

Minutes of the General Education Committee

Friday, February 13, 2015
Hawai'i Hall 208

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

Attendees: Ron Cambra (OVCUE), Kaitlyn Conner (ASUH), Pete Garrod (Chair), Nicole Iwasaki, Bob Joseph, Joy Logan, Mike Nassir, Stacey Roberts (SEC), Kiana Shiroma

GEO support staff: Dawne Bost, Lisa Fujikawa

Excused: Hoku Aikau, Kapa Oliveira, Ryan Yamaguchi (Admissions)

1. **Minutes** from the January 30 meeting were not available.

2. **Liaison Reports**

- E Board (Kiana)

Background: The E Board raised the question of whether it was appropriate to grant a course-based Focus for Honors courses, particularly when the requested Focus is content-based (E or HAP) and the course is regularly taught by instructors from different disciplines. Given these variables, the Board wondered if there was any point in negotiating with the department to get the sample syllabi in line. The Board was also concerned about having the Course Coordinator shoulder the responsibility of ensuring that the course meets the Hallmarks every semester. The course currently in question is HON 301, Public Policy Making. The E Board is not making a recommendation but is asking for guidance.

Discussion:

- One GEC member felt that having the department submit two sample syllabi adequately illustrated the variability of the course. However, in the case of HON 301, the question arose because the Board felt that one of the two sample syllabi did not meet the Hallmarks. The syllabus was one that had been approved by a previous E Board, but the current Board did not feel that it met their interpretation of the Hallmarks.
- Another member questioned why course-based designations are given to any Honors courses. Kiana, formerly the Honors Program advisor, explained that some courses are more “flexible” than others and lend themselves to a much wider interpretation of how they can be taught. In addition, the course-based designations the other Honors courses carry are pedagogy-based, not content-based, and deal with the structure of the course and the way the material is taught.
- There was also concern that the proposed Course Coordinator is a staff member rather than a faculty member, the latter of which is one of the requirements for a course-based approval. Having the Director as the Course Coordinator could solve this problem.
- The role of the Course Coordinator was also discussed. It is the Coordinator’s responsibility to ensure that all sections of the course are taught in accordance with the Focus Hallmarks. If needed, would the Board be willing to work with the Coordinator more closely (and vice versa) to ensure that this happens?
- At least one member was opposed to approving the request because the syllabus changes every semester. It was pointed out that this is also the case with “topics” courses. However, because each topics course is offered and taught by a single department, it was felt that there is more awareness and control of course content.

Decision: Kiana will begin by asking current Honors Program Director Vernadette Gonzalez to be the Course Coordinator for all course-based approvals in Honors. She will also report back to the Board about the GEC's concerns/position.

- H Board (Bob): The Board discussed the MET 102 (Weather in the Pacific) proposal. They felt that the instructor had done an excellent job of using the grid, but there was some concern about Native voice. (This is common; problems with HAP proposals usually have to do with Native voice and/or intersection.) The Board will go back to the instructor to ask for a revision. Bob found it surprising that a science course could carry a HAP designation. It was pointed out that there have been several other HAP sciences courses in the past, including BOT 105 (Ethnobotany) and a GG course in volcanology.

The Board is also talking about adding to the Explanatory Notes. Dawne said that she and Hoku are working on a HAP survey to ascertain faculty impressions of the current HAP Hallmarks, with a roundtable discussion planned thereafter.

- O Board (Joy): There was no report, because the O Board has not met since the last GEC meeting.
- W Board (Hoku): Hoku wasn't present to give a report.
- F Board (Mike): The F Board last met on January 15. Hoku reported on this meeting when the GEC last met. Essentially, the Board's discussion centered on the 12/5/14 Foundations Multicampus Group meeting and the Board's plans for FW.

3. Discussion: Quantitative Reasoning Working Group (QRWG) Implementation Models

Background: The QRWG has put forth two implementation models for consideration. Both models would replace the Foundations-Symbolic Reasoning (FS) requirement with a Foundations-Quantitative Reasoning (FQ) requirement. In addition, the second model would replace one of the W Focus requirements with a QR Focus requirement. QRWG Chair Monica Stitt-Bergh has asked for official feedback on the models.

