

Report of the Faculty Council General Education Committee

Academic Year 2005-6

Members of the Committee:

Bill Campbell
Estelle Disch
Shoshanna Ehrlich
Judith Goleman
Peter Langer (ex officio, fall)
Jack Lutts (fall)
Maura Mast (spring)
Sathasivam Mathiyalakan
Terry McLarney
Victoria Palmer-Erbs
Mark Pawlak
Anthony Petruzzi (ex officio)
Marietta Schwartz (ex officio)
Maureen Scully
Brian White
Judith Zeitlin (chair)

Spring term substitutes for members on leave:

Taylor Stoehr
Ann Torke

Submitted June 2006

The Faculty Council GenEd committee met formally seven times during the 2005-6 academic year, with additional committee business taking place via email or through standing and ad hoc subcommittees. Committee membership saw several changes during the fall term, with Maureen Scully replacing Jeff Keisler from the College of Management, Brian White replacing Rachel Skvirsky from the College of Science and Mathematics, and Maura Mast returning from leave to resume her former role as chair of the Quantitative Reasoning subcommittee, replacing Jack Lutts in the spring term. Judy Goleman, who coordinates the Freshman English program, joined the committee this year to contribute her expertise in this important area of General Education. During the spring term, Bill Campbell and Estelle Disch each went on sabbatical leave, and Ann Torke and Taylor Stoehr substituted for them on the committee as interim chairs of the Writing Proficiency Requirement and Seminars Assessment subcommittees, respectively. Peter Langer turned over to Marietta Schwartz his role as Provost's representative to the committee, after assuming his new position as Dean of the Graduate College of Education. Here we summarize the major issues taken on by the committee during the past year, followed by an appendix with a brief description of the membership and tasks undertaken by the standing subcommittees.

One of the primary responsibilities of the GenEd committee is to review changes in General Education structures developed within individual colleges. To that end, the committee reviewed and endorsed changes in the CPCS Critical Learning Seminars in the fall reported on by committee member Shoshanna Ehrlich. CLS courses now engage a cohort of entering freshmen in an expanded, two-semester sequence. Critical inquiry and writing are two of four competencies addressed in the course, which are normally taught by the same instructor both terms, with the assistance of peer advisers, writing tutors, and three faculty experts in digital literacy, writing, and quantitative reasoning, who circulate among the seminar sections. The College of Management informed the committee of its planned change in policy regarding the intercollege transfer of WPR credit, resolving that it will no longer exempt such students from CM's own two-course sequence that comprise the college's version of the WPR and Intermediate Seminar. The committee accepted the change, understanding that the larger issue of intercollegiate transfer of Gen Ed requirements needs full consideration in future meetings. Finally, toward the end of the spring term, the committee received notice of proposed curricular changes in the CNHS Exercise and Health Science program that had implications for QR and Distribution requirements. The proposals were referred to the appropriate subcommittee, which will report back to the full committee next fall.

During the year, the committee continued to work on issues previously identified as priority matters. A review of capstone courses in CLA and CSM departments was begun late in the fall, but a full examination had to be deferred to the 2006-7 committee agenda, as more pressing business came before the committee. We continued to deliberate about how to manage assessment in the vast number of courses fulfilling Distribution requirements in GenEd. At Marietta Schwartz's suggestion, the committee considered sending a delegation to an assessment institute offered by the American Association of Colleges and Universities. However, because the Distribution subcommittee has had its agenda filled with new course proposals and been unable to

focus attention on assessment issues, it was felt that the committee as a whole needed to study our needs and options more closely in order to make full use of participation in such an institute. As part of these ongoing concerns with assessment, the committee authorized Marietta to represent General Education in a campus task force spearheaded by the Graduate College of Education which is exploring the use of electronic portfolios on campus. The group successfully applied for a technology grant from the President's office and will begin work on the project this summer.

The committee spent considerable time deliberating two issues that came before it as a result of subcommittee initiatives. The first of these was a proposal from Bill Campbell, chair of the WPR subcommittee, and Anthony Petruzzi, Director of Writing Assessment, to invite a team of evaluators to campus from the Writing Program Administrators group, a professional organization. While the initial impetus for this proposed visit concerned contemplated changes in the format of the Writing Proficiency Evaluation (as used by CLA, CSM and CNHS to meet the University WPR requirement), the GenEd committee felt that a broader review of student writing in the GenEd curriculum, from Freshman English through the GenEd seminars and Distribution courses, should be part of this review. We also felt that a broader view of how all the undergraduate colleges provide instruction, support, and assessment for writing should be part of the reviewers' mandate. An ad hoc subcommittee was formed in early spring to develop the specifics of this proposal, consisting of Petruzzi, Torke, Taylor, Goleman, Ehrlich, Scully, Pawlak, and Zeitlin. After some discussion of the merits of the proposal with the Faculty Council Executive Committee and other parties, it was decided to bring the proposal before the Academic Council, at which time the Provost and college deans voiced support for the WPA review. Since then the ad hoc group and the WPR subcommittee, augmented by additional representation from CNHS, have been meeting to develop the self-study report needed by the evaluators. The site visit is planned to take place in late October or early November of 2006.

The second matter of intense discussion and review was a proposal from the Distribution subcommittee to make changes in the formal guidelines by which courses were reviewed for incorporation into GenEd Distribution. The subcommittee had been working with a set of guidelines originally developed some years ago by the former College of Arts and Sciences GenEd committee, i.e., prior to the reorganization of the colleges and the incorporation of most GenEd review processes under Faculty Council's authority. Two specific kinds of problems were noted by the subcommittee. The first concerned the definition of specific GenEd capabilities (two of seven such capabilities must be addressed by any course receiving GenEd approval). The description of the capability "effective communication" focused on oral and written communication, but did not allow for the kinds of nonverbal communication capabilities developed in courses in the arts, so more inclusive language to that effect was considered by the committee. Other problems were noted in the manner in which computing sciences and information technology were addressed both as a GenEd capability and as a Distribution area or knowledge domain. Mathi Mathayalakan, chair of the Distribution subcommittee, led an ad hoc group from the committee (including Jack Lutts and Bill Campbell) during the fall that worked on amending language in the guidelines to formally change these

descriptions; their proposal added “technology” to what will now be a “math/technology” distribution area, and updated the description of pedagogical goals for the “use of technology” capability. With other, more minor changes, the committee brought the revised guidelines before Faculty Council, where they were approved at the April 3 meeting.

As part of its regular business, the committee forwarded to Faculty Council several subcommittee motions to approve new courses for the GenEd seminar program (2 First Year seminars and 1 Intermediate Seminar) and for Distribution II status (18 courses).

For the coming year, the GenEd committee anticipates that, in addition to its regular business, much of its attention will be taken up with the Writing Program Administrators review of writing in General Education and with its contribution to the electronic portfolio task force. We hope to make some more serious progress on the difficult issue of assessment in Distribution courses, as well as continue our efforts to promote University-wide goals for Capstone courses. A somewhat neglected component of the GenEd program is the Diversity requirement, which is implemented differently in the undergraduate colleges and might be strengthened through GenEd committee engagement.

Appendix: GenEd subcommittees, 2005-6

Seminars Assessment Committee (SAC)

Members of SAC:

Estelle Disch, CLA, Chair in Fall 05
Taylor Stoehr, CLA, Chair in Spring 06
Marc Prou, CLA
Victoria Palmer-Erbs, CNHS
Terry McLarney, CPCS (Spring)
Susan Irvings, Academic Support Programs
Lisa Rivera, CLA (Fall 05)
Judy Zeitlin, CLA

Working closely with FYS and IS coordinators, members of SAC did the following during 2005-2006:

Regarding Assessment

- Read student portfolios from selected FYS and IS courses. Provided feedback that coordinators distilled for the faculty involved.

End of Semester Debriefings for FYS and IS faculty

- SAC decided the topic for the midday workshops for debriefings
- Most SAC members attended these debriefings in order to stay current with concerns raised by faculty, mentors, advisors and librarians

Course Approvals

- SAC members provided feedback to the seminars coordinators regarding three new FYSs (The Art of Play, Aging & Wisdom, and Children & Human Rights) and one IS (INTR-D 200G in Anthropology)
- Based on a suggestion from Judy Zeitlin, IS Coordinator, SAC discussed and supported creating a rubric for offering seminars on a one-time basis that have not been through the entire approval process. Course numbers INTR-D 100G and INTR-D 200G may now be used for such courses. INTR-D 200G was used in Spring 2006; Intr-D 100G will be used in Fall 2006.

