

**General Education Committee
Minutes**

January 23, 2018

Present:	Tien Chih	Bernie Quetchenbach
	Melinda Tilton	Jim Barron
	Matthew Queen	Emily Arendt
	Tom Regele	Leanne Gilbertson
	Cori Hart	Scott Harris
	Brenna Beckett (student)	Tara Haupt (ex-officio)
Absent:	John Roberts*	Rebecca Muller
	Lance Mouser*	Megan Thomas*
	Shayla Garman (student)	

*excused

Jim Barron called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. in the SUB Missouri room.

The minutes of December 7 were accepted as presented.

I. ASSESSMENT UPDATE/VICE PROVOST REPORT

Dr. Barron reported that, in December, the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate urged the GEC chairs to meet with Vice Provost Matt Redinger and Registrar Cheri Johannes to figure out how to encourage students to take the ETS test in the Spring semester. The Admissions Office already sends letters to students in January, if they will be seniors the following Fall, advising them about applying for graduation and other concerns. This is around 700 students this year. The idea is the GEC sends an additional letter to these students, informing them they will be required to take the ETS test before they will be allowed to register for Fall 2018 (registration begins March 19). This is known as a registration hold. However, students will not be told that this is a fake hold. No students will actually be held from registration. Dr. Barron and Ms. Tilton put together a letter to faculty and deans, urging them to encourage students to get the testing done. Students will be able to take the test online, unproctored, at no cost. Two on-campus sessions will be offered in February, in case anyone wants to take it in person. These students, at the time of testing, will be juniors rather than seniors. It was noted that this seemed to be the best option for Spring, since creating a real hold would take too much time, as would building a checkbox in DegreeWorks.

It was stated that this is an ethical issue. If word gets out, and it will, that we have threatened our students with a fake registration hold, our credibility will go down and we may even lose students as a result.

We still have issues with a graduation requirement, not the least of which is the Senate seems to be opposed to the idea. A random sampling of seniors is unfair to students (some must take a two-hour test while others don't have to), and volunteer students mean the sample is no longer random. The graduation requirement also must be noticed in advance to students; we can't start enforcing a requirement, should it be approved, until students who have come in on the newest catalog reach their senior year.

It was noted that regardless of our efforts this semester, we don't have actionable data. Therefore, we cannot make any close-the-loop statements in our report to NWCCU. Future plans for data from ETS testing and other assessments of Gen Ed will not be enough. It is highly likely we will get a recommendation (also known as a mandate) from NWCCU about assessment of Gen Ed because we are not getting it done *now*. It was noted that many faculty seem to be unaware of the importance of assessing Gen Ed courses and that our accrediting body, NWCCU, has asked for assessment repeatedly.

It was agreed that we will not attempt the "fake hold" idea with students. The letter will still be sent, encouraging students to take the test and perhaps even mentioning that this will be a requirement in the future. Students will get their graduation fee waived if they take the test this semester as well. The letter to faculty and deans will also go out, asking faculty to encourage their students to take the test.

It was cited that if the GEC can get authorization for either a registration hold or a graduation requirement, it will have to be put in the catalog or MSUB may be liable. If a registration hold is the choice, who will create and release those holds?

It was agreed that the GEC will push forward with its original recommendation, sent to the Academic Senate in January 2017, that the ETS test be required of all students before they graduate.

II. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Biennial Review of Gen Ed Courses Status Report (Due February 28)

The request for Chairs to review their Gen Ed courses went out during Finals Week in December, and again the day before the Spring semester started. The Committee will need to review all these reports once they come in. It was agreed the reports will be posted on the Box online, and the review work will be divided up at a future meeting.

B. Gen Ed Core Statement of Purpose Homework/Contest

The request for each Committee member to create a Gen Ed core statement will go out soon, and those will be uploaded to the Box as well.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna.