General Education Council
Minutes: Tuesday, April 5, 2011 Meeting
7:30-9:00 a.m.
Nessmith Lane Building, Room 1909


The Task at Hand
Jake opened the meeting with a few comments about the ambitious scope of the General Education Council’s (GEC’s) charge, stressing that the council must work diligently toward results needed in the short term. However, he also stressed that the council should simultaneously seek to establish the ongoing process and structure needed to make assessment part of our normal business processes.

Review of General Education Council’s Role
Barry Joyner provided a brief presentation, summarizing the objectives and actions of the CCTF. The task force was formed in response to the University System’s (USG’s) initiative to review, assess, and improve core curriculum. Ultimately, the task force obtained approval for a set of learning outcomes identified for each area of the core, as well as the three over-arching themes set forth by USG. The task force also constructed assessment plans that identify the type of assessment, relevant courses, and intended timeframes for each outcome. These actions fulfilled the task force’s charter and they view the GEC as being the body that will follow-through and provide on-going work toward an effective general education program and assessment.

Where to Begin
Jake pointed out the desirability of reconciling the GEC’s two potential starting points. He explained that the University had formed a group that drafted a set of learning outcomes for General Education and a plan for assessing their achievement following the University’s last SACs review. The plan appears to have been created in 2004-2005, but there is no information about any subsequent implementation of the plan. The second starting point is the work done by the Core Curriculum Task Force, which also produced a set of learning outcomes and a set of assessment plans. Although the GEC should recognize the potential for differentiation between General Education and Core Curriculum, for now the perception is that the latter effort was intended to supersede the former. Stephen Zerwas summarized by confirming we have essentially evolved to a curriculum-based approach to General Education, and that the earlier response to SACS may be viewed as an internal document.

Moving Forward
Jake then discussed how to proceed with subcommittee activities. He suggested that although the original list of questions/topics in the GEC’s charge is very comprehensive, the GEC’s better understanding of what’s already been done may make it appropriate for each subcommittee to focus on a few key questions. In an ensuing discussion, committee members suggested the following focusing questions:

- Policies, Procedures, and Communication Subcommittee: How do we make assessment part of our on-going business processes? Stephen clarified that this includes how the GEC should fit within the faculty governance structure, i.e. the Senate.
- Curriculum Subcommittee: What is the holistic vision we have for General Education that ties together the Core Curriculum Learning outcomes? How do we use the results of our assessments to improve the curriculum?
- Assessment Subcommittee: What do we need to do to follow through with the assessment plans created by the Core Council?

A point of contact was then identified for each subcommittee: Jake for PP&C, John O’Malley for Curriculum, and Fred Rich for Assessment. The GEC decided to allow a week for subcommittee meetings and to reconvene the entire council in two weeks to share and synthesize the progress of the subcommittees.

Ellen agreed to facilitate the next meeting time by using Doodle.com.

The meeting was adjourned.

**Next Meeting: TBA – April 18-22**