

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT KEARNEY
GENERAL STUDIES COUNCIL
Meeting of October 2, 2003
MINUTES

PRESENT:

Faculty: Valerie Cisler, Randall Heckman, Allan Jenkins, Sonja Kropp, Larry Kuskie, John Lillis, Karen Malmkar, Marta Moorman, Chuck Peek, Janet Steele, Kenya Taylor, Ed Walker
Ex officio/non-voting members: Jeanne Cutler, Kristi Milks, Kim Schipporeit, and Bill Wozniak
Absent: Peg Camp, Sandy Cook-Fong, Mary Daake, Glen Powell, Alicia Spelts

Wozniak called the meeting to order at 3:38 p.m.

A. MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 4, 2003 ALREADY APPROVED VIA E-MAIL

B. CD/WI COURSE SUBMISSIONS

1. Writing Intensive:

a. none

2. Cultural Diversity:

a. none

C.

D. OLD BUSINESS

1. WI Cleanup:

a. BACC 311, Business Law (Mike Tye)

The WI subcommittee has already reviewed the revised syllabus. *Jenkins (Peek) moved for approval of the course. Motion passed.*

2. CD Cleanup:

a. none

3. Notification of new WI course-instructor assignments

a. CSIS 350, Information Systems Concepts (Messersmith)

4. General Studies Assessment Update

Wozniak reported that student outcome data will be collected from the a sample of

English Composition classes and from GS Mathematics classes this semester. The faculty of both departments have been very cooperative in this venture. They will determine which instruments will be used and the context in which the data will be collected. Wozniak plans on reporting the student outcome data and other program data to the Council in the spring.

5. Review of new forms
 - a. New WI course approval
 - b. New CD course approval

There was considerable discussion of the new forms for WI and CD approval. The discussion centered on whether the guidelines accurately represented the decision making of the reviewers of the proposals. While it was understood that professional judgment was necessary for reviewing the course proposals, more emphasis on the revision process was needed. *Walker (Heckman) moved to replace the word "should" with "will" on criterion 5. The motion passed.* (The amended forms are attached.)

6. GS/WI/CD appeal
Wozniak described the form for Student appeals of General Studies, WI, or CD requirements and said its purpose is to strongly encourage students to work with their academic advisors to review such problems.
7. New GS course
The listed procedures for submitting new General Studies courses were distributed. It became apparent that according to the rules, changes to the General Studies program must occur by the time the printed catalog is done. Therefore changes to the program must occur on a two-year cycle. The Council understood that this is an important document and any revision needs to be carefully considered. Discussion of the document will continue in future meetings.
8. Liberal Studies at UNK-A proposal for restructuring the program (Chuck Peek)
9. Summary of Recommendations from 2001 Academic Program Review
Items 6 and 7 were discussed simultaneously. Peek asked if the Council wants to put a proposal on the SVCAA's desk that will take into account at least some of the recommendations from the APR? The consensus was the Council should proceed with addressing all of the concerns mentioned. *Cisler (Kropp) moved that the recommendations from the last APR be placed on the agenda of our next meeting for discussion.* The question arose concerning what would be the best way to approach the list of issues. Jenkins suggested that we first address some of the more obvious issues that are easily solved (i.e., low-hanging fruit.) Peek suggested GSC members send their favorite low-hanging fruit to Wozniak who will then prepare the list of items for discussion (low-hanging fruit first.) *Motion passed.* (The summary of the APR comments is attached.)

10. Adjustments to meeting schedule

Wozniak said he will make adjustments to the meeting schedule via e-mail.

E. NEW BUSINESS

1. A proposal for the capstone category in General Studies

Wozniak proposed a change to the Capstone category of the General Studies program that would change the hours from 0-1 to 0-3 and would eliminate the multicultural objective for the category. Several suggestions were made concerning the proposal. Wozniak will revise the proposal for consideration at the next meeting. Since this would be a structural change to the program, the changes will also need to be reviewed by each College's Educational Policy Committee.

F. MISCELLANEOUS

Meeting adjourned at 4:45 pm.

G. NEXT MEETING

The next General Studies Council meeting is scheduled for November 6 in 2122 Founders Hall.

Attachments:

- [Application Procedures for Writing Intensive Designation](#)
- [Guidelines For Writing Intensive Designation](#)
- [Application for CD Designation](#)
- [Cultural Diversity Guidelines](#)
- [CD Course Approval Procedure](#)
- [General Studies Student Appeal](#)
- [General Studies Course Submission Procedure](#)
- [Summary of 2001 APR Comments](#)

Attachment, October 2, 2003

Application Procedures for Writing Intensive Designation

Proposals should be submitted to the Director of General Studies.

_____ 6. Cover letter from instructor attached?

_____ 7. For new courses only. Other required approvals have been requested?

APPROVED:

Department Chair: _____ Date: _____

General Studies Director: _____ Date: _____

Attachment, October 2, 2003

Guidelines for Writing Intensive Designation

In order for classes to be designated as Writing Intensive (WI) in the printed schedule, and thereby count toward the 12-hour requirement of writing intensive instruction, they must meet the following criteria:

1. At least 50% of the course grade, exclusive of examinations, must be based upon written assignments.
 2. As a guideline, students will write a minimum of 5000 words in a 3-credit-hour class.
 3. Writing instructions will emphasize the writing style of the discipline through the most appropriate form--essays, position papers, term papers, abstracts of articles, book reviews, reports, or journals, for example.
 4. Tests will consist primarily of essay questions.
 5. Toward the goal of writing improvement, several written assignments will be revised by the student under the direction of the instructor.
 6. Writing Intensive proposals should address the issue of class size.
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Attachment, October 2, 2003

Application for CD Designation

Date: _____

Dept. & Course Number: _____

Course Title: _____

Instructor: _____

Catalog Description of Course:

Cultural Groups Covered by the Course (see guidelines):

CD Criteria Check-off: (Department Chair should indicate departmental approval by initialing each step. Other supporting materials, such as letters of support, should be attached to this application.)

- _____ 1. Issues of race, ethnicity, or gender integral to the design of this course.
_____ 2. The course takes a comparative approach, giving appropriate amounts of attention to groups compared.
_____ 3. The course uses materials that give substantial voice to the selected groups.
_____ 4. Detailed syllabus attached. (Enough information should be included to determine if the course content meets the criteria.)
_____ 5. Instructors listed have the appropriate qualifications for this course and will teach the course according to CD guidelines.

APPROVED:

Department Chair: _____ Date: _____

General Studies Director: _____ Date: _____

Attachment, October 2, 2003

Cultural Diversity Guidelines

The purpose of the Cultural Diversity requirement is to introduce students to non-Western cultures (such as those of Africa, Asia, and Latin America) and to give voice to traditionally underrepresented groups in America and Europe.

1. In Cultural Diversity courses, issues of race, ethnicity, or gender must be integral to the design of the course. That is, they must not be mere add-ons, even if substantial ones.
2. Cultural Diversity courses must take a comparative approach giving appropriate amounts of attention to all groups being compared.
3. Cultural Diversity courses may focus on topics in the United States, Europe, or in the non-Western world.
 - a. Courses focusing on the United States should incorporate substantial discussion on issues of race, ethnicity, or gender and must feature at least one of the following

groups: African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and/or Women.

- b. Courses focusing on Europe should incorporate substantial discussion on issues of race, ethnicity, or gender and must feature groups that are not traditionally considered as being in the mainstream of Western culture.
 - c. Courses focusing on the non-Western world should emphasize the cultural interactions between the Western and non-Western worlds, and/or the interplay between various racial, ethnic, or gender groups.
 - d. Readings and other material used in Cultural Diversity courses must give substantial voice to the selected groups and must be an integral part of the course. The materials may include artwork, archeological materials, and other non-written forms of primary sources created by the specific group.
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Attachment, October 2, 2003

CD Course Approval Procedure

1. Faculty members may submit to the General Studies Council any course they wish to have approved for cultural diversity (CD) designation. CD designation is not limited to General Studies courses. Courses may qualify for the CD designation either because of the nature of the course, or because of the particular way that an instructor constructs a course. In the first case, the course is always designated as CD regardless of instructor.
2. Applications must be approved by the course's home department and signed by the department chair.
3. Submissions for CD designation must include a CD Course Application and a course syllabus. Reading lists and/or descriptions of materials that give voice to the selected cultural groups should be included. Additional materials may be requested by the Director of General Studies.
4. Application and syllabus will be reviewed by the Director of General Studies, and will then be forwarded to the General Studies Council for approval or rejection.
5. Courses approved by the General Studies Council for the cultural diversity designation will be identified in class schedules with a "CD" following the course number, as well as in a special section listing all Cultural Diversity and Writing Intensive courses.
6. Proposals should be submitted to the Director of General Studies.

NOTE: Following approval, the instructor must send a copy of the syllabus to the Cultural Diversity Liaison before the end of the first week of class each time the course is offered. These syllabi are used for monitoring purposes and to build a resource base; they do not constitute a re-application.

Attachment, October 2, 2003

General Studies Student Appeal

Instructions: Students may appeal their General Studies requirements, including Writing Intensive and Cultural Diversity requirements by means of a process that is begun by consulting with his or her academic advisor. The reasons for being considered as an exception to the program requirements must be clearly spelled out and a proposed solution to the problem should be proposed. This is best done in consultation with the student's academic advisor, who then can forward the form to the Director of General Studies for review.

