

**General Education Committee
Minutes**

September 21, 2015

Present:	Don Wilathgamuwa	David Craig
	Melinda Tilton	Kurt Toenjes
	Matthew Queen	Jennifer Lynn
	Tom Regele	John Roberts
	Leanne Gilbertsen	Patricia Nichols
	Rosemarie Dugi	Scott Harris
	Elizabeth Fullon	Megan Thomas
	Colin Buck (student)	Matt Redinger (ex-officio)

Absent: Brent Finger*

*excused

The meeting was called to order at 2:32 p.m. in McMullen 305.

I. ELECTION OF CHAIR & CHAIR ALTERNATE FOR 2015-2016

- Melinda Tilton **nominated Kurt Toenjes for Chair**, and Jennifer Lynn seconded.
- Motion to approve Kurt Toenjes carried with 1 opposed.

Melinda Tilton volunteered to be Chair Alternate.

II. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

Dr. Toenjes stated that we don't have our assessment data yet, since the results were not submitted this summer. We will have it soon, but this Committee's focus will not be on faculty participation in assessment as it has been in the past few years. It is still a concern, but the GEC discusses Gen Ed.

A. Retention in General Education

It was noted that when the Chancellor talks about students "changing the world" with their degrees, that is what Gen Ed is about. Gen Ed is under scrutiny for retention. There have been rumors of yet another total rebuild of Gen Ed, but that doesn't seem like a solution, especially since we don't yet have enough years' worth of data to make decisions about what Gen Ed should be.

There are other retention initiatives already started this semester, including courses linked with remedial writing and reading courses and additional recitation sections for chemistry that have proven useful to students.

Matt Redinger, Vice Provost, stated that he just found out we will not be getting the Title III grant due to some technical issues. However, as Provost Hoar has mentioned, the application process helped us identify problems. Now, we just have to find a different way to pay for solutions. Half of our freshman class don't come back. We can't assume that Student Affairs is going to fix that problem for the faculty. Montana also happens to be at a low point for high school graduates, just because of birth rate fluctuations. So, rather than recruiting new students to replace the ones we are losing, it's a much better plan to keep those who are dropping out. One major indicator seems to be that students are academically eligible to return (that is, they did not fail all their classes) but do not return because they failed one or two key courses, and those courses usually happen to be Gen Ed courses. The Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education, which MSUB has partnered with for the next three years, is going to crunch a mountain of data for us and identify courses that are tripping up students. Everything from student demographic data to online versus on-site courses will be included. We are currently in the planning stage with that project. However, once we have that information, we must still be aware that there may be other, more complex issues behind success and failure for students in given courses.

Dr. Redinger also noted that we are beginning the Gateways to Completion project, which will bring together faculty from MSUB and all over the country to talk about how each of them teaches a specific course. This program will be entirely voluntary and interest-based on the part of the faculty.

It was noted that if you go to college and complete your degree, you will be a better person, and Gen Ed is a big part of that. We need to sell that idea.

It was cited that we also need to be asking our current students their thoughts and opinions about what works and what doesn't in Gen Ed courses.

The minutes of April 13 were accepted as presented.

The meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna.