General Education Council  
February 3, 2012  
Meeting Notes

Members Present:

Jake Simons, Terri Flateby, Lisa Smith, Caren Town, Bill Levernier, Hani Samawi, John O’Malley, Lorraine Gilpin, Elizabeth Edwards, Ellen Hendrix

Jake welcomed everyone to the meeting and recapped the year’s accomplishments:

- The Senate has voted to make the GEC a standing Senate Committee beginning fall 2012.
- The Undergraduate Council has accepted the General Education Outcomes.
- The motion to expand the scope of the GEC to include the Core Curriculum will be on the February senate agenda.

Jake announced that Fred Rich resigned from the GEC to focus on his research and department needs; Elizabeth Edwards has agreed to chair the assessment subcommittee. He added that the GEC now needs to focus on assessment and what the GEC can reasonably accomplish this coming year. He acknowledged that Terri has been moving forward with investigating potential assessment opportunities to help the GEC move forward.

Terri explained that she had distributed a short, 1 ½ page handout highlighting potential opportunities to the Deans before Christmas break and added that she would email the handout to GEC members after the meeting. She acknowledged that the plan is not perfect and captures mostly lower-level classes, but the plan offers a place to start. Terri suggested assessing the following GEC Outcomes in Core courses based on work that is already being done around campus:

- Effective Analysis of Information – FYE 1220 (Lower Level) and JMY Scientific Reasoning (Higher Level)
- Historical and Cultural Perspectives – ENGL 2111/2112, HIST 1112, and FYE 1410 (Global Citizens)
- Responsible Citizenship – FYE 1410, Student Affairs
- Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning – JMU Scientific Reasoning

She asked for ideas for assessing Effective Communication Skills beyond first-year writing, which was assessed last year. Bill Levernier recommended targeting classes that are designated “Writing Intensive.” Caren Town stated that many programs have Senior Seminar classes that require significant writing, and John O’Malley added that many other programs require capstone courses with strong writing components. Michelle Cawthorn suggested looking at COST’s poster presentations, which focus on the type of writing often done in science courses.

Caren expressed concern that the quality of writing seen in Literature’s senior classes is quite varied and wondered how an effective rubric could be developed to assess the many types and
quality of writing pulled from multiple colleges. Jake offered that the primary benefit of doing such an assessment for the first time might be in the learning process.

Jake then asked Elizabeth and the assessment subcommittee to further consider the suggestions provided and how the assessment might be carried out. He added that the GEC needs to begin thinking about an assessment workshop toward the end of the summer. Terri added that faculty who are actually teaching the courses need to be involved, and Elizabeth stressed that every college needs to be represented. She added that she would convene the assessment subcommittee to begin working on an assessment plan.

Ellen asked if GEC members were opposed to moving the meeting time to an earlier hour on the first Friday of each month. Based on feedback from members present, everyone agreed that the meeting time could be moved to 12:30.

The next GEC meeting will be on March 2, 2012 at 12:30 in CTLS.