

MINUTES
General Education Committee
March 6, 2020
2:00 – 3:30 p.m.
VL 216

Members present: Steve Contakes (Professor of Chemistry and Committee Chair), Michelle Hardley (Registrar), Michelle Hughes (Chair and Professor of Education), Jana Mayfield Mullen (Co-Director of the Westmont Library), Tatiana Nazarenko (Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness)

Absent: Paul Delaney (Professor of English),

I. Prayer – Steve Contakes

II. The minutes from February 14, 2020 were approved.

III. Final Vote - IS-122 Technology and European Society - Add to Common Inquiries: Understanding Society

Committee members took a final vote on the course. The course was approved for offering on the Fall 2020 Europe Semester program.

IV. IS-123 The Arts in Europe - Add to Common Inquiries: Working Artistically

The syllabus was revised based on feedback from the GE Committee. Committee members discussed the course content and whether it sufficiently covered the needed areas within the Working Artistically GE category.

The course was approved for offering on the Fall 2020 Europe Semester program.

V. Reports – AACU General Education Conference Report

Tatiana and Steve went to an AACU General Education Conference recently and reported back on their experience. Steve thought the second plenary with Terry Doyle was the most impactful. In this plenary the new science of learning and its impact on a schools GE curriculum was presented.

Tatiana and Steve also learned that most GE programs are smaller than ours and cover more wide ranging curriculum. This gave Steve a greater appreciation for our GE. Steve also found that there was lots of conversation on the liberal arts but “liberal arts” meant different things for different people. He did not find much depth on the definition of “liberal arts”.

It was also observed that a number of schools have a capstone within the GE focused on service learning internships or projects.

Tatiana attended a session where one school described their process of changing their GE program. For this school it was conflict free as they had support for the change from the top. Those involved did a lot of research on the school's mission and goals and designed a program based on mission driven objectives.

Tatiana also attended a second session about supporting different student groups by not using stereotypes but instead focusing on developing empathetic relationships with students.

VI. Reports – First Year Experience Proposal Report Update

Michelle Hughes shared an overview of the tutor training session she attended with Theresa Covich and the peer tutors. Michelle was impressed by the work that the students were doing. Within the meeting the peer tutors discussed their reflections on the journal articles Theresa had them read as well as how their tutoring sessions were going. The peer tutors are very involved in communicating with the students in the class and good at communicating what they need in the sessions (bigger rooms etc) with Theresa. A few of the peer tutors related some hard conversations they have had with students calling for the students to take ownership of their learning and coming to the tutoring sessions better prepared to engage with the material.

Tatiana reported that Mark is interested in getting money for the pilot project this next fall from the Student Success fund but that the E-Team is not distributing money from the fund so for this next year we are working within the resources we have. Part of the Student Success vision for next year is an even allocation of First Year students within the Old and New Testament sections. So 15 seats will be removed from the sections and preserved for First Year students, which means that Perspectives on World History (HIS-010) with Marianne Robins will be the only section used as part of the pilot project this fall semester. Support will also be given for Philosophical Perspectives (PHI-006) with Mark Nelson, but due to limited sections being offered and seat caps there will not be a separate section for First Year students. Instead additional support on reading strategies and participation in class will be given, especially since the text book that Mark uses is more difficult.

VII. Reports – RIL Syllabus Evaluation Status Report Update

There are a few final syllabi reviews needed and one final syllabus needed for Kya Mangrum's ENG-006 section that is not in the syllabus archive. Tatiana will connect with Kya to get a copy of her syllabus so that it can be reviewed.

Based on the evaluations performed there was one syllabus that was an issue, but we do not anticipate that the professor will continue teaching at Westmont.

We will continue discussing this issue in our next meeting.

VIII. Discuss a Response to the Kinesiology Departments Questions about a PEA Requirement Reduction Proposal

Steve updated the committee on his conversations with the Kinesiology department and a proposal to reduce the number of PEA courses required within the GE. The Kinesiology department was not happy with proposal. They believe that the requirement should stay at 4 as it is still important for students to be out and active given that our culture is so sedentary.

The department wanted to know how many other areas are being asked to reduce their GE offerings and how much of this question is based on the changes in the way we have to pay adjuncts. Steve will respond to the department to let them know the reason we started the conversation was based on the Senior Survey results and the subsequent conversation the GE Committee had with Gregg Afman. At the time, Gregg seemed open to the idea of reducing the PEA GE requirement to 3 courses. Steve will follow up on the conversation and try to assess what has changed since then.

IX. Other Business

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Hardley