

Minutes of the General Education Committee

Wednesday, November 6, 2013

12:00-1:00p.m., QLC 208

Attendees: Ron Cambra (AVCUE), Pete Garrod, Bob Joseph, Joy Logan, Sarita Rai, Stacey Roberts, Scott Rowland, Todd Sammons (GEO), Elisabeth Seamon (ASUH), Kiana Shiroma, Carolyn Stephenson (SEC), Ryan Yamaguchi (Admissions)

Guest: Amy Schafer (Foundations Board Chair)

GEO support staff: Dawne Bost, Lisa Fujikawa

Excused: Amy Schiffner

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m.

1. Minutes from the October 16 meeting was approved as amended.

2. Course-based Focus proposals

a. W Focus for AMST 481 was approved by a vote of 8-0-0.

b. E Focus for EDEF 310 was approved by a vote of 7-0-1.

- One member questioned whether the course spent “at least 8 hours discussing ethics.” The question arose from the syllabus that was created by a GA. Stacey was told that GAs won’t be teaching the course anymore.
- The course is “very applied” and is the main ethics course for Teacher Education.

3. Foundations proposals

a. FGA designation for LLEA 151 was approved by a vote of 7-0-1. Both the Foundations Board and the GEC felt that the proposal clearly explained how the course meets the Hallmarks.

b. FS designation for SOCS 150 was rejected by a vote of 0-7-1.

Background: At the request of several members, the history of the SOCS 150 proposal was provided. The original Foundations proposal for SOCS 150 received a conditional one-year approval. A revised proposal was submitted the following year to continue the FS designation. The Foundations (F) Board felt that the revised proposal showed movement, although the course still did not have the level of rigor and quantity of symbolic reasoning that the F Board was looking for. The F Board recommended another one-year conditional approval. The GEC instead granted a two-year approval, with the understanding that the extra year would give the proposers time to teach (and tweak) the course several times before another proposal would have to be submitted to request an extension of the approval.

Foundations Board Report/Recommendation:

- In past reviews of the course, the F Board and GEC liked the multiple approaches to critical thinking and saw the value of the course for social science students. However, they were concerned that there was not enough focus on symbolic reasoning.
- The F Board met with the proposers on multiple occasions to explain their concerns and what changes needed to be made in order to secure full approval.
- Upon receiving the most recent proposal, the F Board was concerned that the symbolic reasoning component of the course had been moved to the end of the semester, with little opportunity for it to be used as the foundation for other units in the course.

- The proposers did not submit homework or the final exam, although they were sent a copy of the April 2012 memo and encouraged to send in the most relevant materials, including a representative final exam. The last course exam that was described to the F Board (in Spring 2012) was a standardized test for critical reasoning, which the F Board felt did not address symbolic reasoning.
- In the April 2012 memo, the proposers were asked to maintain or “beef up” the quantitative reasoning component of the course. In the most recent iteration of the course, quantitative reasoning seems to have been removed.

Discussion:

- The original proposal had quantitative but no symbolic reasoning. The first revision had some symbolic reasoning, but less quantitative reasoning.
- Several felt that the April 2012 GEC memo should have been the guiding document for resubmission, but the latest proposal did not address many of the points raised in the memo.
- Some felt the course was an attractive alternative for students who are scared of math, with one member calling it the “go-to FS course.” However, the course as presented doesn’t meet the FS Hallmarks or address the concerns that were raised with previous reviews. This frustrated some members, who felt the course provides a viable alternative to traditional FS courses.
- There was concern that the course will continue to carry the FS designation through Summer 2014 even if the GEC determines that it does not meet the FS Hallmarks. The GEC can request but not require that the instructors make changes to the course so that it is in compliance with FS.

Decision: In the end, the GEC supported the Foundations Board’s recommendation *not* to approve extension of the FS designation for SOCS 150. Ron may meet with Social Sciences Dean Ross Sutherland to explain the situation.

4. Focus Exemptions

- O Focus Exemption for Kathleen** was approved by a vote of 7-0-1.
- O Focus Exemption for Breanna** was approved by a vote of 7-0-1.
- O Focus Exemption for Alana** was approved by a vote of 7-0-1.
- E Focus Exemptions for Abbey and Dylan** were rejected by a vote of 0-7-1.
 - Members felt that the course provided good leadership training, but they were unclear how it met the E Focus Hallmarks.
 - Others felt that the narratives provided did not adequately address what ethical situations were discussed and what ethical frameworks were learned and applied in decision-making.
 - Requests based on similar situations have been approved on a case-by-case basis, depending on the arguments put forth by the student requesting the exemption.

Stacey will contact the students and ask them to resubmit their requests, addressing Hallmarks 2 and 3. A new form from the sponsor is not needed.

5. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 13 at 12:00 p.m. in Bilger 106.

Meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Submitted by Lisa Fujikawa, Recorder