

University General Education Council
November 10, 2021, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

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

Absent: R. Rama (L. Sharp-Penya voted proxy on his behalf), M. Straughn (D. Flanagan voted proxy on her behalf), S. Sanders, C. Flanders, R. Ashlock,

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

Guests: T. Shirley, J. Camp, D. Counts

The meeting began at 3:32 p.m.

- Call to order by J. Smith
- Prayer by J. Smith
- Minutes from 10/13/21 and 10/27/21

Motion to approve both sets of minutes by R. Brown; seconded by S. Talley; all in favor; motion passes.

Action Item

1. Revised General Education Proposal

J. Smith – As we discussed this proposal with UUAC, they were very grateful for your detailed work. There were two conversation items that arose when we examined your approved version of the curriculum. One was a concern from our colleagues in History and Political Science. There was a very gracious comment from the chair of Political Science and Criminal Justice who said if their course is included, they will serve the students well, but it is important for every student to take a history course. Therefore, one consideration is to strike POLS 225 from the History menu. Since History is pure humanities, what if we combined all of our humanities together into a single menu? Humanities being 9 hours, with 3 required literature, 3 required history, and 3 a humanities menu selection. There is also conversation about changing the general education selection to a free elective, making it completely unrestricted.

R. Brown – I think those are excellent suggestions. For clarity and for freedom. J. Jones – I agree with the humanities, but I'm a little worried about the free elective being cannibalized by the departments for professional programs. If we want to be a liberal arts institution, we should protect that 3-hour general education selection. J. Prather – I agree with Jody on that for the free elective. J. Smith – I think that is a good conversation to note.

Associate's Degree General Education Requirements

J. Smith – We need to include a humanities course in the associate's degree general education requirements. We could reduce the communication hours, or another idea could be if we strike Political Science from the History menu and leave it standing alone and let it fill the humanities requirement.

R. Brown – So the big thing we are missing is literature, correct? J. Smith – Yes. This is very similar to our current associate's degree requirement. K. Witemeyer – Would we then label it Humanities for SACs purposes? J. Smith – That might be helpful.

L. Sharp-Penya – How many degrees are we talking about? How many students? J. Smith – We have one program – Associates of Arts in Architecture. I think there are about 3-5 students.

R. Brown moves to approve the general education associate degree proposal with the revision of political science being removed and renamed the history menu Humanities; J. Jones seconds; 5 in favor; 5 against; J. Smith votes against in order to allow conversation to continue with other options.

L. Sharp-Penya – Could we broaden the humanities menu here to include any humanities selection? That way it would mirror the bachelor's degree. Since we didn't want it to be just literature, we should have it be just history here. J. Jones – Can other departments apply to it later? J. Smith – As it is currently written, it would be only history, not a multi-disciplinary menu. D. Flanagan – It makes sense for it to mirror the bachelor's degree and I think a broader menu would be better. J. Smith – We have a challenge in trying to protect everything in this shortened menu. We have room for only one of the 3 pieces – either literature, history, or a menu. We can't keep them all.

R. Brown – Are there accreditation restrictions? J. Smith – It is easier to assess in a narrow menu. In bachelor's degree, we will focus assessment in either literature or history. A wide-open menu would be very difficult. R. Brown – So for assessment purposes, it would be better to limit humanities to either literature or history? J. Smith – From an assessment perspective – yes. If we move to a menu, we might need to look at different assessment measures, like having a standardized test for all students to take. L. Sharp-Penya – Could we just enforce the assessment piece more adamantly with departments? If they don't perform the assessment, then their course is removed from the menu. J. Smith – That amount of oversight is challenging. D. Flanagan – Would broadening the humanities menu to include history or literature be manageable? J. Smith – Yes, I believe so. L. Sharp-Penya – If we don't include the arts, then there is no place for arts in the associate's degree. Although, our only AA degree is in the arts. But we don't know what the future might hold. R. Brown – We can't include everything in this smaller plan. Having the two areas of humanities would give some flexibility.

R. Brown moves to modify the general education requirements for associate's degrees to remove political science, change history to a

humanities menu where either history or literature would fulfill the requirement; S. Talley seconds; 8 in favor; 2 opposed; motion passes.

