

General Studies Council Minutes
December 2, 2021 @ 3:30 p.m.
Warner Conference Room, Warner Hall or via Zoom

**** Approved via Email ****

Present: Sherri Harms, Jeong Hoon Choi, Nita Unruh, Doug Tillman, Rebecca Umland, Jeff Wells, Joan Blauwkamp, Jeremy Dillon, Joel Berrier, Miechelle McKelvey, Sri Seshadri, Lisa Neal, Jessie Bialas, Mark Ellis, Greg Brown, Joel Cardenas, Beth Hinga

Guests: Bobbi-Jean Ludwig, Suzanne Maughan Spencer, Nicholas Hobbs, Annette Moser, John Gibbs, Kim Carlson

Absent: Amy Rundstrom, Noelle Bohaty, Rochelle Reeves

I. Call to order:

- **Approve Agenda:** Berrier/Unruh moved to approve the agenda. **Motion Carried.**
- Minutes from November 4, 2021 meeting (approved via email)

II. Old Business (Open Items):

- SOC 124 for review after campus comments as a new course proposal for LOPER 7
- CHEM 148 for review after campus comments as a new course proposal for LOPER 8
- GEOG 201 for review after campus comments as a new course proposal for LOPER 8
 - No comments were received for any of these courses.
 - Blauwkamp/Berrier moved to grant final approval for SOC 124 for inclusion in LOPER 7 and CHEM 148 and GEOG 201 for inclusion in LOPER 8. **Yes-11/No-0 Motion Carried**

III. New Business:

- Course Proposals – None
- GS Governance Document
 - Discussion regarding the changes to the General Studies Governance. The requested changes were made in the Governance Document on the screen during the meeting.
 - The student representative will be chosen by the student senate for a one-year term. Same language regarding when the term begins and expectations of meeting attendance from the section for voting members was added for the student member. The student will rotate among the three colleges each year; language was deleted regarding “as determined by the SVC.”

- Changes to the duties of the Council in the Governance Document was moved from a program change deemed minor to the category for a major change.
- The section on the submission of course proposals to the CIM system was clarified, permitting removal of language about approval by the college educational policy committees, college dean, and Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee – whose approvals are routed through CIM.
- The section on major program changes was revised to add that campuswide comment on the proposal would occur simultaneous to review by the various academic affairs/educational policy committees.
- The language on proposers of major program changes was revised to limit to an academic college or the Faculty Senate, in addition to the SVC and the Council itself.
- The section on the campuswide vote on major program changes was revised to indicate that the SVC is the final approver, and to make the voting rule a simple majority of eligible voting faculty in each of the three colleges.
- Blauwkamp/Seshadri moved to approve the General Studies Governance Document with the changes made. **Yes-11/No-0 Motion Carried**
- Brown asked if the January General Studies Council meeting could be on January 19th @ 10:30 am. The Council agreed.
- First-Year Seminars
 - Brown stated he invited 39 students in the first-year seminars to come to two focus groups next week. Six students have RSVP'd so far.
 - Unruh stated she offered an online first-year seminar for Spring 2022 and no students have enrolled. Neal indicated that 43 students were registered for online Portal classes in the Spring semester.
 - Brown asked if in the future should there be first-year seminar courses targeted for specific students (e.g., veteran students, nontraditional students, athletes, etc.). Neal reminded the Council that there is no means to restrict enrollment in FYS to only students with those characteristics, but Brown indicated that he thought they could be open for general enrollment but with descriptions and advising to encourage enrollment from those students, who might benefit from FYS tailored to their particular experiences or needs.
 - Berrier stated he is in support of the single, generic, three credit hour LOPR-126 course, and there was a lengthy discussion on this idea. Neal, Dillon, and Wells also expressed support for the change – which would address problems with confusion from advisers and students, as well as the issue with students not having sufficient information about their grades in many cases before the deadline for withdrawal passes for the first one or two 5-week sections. Brown stated there are logistical complications – the

Council does not have the authority to create a generic prefix, so the Deans, Academic Affairs Committee, and/or Dr. Bicak would need to lay the groundwork before that change could happen. Unruh stated that a generic course would not allow students to evaluate each instructor. Berrier thought that a unique student evaluation created for FYS could address that problem, but Brown and Seshadri noted that their college constitutions require that faculty in all courses are evaluated using the college evaluation form, so rank and tenure review of faculty would be affected by the change. McKelvey suggested that the problem with students not knowing their grades could be solved by the teaching faculty giving them more timely feedback. Unruh thought that we should wait for more evidence of how well things are working before making a change, since the FYS courses have not even been in effect for one full semester.

- Dillon stated the current structure is causing problems for faculty, advisors, staff, and students. Complaints to the Registrar, problems raised by chairs and deans, and confusion being reported by advisors and by students are evidence that a change is needed for the FYS course structure.
- Neal stated a 3-hour LOPR-126 course could be ready by Fall 2022 if action is taken now. The Fall course schedule goes out in February 2022. Neal has created a test document so Council members can see what the proposed course would look like that she offered to share. She stated there has been support from the Deans to change the current 1+1+1 -126 courses to a single three-credit hour course. Suzanne Maughan Spencer asked to speak and expressed support from the CAS Council of Chairs for the change to a three-credit hour generic FYS structure.
- Dillon/Seshadri moved to recommend a single three-credit hour LOPR-126 course to Dr. Bicak. **Yes-8/No-3 (all COE) Motion Failed**
- APR Teams / Timetable reminder
 - Unruh stated the student evaluation is out.
 - Sections of the self-study from the assigned teams are due to the Director of General Studies by December 31 (earlier is appreciated)
 - Compiled report returned to the Council by January 13
 - Special GSC meeting on January 19 @ 10:30 am to finalize the APR self-study document
 - On-campus review will be in late February or early March – Dr. Matt Tracy, the Director of General Studies at UNO, will be the external reviewer.

IV. Other:

V. **Adjournment: Berrier/Seshadri moved to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned @ 5:05 pm.**

Next meeting: January 19, 2022 @ 10:30 am-Warner Conference Room, Warner Hall or via Zoom