

University General Education Council
October 27, 2021, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Adams Center Classroom

Present: K. Witemeyer, J. Smith, M. Straughn, J. Jones, D. Flanagan, R. Brown, L. Sharp-Penya, S. Sanders, J. Prather, K. Jang, C. Flanders, M. Atkinson, R. Ashlock, S. Talley

Absent: R. Rama (L. Sharp-Penya voted as his proxy)

Ex-officio: L. May, B. Smith, E. Gumm, S. Macaluso, C. Riley

Guests: K. Cukrowski, J. Camp, D. Counts

The meeting began at 3:31 p.m.

- Call to order by J. Smith
- Prayer by J. Smith
- Minutes from 10/13/21

Minutes not voted on.

Action Item

1. Revised General Education Proposal

J. Smith - We will focus on the items we began discussing last meeting. First - the reduction of Bible hours from 15 to 12, which will either need to be amended or dismissed since it's currently not actionable; we must clarify whether the reduction will come from one of the named lower-division courses or the upper-division requirement. Next, the idea of reducing the History/Political Science from 6 hours to 3. Next, increasing the Humanities menu from 3 hours to 6 to open it up to courses beyond literature. Finally, we will consider the communication item.

Reduction of Bible hours. R. Ashlock - None of our faculty want to reduce to 12 hours. If we have to, we have different opinions of how that might be best accomplished. We haven't come to a consensus on this as a department. Many of our faculty have been heavily involved in our spiritual formation task force. Those recommendations are based on the current curriculum with 15 hours. There is already cost invested in this as well as Board of Trustees expectations. There are already certain exceptions to our current requirement that are in place, for example – Nursing only requires 12 hours. Music counts one of their courses as a Bible credit. One possibility is to bend the requirements for certain degree plans but leave the 15-hour requirement for the majority of students across the board. If pressed, most of our faculty would probably go with a split of 6 hours lower-level and 6 hours upper-level. J. Smith - It is understandable that in two weeks we don't have a definitive proposal from Bible when the process that brought us

to this general education proposal took 10 months. To make this change, we could consider specific courses connected to the spiritual formation strategic plan. It is fairly common to add additional items to degree requirements, however, it is very uncommon to remove requirements, such as the idea mentioned about reducing the hours only for certain departments. That could raise questions from accrediting bodies. C. Riley - The spiritual formation plan mentions 4 courses. Three lower-level courses and Christianity in Culture. E. Gumm - The Christianity in Culture is not a required course for any student. It acts that way for Dallas students since they don't have many options.

M. Straughn moves to amend the motion to require 12 hours with BIBL 101, 102, 211, 342. Motion was not seconded. It did not carry.

L. Sharp-Penya - I would hate to specify what students have to take. R. Brown - Can we table the discussion until we have a more specific answer to the Bible question? J. Smith - We have a tight timeline driven by observations from our reaccreditation self-study. C. Riley - The reason we started this process last year was to assess our new outcomes through curriculum. The team evaluating us visits in March, so we have to show progress being made. J. Smith - It also does not seem reasonable to ask a department to come up with a plan in one week.

J. Prather moves to dismiss the current motion to change Bible requirement to 12 hours. S. Talley seconds. 6 in favor, 6 against, 2 abstentions. In the case of a tie, the chair votes. J. Smith votes to dismiss the motion to break the tie. Motion carries.

J. Smith - My vote to dismiss the motion is without prejudice, and we can certainly continue to discuss a reduction to the Bible requirement. This vote reflects the fact that the current motion was not actionable, and we did not have an agreed-upon amendment by the council to make it so.

M. Straughn moves that this process of approving the general education proposal be tabled until ACU Dallas has representation on UGEC.

J. Smith - I will not recognize the motion. We have enacted the designated process to address this question of representation because this is an important issue. We are proceeding with that, but we need to move forward with the council of record at the time. C. Riley - Can a motion be made to reduce the hours and ask for the department to come back with a plan? J. Smith - We need a plan in order to move forward with a decision. L. Sharp-Penya - Many of us were not on this committee last year, so how do we know if this was addressed? I hate to shut down all discussion without knowing more. J. Smith - C. Bennett addressed this last week. The Bible requirement was listed as 15 hours. J. Prather - In the interest of moving on, we can look at History.

J. Prather moves to reduce History/Political Science from a 6-hour menu to a 3-hour menu. J. Jones seconded. 8 in favor, 2 against. Motion carries.

