Memo should state that the GEC will recommend endorsement of this draft MOA in principle; however, the final version should be reviewed and approved by the other campuses and have system-wide approval as well, to be effective F11.
 - Concern was raised that MOA might allow other campuses in the System to determine *our* (UHM) GenEd; would we be giving up our autonomy/authority over our own GenEd? The MOA seems to reserve E5.209. Do we really want that?
6. 400-level Diversification courses ---deferred to next meeting.
7. Passing grade for General Education courses – deferred to next meeting.

Next meeting: May 5, 2010, 1:30 p.m., HH 208.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:52 p.m.

Submitted by Jo-Anne Nakamoto, GEO Recorder.