

**General Education Committee
Minutes**

September 9, 2019

Present: Bernie Quetchenbach
Jason Comer
Josh Hill
Leanne Gilbertson
Will Hobbs
Megan Thomas
Christine Shearer (ex-officio)

Melinda Tilton
Matt Queen
Randi O'Brien
Cori Day
Lance Mouser
Melinda Arnold (ex-officio)

Absent: Tien Chih
Brian Gurney*

Emily Arendt*

*excused

Melinda Tilton called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. in the SUB Missouri Room.

I. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Discussion with Provost Melinda Arnold & Associate Provost Christine Shearer

Dr. Arnold noted that we have a distributed model of Gen Ed, and students don't understand it. They don't get why they take what they take. The GEC has done great work over the last year to create a "mission statement" (Gen Ed Purpose Statement) and closely followed the MUS Core. Dr. Arnold now suggests that the Committee redistribute the courses around the four themes she pulled from the purpose statement: promote the development of respect for diversity, along with skills in problem solving, critical thinking, and communication. ASMSUB will be doing focus groups with students to find out perceptions about Gen Ed, and she needs to find a faculty advisor for this effort. Better presentation of our Gen Ed to students is part of the strategic plan (sub-objective 1.4 under theme 1). We all need to work toward a common goal of a more understandable Gen Ed for students.

Provost Arnold noted that not all of our current Gen Ed list of courses will fit into the four-theme system, and there are too many courses.

It was cited that decisions about staffing, about whether a course should be offered, should not be conflated with GEC decisions about whether the course is appropriate for Gen Ed. A course can fill a Gen Ed need but not enroll well. It was noted that there are courses currently in Gen Ed that are only there as a pilot, or to earn FTE for a department, and they are still there even though the courses are not really appropriate to Gen Ed.

Provost Arnold stated that, due to budget constraints, we can no longer offer courses that are new and interesting to faculty, but which have low enrollments. Getting students into courses is everyone's job, including faculty.

When students look at our Gen Ed list, do they see a program? We need an intentional structure that students will understand as a program, which will also make assessment easier. Instructors should be able to articulate how each course meets the objectives of Gen Ed, and that information should then trickle down to the advisors in the Advising Center, so they get the students where they need to go. A part of that may be A&SC 111. Right now it's not required, and it should be. Make the course meaningful and tied to Gen Ed themes—a Gen Ed “sales pitch,” if you will.

It was noted that NWCCU commended us for aligning with the MUS Gen Ed Core. Provost Arnold noted that the MUS Gen Ed Committee is being reconvened and the Core will be changing in the near future. It was noted that we then shouldn't change our structure if it's just going to need to change again.

It was cited that we have so few criteria for Gen Ed (and even less if we use the four themes) that almost any course can be deemed appropriate for Gen Ed. How do we then exclude courses? The Committee will have to decide criteria with real teeth, and agree that adding more courses (bloat) is not a good idea. This will not be easy.

The Provost & Associate Provost had to leave for another meeting.

It was noted that we do not appear to have data related to high DFWI courses in Gen Ed causing students to not understand the Gen Ed program, or that not understanding Gen Ed causes students to drop out. Also, a high DFWI rate does not necessarily mean the course is the problem.

However, we can always work toward a cohesive vision of Gen Ed that all faculty share. We don't have to scrap what we have. We need to get faculty to agree “who we are as MSUB,” is a part of this unified Gen Ed that makes sense to students.

II. ELECTION OF CHAIR(S) FOR 2019-2020

Melinda Tilton and Bernie Quetchenbach agreed to continue.

- Motion by Will Hobbs, seconded by Matt Queen to accept Melinda Tilton and Bernie Quetchenbach as co-chairs for the 2019-2020 year.

- Motion carried.

III. Acceptance of Minutes

The minutes of April 10 and August 27 were accepted as presented.

The meeting adjourned at 4:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna.