

**General Studies Council Minutes**  
**September 2, 2021 @ 3:30 p.m.**  
**Warner Conference Room, Warner Hall or via Zoom**  
**\*\* Approved via Email \*\***

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

**Guests:** Dr. Charlie Bicak, Jim Vaux, Ralph Hanson, Jody VanLaningham, Suzanne Maughan, Ryan Teten, Ken Trantham, Yipeng Sui, Annette Moser, Sandra Loughrin, Carol Lilly, Ben Malczyk, Bree Dority

- I. Call to order:
  - **Approve Agenda:** Unruh/Dillon moved to approve the agenda. **Motion Carried**
  - Welcome Noelle to GSC: Brown welcomed Bohaty to the Council from the Fine Arts & Communications division in CAS (replacing Tim Farrell whose term ended in April).
- II. Minutes from April 29, 2021 meeting (approved via email)
  - PHYS-CHEM-PHIL 126 (Fermi's Paradox: If We're Not Alone, Where Is Everybody?) and MUS-SOC-WSTD 126 (The Visible Voice) approved via GSC vote via email in May 24-25 (10 in favor, 0 opposed)
- III. Old Business (Open Items):
  - None
- IV. New Business:
  - SVCASA Dr. Charlie Bicak, re: ITEC 290
    - Dr. Bicak thanked the Council for their time and effort. He stated that he read the past Council minutes as well as comments from faculty regarding ITEC 290 and the syllabus and application that were submitted for Council review. Dr. Bicak reminded the Council that on May 14, 2021 he sent a message to the Council in regards to ITEC 290 ***“ITEC 290 will be offered in a 2 year pilot framework. I expect the course will be evaluated by the GS Director and Committee throughout the two years. A recommendation for continuance or discontinuance should be offered at the November 2022 GS meeting. Further consideration will be based on the evidence provided from the November 2022 Meeting.”***
    - Dr. Bicak reviewed his pros and cons list in relation to ITEC 290.
      - Cons:
        - None of the learning outcomes for LOPER 3 refer to technology.

- It is unclear how computer technology is playing a meaningful role in the course or what need is being met. If the course simply includes presentations that incorporate slides or FaceTime/Zoom, it is similar to what is likely found in Speech 100.
  - Communication appears to be taught purely from an instrumental standpoint, rather than as constitutive.
  - The course appears to be a speech course taught by a technology expert. That is, the instructor lacks an advanced degree or graduate coursework in communication.
  - It's legitimate to raise a slippery slope possibility that core skills courses in other categories could be taught by any discipline.
- Pros:
    - ITEC 290 has been in the General Studies program for over 10 years. The course was revised and restructured to meet a General Studies need.
    - No one discipline "owns" entry level skill areas or all the ways general education knowledge and skills requirements can be met.
- Dr. Bicak stated his approval of ITEC 290 is as a pilot program over the next two years and then the Council will evaluate the course.
  - Blauwkamp asked for clarification as to what was being "piloted" and what evidence the Council is supposed to use to make its recommendation, given that the reasons why the majority of Council members voted against approving the course (lack of disciplinary fit with the category/instructor qualifications in communications, slippery slope for LOPERs 2 and 4) would not change in that time. Dr. Bicak stated all curriculums can be made better and that he disagreed that nothing relevant to ITEC 290 being approved or rejected for LOPER 3 would change in the next two years.
  - Bicak also noted that the record shows a vote of 10-1 from the Council in favor of sending the course to campus for comments but the final vote was then 7-6 against approving it, raising the question of what changed? Dillon stated he was a Council member that changed his vote. He stated after he read the syllabus the first time the course seemed fine, but he was then taken aback after reviewing the comments from campus. He stated what swayed his vote was the course schedule, as most of the schedule was students watching other students give presentations. He also stated that it is appropriate for the Council to take campus feedback into account when we make our final votes.

- Umland stated she is uncertain what the role of the Council is in this pilot program. Dr. Bicak stated the course is open to change and the Council needs to communicate what changes need to be made.
- Brown stated the faculty needs to meet the HLC qualifications to teach a course (advanced degree or 18 hours of graduate coursework in the relevant discipline) and asked what the Council's role is in making sure the faculty teaching the course have the HLC qualification. Dr. Bicak stated it is the responsibility of the Deans and department chairs to make sure the faculty have the correct HLC qualifications to teach courses in their areas.
- Hanson stated that he feels the course has been piloted for 10 years and assessment data showed that the students did not perform as well in ITEC 290 as in SPCH 100. Hinga confirmed the assessment evidence on this point. Hanson asked if the course needed to make changes before it is brought back into the General Studies program. Dr. Bicak stated we are going forward with the pilot of the ITEC 290 course, and he expects to see changes.
- Bicak noted that other categories in the Foundational Requirements (LOPERs 1-4) offer students some choice of courses. He cited the figure that in the old GS Program, 19% of students took ITEC 290 to meet their oral communications requirement.
- Brown summarized that the new LOPERs Program has new objectives and will have new assessments, so the Council can see how ITEC 290 performs, ask for changes as needed, and then see where things stand in November 2022 and make our recommendation. Dr. Bicak concurred.
- Phasing out of Portal Classes (X-188) in 2021-2022
  - Brown stated Summer 2022 is the last semester for Portal classes (-188). Next academic year, 2022-2023, Portal classes will no longer be taught. Unruh asked when the Capstone (-388) courses need to be gone. Neal stated that will be a little longer, most likely one extra year after the -188 courses.
  - Blauwkamp asked what would happen if there are students who are in an older catalog trying to complete their degree but no Portal is offered. Can they substitute with a -126? Neal said yes, they could.
- Update on enrollment in First-Year Seminar Courses
  - Brown stated almost every single section of -126 is filled for the Fall 2021 semester. He stated that it far exceeded his expectations. Neal stated not quite half of the newly enrolled freshman are enrolled in a -126 course this Fall. Neal stated there are 16 sections of first-year seminars for Fall 2021 with a total of 444 students enrolled as of 9/2/21. There are 9 sections of

