

**MINUTES**  
**General Education Committee**  
**May 5, 2020**  
**2:00-3:30 p.m.**  
**Zoom chat**

**Members present:** Steve Contakes (Professor of Chemistry and Committee Chair), Paul Delaney (Professor of English), 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:**

**I. Prayer** – Steve Contakes

**II. The minutes from March 27, 2020 were approved with some corrections.**

**III. PRC's Response to the GE Annual Report**

The Program Review Committee (PRC) was pleased with the work that was done by the GE Committee this year. There were no corrections requested to the final report of the GE Committee's activities.

**IV. Reading Imaginative Literature**

Additional information is needed within the Reading Imaginative Literature assessment before this work can move forward. Tatiana will work with Manuela to get the final data to Paul. Once received, a decision can be made on whether conversations on assessment can continue now or will need to be continued in the fall semester.

There was one syllabus that was not in compliance. This syllabus is for a position that is open, and no information on a permanent hire is currently available. We won't have any information until at least July. If a new person is hired, then we will work with department chair directly to make sure the new faculty member is aware of the syllabus guidelines and how to embed GE information into a syllabus.

**V. Race, Social Justice and Equity in the GE Curriculum**

The GE Committee was asked what guidance and advice we could give to Senate as they consider any revisions to the GE program to incorporate issues of race, social justice and equity.

The strength of the GE Committee's contribution to this process may be contributing context to how this document is actually used. Making edits to the

beginning sections may not be seen by students and faculty, but modifying the certification criteria is where the changes would have the most impact. Faculty would have to adjust their syllabi to the new certification criteria, and students would see those topics being noted in each course

It was noted that one way to ensure Westmont students are getting an adequate engagement in ways that makes sense would be to modify one or more of the GE categories. All students take Common Context courses, so this may be the place to have the biggest impact. The RS classes (Old Testament and Christian Doctrine), the Philosophical Reflection course (focusing on the role of justice) or the HIS-010 class would be the most logical choices.

Other logical areas would be the Reading Imaginative Literature, Life Science, Thinking Globally or Understanding Society areas within the Common Inquiries. We would also revise the Competent Action area to incorporate these concepts.

The concern with changing the certification criteria is that some courses may need to be delisted from the impacted category. It is not a trivial thing to have courses delisted from the GE. Impacts on faculty load, course enrollment and ease of graduation on students should be considered as changes are being considered to the certification criteria.

Another concern with modifying an existing GE category would be whether the faculty teaching in that area have the skills and expertise to handle these topics well. Some faculty not equipped with these skills, so additional training in this area may be needed. Some of the faculty who need the training most are also the least likely to come to training sessions.

We could also consider adding a requirement to the GE (Racial Equality and Justice?). There is always a concern with making our GE bigger. Ideally, if this route was chosen, we would have a critical mass of courses that overlap with another area of the GE, similar to the Quantitative and Analytical Reasoning GE. In this way, students could complete this new requirement while also completing another GE in the context of another course. It was noted that if we add a GE category then we should strongly consider dropping a GE category.

We should also make the suggestion to tie the Diversity ILO to the issues of race, social justice and equity.

The committee noted that some thinking should be done on how to move forward with any change once a decision is made. How might we pull other partners into the conversation (Student Life)? What is a reasonable timeline for implementation, and how this is communicated to the students? All of these items should also be considered.

Steve will work on creating a draft of the committee's thinking and our initial preferences for Senate to use in their discussions. The GE Committee members will look at the draft document in advance of our next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Michelle Hardley