Date:

Student Name:

Social Security Number:

Major/Minor:

Academic Advisor:

Statement of problem and basis for the appeal:

Recommendation of the Advisor:

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Advisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Attachment, October 2, 2003

General Studies Course Submission Procedure

The General Studies Program must respond to changing circumstances yet maintain sufficient stability that students may complete the program without undue confusion. To accommodate change, the General Studies Council will consider the submission of new courses under the following circumstances.

1. The course must be an active UNK offering.
2. The department must provide a written explicit description of the course detailing how it meets the established General Studies criteria at both the program and perspective level. The proposal must include the following:
 - Evidence that student objectives are consistent with program and perspective criteria
 - Description of the teaching strategies employed
 - Plan for assessment of student outcomes compatible with the criteria
 - Plan for assessment of the course's achievement of the criteria
3. The submission must include evidence of support from:
 0. The Department
 1. The College Academic Affairs/Educational Policy Committee
 2. The Dean's Office
4. The Chair of the submitting department must meet with their college representatives on the General Studies Council, and the proposal should come forward only with the support of these representatives.
5. Timing of submissions must be compatible with the printing of the UNK Undergraduate Catalog.
 0. The Council will consider submissions during the Spring semester proceeding the publication year of the Undergraduate Catalog.
 1. Final action by the General Studies Council will be no later than September following the open submission period.

Attachment, October 2, 2003

Summary of 2001 APR Comments

The strategic plan for the General Studies program includes:

- Maintenance of a faculty governance system for the program that reaffirms faculty ownership of the program and provides means to review, publicly discuss, and possibly change it.
- Maintenance and development of the academic integrity of the program so that it is a valuable experience for all UNK students
- Maintenance of the stability and viability of the program so that all UNK students can complete it in a reasonable amount of time.
- Development and execution of a workable program of student outcomes assessment that connects to the review of programmatic changes

Analysis of Successes and Concerns:

The most recent academic program review of the General Studies program described the successes and concerns for the General Studies Program. Generally speaking, the program is academically sound and uniform for all UNK students, regardless of their major. The governance issues have been addressed since the 2001 academic program review and form the process by which other structural concerns can be addressed.

Successes:

- Provides students with a broad introduction to liberal studies in support of the UNK mission statement “an extensive general studies curriculum that emphasizes the liberal arts.”
- The structure of the program is well balanced with regard to traditional liberal arts areas.
- The WI and CD requirements, though not a part of the General Studies program per se, show a commitment to these aspects of a student’s education.
- Have thus far maintained a common General Education program for all UNK students, regardless of their major. This has proven to be a distinctive feature of UNK within the University system.
- Within the broad General Studies requirements, Colleges can specify specific courses to support their majors and minors.

Concerns:

- The University should develop and publicize a more comprehensive rationale for the General Studies Program structure, purpose, and student learning outcomes.
- The University should make several immediate modifications to the General Studies Program that will enhance student learning.
 - requiring students to complete English 101 and 102 during the first two years.
 - adding foreign language as a strand of the Humanities category.
 - encouraging departments to limit the size of their classes
 - adding upper level courses to the GSP.

- encouraging faculty to make connections between their GSP courses and classes in other academic disciplines.
- resolving the future of Category VIII: Capstone Course.
- The University should engage in a dialogue to consider several elements of the General Studies Program.
 - Is a liberal education best achieved via a small number of courses focusing on the most fundamental aspects of academic disciplines? Or is a liberal education more likely to be realized by offering students multiple options to meet the individual GSP requirements?
 - Why is philosophy the sole discipline within the Humanities category that students may avoid? Students are currently required to complete Humanities' course work in literature, aesthetics, and history -- but not in philosophy. What are the justifications for marginalizing philosophy in this manner?
 - Why is economics the sole discipline within the Social and Behavioral Sciences category that students may not avoid?
 - Why are the structures of the Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences categories different? On a related note to points #2 and 3 above, why are choices in Humanities prescribed, but not in the Social and Behavioral Sciences category?
 - Why are most of the GSP categories arranged according to "perspectives," but the Natural Sciences category is structured by "department?"
 - Why is the historical perspective considered part of the Humanities category when the Department of History is housed in the College of Natural and Social Sciences?
 - Why are some areas of the GSP under the control of a specific department while others are not?
- Governance of the GSP
 - Appoint a Director of General Studies
 - Restructure and General Studies Council in order to provide a larger faculty voice in the development of the program
 - Clarify the approval processes for structural changes.
- The University should design a plan to assess the General Studies Program. Secondly, the University should identify and implement specific instruments by which it will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the General Studies Program.
- The University should emphasize the importance of advising in the General Studies Program.