Portal sections for Fall 2021 with a total of 205 students enrolled as of 9/2/21. She also stated there are currently 15 sections of the first-year seminar for Spring 2022. Blauwkamp asked Brown to send out a call to campus for more -126 courses for Spring and Fall 2022 and let chairs/departments know how many seminars need to be offered to meet student needs. Brown stated he would send an email to campus.

- Suggestion to limit enrollment in First-Year Seminar Courses
  - Brown stated he had a Council member ask if there should be a cap on each section of -126. Brown stated his thought is it should be left up to the department chairs. Blauwkamp stated that the CAS chairs would like a range for class size for -126 sections, such as 20-30. Wells stated there is already a challenge to build rapport with the students over just 5 weeks, and if the courses are too large, they will lose the purpose. He also noted that the objective of meeting the personal and professional development needs of first-year students would argue in favor of smaller classes. Umland stated having a smaller class size allows faculty to get know students and allows students get to know each other. Unruh noted that the KSS -126 sections have been capped at 20 for the Fall semester, which is a nice size.
  - Brown asked if the Council should vote on a cap for each section of -126 or wait a month and think about it. Seshadri stated the Council should wait a month and get feedback from the chairs. Unruh stated there is a chairs meeting later in September and she will bring the question to the group. Brown stated he can also talk to the Deans to get feedback on the appropriate size. Neal reminded the Council that Spring course schedules go out the end of September and changing the course size in October may not be possible. But a cap could be implemented for first-year seminar classes starting in Fall 2022.
- Brown stated he has gotten feedback from faculty and the -126 classes are going well.
- Clarification on GS requirement for 2<sup>nd</sup> Bachelors (same as student transferring in with AS / AA?)
  - Neal affirmed that a student with a Bachelors degree in hand is treated the same as the AS/AA degree students when coming to UNK to earn a second degree. The general education they completed for their first Bachelors degree is considered equivalent to meeting the requirements for UNK's General Studies Program. Brown noted that a student pursuing a second Bachelors degree, just as an AS/AA student, must complete any General Studies coursework that is required for their degree program/major.
- GS Assessment

- Brown stated during the AACU workshop over the summer, the Council members who participated came up with a new assessment rubric for each category in the LOPERs Program. Hinga noted that the new assessment approach allows the instructor to select which assignment in their course will be used to assess each objective. The imposition of a separate assessment assignment was something that instructors disliked about the old GS Program. Brown asked the Council to review the rubrics before the next meeting. Blauwkamp asked if the Council is going to ask the faculty member to identify what assignment they are using to assess each objective in the rubric. Brown said he would make that change to the draft rubrics. Brown stated he would like to assess all the General Studies courses every semester to start in order for the Council to have enough information to review after three semesters. He also stated ITEC 290 would start collecting assessment data this semester and all other classes would start during the Spring 2022 semester.
- GS Governance Document
  - Brown stated the governance document is open for revision. He stated he would like to discuss possible changes the voting procedure and find a way to get students on the Council. He also stated he would like a way to recognize outstanding faculty members in General Studies. Brown stated he would like to take time during each meeting to work on parts of the governance document in order to have it completed by April 2022.
- APR
  - Brown stated he would like to divide of the APR self-study document into sections and asked each Council member to volunteer to complete two sections, working in pairs.
  - Hinga stated the timeline for the APR is as follows:
    - The site visit would need to be completed by March 2022.
    - The self-study would need to be completed by February 2022. As one person will need to put all the sections together into one document the Council members will need to complete their sections by January 2022. Brown stated he would be the one to put all the sections into one document.
- Course Proposals (none right now)
  - Brown stated he plans to let campus know that if there are new course proposals to be submitted to the General Studies Council, they must be provided to him no later than 10 days before the meeting as he has to have the agenda done no later than 7 days before the meeting.

V. Other:

- Neal asked faculty to please consider the students when scheduling -126 sections and put the students in one classroom for all sections as this is more helpful to the students.

**VI. Adjournment: Seshadri/Reeves moved to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned @ 4:45 pm.**

**Next meeting: October 7, 2021 @ 3:30 pm-Warner Conference Room, Warner Hall or via Zoom**