Quantitative Reasoning Assessment Committee (QuAC)

Members of the Quantitative Reasoning Assessment Committee, 2005 - 2006:

Jack Lutts, Mathematics (chair, fall 2005)
Mark Pawlak, Academic Support
Jason Evans, Chemistry
Peter McClure, Management
Marilyn Frankenstein, CPCS
Maura Mast, Mathematics (on leave fall 2005; chair, spring 2006)

Activities for 2005-2006

- The committee spent most of its time and energy working with the Director of Undergraduate Education to identify and deal with students who had over 90 credits but who had not fulfilled the Math/QR requirement. During fall 2005, postcards were mailed out to over 200 students and registration holds were put in place for students who did not respond to the mailing (most students did not respond to the mailing). Professors Lutts and Pawlak worked with Marietta Schwartz to counsel students and lift the holds; in the end, about 130 students responded. In some cases, they had already met the requirement but their degree audit did not reflect this; many others registered for a course that would put them on the path to meeting the requirement. A new list was constructed late in spring 2006, containing over 300 names, but there was not enough time to contact these students before the end of the semester. This work took a significant amount of time and effort and members of the committee were not able to get as much of the assessment work done as a result.
- The committee discussed the Math/QR requirement for students in the Exercise and Health Science program. Some of these students have been improperly advised that they can meet the requirement by taking the EHS statistics course; this course is not on the approved list, however. The committee agreed to waive the requirement for such students graduating in spring 2006 but not for other students. They agreed that a dialogue with this department needs to occur, especially since EHS would prefer that their students take their statistics course to meet their QR requirement.
- The QuAC student evaluation was administered in the Math Q114 sections and, for spring 2006, the results were compiled and distributed them to faculty teaching the course.
- In June, the committee will assess two of the new faculty members teaching Math Q114.
- A set of common final exam questions for the QR sections was developed and distributed to QR faculty to administer. Some faculty supplemented these questions with additional ones of their own. After QR faculty graded their final exams and assigned course term grades, a representative sample of final exams was gathered from each section taught. The committee will holistically score the common problems from these sample exams sometime in June in order to assess student learning in the QR program as a whole with regards to both mathematical topics and general education capabilities.

Distribution Committee

Distribution Sub Committee Members – AY 2005/2006

1. Sheldon Kovitz – Math /CSM
2. Elizabeth Marran – Art /CLA (Fall 2005)

3. Sathasivam Mathiyalakan – MSIS / CM (Chair)
4. Arthur Millman – Philosophy /CLA
5. Marc Pomplun – Computer Science / CSM (Spring 2006)
6. David Reider - CPCS
7. Judith Zeitlin – Anthropology / CLA

Major tasks and accomplishments revolved around

- I. Revision of TAN document (CAS Distribution guidelines)
 - a. Technology as a body of knowledge
 - b. Recognition and incorporation of non verbal and other forms of communication within the Effective communication capability
2. Assessment strategies for Distribution courses
3. Course approvals

Total Submissions including carryovers from prior years	28	
Approved	18	
Denied	02	Classics I61 & Classics I62
Request for additional information		
No resubmission	02	BIO 207, BIO 208
Awaiting response	03	MUS 251, Psych 271, CHEM 130
Carryover to 2006/2007	03	EHS 340, EHS 280, Math I45, Math I46

Writing Proficiency Requirement Committee

Members 2005-6

- Bill Campbell, CSM (chair, fall)
 Ann Torke, CLA (chair, spring)
 Philip Chassler, CLA
 Estelle Disch, CLA (ex officio, FYS coordinator)
 Basye Hendrix, CM
 Kelly Matthews, CPCS (fall)
 Anthony Pettruzzi, (ex officio, Director of Writing Assessment)
 Rajini Srikanth, CLA
 Taylor Stoehr, CLA
 Vivian Zamel, CLA
 Judith Zeitlin, CLA (ex officio, IS coordinator)

The committee continued its oversight of the Writing Proficiency Evaluation, assisting Petruzzi in the development of reading sets and exam and portfolio questions. During the current academic year, special attention was spent on the following matters:

- Consideration of the proposal to bring the WPA evaluation team to campus. In late spring, members of the WPR committee met with the ad hoc WPA group from the GenEd committee to develop details of the planned evaluation.
- Further refinement of the criteria specified for portfolio papers submitted in fulfillment of the WPE.
- Consideration of how the committee might work more closely with instructors of Distribution courses that include a paper suitable for the WPE portfolio and/or emphasize the capability of Effective Communication (Writing). The committee seeks both to help students identify courses beyond Freshman English and the GenEd seminars in which a portfolio paper is part of the course work and to help instructors develop analytical paper topics that will conform to the writing model stressed in the WPE.