

General Education Committee Minutes

Friday, 01/30/15 2:00pm HH 208

Attendees: Hokulani Aikau, Ron Cambra, Kaitlyn Conner, Peter Garrod, Nicole Iwasaki, Bob Joseph, Joy Logan, Stacey Roberts, Ryan Yamaguchi

GEO Support: Dawne Bost

Excused: Kapa Oliveira, Amy Schiffner, Kiana Shiroma, Lisa Fujikawa

The meeting convened at 2:02pm.

Introductions opened the meeting.

Minutes: 11/19/14 Minutes – Approved with no changes.

Focus Exemption Requests:

Gabriella (O) – Unanimously approved without discussion.

Louise (W) – 4 yes, 1 no, 1 abstain

There was discussion about the types of writing and manner of feedback delivery with focus on the assumption that drafts and rewrites of a single assignment is a required part of the feedback process. It was shared that the Hallmarks do not specify that a single assignment must incorporate feedback for the purpose of revision; it is possible to also use the feedback for future assignments in the course. The request was approved.

Liaison Reports:

E Board – Kiana was not present at the E Board meeting and was excused from this GEC meeting. Dawne reported that there were no proposals, but Monica Stitt-Bergh from the Assessment Office visited the Board to talk about the development of a rubric for critical thinking assessment since E Focus courses are being used to assess critical thinking at Manoa. The E Board is amending the AAC&U VALUE Critical Thinking Rubric with content from the Ethical Issues Rubric developed by the 2007 E Board. Discussion followed that included statements that many disciplines and courses, not just those holding the E designation should be used as examples of critical thinking. It was agreed that critical thinking can be located nearly all disciplines, but the E Focus courses cut across multiple disciplines at the 300 and 400 level and offer a readily available bank of artifacts. The rubric being created by the E board will be applicable across disciplines and beyond E Focus courses.

F Board – Mike Nassir liaison, excused from the GEC meeting.

Dawne reported that F Board has no proposals and none are anticipated this semester, so the Board is doing required Hallmark review beginning with the Foundations Written Communications (FW) designation. Background was provided about the FW including the fact that it was established with the intent that all departments, not just English, would be eligible to teach a course with an FW. The option for FW courses to be taught outside of English has never been practiced due to numerous deterrents including English Department resistance based in scholarly determinations that special training and expertise is needed to teach and FW course. The F Board and GEO Director Hokulani Aikau, cognizant of the challenges that may be inherent in beginning an initiative to expand FW course offerings beyond the English Department (and the English Language Institute), asked F Board Vice-Chair Matt Romaniello to meet with Georganne Nordstrom, English Department Composition and Rhetoric Director; Laura Lyons, English Department Chair; Kristin McAndrews, English Department Associate Chair; and the GEO Director and APT staff to discuss the FW Hallmarks and expansion of FW courses beyond the English Department.

Hoku reported that the meeting was cordial and informative and ended with a decision that Georganne will take the FW Hallmarks to the English Department Comp-Rhet committee to see if they have suggestions for changes that may strengthen participation by other departments. There is also the possibility that the Comp-Rhet committee may suggest edits to the FW hallmarks excluding other departments as the conversation indicated a shared conviction that teaching writing that is applicable across the curriculum is very different than teaching writing in a specific discipline and potentially requires specialized training.

Discussion followed this summary including the idea that many departments, such as Communications, will now be able to begin writing instruction for their majors very early in their education at Manoa. It was noted that this point in fact speaks directly to English Department concerns that students will not receive the breadth of writing instruction now available in ENG 100, ENG 109 and the ELI courses.

O Board – Joy Logan - Nine proposals went before this Board that Joy reports appears to be working very well this academic year. One of the issues that has often presented itself in proposal review is again under examination by the O Board. The issue- should courses with highly weighted class participation grades include an attendance requirement - will be examined more intentionally as the semester progresses.

Hokulani Aikau added information about CEE 490, a course holding both the O and W designations that has multiple sections meeting at the same time and place with one instructor resulting in violations of the student faculty ratios and questions about the type and quality of feedback being offered in the course. She shared that the GEO is working with the CEE and the appropriate Boards to resolve the issues posed by this course.

Discussion Items:

Quantitative Reasoning Working Group (QRWG) – presentation of two proposals
QRWG members Joy Logan and Dawne Bost were present at the GEC meeting.

Model One – Replacement of FS with a single Foundations level FQ requirement reinforced indirectly through Diversification courses (DP, DB, and DY)

Discussion centered on the following questions and concerns:

Q. Will transfer students and the articulation agreements be adversely impacted by this change?

A. The QRWG has been fully transparent in the development of the models including establishment of a public website, distribution of Hallmarks and models drafts for feedback from all UH system faculty, and presentation of the Hallmarks for discussion at the System Foundations Board members. The feedback and discussions results have been carefully considered to minimize any negative impact on transfer students and native Manoa students and to preserve the articulation agreements.

Q. How will reinforcement through Diversification courses be verified and measured?

A. There is no clear mechanism for making sure students are getting the needed amount of QR content in the Diversification courses.

Q. Will existing FS courses qualify for the FQ?

A. Most of the current FS courses at Manoa will require little adjustment to receive an FQ designation. PHIL 110 is a probable exception, though PHIL 111 may qualify.

Q. Is a 30 seat cap needed and can it be enforced given current resources?

Research has shown that QR is best learned in a classroom environment of no more than 25-30 students. It is unlikely it can be reinforced with only the currently available resources.

Model Two: Replacement of FS with a single Foundations level FQ requirement and replace one of the five WI Focus courses with a Quantitative Reasoning (QR) Focus course taught at the 200, 300 or 400 level comprised of 30% QR content.

Discussion centered on the following questions and concerns:

Q. Will transfer students and the articulation agreements be adversely impacted by this change?

Q. How will non-STEM departments create and maintain QR Focus courses?

The QRWG has been fully transparent in the development of the models including establishment of a public website, distribution of Hallmarks and models drafts for feedback from all UH system faculty, and presentation of the Hallmarks for discussion at the System Foundations Board members. The feedback and discussions results have been carefully considered to minimize any negative impact on transfer students and native Manoa students and to preserve the articulation agreements. It is possible that students could take all their QR courses at a community college if this model is adopted and the CCs develop 200 level QR courses.

Q. There is concern that Manoa students will not be able to pass QR courses at the Foundations level; how can they be expected to meet a QR Focus course requirement as well?

A. The same concerns were part of the QRWG's discussions. Professional development efforts focusing on enhancing QR instruction skills and expansion of student academic support may all be needed. Manoa does not engage in remedial course work at this time (outside of special first year programs).

The majority of the GEC indicated support of model two in principle and for the purposes of assessment, but saw implementation to be nearly impossible due to lack of resources, the challenges to non-STEM department faculty and students and the loss of one WI course. However, the group also generally agreed that model one lacked clear QR reinforcement and thus posed assessment and accreditation problems in the future. Thus, there was no clear preference for either model though all understood that the QR must be implemented to meet WSCUC accreditation standards for both the senior (4- year) and junior (2- year) campuses.

Manoa Writing Program (MWP) Working Group

A brief history of the MWP and its current status was provided. A working group is being formed by the GEO Director (Hoku) as part of her charge from Reed to determine the future of the MWP. There was some discussion of the GEC's role in decisions about the MWP. The issue is muddled by the fact that historically the MWP has maintained the FW and WI portions of the General Education Program, while independently operating as a research and professional development engine. This dichotomy of purpose was identified as one of the ongoing difficulties during the period of split leadership of the GEO and MWP after Tom Hilgers retired as the Director of both areas. It was suggested that the VCAA and SEC should not be the only deciding entities and that the MWP Working Group report be presented to the GEC and CAP for review and input and/or decisions. At this time there is no clearly defined role for the GEC or any other group in regards to this issue, though GEC input will be solicited. Hoku will verify with Reed how decisions regarding the MWP will be finalized.

The meeting adjourned at 3:06pm.

Prepared by: Dawne Bost, Education Specialist, GEO