MINUTES  
General Education Committee  
November 29, 2012  
1:15-2:45pm  
Alumni Gallery

Members present: Gregg Afman, John Blondell, Michelle Hardley, Tatiana Nazarenko (chair) and Debra Quast

Absent: Wayne Iba

Others present:

I. Open with Prayer

II. The minutes of the November 8, 2012 meeting were approved

III. Oral Communication Assessment Update: John Blondell  
In conversations with Lesa Stern, the COM department will not be able to add another Public Speaking course. John was interested in the possibility that each department could offer a course that would have an oral communication requirement. The definition of “oral communication” could vary based on what is appropriate for the discipline. In a COM course it could be delivering speeches or in a BIO class it could be delivering a poster presentation. The goal would be to release COM as the only department offering a Speech Intensive course and allow faculty the opportunity to develop courses or reformulate existing courses to meet this requirement.

In talking with Deborah Dunn from the COM department, she was a proponent for more public speaking requirements for our students versus oral communication requirements.

The committee needs to decide if the oral communication portion is important and if we should recommend a change to the GE to require a course in writing and also a course in speech/oral communication. If we changed the GE, then the committee envisions this as a course students take in their first year. This could also include the addition of an oral component to the senior capstone course in order to continue building on the foundation laid in the first year.

Currently student’s oral presentations are being recorded. We will use those recordings to decide what strengths we want to capitalize on and how we might
use those presentations to help guide our discussion on the benefits of instruction in oral presentations versus public speaking.

IV. GE Committee Proposals to the Senate: Tatiana Nazarenko
Two of the proposals were approved (the revisions to the Old Testament, New Testament, Christian Doctrine criteria; revisions to Philosophical Reflections criteria). The modification to the minimum SAT/ACT for ENG 002 requirements was referred back to the committee for more information.

V. Modifying the GE Curriculum Conversations with the Senators: Gregg Afman, John Blondell, Wayne Iba

WCSA Perspectives - Tatiana presented information from WCSA in response to questions she had for them. Tatiana was surprised it was as positive as it was, she expected students responses to be more neutral or negative. Some committee members questioned how the data was collected (e.g. how honest were the students if they knew they would be putting their names on a report). Another was unsure how mature students were in knowing and interpreting the GE. There seemed to be a trust in the faculties perspective on the part of the students that this is the best GE possible or that this is the best way to approach general education.

We as a committee need to go into any data collection opportunity with an open mind versus trying to find data to support an opinion. That will give us the best footing on which to recommend changes.

Senators Perspectives – The senators perspectives were what was expected – they mentioned the GE was so hard to design in the first place, they don’t want to do it again. It was such a major undertaking that it would take at least 2 years of work to do revise it and we will be sacrificing other areas of development in the college in order to do this. There was much resistance from one of the senators.

Senators also mentioned their difficulty in explaining it to parents and outside people who are not deeply tied to Westmont. There were too many requirements and not enough freedom to explore other things. They also mentioned that WASC is going to drive a change sooner or later so we might as well do it now. Younger faculty members are more interested in changing the GE than older faculty members. There was also a sense that this is not a burning issue within the community at the moment but they might get behind a new GE if they did not have to do all of the work towards it.
Overall there was a sense of increased openness to revisiting the GE when compared to past conversations – it wasn’t a no, but it wasn’t a yes.

VI. Drafting the GE Modification Proposal to the Senate

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Hardley
Registrar