

Minutes of the General Education Committee

Wednesday, September 14, 2011

Hawai'i Hall 208

ATTENDEES: Fred Birkett, Ron Cambra (AVCUE), Jim Caron, Richard Chadwick (SEC), Sianha Gualano (ASUH), Joe Jarrett, Dore Minatodani, Mamoru Sato, Ryan Yamaguchi (A&R), Wei Zhang

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

Excused: Garrett Inoue (A&R), Scott Rowland, Comfort Sumida

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chair Joe Jarrett.

ACTION and INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Introduction of GEC members.
2. Implementation of Recommendations regarding High Failure Courses
Summary:

- 7 recommendations were made by the subcommittee.
- There will be another follow-up committee headed by CAPP.
 - GEC will need 2-3 members for this committee.

Guest: Vice Chancellor Reed Dasenbrock

- 10-year accreditation granted by WASC.
- Issue of graduation rates was raised (a report to WASC is due by 2015).
 - UH graduates more students although the rate has not increased. It's a combination of the demographics of the State along with the majority of students of East Asian background (Japanese, Chinese, Korean).
 - Japanese account for 37 % of the graduates but they are not 37% of the population.
 - The number of enrolled Pacific Islanders is up, but their graduation level is down.
 - We currently have more Filipino freshmen than Japanese.
 - Things to help with graduation rates: Early registration, increase the number of advisors, eliminate Admissions issues.
 - Provide additional things to encourage more students.
 - See what's happening in actual courses on campus.
 - Review DWIF rates.
 - Maybe curriculum is not structured properly.
 - Maybe course needs technological improvements.
 - Is the wrong instructor teaching the course?
 - Physical state of campus
 - Are we awarding teachers or rewarding researchers?
 - Question: is it time to evaluate the core? Any formal mechanism on the structure/organization?

Discussion:

- We made sure there was seat availability in select courses (Math, Eng). At this point the core would be given a grade of B+. This is ongoing work.
 - Two exceptions: FS is a mess; what are other campuses doing?
 - Implementation of core is complicated. More communicability needed; would not recommend massive re-do of core.
 - Data seems to show number of courses completed in the first year correlates with success (30 credits appears to be the magic number). Comment: Hallmarks are restrictive; they've become systemwide.
 - Any course that many students fail is not right. "Hazing is not good pedagogy."
 - Comment: Examine a teaching department. There is a small proportion of younger faculty eager to attempt innovative ideas but may not be empowered (i.e., tenured) to speak up.
 - Question: are there surveys to see what the students think? The Assessment Office is doing a longitudinal study of 500 freshmen through their college career. They are in the second year now.
 - Birkett wrote a grant. Discovered that students start their first semester, and get "lost" in the second semester. What happened to them?
 - Improving teaching in GenEd courses would be a long term project, but sometimes we do too much planning and the problem is not solved. Perhaps decide on one item to tackle and make it an Action Item.
3. Minutes of May 10, 2011 approved with the following corrections (in *italics*)
 - Action/Information Item 2, bullet 3: Proposers were given BOT *105* and AMST 150 as samples.
 - Action/Information Item 4, bullet 1: Recommendation on *common* course numbering . .
 4. GEC meeting date for Fall semester -- it will currently stay at 4-5 p.m. on Wednesdays. ASUH Representative will see if she can rearrange her schedule to accommodate alternate times and will report back to GEC at the next meeting.
 5. Proposal to make an exception to ruling (Fujikawa)
 - Current policy in Handbook (page 8-15) states that focus designations can be modified only until student registration starts. Proposing that in COURSE-BASED cases it be possible for the GEO to designate particular courses after registration starts or whenever a section is added.
 - Fujikawa will work on wording of policy and present it to the GEC at their next meeting.
 6. GEC Liaison Assignments:
Zhang – H Board (Mondays, 12-1)
Birkett – E Board (Tuesdays, 1:30-2:30)
Sato – W Board if Tuesdays, 1:30-2:30; Fujikawa to get back to group with firm dates/time.
Nakamoto to check with Rowland for Foundations Board (Fridays, 1:30-2:30) and Sumida for O Board (Thursdays, 12-1).

CARRY OVER ITEMS:

1. FG: we will not be discussing this issue for now.
2. FS Issue
 - The Foundations Board brought recommendations to the GEC; the GEC voted in approval.
 - Now the GEC must see how FS in the first two years is being implemented.
 - Automatic holds? Email messages? Suggestion: Bark first.
 - Yamaguchi said a list can be generated of those short of FS completion after their first semester.
 - Or do we send to jr. level students in their first semester?
 - Fujikawa stated that the “trick” (i.e., “timing”) is to start at the beginning of their college career, and remind them every semester. Yamaguchi confirmed after the first semester, those lacking FS credits will be known to A& R.
 - Question: is there coordination with the community colleges? Is there evidence that courses are not scheduled to their benefit?
 - It is not a seat or prerequisite problem.
 - Cambra noted that we were in the 2nd year of the 4-year plan.
 - Maybe referencing the 4-yr plan in an email will remind the students.
 - Or reference STAR to see where the FS is in their plan.
 - Sammons: out of 13 departments/programs studied recently, only Social Work didn’t push FS in the first semester.
 - Jarrett suggested sophomores (30+ credits) should be reminded by email. Yamaguchi reminded GEC that sophomore ranking begins at 25 credits.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- Committee Charges from SEC
 - Two other charges:
 - Critical Thinking Working Group. (This came out of WASC report.) UH should teaching critical thinking. Identify courses already teaching critical thinking; next time WASC comes we can have a list of courses to present to them.
 - It was noted that some faculty members want to use an already-designed test to assess student’s critical thinking ability before and after certain FS courses.
 - Institutional Learning Objectives (WASC item) for UHM as a whole.
 - 5-6 statements about what kids should be getting out of education.
 - Then you can map each program objective onto departmental objectives, onto institutional objectives.

There will be a need for 2-3 GEC members to meeting twice per month with other committee members. At the next meeting we will get some names of volunteers.

Next meeting: Wednesday, September 28, 4:00 p.m., HH 208.

Meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

Submitted by Jo-Anne Nakamoto, Recorder