

University General Education Council
April 10, 2024, 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Zoom Meeting

Present: K. Witemeyer, J. Smith, J. Jones, K. Carroll, L. Sharp-Penya, A. Pittman, D. Kneip, S. Sanders

Absent: S. Kang, D. Jackson

Ex-officio: (E. Gumm, A. Sutherlin, C. Riley were absent)

Guests: R. Morgan, J. Carpenter, C. Miertschin, D. Counts, J. Bluitt, D. Kennamer, M. Atkinson

The meeting began at 3:32 p.m.

- Call to order by J. Smith
- Minutes from 1/24/24

No corrections, so minutes were accepted as approved.

Action Items

1. AGRB 261 – Add to Social & Behavioral Sciences Menu

J. Jones – Looking at the assessment piece, I was having a little trouble following where it lands with the course material. It mentions exam #1 and there are 6 exams. Why not use the comprehensive exam? It also mentions a writing assignment and I don't see a writing assignment in the syllabus. J. Carpenter – J. Judah is the instructor for this course. I can tell you that as far as exam 1, he was telling me that the exam pertains directly to the assessment. As far as the writing, I can't find it, either. J. Jones – If you look at other economics courses they use a more comprehensive measure, a summative piece at the end of the course. J. Smith – When I look at the artifacts, I see a commodities project that is a long-term assignment that seems to address that summative piece you mentioned. J. Carpenter – The essay is incorporated in the commodities project. I can clean up the document to make it clear between the artifacts and the rubric. C. Miertschin – It looks like p. 6-7 are the actual rubric and p. 9 is a sample rubric that was not removed. J. Carpenter – Yes, that is correct. J. Smith – So maybe we don't need any additional clarification. J. Jones – We need some definition of what counts as superior quality. C. Miertschin – The rubric uses words like "superior". We followed that. Is it necessary to define that? J. Smith – The difference within disciplines is something we will need to navigate as we work through these applications. The SBS menu allows faculty to create their own rubrics, and we do not need to assess all three items. So if we are having difficulty, you can just show one per each outcome.

D. Kneip – As a qualitative grader, when I look at that rubric, it looks familiar to me. If the rubric proves problematic in that it is too vague, what problems would that create? J. Smith – The specialized rubrics will allow faculty to collect data easily, however, having different rubrics in different classes presents a challenge regarding consistency. I think we could raise similar questions about other courses already accepted to the menu, however. D. Kneip – With the broad menu, I can't image a rubric that would work for all of them. J. Smith – This approach was designed to be flexible but will likely mean more training for faculty in how to assess and interpret data. Adding new courses to the menu does not change what is already in place for other menu courses.

Motion to approve by J. Jones with revision to A2 assessments for clarity on superior definition; there was no second. Motion fails.

Motion to approve as presented by L. Sharp-Penya; seconded by D. Kneip; 5 in favor; 1 opposed; motion passes.

2. HIST 275 – Add to Cultural Literacy Menu

J. Jones – If you look at p. 5-6, you have the assessment levels defined, which is what I was hoping to see with the previous item.

Motion to approve by J. Jones; seconded by S. Sanders; all in favor; motion passes.

3. HIST 329 – Add to Arts & Humanities Menu

D. Kneip – Can one course count toward both menus? J. Smith – No. A course can only be applied to one general education requirement. It does mean that the professor has to submit data for more than one menu's measures, however. R. Morgan – We are outlining those on the syllabus themselves for clarity.

Motion to approve by J. Jones; seconded by K. Carroll; all in favor; motion passes.

4. HIST 329 – Add to Cultural Literacy Menu

No discussion.

Motion to approve by J. Jones; seconded by S. Sanders; all in favor; motion passes.

5. HIST 334 – Add to Arts & Humanities Menu

No specific discussion.

Motion to approve by J. Jones; seconded by K. Carroll; all in favor; motion passes.

Discussion Item

6. SBS Menu Rubric Follow-up

J. Smith – After last semester, a question arose about how we are assessing the outcomes for the SBS menu. The assessment tool asks for number of students when some of the rubrics use an overall class percentage instead. There are currently 27 courses on the SBS menu. Of those, 17 have assessment I would consider student-based. Ten courses used a course-based approach, looking at overall percentages. Those were in the Communication and Sociology Department. The assumption was that we would utilize student-based rubrics. Those were the examples supplied by the faculty committee. That is the preferable approach. However, it was not stipulated as mandatory. It is up to the council to decide if we want to clarify the rubrics and the approaches being taken.

J. Jones – If we are going to ask 10 courses to change their assessment model, that's a lot. I think it would be better to delay that until next year. What model is ACU Dallas using? They seem to have a pretty systematic approach. K. Carroll – My experience is that we count number of students that reached a certain standard. J. Smith – I examined the courses that we evaluated and because the Dallas versions of the courses were approved because they were linked to the approved Abilene courses, we didn't examine the differences in assessment between those. I reviewed the Abilene courses, and Dena and I reviewed those for how they were being assessed on the Dallas side. J. Smith – I do not recommend that we change anything for this semester, but we do have a lack of alignment that we will want to address in some way, either to clarify in the application that it is acceptable to use either student or course-based assessment or to select one for how we would like move forward. It could just mean that we change how things are classified on the rubric. We would not review already approved courses. Rather than simply trying to resolve the rubric question, it might be helpful to revisit the way we assess the SBS courses with rubrics that are unique to each course. A. Pittman – For program assessment, it specifically mentions course-based methods. Is it just different than general education assessment? J. Smith – Yes. General education is so much broader, we need to be able to put everyone across a large spectrum on the same measurement scale. If I don't know how many students are in each category, I can't process the data appropriately. D. Kneip – I think clarity could be helpful.

The meeting adjourned at 4:29 p.m.