



**General Education Committee
Minutes**

November 19, 2021

Present:	Tien Chih Emily Arendt Jason Comer Jeff Willardson Brian Gurney Megan Thomas	Melinda Tilton Rachel Schaffer Sarah Friedman Cori Day Lance Mouser
Absent:	Bernie Quetchenbach* Mara Pierce	Josh Hill* Scott Jeppesen
	*excused	
Guests:	Anne Cole	Kathleen Thatcher

The meeting was called to order at 1:01 p.m. in COE 323 with some members attending via webex.

I. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

The minutes of October 15 were accepted as presented.

II. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. WICHE “Interstate Passport” program – Recommendation to Academic Senate

It appears that the Passport program is going to happen, but the GEC does need to put forward a recommendation to Senate. The Co-Chairs have put in many, many hours discussing Passport with the Provost, WICHE, and OCHE, and are very mindful of the GEC members’ time. The worry that this is just a trend does remain, to a certain extent, because the program is much younger than originally thought. While the program was created in 2010, the rollout just happened in 2016, so no university has completed their five-year commitment yet. However, the Provost feels that this program is worth the cost both in funding and the GEC’s time. It is possible that the Montana University System as a whole may adopt this program, and with that will come possible funding.

It was noted that DegreeWorks will need to be updated to accept Passports. It was noted that Registrar Cheri Johannes stated Passport will make it easier for advisors of transfer students.

The issue of exceptions is still concerning. If students are told they will have a complete Gen Ed by using the Passport, and then they come to MSUB and major in education, they will have to take additional courses. It's a misleading situation and students will be angry. It was suggested that the GEC find out how many exceptions MSUB would actually have, before we endorse Passport to the Senate. The real question is, how rigid are programs' Gen Ed requirements? The Co-Chairs will poll Department Chairs to find out.

It was agreed that the Committee will hold an electronic vote on the recommendation to Senate after receiving the Gen Ed exceptions information.

B. Polishing Language in Gen Ed Purpose Statement

The following changes, originally proposed by Cori Day, were presented.

General education at MSU Billings is designed to ~~initiate~~ **advance** students as participants in the ongoing accumulation of human knowledge and understanding. General education courses promote the development of respect for diversity, along with skills in problem solving, critical thinking, and communication necessary for students ~~to be become~~ productive and responsible members of their communities.

- Motion by Tien Chih, seconded by Cori Day to **adopt the changes to the Purpose Statement.**

- Motion carried.

C. Finalize Criteria for New Gen Ed courses

The following essential criteria were presented:

1. CourseLeaf Criteria: clearly meets the learning outcomes. (course and program level)
2. Course provides entry-level exposure to an academic discipline or a primary subdivision of that discipline. Doesn't presume prior knowledge. (Rachel)
3. Course is open to all students, 100-200 level with no prerequisites. [Lance, math – pre-reqs, co-reqs, or placement score requirements (need for remediation)]
4. Course is not restricted to majors and meets the needs of students in a wide range of knowledge and skills (Jason, SCIN)
5. Course services significant numbers of students from different academic programs.
6. What is novel about this proposed GE course? Are there similar courses in this or other departments?
7. Assessment options – How will learning outcomes be assessed? Please provide a sample assignment(s).
8. Explain the sustainability of course. Can this course be taught by multiple people? How frequently do you anticipate this course being offered?

To be determined:

HIPS – what assignments, projects, etc. demonstrate the learning outcomes

Essential, in light of the university strategic plan OR encourage in all GE, not just for new course proposals.

2. Transferability (preferred?)

It was noted for #3 that math does have issues because those courses have prerequisites. It was suggested that the language be changed to “No college-level prerequisites.” Also, #3 and #5 could be combined. Further, there is a small handful of courses meant for majors. It was agreed to move #4 to Preferred Criteria, rather than Essential.

Regarding #1, better wording would be “Provide evidence that students meet the Gen Ed course and program outcomes.” We can then request student assignments.

Transferability will remain as a Preferred criterion. With Passport coming, it may be even less of an issue.

It was noted that we have to assess whether we are meeting our strategic plan, and we have to assess Gen Ed, so why not do both at the same time. High Impact Practices (HIPs) help with student success and satisfaction. It was argued that making HIPs an essential criteria for Gen Ed will also lock the pedagogy of a given course in place, losing flexibility. We should encourage, but not require HIPs. It was noted that the GEC can always ask about HIPs in the biennial course review.

It was noted that there are new Gen Ed courses currently on their way to the GEC. Those faculty will be asked to meet these criteria.

D. Curriculum mapping

Kathleen Thatcher, Director of Assessment & Accreditation, stated that the maps should be flexible and change over time. Don't get hung up on differentiating between Introduced versus Developed.

Dr. Arendt will compile the information.

E. Roll out/messaging for new Gen Ed program outcomes

It was noted that if we will have the Passport program by next Fall, we can simply piggy-back on that promotion to students. We need only tack on something like, “To make this even easier, we've streamlined our Gen Ed outcomes!” Also, the conversation is still ongoing with A&SC 111 and adding a component to that course that covers the purpose and importance of Gen Ed.

The meeting adjourned at 2:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna.