

## General Education Committee Meeting Minutes for October 28, 2016

**Committee members attending:** Keying Ding, Brandi Lindsey, Nancy Caukin, Yang Soo Kim, Virginia Hemby, Zaf Khan, Kate Pantelides, Mike Boyle, Charles Chusuei, Barbara Turnage, Amy Sayward, Philip Loubere

**Ex-officio members attending:** Sheila Otto, Peter Cunningham, Chris Brewer, Dawn McCormack (for Karen Petersen), Jeff Gibson

**Guests attending:** Aleka Blackwell, Mary Beth Asbury, Andrew Dix, Heather Hundley

### **Business:**

- Following a welcome from Nancy Caukin (the committee's chair) and introductions, the minutes of the September 23, 2016, meeting were approved—moved by Mike Boyle, seconded by Zaf Khan, and approved unanimously.
- A name change for BIOL 1110/1111 was presented for approval. TBR approval is not required for a name change, but this request for a name change did go to the UCC first before being submitted to this committee. The request for a name change is due to the university presently having two courses with the same name. The new names for these two courses are General Biology I/General Biology Lab I and General Biology II/General Biology Lab II. General Biology I is the only course under consideration for a name change by this committee as it is the only course in the General Education Curriculum. The request for a name change for BIOL 1110/1111 was approved—moved by Mike Boyle, seconded by Barbara Turnage, and approved unanimously.
- The General Education Competency Assessment reports on writing, oral communication, mathematics, and critical thinking were presented to the committee.
  - Aleka Blackwell discussed the Writing Assessment report explaining how the sample for the study was selected from the ENGL 1020 population, what writing assignment was selected (argumentative essay), and how faculty reviewers were selected. She further explained that a faculty norming session was established in which faculty agreed to follow the same processes. Feedback was solicited from the committee. Aleka will add information about cut off scores and inter-rater reliability. Boyle commended Blackwell on the excellent results.
  - Mary Beth Asbury discussed the Oral Communication report explaining that changes had been made as to how samples were collected and that the instructors had changed the ways in which speeches were assigned. She further explained that a new faculty person had been selected to handle the COMM 2200 assessment and that individual will be implementing some changes—particularly those involving the use of library resources and librarians. Feedback was solicited from the committee. A recommendation was made to connect improvement

strategies to specific outcomes. After a discussion regarding suggestions for streamlining the evaluation process (e.g., are three evaluations needed for every speech), the committee commended Asbury on the results and plans for future updates to COMM 2200.

- Nancy McCormick could not attend to present the Mathematics report. After reviewing the report, the committee had some suggestions. One question posed was in reference to the format of the report. A suggestion from the committee was to use the common format used by the other reports, particularly the one for Writing Assessment. That report used tables to present data and was deemed the clearest one. Discussion ensued regarding the amount of work that has been completed in the course up to this point but that redesign has been put on hold pending the implementation of the FOCUS Act. Cunningham stated that the redesign does not have to wait until that point. Zaf Khan asked about the outcomes and plans for remediation. He suggested the need for clear delineation of what targets are and what interventions are for those specific items on pages 5-7. It was suggested that plans for improvement be linked to specific outcomes. There were questions about the final exam items linked to each learning outcome. Outcomes 2 and 3, for instance, are assessed with exactly the same outcomes. Outcome 1 is assessed using all test questions. Following discussion and recommendations, the committee commended McCormick on the report.
- Sheila Otto led the discussion about the report on Critical Thinking. The major point was that while the national mean for the CCTST has remained stable at 17.1 for the past three years, the MTSU mean has declined from 17.1 to 16.2. One explanation referenced changing student populations and how that might impact scores. As the CCTST is part of performance funding, the committee questioned the impact of these results. Thus far, no effect to our funding has been seen. Suggestions from the committee included the need to have critical thinking skills progressively put into the complete academic map. The thought that perhaps the deliberate inclusion of critical thinking in course syllabi would lead to a discussion on its definition and its importance. A potential research idea was suggested by the committee: determine if a correlation exists between a student's ACT score and his/her CTSCC score.
- A discussion of the general education curriculum followed. Peter Cunningham stated that the general education course recommendations will no longer go to TBR. THEC does not seem interested in hands-on management of General Education, so the belief is that the articulation agreements between institutions will stand (everything transfers from the community colleges to the former TBR universities in the General Education core). The 41-credit hour with these categories will be standard, but the list of courses will vary by campus. Our new governing board will play some role in curriculum decisions, however. Cunningham went on to state that THEC may call a meeting of institutions to review the General Education Curriculum but will probably not implement a policy

that will require us to send courses to THEC for review. Perhaps more information about procedures will be forthcoming in November.

- Nancy Caukin asked that members of the committee review the General Education website so that they can give feedback at the November meeting.
- The November 18, 2016, meeting (JUB 100) will be to discuss any new procedures for approving General Education courses (if any directives are forthcoming from THEC by that time) and to review the General Education website.
- The committee adjourned at the conclusion of its business.