

University General Education Council
April 22, 2020, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present: K. Witemeyer, J. Smith, L. McCurley, K. Wick, M. Straughn, D. Flanagan, B. Rix, R. Green, C. Flanders, J. Prather, M. Ice, C. Flanagan

Absent: D. Kneip, K. Jang, M. Rogers

Ex-officios: C. Riley, B. Carroll (E. Gumm and S. McDowell were absent)

Guests: D. Williams, D. Morrison, L. Lemley, D. Kennamer

The meeting began at 3:33 p.m.

- Call to order by J. Smith
- Prayer by J. Smith
- Minutes from 4/8/20

Motion to approve minutes by K. Wick; seconded by M. Ice; 8 in favor; 1 abstention motion passes.

Action Items

1. Revision of Undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes

J. Smith – We had some discussion with James and Chris via email. This draft is the same as the one we reviewed two weeks ago. J. Prather – My concerns have been assuaged. I was not aware of some of the work the committee had done regarding what was truly measurable. J. Smith – The committee looked at three different frameworks as well as outcomes from other schools. C. Flanders – I am still unsatisfied personally, but as I thought about the role of this committee being to hold the university to the standards not to create them in this case, I realized the amount of work it would take to go back and recreate it at this point is not pragmatic. I would vote for it as it is even though I don't think it captures what we want it to capture.

R. Green – Have these already been shown to the provost? J. Smith -This was under faculty purview, but Susan Lewis did look at the outcomes as well as academic managers and the provost cabinet. Dr. Rhodes looked at as part of the cabinet and did not raise any issues.

Motion to approve by C. Flanagan; seconded by J. Prather; all in favor; motion passes.

2. ENGL 112 – Revision of Content, Description, & Title (University Requirement)

D. Williams – We needed to revise the name and tighten up the description to make it consistent with what we teach in the course. Ten years ago we noticed an inconsistency in that some were teaching it as an introduction to literature and others were teaching it as a research course. We focused assignments on research and taken the literature emphasis out of the course. However, we never changed the name or description. We should have made these changes much sooner – removing literature from the title. This will help clarify transfer equivalencies as well. These changes reflect what we've been doing in the course for a long time. J. Smith – Looking at the syllabus, as part of the work with transfer courses, one of the things we uncovered is that some of the ENGL 111 and 112 syllabi had different outcomes on them based on the instructor. I would like to confirm that these outcomes will appear on all syllabi no matter the instructor. D. Williams – Yes. I will make sure that all of our professors include the full list on all of their syllabi. J. Smith – This is a long list of outcomes. Do you feel able to address all of these? D. Williams – Yes. There might be room to streamline a bit. B. Carroll – Based on where we are as an institution now, it might be better to focus on the research outcomes and not on the more general program outcomes. J. Smith – I would recommend a more focused list of outcomes in future, but I don't think that needs to keep us from presenting these changes to the council.

B. Rix – I feel like ENGL 112 is a course many people transfer in. Will these changes limit transfers? D. Williams – No, it will just clarify the process. M. Straughn – In the common course system, it is equivalent to Composition II, not Intro to Literature. So this change makes sense.

Motion to approve by B. Rix; seconded by K. Wick; all in favor; motion passes.

3. SOCI 498 – Capstone Application

D. Morrison – This is our internship course. We want to make sure all of our students have this experiential learning course to prepare them for their career or graduate school programs, emphasizing an application of knowledge to the real world. We also don't have the faculty resources to offer the previous seminar course as often as our students need it. J. Smith – Has this course been required in the past for the major? D. Morrison – I'm not sure. K. Witemeyer – It is not currently listed in the catalog degree plan as a required course.

J. Smith – Reviewing the capstone application, are there any questions or concerns from the council? R. Green – The final report, which appears to serve as the capstone paper, is tied to the internship experience. How are sources applied to this final report? A series of five substantial sources are required for that paper. D. Morrison – A student is coming into the field placement with their past experiences and knowledge of the discipline. They will be applying their knowledge and referencing the literature as support in this paper.

J. Prather – Is there some sort of back-up plan if a student cannot land an internship?
D. Morrison – With Abilene having so many nonprofits, we have not had any problems with this in the past, but we will work with students on an individual basis and leverage our connections in the community to assist with this when necessary. J. Prather – I think there should be a back-up plan in place even if you never have to use it. D. Morrison – We might even be able to have a position here on campus with Student Life or other areas. We could even use students within our department as research assistants. J. Prather – It would be nice to have it in writing.

J. Smith – Does the internship require instructor approval? D. Morrison – Yes. We have conversations with the students as well. We are a small department, so we are close with our students.

J. Smith – If we approve this as a capstone course, it won't become part of the degree plan until UUAC approves the degree plan change.

C. Flanagan – Is the resume fulfilling the third outcome as thinking globally? That doesn't seem correct. D. Morrison – It's the third assignment, not the third outcome. C. Flanagan – OK. J. Smith – It does seem that the assignments map well to the capstone requirements.

Motion to approve by C. Flanagan; seconded by R. Green; 9 in favor; 1 abstention; motion passes.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.