

University General Education Council
February 9, 2022, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00
p.m. Adams Center Classroom

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

Absent: R. Rama, S. Talley, M. Straughn

Ex-officio: L. May, V. McCracken (for S. Macaluso) (E. Gumm, C. Riley, S. Macaluso were absent)

Guests: D. Counts

The meeting began at 3:33 p.m.

- Call to order by J. Smith
- Prayer by J. Smith
- Minutes from 12/8/21

Motion to approve the minutes by R. Brown; seconded by C. Flanders; 8 in favor; 1 abstention; motion passes.

Business Item

1. Update on Menu Criteria Teams

J. Smith - We have named three of our four criteria teams. We are still searching for members for our Science criteria team. Members from UGEC will be instrumental in communicating our outcomes and the nature of the menus to the other committee members. I will be encouraging the creation of a rubric or other measure to aid in assessment of the outcomes for our menu courses. I'm excited about the enthusiasm shown by faculty who volunteered to be on these committees.

V. McCracken - Is there only one assessment instrument? That doesn't seem very flexible. Could there be a menu of assessment options? J. Smith - We will let the criteria teams decide on what assessment is appropriate. The assignments will be flexible, but we will narrow in on specific assessment measures.

L. Sharp-Penya - I have concerns about a common assignment for courses in a menu. In diverse menus, it is hard to effectively assess with a single assignment. J. Smith - I'm going to urge our teams to focus on a common assessment, not a common assignment. That way instructors can find an assignment of their own to fit the assessment goals. L. Sharp-Penya - Will the committees have this information? J. Smith - They will have the outcomes as well as their experience from their different fields. We want flexibility but a common tool to use as a yardstick across all menu courses.

J. Smith - I hope to have criteria to discuss here by the end of March or first of April. That way departments can have the summer to decide which courses they would like to propose for inclusion on the menus. Come fall, we will start adding courses to the menus.

Action Item

1. Individual Degree Requirements

J. Smith - We have received recommendations from deans and department chairs about the different degree requirements. The BBA and BSN have asked to keep the current requirements and move that forward. BSE will also have no change. The BFA, BM, BA have recommended that we remove their requirements to have no additional changes. The new general education requirements cover many of the items that had been required previously.

L. Sharp-Penya - So for the BA degree, they would no longer be required to have our "supplement for the major" courses. If we removed the BA special requirements, would those requirements remain in the degree plan, or would those be removed? J. Smith - I would imagine that would be up to the departments to decide whether or not to keep it. L. Sharp-Penya - Is this typical of what other universities do? J. Smith - We have a larger general education than other schools, so literature is covered. The language requirement has often been what differentiates the BS from the BA degrees at most schools. We can discuss keeping the foreign language requirement for an additional 6 hours if we wish.

J. Smith - The BSN is the only degree that subtracts from the core. All others are additions to the general education. Due to the requirements of the nursing program, they can only take general courses for two years, which makes the 12 hours of Bible important for them.

J. Smith - For the BS, six hours of science and 3 hours math that our general education require are very strong for a BS degree. I believe that "no additional hours" has served us well. R. Brown - I can see an argument for adding 3 hours of math, but I think I still lean toward no additional hours. D. Flanagan - Departments can still add math or science if that serves their degree, correct? J. Smith - Yes. This is at a university level. Nothing we are doing here restricts a program from making additional requirements.

J. Smith - For the BA - the foreign language discussion is the big issue. S. Sanders - I think it is very meaningful to have it included. R. Ashlock - Even if we went to no additional requirements, our programs would still maintain our requirements of foreign language. We are firm proponents of including that. L. Sharp-Penya - I think it is important to have the foreign language piece. It would be nice to see what other schools require. It could provide meaning as to what we mean by Bachelor of Arts. What makes it different from a Bachelor of Science. If we want to draw a distinction, a chart showing that is helpful. J. Smith - There is both a philosophy of a liberal arts education and the

practical side. There are several programs that offer both a BA and a BS. So what makes them distinct? V. McCracken - Is there any pushback against the foreign language? Is there another voice? R. Ashlock - I think if it is located just in the BA, there's not much pushback. If we tried to require it across all degrees, that is where we would get pushback. J. Smith - The pushback might be due to the fact that we have a large general education, and adding more requirements to that can make it difficult for students, moving from 54 hours of general education to essentially 60 hours for BA students with the additional 6 hours of foreign language. Our art and theater degrees are BFA, so they would not be affected, and they have no electives. Most BA programs have plenty of elective hours. D. Flanagan - Our BA in Biochemistry has the foreign language waived. Will the new requirements apply to all programs? J. Jones - I don't think there should be exceptions. If we approve that foreign language must be taken, then it should be taken by all BA programs. J. Smith - It would be applied to Biochemistry and then they could appeal, and we could decide if it is worthy of an exception. It seems we agree that requiring foreign language fits our philosophy. Moving to the 3-hour additional literature requirement. With our expanded humanities menu, the 9 hours seem to serve the intention of the BA literature requirement. C. Flanders - The sophomore literature can include literature in languages other than English, correct? J. Smith - Yes. S. Sanders - I think the courses we offer in literature will only broaden and deepen our students' education. We have been expanding our offerings. Those extra 3 hours would go a long way in rounding out a BA degree, but I understand that is a lot of English hours. C. Flanders - We are shaping the kind of people we want to produce. I can see the practical side, but I think the critical thinking and perspective taking and exposure to other points of view found in literature is too valuable to lose. J. Smith - The practical application, students will see they need literature and all BA students will therefore take literature on the humanities selection menu, effectively narrowing their options. R. Ashlock - Our majors will still be required to take literature. K. Jang - The trend in education and society is to blur the lines between degrees. I like the idea of reducing requirements so we can focus more on competence-based programs instead of content-based. D. Flanagan - I work with students who want to go on to PA school and other professional programs, and they are forced to use their limited time here to satisfy general education instead of taking upper-level electives in our major. The rigorous upper-level courses support their goals better than the general education. L. May - I like the idea of having a menu of options. More flexibility is good. J. Smith - What does literature offer students that history or fine arts does not? R. Brown - Can we remove the literature requirement just because it is confusing? R. Ashlock - It is confusing. I agree. J. Smith - Any department can still require it in their major.

J. Jones - The BBA seems to assume that economics will be on the social science menu, and we haven't determined that yet. J. Smith - It is part of the business foundations, too.

S. Sanders - Do you think these extra BA requirements are discouraging students from taking BA degrees? J. Smith - I think that is true. It is especially challenging for transfer students and students changing majors from a different degree program.

Motion to approve proposed degree requirements for BSE, BSN, BFA, BBA, and BM by R. Ashlock; seconded by S. Sanders; all in favor; motion passes.

Motion to approve no additional requirements for BS by D. Flanagan; seconded by R. Brown; all in favor; motion passes.

Motion to approve keeping additional 6 hours of sophomore foreign language without the additional literature requirement for the BA by R. Ashlock; seconded by D. Flanagan; 6 in favor; 3 opposed; motion passes.

The meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.