



**General Education Committee
Minutes**

October 21, 2020

Present:	Tien Chih Melinda Tilton Emily Arendt Jeff Willardson Lance Mouser Christine Shearer (ex-officio)	Bernie Quetchenbach Josh Hill Mara Pierce Brian Gurney Megan Thomas
Absent:	Jason Comer* Randi O'Brien* Cori Day*	Matt Queen* Leanne Gilbertson* Laura Gittings-Carlson (ex-officio)*
	*excused	
Guests:	Austin Bennett Anne Cole	Roger MadPlume Kathleen Thatcher

Melinda Tilton called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. via Webex.

Today's meeting will be short since the all faculty meeting begins at 4:00 p.m.

I. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

The minutes of September 16 were accepted as presented.

II. NEH GRANT PRESENTATION

Austin Bennett & Roger MadPlume, City College Instructors

City College was awarded a grant to reimagine their Gen Ed courses. It's a core of three primary courses in communications, math, and writing, and their goal is to embed ethics by 2022. In summer 2020, professional development for City College faculty was offered, to incorporate environmental, intercultural, medical, and technological ethics. They will use e-portfolios in D2L to tie the whole thing together, and they will be bringing a specialist to set up the e-portfolios in December. The updated courses will be implemented in Spring. The question was raised as to whether the system could be scaled up for the whole Gen Ed program. It was responded that

there is potential, but the program would need to be grouped into something like skill sets. The GEC members were invited to participate in the e-portfolio seminars in December.

An executive summary is attached to these minutes. Mr. Bennett & Mr. MadPlume hope to have an update on the project in a year.

III. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Discussion of Gen Ed Re-Envisioning

It was suggested that we should have a response to people when the question of why we are re-envisioning comes up, beyond the strategic plan. If nothing else, we are reviewing what other institutions are doing and looking for ways to improve our own program.

B. Favorite Features from Other Institutions

Please remember to add your feedback to the Box folder. We will use the favorite features to springboard our discussion at the next meeting.

C. Criteria for Inclusion/Exclusion of Courses in Gen Ed

Questions were raised with no responses. What are the issues with the existing criteria? Is a proposed course unique or different from the courses already in the category? Ask for inclusion of high impact practices? Ask for assignments that illustrate how the course meets the Gen Ed learning outcomes? This could result in a great number of assignments being submitted. How would fewer outcomes impact the vetting of new courses?

We don't want the process to become so onerous that no one can get a course approved.

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna.

Project Summary

Prepared by Austin Grant Bennett and Roger Madplume

Ethical reasoning is an established learning outcome within higher education that can be traced back to the classical era and remains a current need based on national and local employer survey data. ***Ethics Bound: Embedding Ethics into the City College General Core Curriculum*** seeks to utilize a humanities initiative to embed applied ethics across the core curriculum through four themes: environmental, intercultural, medical, and technological. This solution will grow inter-disciplinary study among faculty, generate humanities-based resources, unify the general education curricular, and expand students' ethical reasoning for 77% of students seeking associate-level degrees at Montana State University Billings City College (City College).

City College is a two-year traditional Career and Technical Education (CTE) institution that is continually evolving to serve as a two-year comprehensive community college for Montana State University Billings (MSUB), a four-year regional comprehensive university. The City College general education department consists of nine full-time faculty and eight part-time faculty teaching 17 courses in communications, math, and writing. For 73% of associate-level degrees, these three courses make up the general education core and an average of 673 students take these courses each semester.

With the goal of improving the humanities for faculty and the majority of students, the decision was made to embed applied ethics, a subfield of philosophy, within all communications, math, and writing courses. An embedded curriculum, by design, brings unification while being effective and efficient. First, an integrated, cross-curricular model deepens student learning and cross-contextualizes learning outcomes. Second, courses with common numbers only need to meet 80% of system-wide learning outcomes. Hence, implementation can occur quickly at the college, department, or instructor levels.

To reach an institutionalized goal, a two-and-a-half year program of activities with at least 40 faculty contact hours has been created with three phases: faculty development, curriculum development, and implementation and assessment. First, general education faculty will participate in a series of seminars focused on providing faculty a working knowledge of applied ethics specifically within the four themes. Second, after participating in an additional series of seminars focused on teaching ethics and assessment, faculty will build the curriculum—including outcomes, sub-outcomes, rubrics, coordination of themes, qualitative and quantitative assessments, etc.—based on faculty consensus. Third, faculty will implement the curriculum in the fall of 2021, assess, and revise to scale all courses for spring 2022. Additionally, a sustainable process will be created along with a digital self-study and resource guide to train part-time or new faculty.

By fall 2025, 17 courses, with multiple sections serving an average of 673 students taught by 17 general education faculty, will include an embedded, cross-contextualized ethics education. Ongoing assessments drawn from ePortfolio samples will continue to improve the curriculum and will be included within the seven-year cycle accreditation report. A follow-up survey will assess the long-term effect of the curriculum's impact on students. The project co-directors will disseminate this curricular model to the MSUB general education committee and faculty as well as at a national conference such as the AAC&U Annual Meeting.