

Minutes of the General Education Committee

Tuesday, January 18, 2011

Hawai'i Hall 208

ATTENDEES: Joe Jarrett, Mike Nassir, Mamoru Sato, Galen Sasaki, Comfort Sumida, Wei Zhang

Ex officio: Ron Cambra (AVCUE), Garrett Inoue (A&R)

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

Excused: Jim Caron, Ernestine Enomoto, Sianha Gualano (ASUH),
Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa (SEC), Todd Sammons (GEO), Ryan Yamaguchi (A&R)

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Vice Chair Joe Jarrett.

ACTION and INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Minutes of December 7, 2010 were unanimously approved.
2. Update: High Failure Working Group
 - Group met last week.
 - Current list involves approximately 25 courses, with D-F-W-I rate greater than 25%.
 - List “too long”, very diverse.
 - Some alleged high-failure courses (i.e., MATH 100) are not really in this group.
 - Group trying to get a departmental view/focus on 100- and 200-level courses. Chose 5 departments to examine: CHEM, MATH, NREM, PHIL, PSY.
 - Formed subcommittees with 3 members each; to meet over the next 3-4 weeks with departmental faculty and chair, talk about their perspectives on their high-failure-to-complete courses and how to solve the problem.
 - Group felt it would be good to get the students’ perspective on this issue.
 - Try to obtain anecdotal information from the student about the course and how they attempted to correct the situation.
 - Or anonymous online poll (would only go to current students and not drop-outs.)
 - Question: MATH evaluation forms – are they optional? Will we have access? Note: MAC stressed absolute confidentiality.
 - Is it a confidentiality issue? For example, if we obtained email addresses from all former students and polled them? Or if we only looked at class lists, not grade sheets (noted that these types of records are available).
 - Do we go back one semester? Up to three years?
 - We can get grade distribution but no names.
 - Suggestion: survey students asking them to identify what course they received a failing grade in, then filter the others out.
 - However, students with A-C grades may also have recognized problems with the course.

- Also, not everyone that fails drops out of school.
 - To what extent is it the student's fault? Or is the course being blamed?
 - Is there a group on campus that specializes in studies/methodology in this?
 - Working Group to present interim report in February (MFS meeting on 2/16), final in April.
3. Discussion on Freshmen Seminar/Retention
- Cambra provided history (2 Vice Chancellors put together an enrollment management committee, as an outgrowth of an earlier KCC meeting. Four areas were designated, with retention and graduation being one of them.)
 - 10 to 12 faculty are on the committee.
 - There are approximately 6 major recommendations.

There are some good ideas, challenges. However, there is a disconnect with many areas on campus and the lack of understanding of prior administrative attempts.
 - Appears to be a form of freshman seminar, but too academically overwhelming.
 - Item tabled until February 1, 2011 meeting, awaiting Sammons' report.
4. Report: Foundations Board on FS resolution
- Nassir reported that the Foundations Board did not have a chance to discuss this at their last (December) meeting. Their next meeting is scheduled for Friday, 1/21.
5. Report: 400-level diversification
- Diversification Subcommittee discussed this issue briefly at their last meeting: Does each diversification requirement meets the goal of assuring that "every student has a broad exposure to different domains of academic knowledge?"
6. Discussion on Passing Grade issue
- Do we raise the passing grade to C/C-?
 - This discussion also ties into the high-failure discussion.
 - At present, changing the passing grade doesn't appear to be a good idea.
 - Students can fulfill GenEd requirements with a grade of D but are unable to go to higher/advanced level courses in the same subject.
 - Currently (for transfer students) D- grades are recorded but not counted into UHM records (Garett Inouye). However, UHM students do earn Manoa credit for grade of D- if taken at UHM.
 - Could the GEC recommend abolishing the D- grade?
 - Suggestion: Ask departments to get aligned with Natural Sciences regarding "passing grades" – a) get rid of D's or b) D- is not passing.
 - Suggestion: have UH adopt A+ calculation into the (4.3) GPA.

No other announcements

Next meeting: February 1, 2011, 3:00 p.m., HH 208.

Submitted by Jo-Anne Nakamoto, Recorder.