

**General Education Committee
Minutes**

January 18, 2017

Present: Don Wilathgamuwa
Melinda Tilton
Matthew Queen
Emily Arendt
Leanne Gilbertson
Megan Thomas
Matt Redinger (ex-officio)

Bernie Quetchenbach
James Barron
Brent Finger
Tom Regele
Elizabeth Fullon
Tara Haupt (ex-officio)

Absent: Patricia Nichols*
Ken Miller

John Roberts*
Scott Harris*

*excused

Guest: Mark Jacobson

Jim Barron, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:19 p.m. in the SUB Missouri room.

The minutes of December 12 were accepted as presented.

I. ITEMS – FIRST READING

Item 26 Gen Ed Course: M 130 Mathematics for Elementary Teachers I. Submit for category I.A. Mathematics.

Item 26.a Gen Ed Course: M 131 Mathematics for Elementary Teachers II. Remove from category I.A. Mathematics.

Mark Jacobson, Chair of Mathematics, noted that the College of Education faculty who taught math education courses resigned, and a new faculty member has been hired. She has redeveloped the M 130 course, which many students skip. The M 131 course is currently in Gen Ed, but the Math Department and the COE would like to trade out M 131 and add M 130 to Gen Ed instead. It was noted that there may be some issues for students who are re-admits—coming back to school after an absence—but those will be handled on a case by case basis. Also, it would be better to have as few Gen Ed courses with prerequisites as possible.

- Motion by Bernie Quetchenbach, seconded by Tom Regele to **accept Items 26 and 26.a.**
- Motion carried.

II. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Discuss “General Education Transformed” by Paul Gaston

It seems that there is now this idea around campus that the GEC will change Gen Ed. This is not necessarily the case. However, there are things we can do to retain students and improve the program without changing the Gen Ed program.

It was noted that, all this time, D2L has offered an ePortfolio. Students, not faculty, could add artifacts to this portfolio whenever they want. Why don't we make use of this and have the students track their progress in Gen Ed through ePortfolio? The portfolios are also set up with the capacity to be shared with faculty and other students. We have renewed our contract with D2L so we know this option will be available for at least the next ten years. Leanne Gilbertson stated that she will be attending an ePortfolio conference with Sue Balter-Reitz, Director of eLearning, next week.

It was suggested that we could require a Gen Ed ePortfolio for all students, where they would include artifacts: assignments, projects, videos, artwork, whatever they find relevant. We could then ask them to plan out their Gen Ed choices, and reflect on the courses and how they helped or didn't help their college careers. We could create a template for a final reflective piece. This could even be part of a student's capstone course, since all programs have a capstone, and the responsibility and work would be the student's, not the faculty member's. If we are teaching our Gen Ed courses to meet the outcomes, no extra work should be required of the faculty.

If this is to work, we need buy-in from the students. We don't want to receive a bunch of essays that say, “I don't know how this helped me.” Faculty buy-in won't be hard because the onus is all on the student. However, someone will have to read all of these essays. It was responded that we wouldn't have to read all of them, but rather a sampling. A committee could be formed for this once a year.

It was agreed that, at the next Senate meeting, a short report will be given to state that we examined the Gen Eds of other universities, we have contingents going to conferences this month and next month, we read Gaston's “General Education Transformed,” and we like the ePortfolio idea. In addition, a reflective written essay about Gen Ed should be required of each student. It was noted that we should prepare a presentation to Senate, at a later time, which shows how the ePortfolio works.

Gen Ed review is still a responsibility of the GEC. We really need to have “teeth” from the Senate, to be able to pull courses from Gen Ed that are not meeting the outcomes. We also need to review the outcomes and pare them down.

The meeting adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna.