



**General Education Committee
Minutes**

January 19, 2021

Present: Bernie Quetchenbach
Jason Comer
Emily Arendt
Randi O'Brien
Lance Mouser
Tami Haaland (ex-officio)

Melinda Tilton
Matt Queen
Mara Pierce
Leanne Gilbertson
Megan Thomas

Absent: Tien Chih
Jeff Willardson
Brian Gurney*

Josh Hill*
Cori Day*

*excused

Guests: Anne Cole
Kathleen Thatcher

Melinda Tilton called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. via Webex.

I. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

The minutes of November 18 were accepted as presented.

II. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Information & Updates/Review of General Education Purpose Statement

Ms. Tilton proposed the Committee review the Gen Ed purpose statement before moving on to outcomes. It was agreed that the GEC, and the Senate, think our Gen Ed program should stay in alignment with the MUS Core. We don't plan any radical changes to our Gen Ed curriculum, but rather improvements that will lead to a cohesive, wisely sequenced program.

It was noted that past administrators have pushed to re-vamp the Gen Ed program, without data supporting why it should be done. Since the program is doing what it's supposed to but students don't understand, we can improve our messaging. Student satisfaction with Gen Ed may increase once we improve how the program, as a whole, is presented to them. Some preliminary research done by the GEC a few years ago indicated that our students are progressing more than our peer institutions. That is, our incoming students start out at a lower level, and we bring them to the same

level as our peer institutions. The MSUB strategic plan does use the term “reimagine Gen Ed,” but the Chancellor and Interim Provost have given the go-ahead to change that language.

It was agreed that our Gen Ed purpose does not need revision. Adding to it may make it less clear.

B. Examination of Gen Ed Categories

In reviewing our categories, other institutions were also reviewed. Bozeman’s structure is much more loose, and as a result, confusing. They have many integrative elements, which we can borrow without completely changing our categories. The group was in agreement that we don’t need to change the Gen Ed categories.

C. Gen Ed Program Outcomes

Several institutions with program outcomes were reviewed: some had as many as 14 while some have as few as 5. Most of these institutions don’t map their program outcomes to categories. Thus, the outcomes are meant to assess the whole knowledge a student should have by the time Gen Ed is completed. We have been assessing, through our 30 outcomes, the building blocks that lead to that whole knowledge. Kathleen Thatcher, Director of Assessment & Accreditation, noted that many institutions with a small number of program outcomes employ a strategy where each outcome is jam-packed with information, which is then explained in an accompanying rubric. We could do the same.

It was agreed that the GEC will move toward program outcomes instead of outcomes linked to categories.

A draft of program outcomes, created from our existing 30 outcomes, was presented by Leanne Gilbertson. The members will work on these outcomes over the next month.

The question was raised as to whether we should maintain course-level outcomes, which may or may not be published for students, but which will help the GEC decide on appropriateness of new courses submitted for Gen Ed. The issue is, program outcomes will, necessarily, be very broad, and those will not be useful in vetting new course proposals. Should course-level outcomes be published in the catalog? If not the catalog, where should they be maintained?

The draft program outcomes, as well as the other institutions’ outcomes, will be posted in a Box for Committee members to review and revise. The members are also urged to share draft outcomes with colleagues for additional input.

The meeting adjourned at 4:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna.