

GSC Working Retreat NOTES

8 May 2012

Alumni House

9:00am – 3:00pm

Present: A. Jenkins (BT)
K. Heelan, D. Montgomery, J. Moore (ED)
R. Hanson, M. Kruse, D. Mitchell (FAH)
K. Trantham (NSS)
M. Sutherland (LIB)
D. Snider (*ex officio*)

Business

a) Portal / Capstone / Democracy course offerings (**doc: enrollments**)

There is concern about departments' abilities to offer enough sections of portal, democracy, and capstone. Chairs have expressed desire to offer more, but cite insufficient resources. One way to reduce this credit load across campus would be to make the Democracy in Perspective requirement a designation upon courses, rather than the stand-alone, 3 hour credit requirement it currently is. Any GS course could be designated a Democracy course similar to how courses are designated as WI or CD. This would free up 3 hours in the GS program for students to take other GS courses (such as ENG 101, etc.). Director will ascertain the deans' views on this possibility and will agenda the issue for the 9/6/12 GSC meeting.

b) Distribution

The 6 General Studies program-level outcomes are already assessed (with exception of #5 *global*) for NCA purposes. Any further assessment, such as assessment of Distribution, may further benefit the program.

In fall 2012, subcommittees will be set up with GSC members and faculty from departments from the Distribution categories. Subcommittees will include interested faculty whose disciplines are similar enough to allow common assessments to be created and piloted.

Exemplar courses (a small selection of courses from those offered in a Distribution category) can be selected for a sample if the GSC chooses to pursue assessment of Distribution on a regular basis.

c) Dealing with collected data (NSSE, surveys, TaskStream, CAAP)

The GSC should hold a "data retreat" to look at the collected data in breakout groups and then determine ways to improve student learning based on that data.

d) Portal rubric revision

The portal rubric was revised and will come to the GSC in the fall as a seconded motion for approval to send to campus for input. Changes included altering the item about evaluating sources critically to focus directly on information literacy, and creating an item addressing the global context of portals. If approved in the fall, the revised rubric would go into effect in Spring 2013.

e) Critical thinking in GS courses

The 2010 GS program has the learning of critical thinking (CT) skills as a primary focus, and there has been support for faculty such as webinars and CTE events about teaching CT skills. In order to foster a climate of CT at UNK, the GSC will explore other possible means of supporting this effort, such as:

Organizing a CT workshop for interested faculty similar to the writing across the curriculum workshops in past years. These could be offered in May after finals, or in January before spring semester, and last 2-3 days. Faculty should receive a stipend for participation, and the workshop should be repeated annually for some years to build momentum.

Working with CTE on further events focusing on teaching CT.

Creating an online seminar on CT that would run a couple of times per semester.

Seeking incentive support for faculty to integrate CT more into courses.

f) Other

1. The group discussed a request from Music & Performing Arts to consider allowing a required course for music majors also to be a capstone. This request came due to the department's pressing need to meet the 120 hour requirement. Consensus was that, while the group sympathized with the intentions of Music in making the proposal, the GSC should follow previous policy about capstones and not support making a change to the policy.