

University Undergraduate Academic Council
November 3, 2021
3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Adams Center Classroom

Present: K. Witemeyer, J. Smith, K. Cha, M. Long, G. Broderick, A. Sutherlin, D. Mayhall, S. Martinez, J.D. Wallace, D. Kneip

Absent: R. Jessup

Ex-officios: E. Gumm, L. Merchant, B. Fang, S. Jones

Guests: None.

The meeting began at 3:31 p.m.

1. Call to order by J. Smith.
2. Prayer by D. Mayhall.
3. Approval of the minutes from 10.20.21

Motion to approve the minutes by A. Sutherlin ; seconded by K. Cha; all in favor; motion passes.

Action Item

4. General Education Proposal

J. Smith - Last week, UGEC voted to approve a slightly revised version of the proposal for bachelor degrees. We clarified the written and oral communication, narrowing the oral communication requirement to COMM 120. The Math requirement was clarified and narrowed slightly. The History/Political Science menu was changed from 6 hours to 3 hours with the 3 reduced hours being added to the Humanities menu to create 3 hours for literature and 3 hours for a broader humanities selection. We remain at 54 hours total for general education. We will be looking at the requirements for associate's degrees as well and the explication of the outcomes. We will also look at degree-specific requirements, for example BA, BSN, etc.

With the expansion into ACU Dallas for undergraduate programs, we need to think about how our Abilene committees address their needs as well. We invited the associate dean for Dallas to be present at the council meetings, but we are looking into the possibility of representation for them on our councils in the future.

G. Broderick - Can you talk about fine arts and where they would fit? J. Smith - UGEC voted to expand the Humanities menu to create a place for broader humanities

disciplines. Fine arts would be a natural fit there. Departments would have the opportunity to propose courses to be added to that menu. The original proposal included example courses to populate the menus, but those will not be automatically approved. All multi-disciplinary menus will be wiped clean and departments will propose courses to be added to those menus. A. Sutherlin - Did UGEC talk to the fine arts departments? From the original proposal team, when we talked to various fine arts departments, they were not anxious to populate those menus. G. Broderick - Our faculty are very interested in participating in general education. J. Smith - Ronnie Rama sits on UGEC and he talked to his department chair, and there was support for offering additional class sections. Literature already has a place in the humanities menu. I also expect that many of our fine arts courses from the cultural awareness menu might shift to humanities. D. Kneip - My experience on committees like this in the past demonstrated that it was hard to recruit faculty from departments to teach CORE courses. I would love to see departments populate this menu with a broad spectrum of options. It could even serve to recruit undecided students into those majors. J. Smith - We do want to focus on which courses have the best fit for the criteria. E. Gumm - We also talked about a commitment to assessment. So we want to make sure we are careful in selecting courses that fit the criteria and can be easily assessed for general education outcomes. J. Smith - Yes, the proposal team wants to keep menus manageable in length and keep from having the same course appear on multiple menus.

A. Sutherlin - The political science department was good with the change to history/political science from 6 hours to 3 hours. The history department is concerned about the change, since a student could graduate without ever taking a history course (if they took political science instead). Although the same argument can be said for graduating without a fine arts course. J. Smith - The history and political science requirement received a lot of debate in the discussion due to transfer students coming in from Texas state schools with so much history and political science credit. D. Kneip - Was there conversation about combining humanities and history? History seems like a humanities discipline. J. Smith - Political Science is more of a social science. UGEC did discuss the idea of having history courses on the broader humanities menu. D. Kneip - Could we have a 9-hr humanities menu with 3 hours for literature, 3 hours for history, and 3 hours of selection? Political Science could go back to the social sciences menu. J. Smith - That is an interesting idea. It doesn't really change the requirement at all but the labeling would change which might make it clearer for students. Using humanities as a label was a question in UGEC. We are required to label something in our general education as humanities by SACs. Populating it more thoroughly shouldn't be a problem at all.

D. Kneip - With Texas core complete and transfer-friendly elements being a priority, do you feel that we have achieved that with the new version? J. Smith - The proposal that we have remains quite comparable with where we were before with some pruning. Removing the PEAC requirements, for example. We are also starting fresh with the menus and can prune there. Compared to Texas state schools, we require substantially more communication (written and oral) and less history/political science. E. Gumm -

For the majority of our programs, there are enough elective hours in the major to absorb and apply those extra history/political science transfer hours. With core complete, we articulate things individually and force-complete things if necessary, but our major requirements remain the same.

S. Jones - On these menus, are the individual departments going to have to reapply to have courses on those menus? J. Smith - Yes, that is our intent. We will immediately start developing the criteria teams so that we will be ready in the spring to start receiving proposals for populating those menus. This will help us with assessment as well. The criteria will be different than it is for our current menus. This will also affect the individual majors and how they might change how hours are counted if the general education requirements change.

G. Broderick - Will we have updated definitions for the menus, especially humanities? J. Smith - Yes. We have people at work to revise these definitions to reflect our changes. We need the description for the selection piece of the humanities menu. Literature is self-explanatory. We will make sure that is available and clear when we are ready to make a decision here.

J. Smith - I would expect the revision to the associate's degree requirements, that you will see the same clarification on the Math section. We will probably need to add literature or make it just history or just a humanities selection if we want to keep the hours in the same proportion as they are currently. The area where we are overbalanced is in the communication menu. We could have students take 6 hours instead of 9 (ENGL 111 plus either COMM 120 *or* ENGL 112).

J. Smith - In a 128-hour degree, 54 hours would be general education and 74 hours would be in the major. This works well for our traditional humanities majors, but for our professional programs, they have less flexibility.

A Sutherlin - In the new general education, there will be 3 hours as elective? J. Smith - It will be a general education selection, so it must be a course from a general education menu.

A Sutherlin - I do like the idea of the combined history/humanities menu, and I think we should consider that. It helps remove the tension between history and art. Political science could move to the social science menu, where it currently is found. D. Kneip - It's one less category for students to keep up with, too.

Proposed:

Humanities - 9 hours

- Literature (ENGL 200-299, or foreign language literature) - 3 hours
- History (HIST 100-299) - 3 hours
- Humanities Selection -3 hours
 - Any additional 3 hours from the categories above or a selection from the following menu

J. Smith - We want to continue to make forward progress as we anticipate our SACs visit in the spring.

Meeting ended at 4:35 p.m.