D. Flanagan - I understood the expansion of this menu was to help transfer students. Would this negatively affect transfer students? J. Smith - C. Bennett mentioned that state institutions in Texas do have that requirement. State schools also require a fine arts course that we do not. It is a substantial increase from where we have been in the past. J. Jones - I think History could be included as a humanities course. L. Sharpe-Penya - I would agree with expanding the humanities menu. We would define it and then open it to any department with a course that meets the criteria. B. Smith - Would taking 3 hours away from History hurt their department? J. Smith - It is consistent with what we have today, so we would be maintaining a similar requirement. J. Prather - It would not adversely affect faculty, correct? J. Smith - Correct. C. Flanders - If we expanded the humanities menu, it could augment history offerings. L. Sharp-Penya - The historical literacy menu currently includes courses outside the history department. So, the 3 hours would increase demand for HIST courses, right? J. Smith - The other courses are not offered as often.

S. Sanders moves to expand the Humanities menu to 6 hours with 3 hours protected for literature and an additional humanities 3-hr selection submenu defined by a to-be-developed criteria that could also contain literature as an option. R. Brown seconds. All in favor. Motion passes.

L. Sharp-Penya - Why can't literature stand alone? J. Smith - SACS requires a pure humanities that does not include skills of writing. We have designated literature as meeting that. If we leave literature under the Humanities heading, we will have more freedom in developing the criteria for the rest of the menu. If we remove literature from under the heading, we would have to be more specific and narrow with our criteria. We could move it out, but that may limit our ability to populate the menu in future. L. Sharp-Penya - We've talked about the importance of having literature, if it stood alone, might it be better protected in future? C. Flanders - It sounds like it is protected with the way we are currently talking about it. E. Gumm - It seems that we will need to revise the descriptor of this requirement before we can pass the proposal along to UUAC and Faculty. The details matter since that is where we assess our outcomes. J. Smith - We could address this when we address explication of outcomes. We will pass a clean, revised version on to UUAC.

J. Smith - Communication and Sociology is proposing a new course, COMM 120 Introduction to Public Speaking, that they would offer in place of the current COMM 211 requirement. L. Sharp-Penya - We plan to pilot the course in the summer. We will propose it as a new course in the fall of 2022. D. Counts - Dallas would also pilot in the summer. J. Smith - At this point the proposal states a 100 or 200 introductory speaking course with a COMM prefix. It might be clearer to state the intended course. L. Sharp-Penya - We think specifying a course would add clarity. We would like to specify COMM 120 as the requirement. E. Gumm - We will come back with implementation for students who previously took COMM 211. We can make it equivalent in the degree audit to the COMM 120 requirement. J. Smith - Dr. Lewis agreed to allow one section per semester of students to substitute COMM 120 in place of COMM 211 before implementation of the curriculum.

R. Brown moves to specify the new course Introduction to Public Speaking COMM 120 as the stated requirement for oral communication. J. Prather seconds. All in favor. Motion carries.

J. Jones - Under the Cultural Literacy menu, we currently have extensive course options but in the new proposal, several departments previously represented do not have courses listed. Why is that? J. Smith - Those are sample courses only. We will establish criteria and all departments will be welcome to submit courses for consideration for those menus. When we vote on this general education proposal, we will not be voting for courses listed on multi-disciplinary menus. We do need to keep assessment in mind as we move forward with implementation. We have learned a great deal from the criteria we've had in place in the past. Both for populating menus and for assessment. We will want to have clearer, tighter criteria and artifacts, because assessing from such a broad menu of options is impractical. R. Ashlock - The general education proposal committee saw a need for us to be more selective moving forward in populating these menus. We want the council to stick to the criteria and perhaps be a little tighter on votes about what is allowed on the menus.

L. Sharp-Penya - I'm a little concerned with there not being criteria in place for the new humanities menu when we pass this along. I don't want them not to understand our intent. J. Prather - I feel better since that is what is happening with the other menus as well. J. Smith - One of our next orders of business would be to establish those criteria committees. L. Sharp-Penya - Should we give some documentation of the breadth of our consideration? J. Smith - We can use the minutes from our discussion to inform that discussion.

J. Prather moves to approve the current proposal with amendments made in this meeting. S. Talley seconds. 10 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention. Motion passes.

D. Flanagan - What is really changing? J. Smith - Speech requirements are changing. The Humanities menu is changing with the new expansion. Cultural Literacy is narrower than before. We have removed the free elective but preserved the general education selection. The History menu is narrower. PEAC courses are removed. Overall hours are reduced from 56 to 54.

L. Sharp-Penya - Could we add headings to clarify the sections like Communication and Humanities? J. Smith - That is helpful. The Council approved the use of subheadings.

K. Cukrowski - Was any benchmarking done with institutions with doctoral programs about foreign language requirements for undergraduates? J. Smith - Yes. The committee decided it was not necessary to add a general education requirement for foreign language.

The meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.