

**MINUTES**  
**General Education Committee**  
**September 23, 2020**  
**2:00-3:30 p.m.**  
**Zoom**

**Members present:** Steve Contakes (Professor of Chemistry and Committee Chair), Michelle Hardley (Registrar), Steve Hodson (Professor of Music), Jana Mayfield Mullen (Director of the Westmont Library), Tatiana Nazarenko (Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness), Rachel Winslow (Professor of History)

**Absent:**

**I. Prayer** – Tatiana Nazarenko

**II. Approve the Minutes of September 9th**  
The meeting minutes were approved.

**III. Reports**

**A. Modern Foreign Language GE Discussions**

Mary Doctor presented to the Senate on the 6 year report and action plan for the Modern Language department. In their external review it was recommended that they consider implementing a competency based Modern Foreign Language GE requirement versus a semester based GE requirement. They are interested in this, and would like to explore and implement the change by fall 2021.

Committee members noted that this is an ambitious timeline, and questions whether the impacts of a proposal have been fully explored. There were concerns on what this change would do to the teaching loads for the faculty, timelines for graduation for students, as well as the Greek and Hebrew course enrollment (as few students come in with these languages to build off of. There were also questions on what competency level would be determined for the GE requirement.

This will be a continued topic of conversation with the Modern Language department.

**B. Reasoning Abstractly Assessment Discussions**

Steve met with Jim Taylor and Russ Howell on the assessment of the Reasoning Abstractly GE area. This area has not been comprehensively assessed before. Prior assessment was done as part of a larger assessment project, but we have never focused in on just this area.

There was a prior rubric developed in the earlier assessment which could be modified for the current assessment efforts. Neither Jim nor Russ thought this was a good year to yield quality assessment data. David VanderLaan who teaches the Logic course is on sabbatical all year, so the only faculty members who could participate this year would be pre-tenure faculty. Given this, we might want to consider pushing this routine assessment activity back one year to 2021-2022.

Committee members discussed and decided that a timeline of refining the assessment tools (spring 2021), collecting the data (fall 2021) and closing the loop (spring 2022) would be a better option for moving this assessment forward. Either a faculty member in Mathematics or David VanderLaan would be the best to lead this assessment over the next year and a half.

C. **Michelle Hardley – REJR Memo to Senate**

Senate has recently charged the GE Committee to work on proposed changes to the GE in light of the conversations on race and ethnicity, so it was not necessary to present the memo to the Senate. The memo we worked on can be considered an internal document for our use to help refine the GE Combined document

**IV. Report on Charges from Mark Sargent**

Tatiana and Mark discussed the charge to the GE Committee to examine the GE Combined document and suggest areas for changes to the based on the recent race and ethnicity discussions. This work is due November 3<sup>rd</sup> for Senate's consideration.

The committee discussed areas whether it would be better to add these concepts into the existing categories or propose that a new GE category be added to the GE.

Adding it to an existing GE category would give it due attention, but it runs into two possible barriers. The first is that there may not be sufficient space in a course to add in additional material on race and ethnicity. When you add in new topics to cover, you run the risk of covering all of the material poorly or in haste. This does not seem like an optimal way forward to respond to the material and to the concerns of the students.

The second is that the faculty who teach in the chosen GE area may not have the expertise to teach in the areas of race and ethnicity. This runs the risk of creating a bad experience for the students and the faculty member. In all of our plans, our first goal is to do no harm.

Students were in favor of having a required course or experience in this area that all students would need to complete. Rachel suggested the idea of creating a separate Common Inquiry that would deal with Race and Ethnicity, and to keep

the GE units down one of the requirements for inclusion would be that any proposed course has to also meet another Common Inquiry requirement. This would allow a student to double or triple dip with one course, thereby lightening the burden on students to complete this additional educational experience. It would also allow the college to highlight the courses it already offers in various departments, versus creating something totally new. We would need an assessment of how many courses we currently have that can reasonably be considered for this new GE area. The list of diversity courses updated by Dinora Cardoso in 2017 can be a start, but we need to develop a working definition of what we are looking for, then apply that definition to the list to see how many courses stand in alignment.

Proposal for a way forward:

1. Steve Contakes will work on a proposal for infusing some of the basic concepts on race and ethnicity into various GE areas (possibly the Common Context)
2. Rachel will work on the initial steps to craft a whole new GE category (with certification criteria and student learning outcomes) and identify existing classes that may fit the criteria and outcomes. She will have this language in place for consideration next week.
3. We can discuss the proposed language so that we have a working document in place for our next meeting on October 14<sup>th</sup>. We can do a syllabus review for possible courses that might fit in with the proposed certification criteria and student learning outcomes.

There is still the possibility that instead of simply adding a GE category we could also collapse two existing Common Inquiries so that we end up with the same number of Common Inquiries once the revisions are complete. This could be something else we continue to discuss.

## **V. Discuss Agenda Setting and Assign Tasks**

We can consider discussing the GE assessment reports in our November or December meeting.

The Serving Society, Enacting Justice area also still needs to be discussed from last year's data with Enrico Manlapig's analysis. This is something we will take up after the GE revisions for race and ethnicity conversations have concluded.

It will be an extended conversation as there are a lot of stakeholders. Steve Hodson will take the lead in this area. He may have some initial conversations in the fall (being careful to separate these conversations from the ongoing race and ethnicity discussions) with most of the work done in the spring. The end goal would be to develop a proposal for what this category should be and how it should move forward. Then the existing courses can be evaluated against that vision to see where courses may need to be pruned or added.

**VI. Philosophical Reflections Report Discussion**

The PRC said that the report on the Philosophical Reflections assessment was an excellent report, but they would like the GE Committee's perspective on it as the GE Committee was not involved in the assessment.

The GE Committee commends the department for taking on this work independently, and they had some additional questions based on the research methods used and the results of the assessment work. The GE Committee would like to see the rationale for the rubric used and benchmark that was selected. Are these standard rubrics and benchmarks used on other campuses? There were also two different prompts that were used, and one faculty member met the benchmark while the other did not. The GE Committee recommended that they standardize the prompt and redo the assessment for the faculty member who did not meet the benchmark and the faculty member who did not teach a section of the assessed course last year. Based on current conditions and a sabbatical in the department, repeating this assessment in the next three years seems to be a reasonable timeframe.

We need to file our own GE Assessment report to the PRC October 15<sup>th</sup>. In this we don't need to mention the Philosophical Reflections report as the Philosophy department completed it a year early, but we do need to cover the Reading Imaginative Literature and Old Testament, New Testament and Christian Doctrine assessment. The suggestion was made to ask for an extension as we have not received the needed reports in order to complete our report.

**VII. Other Business**

None

Respectfully submitted,  
Michelle Hardley