

**General Education Committee
Minutes**

October 14, 2019

Present:	Tien Chih	Bernie Quetchenbach
	Melinda Tilton	Jason Comer
	Matt Queen	Josh Hill
	Emily Arendt	Leanne Gilbertson
	Cori Day	Will Hobbs
	Brian Gurney	Megan Thomas
	Naomi Norris (student)	Jordan Neff (student)
	Kathleen Thatcher (ex-officio)	
Absent:	Randi O'Brien	Lance Mouser*

*excused

Melinda Tilton called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m. in the SUB Missouri Room.

The minutes of September 9 were accepted with a correction.

I. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Assessment Update

The Committee welcomed new Assessment Director, Dr. Kathleen Thatcher. Dr. Thatcher noted that she is mainly here to listen and learn. She noted that she was the director of assessment at Casper College when they overhauled their Gen Ed, and also participated in the creation of a first-ever common core at St. Louis University. She stated that she will not bring mandates, but rather resources to the Committee.

It was noted that it is important that the GEC stay student-focused. The MUS Gen Ed Core will be changing. Why change our current Gen Ed when we have no data that it's a problem for retention? Do we want to move away from the distribution (menu) format for Gen Ed?

Dr. Thatcher noted that there is national research including all U.S. institutions that students make better connections when courses are not compartmentalized into disciplines. Team teaching across disciplines, theme projects, and other concepts are being used by about a third of all U.S. institutions. About a third still use the distributed model. The remaining third are doing a hybrid of the two.

If the GEC is being tasked with “reimagining Gen Ed,” we need to know what it is we are trying to accomplish. We need to know what the perceived problems are with the current Gen Ed. We’ve made huge progress in the last four years.

We have data from the last couple years, using the ETS test. We showed that our incoming students are at a lower level, and we are moving them to the national average, which is impressive. We have now learned from the Provost that the ETS test will no longer be used. Apparently cost was the major factor, but another problem is the ETS test does not cover all of our Gen Ed program. The GEC had set out to design a second assessment to get at those outcomes not covered by ETS.

B. MUS Gen Ed Committee Update

It was noted that the Provost attended the first MUS Core meeting, and she reported on it at the last Academic Senate meeting. She intends to get a faculty member representative on the MUS committee soon. She reported that the System is concerned that there are many courses that are listed as Gen Eds but only accepted at one campus—the campus which offers them. The MUS Gen Ed Committee will focus on two choices for revision: (1) creating a core within the core of 12 to 15 credits which all campuses will be required to offer and accept, and (2) creating themes that all campuses could put courses into so all courses fit one theme or another.

It was noted that it will be two to three years before students begin taking any new Gen Ed, so we have time to carefully consider what we will do.

C. Biennial Review of Gen Ed Courses: Template & Example

It was noted that since we don’t yet know what will come of the MUS Gen Ed Committee meetings, we should work on the tasks we know we need to finish. At our next meeting we will prepare a revised letter to chairs with clearer directives. It was suggested that if we are moving toward an ePortfolio, we could ask in this same letter for some examples of student work. That way, we can get an idea of what we would be receiving. It was noted that in the past, our plan was that every student taking a Gen Ed course would submit one or two artifacts illustrating a Gen Ed outcome, and the GEC would then review a sample of those, rather than all of them. The issue is, how does the Committee get access to and gather that information? It was cited that submitting artifacts electronically also limits the breadth of what can be included, especially with performances. A video can be submitted, but being recorded fundamentally changes a presentation. Art may be intended to be experienced in person, not as a static photo. Group work is also difficult to document. It was also noted that we can’t evaluate an essay if we don’t know the context, so the question needs to be included as well. Reminders of the review process could be sent this semester, with the full letter going out in January. We could ask in the letter what kind of assessments faculty use for the Gen Ed outcomes.

The meeting adjourned at 4:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna.