

General Studies Council Minutes
February 3, 2022 @ 3:30 p.m.
Warner Conference Room, Warner Hall or via Zoom

**** Approved via Email ****

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

Guests: Ryan Teten, Suzanne Maughan Spencer, David Ballinger, Megan Hartman, Ralph Hanson, Annette Moser Lintz, Linda Van Ingen, Nicholas Hobbs, Amanda Sladek, Jim Vaux, Jody Van Laningham, Tiffani Luethke

I. Call to order:

- a. Brown welcomed John Hastings to the Council, temporarily replacing Sherri Harms as a CBT appointee through the end of the 2021-22 academic year.
- b. **Approve agenda:** Berrier/Seshadri moved to approve the agenda. **Motion carried**
- c. Brown stated one item will be added to the end of the agenda (PSY 250 will no longer count for LOPER 4).
- d. Minutes from December 3, 2021 and January 19, 2022 meetings (approved via email)

II. Old Business (Open Items):

- a. Governance Document
 - i. Only 1 faculty member commented
 1. A few comments:
 - a. Considering that in the search for a new SVC, the title and role are changing, I would recommend you refer to the "Chief Academic Officer" in the document rather than SVCASA.
 - b. The college Ed Policy/Academic Affairs committees do not usually conduct elections within a college -- why not refer the election to the committee in each college that normally does so -- for example, the CAS Oversight committee and its equivalents in the other colleges? (Section VI.B.3)
 - ii. Dillon/Reeves moved to incorporate the comments as changes to the Governance document. **Yes-13/No-0 Motion Carried**
 - iii. Since the final revised version of the Governance document has been approved by the Council, the next step is to forward to the SVCASA for Dr. Bicap's approval. Once approved, the new Governance document will be in effect.

III. New Business:

a. First-Year Seminars / -188 classes

i. Enrollment

ii. Grades – The Council discussed in detail the grade distributions for -126 courses from Fall 2021 and what they indicated about how LOPER 1 is working in the new program.

- Dillon stated 65% of all grades are in the ‘A’ range and expressed concern that the courses are not rigorous enough to prepare students for college-level courses. Brown confirmed that some students in the Fall focus groups had expressed that their FYS courses were not challenging or intellectually stimulating. One seminar that produced a wider range of grades was “Capitalism: How and Why It Works.” Blauwkamp noted that varying grade distributions with some courses/instructors being easier than others were likely to be observed in other categories as well if we had those data to compare.
- Dillon also observed that the failure rate for -126 courses was higher than for Portal courses (9.7% versus 7.6% when considering number of courses rather than number of students). 63 students failed one, two, or all three of their sections of -126 (of 439 students enrolled, so 14.3% failed the seminar, compared to 7.6% who failed their Portal class). He noted that many of those students might have been able to pass if the FYS was structured as one 3-credit class rather than 1+1+1. Blauwkamp agreed that the 24 students who failed just one section probably would have passed with the alternative structure. Wells stated that some of the students who failed two or three sections might have just given up if they knew they failed the first 5-week section, so the 24 students who probably would have passed is a low estimate. Neal also reminded the Council that students whose seminar was scheduled as three 5-week sections did not have the first 8 weeks of the semester to decide whether to withdraw, as they would have if the seminar was one 3-credit course. Reeves asked why those students failed and wanted to know if they just did not show up for class. McKelvey noted that those students might have failed most or all of their other courses too.
- Wells asked Neal if she could get the retention data for the students that failed the FYS and other information that would clarify these matters. What data the Council wanted was discussed and agreed to information about whether those students had enrolled in Spring courses, if they were retaking a FYS, and if so, was it the same seminar or a different one? Further data to include how many of the 63 students had failed their courses across the board and how the failure rate for -126 compares to the previous two years of Portal classes (since most first-time students this Fall were taking -

126 courses and Portals this Fall had mainly upper-level students that were grandfathering out of the old GS Program). Neal stated she can get the information. Brown wrapped up this part of the discussion by noting that the Council will continue to study the data and consider what changes to the structure may be indicated.

- iii. Tableau Training (Lisa) <https://nuinsight.nebraska.edu>. Neal demonstrated how the Council could access Tableau and the enrollment and grade data for GS courses that the Council members can access there.

b. ITEC 290 Assessment

- Blauwkamp noted that not all instructors put their name on the assessment form. Before the assessment forms are sent out to all GS faculty to collect data for Spring 2022, the forms should be modified to add a line for the instructor to be listed. She also stated the Reflection Questions boxes need to be set up so that the text wraps around rather than cutting off after the first couple of lines. Faculty should be reminded to report only aggregate data and not put student names and grades or other identifying information into the assessment reports (educational privacy issue).
- Brown thanked Vaux for getting the information to him very quickly. He also reminded the Council of Dr. Bicak's charge to evaluate and make a recommendation about ITEC 290 as a LOPER 3 course by November 2022.

c. Call for course proposals?

- Brown asked if there should be a call for courses to be added to the GS Program, particularly for LOPER 9 (14 courses), LOPER 2 (2 courses), and LOPER 3 (2 courses).
- Blauwkamp stated that having 14 courses for LOPER 9 provides students with a lot of choices, and multiple sections of most courses are offered, so meeting enrollment demands is not an issue either. Too many choices can make it difficult for students to decide and lower satisfaction. Even categories like LOPER 2 and 3 with only two courses approved provide students with choices of dates/times, online or f2f, and instructors.
- There was some discussion of whether ENG and COMM should be encouraged to add additional composition and communications classes for students to choose from in LOPERs 2 and 3, or whether other departments could offer courses in those categories. UNL has more course options for written communication in their GS Program than just ENG 101 and 102. Are those courses all offered by the English Department? Amanda Sladek stated that UNL has some specialized Writing Across the Curriculum courses. She further noted that there is no shortage of sections or enrollment capacity in ENG 101 and 102 to meet students' needs for LOPER 2, and the English Department is happy to work with other

departments to develop specialized sections of ENG 102 for their students to learn writing skills tied to those disciplines. Tiffani Luethke noted that Communications has offered a SPCH 100 section specially tailored for Health Sciences students and their department also would be happy to work with other departments to provide more specialized options for LOPER 3. Brown observed that transferability would be a concern if the Council approved courses outside of English and Communications Departments to meet written and oral communications requirements.

- Blauwkamp stated that the category that would benefit from more courses approved is LOPER 1 (only 8 topics offered in the 2021-22 AY, although multiple sections of many of them). Brown stated he will put out a call for proposals for more First-Year Seminar courses.

d. APR – on campus visit March 9 and 10

- Brown stated the APR visit is scheduled for March 9 & 10 and Todd Bartee agreed to join the Review Team, as he served on the APR in 2013 and the team requires a member who was on the previous APR. Thanks to Jessie for catching that omission in the originally announced team.
- Blauwkamp asked when there would be a schedule of meetings that Council members need to attend. Brown stated he is hoping to have a schedule by next week or ASAP.

e. Informational items:

- i. Course Name Change - The Political Science Department has submitted a proposal to rename PSCI 140 (LOPER 7 & 9) from “Democracies Around the World” to “Democracy and Global Citizenship.”
- ii. Course Removal (addition to the agenda) – Neal stated that the Psychology Department has submitted a proposal to remove PSY 250 (LOPER 4) from the General Studies Program. Academic programs that require their students to take that course for LOPER 4 will need to change their programs. Programs that require PSY 250 for BS-science related course requirements but not for General Studies will not need to change.

IV. Other:

- V. **Adjournment: Reeves/Blauwkamp moved to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned @ 4:20 pm.**

Next meeting: March 3, 2022 @ 3:30 pm-Warner Conference Room, Warner Hall or via Zoom