

**General Education Committee  
Retreat Minutes**

September 2, 2010

<b>Present:</b>	George Czyz Melinda Tilton Neil Suits Matt Redinger Neil Jussila Elizabeth Fullon Tasneem Khaleel (ex-officio)	Bernie Quetchenbach Kurt Toenjes Mike Havens Tom Regele Michael Scarlett Brent Roberts
<b>Absent:</b>	Mark Fenderson	Kathe Gabel
<b>Presiding:</b>	Matt Redinger, Chairperson	

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Matt Redinger called the meeting to order at 11:09 a.m. in the Missouri room.

I. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

**A. NWCCU Report**

Dr. Redinger reported that Northwest liked what we did, but didn't love it. They said our outcomes were unmeasurable and vague, which we discussed on multiple occasions. They also said some of our outcomes were inappropriate for Gen Ed, but did not specify which ones. We do not plan to revisit the assessment system this year.

**B. Finalizing Course Vetting Procedures**

This topic was left over from last year, as we have not yet finalized a system. We need to find a way to make sure that the Gen Ed courses which may have been passed from instructor to instructor over the years are still appropriate for Gen Ed. Last year we talked about the Department Chairs doing this review on a rotating basis. It was suggested that the courses could be compared to their original submission paperwork to make sure they still measure up to those justifications. It was cited that really, we need to verify that the courses in Gen Ed are meeting the current learning objectives. If a Chair finds a course is not meeting those objectives, it is up to the Department to resolve the situation, or even pull the course from Gen Ed. It was noted that if a course is removed from the Gen Ed list, there may be impacts to majors which require that course.

It was suggested that courses could be reviewed by department/rubric, or by category, on a three-year basis. It was noted that the review should really align with the catalog schedule. It was agreed that all Gen Ed courses would be reviewed every other year, coinciding with the catalog revisions (i.e. even years).

### **C. Criteria for Inclusion of Courses in General Education**

We do not have any firm criteria for including or excluding courses from Gen Ed. Last year, we used the learning outcomes which is inappropriate because they are purposefully vague. This year, we should revisit the Academic Foundations application process and revise from there. We will also put a moratorium on any new courses in Gen Ed until this process is complete.

The meeting briefly adjourned for lunch, from 11:30 to 12:00.

### **D. Enrollment in Gen Ed Courses**

Dr. Redinger distributed (via email) spreadsheets which detail the enrollments of all Gen Ed/Academic Foundations courses for the last seven years. He asked the Committee to look at them and make note of any big trends. He stressed that this information will not be used to decide which courses stay or go in Gen Ed. It was noted that it would also be interesting to know which majors take which Gen Ed courses, that is, a breakdown of Gen Ed course enrollments by major. It was cited that I.T. does have such a report and it will be requested. (Note: the Committee later learned that this report is not broken down into Gen Ed courses, but rather includes all courses, so the report is not useful.)

### **E. Board of Regents and the LEAP (Liberal Education & America's Promise) Essential Learning Outcomes**

It was noted that there are basically three different cores available to students. Students can take the MUS core, which is 30 credits, and transfer it anywhere in Montana. Students also have the option to transfer in 20 credits of the MUS core and opt to finish the MUS core rather than the MSU Billings core, but they must have 20 credits completed prior to transfer. Students can take the MSUB 37 credit core. There is now being developed an online core as part of the virtual community college initiative. Dean Khaleel noted that the online, or "streamlined," core is being developed as a result of a grant, but they have now decided they are going to use it as well.

Dean Khaleel noted that the MUS General Education Council has deemed a couple of our courses as unacceptable because they do not meet the MUS objectives. They are doing this with all campuses as part of the transferability initiative. It was noted that also at the Gen Ed Council there was a proposal by Brian Price, a member, to completely eliminate Gen Ed. Students would learn the content within their major though a course such as "History of Mathematics" and there would be almost no faculty qualified to teach such courses. Students would take 25% fewer courses and graduate in three years instead of four. The implementation of such a plan would be a huge mess, and what would result is that we would be doing training rather than educating citizens. It would change our whole mission. The real concern with this proposal is that so often with the Commissioner's Office, an idea is up for discussion, but by the next meeting it is an action item or it is now "the plan" going forward. It was cited that if we really want to prepare our students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we

need to require a foreign language of all students. However, we have neither the staff nor the funding.

#### **F. First Year Experience (FYE) and Gen Ed**

This effort is centered on retention of freshmen students. We are currently in a two-year pilot program with the new two-credit course. The problem is, the two credit course does not fit anywhere. The long-term goal is to make this a required course for all students. Many assume it will be added to Gen Ed, but the course as it stands now is not appropriate for Gen Ed because it's mainly a college success strategies course. We will have to address this at some point in the future. It was noted that our former Chancellor proposed that we simply add two credits to every program, from 120 to 122 and 128 to 130. Bozeman requires their FYE in their Gen Ed core, but it is counted as a writing course.

It was cited that the value of this kind of course lies in a student reading something along with his or her professor and realizing they are smart, too. For many, it's the first academic discussion they have participated in.

#### **G. Meeting Schedule**

Meetings will be every other Wednesday, starting September 22, at 3:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna.