

Minutes of the General Education Committee

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Hawai'i Hall 208

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m.

Present: Hokulani Aikau, Ron Cambra, Kaitlyn Conner, Nicole Iwasaki, Bonnyjean Manini, Mike Nassir, Kapa Oliveira, Kiana Shiroma, Maria Stewart, Nori Tarui, Lisa Fujikawa, Vicky Keough

Excused: Miguel Felipe, Dore Minatodani, Ryan Yamaguchi

1. **Minutes** from October 14 were approved as written.
2. **Course-based Focus requests**
 - The **O Focus request for JPN 318** was deferred because Kapa is still working with the Course Coordinator to get the GEC's concerns addressed.
 - The **W Focus request for ENG 406** was unanimously approved by a vote of 6-0-0.
3. The GEC voted 7-0-0 to follow up with instructor Joseph Campos on his **E, O, and W request for PACE 413**. Several members had questions/concerns, primarily about the proposed O Focus. Kapa will contact the instructor to add information about preliminary guidance and feedback on the seminar presentations, as well as clarify the difference between attendance and participation. She will also refer the instructor to the O Focus rubric on the Assessment Office website.
4. The **O Focus Exemption request for Chris** was approved by a vote of 7-0-0. There was some discussion about whether theatrical performance meets the intent of the O Focus. At least one member questioned whether "recitation of lines" could and should be used to meet the O Focus. Several other members felt strongly that the oral presentation techniques learned in performance classes were valuable skills that were transferable to other oral communication situations. The question will be put on a future GEC agenda for further discussion.
5. **Liaison Reports**
 - E Board (Nori): The Board is having a hard time evaluating a course-based request because the questions are different from those on the "instructor-based" proposal and don't always elicit responses that address how the course is meeting all of the Hallmarks. To remedy this problem, the Board may append a page of guidelines to the course-based form.
 - H Board (Kiana): No report; the last meeting was canceled.
 - O Board (Dore/Vicky): No report; the last meeting was postponed.
 - W Board (Hoku): The Board has had several challenging cases, both revolving around the fact that the Board now requires that the syllabus address how the course is meeting all of the W Hallmarks. In one case, the instructor was resistant to changing her syllabus, saying that it is an academic freedom issue; in the other case, the instructor was very receptive to the request for changes. In both cases, the Board felt that they needed to be consistent and have proposers meet the same requirements. Instructors have the freedom to decide whether or not they are willing to conform to these requirements to have their courses approved for a W Focus.

- F Board (Mike/Hoku): The Board reviewed an FW proposal from American Studies. The ELI and Comp/Rhet Directors were present and provided input. The Board sent the department a list of recommendations for modification. One of the biggest concerns was that the course syllabus was content-driven versus writing-driven. The Board equated it to the difference between W and FW courses. The Board is also waiting for several FS renewals that should be submitted soon.

5. **Quantitative Reasoning (QR) Update**

The QR Ad Hoc group is meeting this afternoon to discuss the feedback received from the UH community, including the Math Department's response, concerns about rigor, and varying opinions about the 30:1 student-to-teacher ratio. Feedback from the discussion at the QR workshop held on October 22 will also be incorporated. The goal: to come up with a revised version of the Hallmarks that takes into consideration the latest feedback received.

The GEC discussed the concerns about the rigor of QR courses. One comment received was that the Hallmarks are "too general" and not at the college level. It was pointed out that Focus Hallmarks are also general, and that the rigor of the requirement rests with the rigor of the course content/curriculum, not with the Hallmarks, per se. Because all Mānoa courses are required to be at the college level (remedial courses are not offered), the QR work in those courses should be at the college level as well. The GEC felt this idea needed to be conveyed to the concerned parties, with examples that demonstrate how the current Hallmarks can be met at different levels of the curriculum. Another suggestion was to create another Explanatory Note with the information.

6. **"Unsuccessful Outcome" (UO) courses and the role of GenEd**

UO courses are those in which a large number of students get grades of D, F, W, I, or NC. The GEC received data on classes with repeated high UO rates, many of which have a Diversification or Foundations designation. Sequential courses (e.g., CHEM 161) are the most problematic, especially if the courses are offered only once a year.

One member questioned why "W" grades are being included. It was explained that "W" grades may impede academic progress and may also be an indication of how students are (or are not) engaging with certain courses.

It was noted that the UO courses on the list are those with the greatest *number* of UO students, not necessarily those with the highest *percentage*. These courses are being examined because they may impact retention and graduation rates. (Graduation rates have improved, but first-year retention rates are still lower than desired, with 20% of first-year students failing to return for their second year.) More work needs to be done to figure out why courses appear on the list and what can be done to better promote student success.

7. **Next meeting: Wednesday, November 4 (10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Hawaii Hall**

208) Meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Submitted by Lisa Fujikawa, Recorder