

MINUTES
General Education Committee
March 25, 2019
3:15-4:45pm
VL 216

Members present: Paul Delaney (Chair and Professor of English), Michelle Hardley (Secretary and Registrar), Heather Keaney (Professor of History), Jana Mayfield Mullen (Information Literacy Librarian), Tatiana Nazarenko (Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness), Rachel Winslow (Director, Westmont Downtown)

I. Prayer – Rachel Winslow

II. The minutes from March 4th were approved.

III. Meeting with the RS Faculty Regarding Christian Doctrine Syllabi

Tatiana and Jana met with Telford over coffee. They reviewed the syllabus template with him and he was open to making the revisions needed for his syllabus. He took pictures of the outcomes for the GE area and the audit sheet from Tatiana and Jana detailing what was missing in the syllabus.

Tatiana will double check for these revisions in August for his fall 2019 syllabi.

IV. ENG-006 – Studies in Literature – Add to Common Inquiries: Working Artistically and ENG-007H – Honors: Studies in Literature – Add to Common Inquiries: Working Artistically

The committee discussed the course proposal. When the course is taught by Paul Delaney he will incorporate additional instruction and experiences designed to cover the certification criteria for the Working Artistically GE area.

Rachel moved to approve the added GE credit for Paul Delaney's sections only. It was seconded by Heather Keaney. Any other professors wanting to have the Working Artistically GE credit for their course would need to be individually approved by the GE committee.

The course was approved. This change will be effective fall 2019.

V. Round Table Discussion Course

Tatiana talked with Mark. He indicated that approximately \$50,000-\$70,000 would be needed to offer a class to all of the incoming First-Year students with a course cap of 15-20 students. The money would help to hire adjuncts to staff the courses or to staff existing courses so the full time faculty could staff the new courses for the First-Year students. He couldn't guarantee the money would be given, but we needed to start

building momentum for the proposal in order to get it off of the ground and then see if we can secure the funding.

Tatiana mentioned the idea at the Strategic Planning Committee meeting when they were focused on student success initiatives. The cohort model was raised as an idea at that meeting. Tatiana noted that Alister Chapman and Ron See (who are on Senate this year) were in support of the general idea. Mark wants us to bring the Roundtable idea to Senate to talk about the concept (approx. 5-10 minutes to start the conversation).

Committee members discussed the nature of the course, whether it would have GE credit and what the overall vision and outcomes would be for the courses. Are they existing courses with lower enrollment caps which allows room for additional topics to be discussed relative to our goals for the Roundtable courses? Or are they separate courses entirely that have GE credit built into them? Perhaps the outcomes are similar to the outcomes for the existing First Year Seminar courses, so we don't need the 1-unit First Year seminars anymore.

There was also a discussion on who would teach the courses? Adjunct teaching courses seems to defeat the purpose of having our full time faculty engage with students. If the full time faculty are teaching the Roundtable courses then would these courses pull them away from Common Context courses, or have us using adjuncts to cover Common Context courses? If the courses cover Common Inquiries areas then why would a student enroll in this course when they could take (and transfer) these units elsewhere? One way to account for this would be to strategically reduce our upper division offerings to free up faculty load time for the Roundtable courses.

There was also a concern that right now we are talking about 1 class, but to be a cohort there has to be someone else attached to it. Either a second class taken in the same fall semester, or a second class taken the following spring (like the Augustinian model) or other co-curricular additions outside of the classroom (like the residence halls). Right now all we have been discussing is a one semester class.

There was also some discussion as to whether writing should be an element of the course. To some it felt like too much to also ask this class to be writing intensive for the GE, but others felt that students who can think well are also able to write well, and the process of learning how to write well strengthens a person's ability to think well.

There was also discussion as to whether the vision for these classes was to be more remedial or more advanced. There can be some benefits to considering the classes as covering the basic study skills and abilities needed to succeed in college, as a number of our incoming students need these skills. But in smaller classes with an emphasis on a high level of discussion faculty can better support the inclusion of higher reading and higher writing because of the small class sizes. More intentional faculty with a higher level of support may be able to have higher standards, and students may rise to the demands of the course as they are all First-Year students. – high support and higher

standards – more intentional faculty – time to ask questions and discuss it – more level playing field as they are all First-Year students.

The merits of a two semester model with one course each semester and a one semester model with clustered courses was also discussed. Overlapping this with other co-curricular elements like living learning communities in the residence halls may also be helpful to create the cohort environment.

Tatiana encouraged the committee to continue working on the idea in the hopes that we can present our final thinking to Senate and solicit feedback and advice from Senate on how to move forward.

VI. GE Credit and Topics Courses

Michelle reviewed the policy with the committee and the historical reasons why topics courses have not received GE consideration. Built into our process is a two step vetting system for new courses where the Academic Senate Review Committee considers the overall course as an offering, paying attention to institutional fit of the course with the college, course rigor, course learning objectives, following the syllabus template and any other issues that are germane to the courses as an overall offering within the curriculum. If a course then wants GE credit, the GE Committee oversees an evaluation of the course and it's fit within the certification criteria for each proposed GE area. Topics courses receive only departmental approval, and therefore have not been considered for GE credit to date.

The main issue is whether we want to continue with this policy or propose a change moving forward. Having topics courses approved for GE credit becomes more complicated to manage from a Student Records perspective. But if the college feels it is appropriate to change the policy then the Student Records office will determine a reasonable way to do this.

A secondary issue was how the topics proposals from Serah Shani and Rick Pointer were processed this semester. These particular situations make it important to resolve the main issue so that there is no ambiguity about the policy moving forward.

Michelle and Tatiana will bring the issue to an upcoming Senate meeting for further discussion and determination.

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Hardley