Explication of Student Learning Outcomes

J. Jones – One of our outcomes in communication has something to do with technology. It includes a multimedia piece. Where is that addressed and assessed? L. Sharp-Penya – I believe that is addressed in the public speaking course where we have the students use software as part of their presentation. J. Jody – That doesn't seem sufficient to me. J. Smith – We can always do more than what we say, but we can't do less than what we say. If we reduce the outcome and remove the multimedia piece, we can still include that in the courses. J. Jones – I think we should remove the multimedia and digital composition notation. S. Talley – I agree with Jody. I'd rather do more than we say than less than we say. L. Sharp-Penya – Do we know what the team was trying to address here when they proposed this outcome? J. Smith – They were largely considering what had been done in the past. Students should be able to evaluate digital compositions but creating them is different. K. Jang – Is multimodal and multimedia the same? They seem different to me. It seems this is using them interchangeably. J. Smith – I believe the intent was to include video and audio in presentations. Is there interest in striking digital compositions as well? R. Brown – For clarity sake, it might be easier to strike it. J. Jones – I agree, we don't want to have to explain to the visiting committee what that means. L. Sharp-Penya – We don't have anyone here from the English department to address the assignments they plan to do. I hate to strike it without their input. J. Smith – I would hesitate to make our overall outcomes tied to any single assignment in any course. I believe focusing on our written and oral components is sufficient. However, I would also never stop our faculty from going beyond these.

J. Jones moves that we approve the communication outcomes by striking multimedia and multimodal verbiage. R. Brown seconds. 8 in favor; 2 abstentions; motion passes.

J. Jones – On page 37, I just want to say that the changes we made to the humanities menu actually makes this outcome stronger. Protecting the general selection elective aids assessment of this learning outcome.

R. Brown – I have a revised version of the humanities outcome. This draft would make the humanities menu outcomes-based instead of discipline-based. J. Smith – We should be able to incorporate that into our criteria for the menu. R. Brown – This version is broad for disciplines but restricted in outcomes (A:2, B:2, B:2, C:2), including (but not limited to) literature, history, and fine and performing arts. J. Jones – Assessing four learning outcomes in a single course could be very taxing. We might need to be careful there. J. Smith – That is helpful. One approach that we've taken in the past, is to have courses address three of the four. That is good for our criteria teams to keep in mind. L. Sharp-Penya – Having tried to work with the prior general education menus, we want to be careful about specifying disciplines. The "not limited to" can make it different for other disciplines to be included. The term "time periods" seems to apply only to history. Would that restrict us? S. Talley – I think literature discusses time periods, art looks at

time periods, I don't think it is restricted to history. R. Brown – My thought was that "Emphasis will be placed on" would soften the requirement. J. Smith – We could use the word "artifact" to cover all the examples you listed. R. Brown – We can eliminate the reference to specific disciplines. J. Smith – Yes, we can let our criteria committee grapple with those elements.

Humanities Outcome (final version)

Courses within this domain will expose students to other cultures, time periods, and points of view through a wide variety of media. Emphasis will be placed on understanding the human condition, relevance and aesthetics of rhetorical claims, interrogating one's personal worldviews, and drawing conclusions from analysis of artifacts. [A:2, B:2, B:3, C:2].

R. Brown moves to make the amendment to the definition of the humanities menu as discussed today. S. Talley seconded. 9 in favor; 1 abstention; motion passes.

J. Jones – On page 39, outcome #3, the only place we are assessing that outcome is in Bible, but it seems that it could be assessed in other areas. It seems to apply to integration of faith and career. J. Smith – It could apply to our capstone courses. D. Flanagan – I have an issue with using terms like respect, humility, etc. in outcomes since they are so hard to assess. R. Brown – I've had several conversations with Stephanie Hamm on similar concerns. J. Smith – The use of the term humility represents that their position is not automatically preferred. This terminology is fairly common within cultural competence outcomes. We might want to discuss other ways to express that, but it is important to include that idea.

J. Smith – Please send me line edits for other outcomes that you have. I will compile them in digest form, and we can discuss via email.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.