Discussion:

- At the last GEC meeting, the group endorsed Model 2 in concept, although "the devil is in the details."
- **QR Focus in the major.** Several members were concerned about whether their departments (e.g., in the Humanities) would be able to create QR courses that would allow their majors to fulfill their QR Focus requirement. The compromise to this anticipated problem is to allow QR Focus courses from the 200 level up. However, if students have to go outside their major, it may delay their progress which is otherwise facilitated by the W courses offered in their major.
- **Applied math.** The group again noted the difference between theoretical and applied math, with the focus of QR being on application. Courses that teach "abstract" math and do not show how the math can be applied to "real world" situations will not qualify for a QR designation.
- Bob asked for clarification on the FAQs document: "Object of study are ideals" or "Object of study are ideas"?
- **Proposed 30:1 student-to-teacher ratio.** At least one member was concerned about the small class size. However, Mike pointed out that all but two of the large math lecture courses have smaller group/recitation sections, all of which would meet the 30:1 class size Hallmark.
- The **eligibility of online courses** was raised. The QRWG has not discussed that possibility yet.

- **Eliminating one W requirement.** Some members were concerned about dropping one of the W Focus requirements in order to accommodate the QR Focus. It was explained that administration was firm about not extending the “time to graduation.” Consequently, existing requirements needed to be replaced to “make room” for the new QR requirement(s). Because earlier research showed that students were graduating with an average of almost 6 W courses, elimination of a W requirement seemed the most logical choice.
- **FS to FQ.** All Foundations-Symbolic Reasoning (FS) courses except for PHIL 110 (Deductive Reasoning) can, with some tweaking, meet the proposed QR Hallmarks.
- **Articulation.** The QRWG also discussed what the proposed QR requirement(s) would mean for the community colleges. Nicole felt that the proposed change was beneficial for transfer students, and she hoped that the community colleges would add the requirement to their AA degrees. Dawne said that community colleges have been discussing the impact of the proposed change, both if they choose to adopt the new requirement(s) or not.
- **Remedial students/quality of teaching.** Another concern is that many students exit high school unprepared to take college-level QR courses. The success of these students depends not on where they take their QR courses, but on who teaches those courses and how engaged the instructor is. Bob feels that instructors who are good at teaching QR courses will emerge if/when the new requirement is adopted. Ron said that students who are at the remedial level normally take those courses through Outreach College. (Mānoa does not offer remedial courses through “day school.”)
- **One vs. two QR requirements.** For students who are already “math phobic” and who have a hard time in one FS course, what problems will a two-course FQ requirement (Model 2) bring? Pete felt that putting the QR into context – especially in the major – would make QR more accessible for these students. Dawne believes this is why WASC wants QR courses to provide “real world” examples.
- **Seat availability.** At least one person was worried about whether there would be enough QR courses/seats to accommodate all the students, especially since Model 2 would effectively double the number of QR seats needed.

Decision: Pete will draft a GEC response to send to Monica and will circulate it among the GEC members. The document will include:

- the question of whether or not online courses will be eligible to meet QR
- concerns that the proposed 30:1 ratio may be an added burden for some departments
- the question of whether the QR Focus should be limited to upper-division courses
- concerns about who is able to teach QR courses
- the question of whether enough seats/courses to accommodate all of the students will be offered

At the next GEC meeting, members will decide whether or not to send the document out.

4. **Updates** on the Mānoa Writing Program (MWP) Working Group and the Diversification review/approval process were tabled until the next meeting.
5. **Remaining Spring 2015 meetings** (Fridays, 2:00-3:00 p.m., Hawai‘i Hall 208):
 - February 27
 - March 13
 - March 20
 - April 10
 - April 17
 - May 1 (if needed)

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Submitted by Lisa Fujikawa, Recorder