

University General Education Council
April 26, 2023, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Zoom Meeting

Present: K. Witemeyer, J. Smith, R. Rama, J. Jones, S. Talley, M. Atkinson, R. Brown, K. Carroll, S. Sanders, L. Sharp-Penya, R. Ashlock

Absent: T. Naldoza

Ex-officio: B. Reeves, E. Gumm (C. Riley, G. Mihills, M. Allen were absent)

Guests: D. Counts, D. Kennamer

The meeting began at 3:34 p.m.

- Call to order by J. Smith
- Minutes from 3/8/23

No corrections, so minutes were accepted as approved.

Discussion Items

1. General Education Assessment Plan

J. Smith - Considering the way we collect course-embedded information, menu engagement, and centrally-run assessment activities, I've put together a draft of options. Some of the assessment pieces have not been created yet. Some discussion has begun among faculty for those possibilities. Under "Measures" on the document is where I propose we assess the associated outcomes. I wanted be sure to include the menu evaluation items. We've added several other activities. For example, writing across the curriculum in the writing-intensive courses – we can look at the current rubric and decide if any revisions need to take place. I would recommend that we focus on BIBL 101, 102, and 211 for engaging Christian approaches to community measures since all students will be taking those courses while upper-level Bible spreads across a wide range. The assessment instrument has not yet been developed.

J. Smith – We want to stay as focused as possible as we move forward. R. Brown – Is the location column talking about data collection or is that only coming from measures? J. Smith – The location is just mapping. We will focus on the measurement column for assessment. E. Gumm – So is CORE not being used in assessment at all? J. Smith – CORE is an intro for many of these areas, but the first time a student attempts the content might not be the best place to assess. We've used the annotated bibliography in the past, but I think we might be better served with assessing later in the student's experience.

L. Sharp-Penya – same question for COMM 120. So we won't be assessing public speaking at all for general education? J. Smith – Correct. We wanted to make sure our outcomes assess things our students get a lot of exposure to. However, assessment can get very burdensome if we try to measure every place it occurs. Common practice is to assess in 2-3 places. So that's what I'm aiming for. Part of what we need to decide is if the 2-3 places I've proposed are the right places for that assessment to occur.

R. Brown – This seems like a good plan in general, however, I would like to see emphasis on the courses that all students take and how those fit with various majors. I would like other departments to have input into what is accomplished in those courses, like speech, CORE, etc. How is it serving our students and can we have any input there? J. Smith – We need to evaluate our student learning outcomes. As a faculty member there is a desire that all shared requirements contribute to all majors. Would we be interested in evaluating content and progress of the courses themselves? Is that what you are asking? R. Brown – That is what I would hope to see. As a general education council, we should be stewards of the courses contained there. E. Gumm – Are we talking about all courses? Or just Speech and Core? J. Smith – I would consider all of the general education as being under the purview of this council. We haven't done this in a structured way in the past. Maybe we rotate a discussion over 2-3 years so we keep the general education up-to-date.

L. Sharp-Penya – While some of the courses on the communication measurement do have some oral communication content, COMM 120 is the only course that addresses oral communication exclusively. A1 and A3 with are direct fits. J. Smith – We are looking at the outcome at the main level, not the sub-level. L. Sharp-Penya – I would propose that COMM 120 be added for a measurement for the outcome of communicate clearly. J. Smith – If we add a course-embedded measure, what would we remove from the currently list of measurements? L. Sharp-Penya – As we looked at approving courses for the social sciences menus, I felt that some of those courses struggled to meet the A outcome clearly, so I would recommend removing the SBS menu items and add COMM 120. R. Ashlock – If we simply add it, does that make it too clunky? I get Lynette's point. I just don't want it to become unwieldy. J. Smith – Yes, I want to keep it to no more than 3 measures. So if we add COMM 120, I would want to drop one of the previous ones. I can easily see us assessing one written artifact and one oral artifact. Which would fit better – A&H or SBS? S. Sanders – I would need to go back and look. J. Smith – That's a good thought. Let's plan to revisit this in the fall. Choosing today will not affect what we collect, but if we have a plan in the fall, we can move forward.

R. Brown – A&H were asked to map 3 of the 5 options, so there might be courses that didn't map to A2 at all. J. Smith – All A&H courses needed to address C and A, but B gave them a menu of options.

J. Smith – This plan felt very similar to what we are currently doing. As the data begins to come in, we will need to assess whether or not our courses are measuring what we intended and how our students are performing.

2. Review Menu Application Forms

J. Smith – I know it has been a while since we looked at these menu criteria. I wanted to discuss whether or not there are obvious places for revision to better collect the data we want to see.

L. Sharp-Penya – Some of the discussions we had in our department about the social/behavioral science menu made us realize that A2 seemed rather difficult for many social science courses to address and would have to be tied to a specific type of assignment. It didn't feel like the best fit for SBS courses. I would also suggest removing the assessment of whether or not this is a social science course. J. Smith – So you are asking about the appropriateness of mapping SBS to A2 and then whether the course is evaluated as a social science. What that is getting at is not asking the course to defend that it is a social science but asking whether the student is learning the social science content. L. Sharp-Penya – It seems odd that this assessment is only applied to SBS. I would propose that all menus be asked to assess in the same manner. R. Brown – I would like to have communication between departments to see how courses are performing on menus. So I would like this type of assessment in all areas. S. Talley – I think SBS is a little different. There is a difference for students knowing systems and not something as concrete as writing. The lack of consistency doesn't bother me because we are assessing something different.

J. Smith – I'm guessing that the first time we collect data will be when things become clear about what we need to be assessing. I expect that the process will evolve over the next few years as we evaluate and adjust to the patterns we see.

S. Sanders – I wonder if it would be helpful in the application to have some way to understand the history of the course. I feel like it would be helpful to know if the course brand new and tailored toward general education or is it a course that has been around for years but is changing to address gen ed. It might be nice to have information on course context. J. Smith – I think asking for some course context might be helpful – how long it has been taught, has it been gen ed before, how many programs utilize the course? That would pretty easy to add to applications.

J. Smith – Do we like having faculty present the proposals? R. Ashlock – It's nice to have someone who knows the course itself to answer questions about content, but it is also helpful at the administrative level to know about staffing, etc. It's good to have representation at both levels. It's better to have too much information than not enough when a proposal comes forward. J. Smith – I think the chance for conversation is important. I also want to protect the council's time so we have more time to do evaluation work.

J. Smith – With the college reorganization going on, this council will likely be changing some in the future. Thank you to Robert, Stephanie, Ronnie, and Rodney for all their work as they rotate off the council.

The meeting adjourned at 4:38 p.m.