

General Studies Council Minutes
November 4, 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, Noelle Bohaty, Rebecca Umland, Jeff Wells, Joan Blauwkamp, Jeremy Dillon, Joel Berrier, Rochelle Reeves, Lisa Neal, Amy Rundstrom, Jessie Bialas, Mark Ellis, Greg Brown, Joel Cardenas

Guests: David Vail, Annette Moser Lintz, Linda Van Ingen, Suzanne Maughan, Ryan Teten

Absent: Beth Hinga, Michelle McKelvey, Sri Seshadri

I. Call to order:

- **Approve Agenda:** Unruh/Dillon moved to approve the agenda. **Motion Carried**
- Minutes from October 7, 2021 meeting (approved via email)

II. Old Business (Open Items):

- HIST 305 for review as a new course proposal for LOPER 6 (Humanities) and LOPER 9 (Civic Competency and Engagement)
- PE 256 for review as a new course proposal for LOPER 10 (Respect for Human Diversity)
 - Unruh/Wells moved to approve HIST 305 for inclusion in LOPER 6 & LOPER 9 and PE 256 for inclusion in LOPER 10. There were no comments on these proposals received from campus and no discussion by the Council.
Yes-11/No-0 Motion Carried
- GS Assessment Rubrics
 - Reeves/Tillman moved to approve the General Studies assessment rubrics. Blauwkamp stated she understands the point made in the comment on Canvas that instructors choosing their own assignments for assessment might lead to “grade inflation” in the assessment data and make them difficult to compare with other courses, but the common assessment assignment used in the old program was not well integrated into the course and likewise required instructors to self-report on student performance. Brown stated that the AAC&U conference emphasized that assessment works best when it is a natural process and the common assessment assignment was artificial. **Yes-11/No-0 Motion Carried**

III. New Business:

- Course Proposals
 - SOC 124 for review as a new course proposal for LOPER 7
 - Blauwkamp/Berrier moved to send SOC 124 to campus for inclusion in LOPER 7. **Yes-11/No-0 Motion Carried**
 - CHEM 148 for review as a new course proposal for LOPER 8

- Berrier/Dillon moved to send CHEM 148 to campus for inclusion in LOPER 8. **Yes-11/No-0 Motion Carried**
- GEOG 201 for review as a new course proposal for LOPER 8
 - Blauwkamp/Berrier moved to send GEOG 201 to campus for inclusion in LOPER 8. Wells asked how often the course would be offered. Dillon stated the course will be taught every fall and the Physics version would be taught in the spring. Berrier remarked that the Physics course is already approved for LOPER 8. **Yes-11/No-0 Motion Carried**
- GS Governance Document
 - GSC Membership regarding divisions of CBT and divisions of COE
 - Choi stated he does not understand why CAS has more GSC members than COE or CBT. He believes they (CBT/COE) should have additional members on the GSC. Blauwkamp reminded the Council that there used to be four Colleges and there were three faculty members from each College. When the two CAS Colleges combined, they each kept three faculty members on the GSC. Even though CAS has 6 members and CBT and COE each have 3, CAS is still underrepresented based on the numbers of faculty in each college. Brown consulted the UNK Factbook and read the numbers for Fall 2020 – 59% of faculty are in CAS. Umland stated that most General Studies courses are offered from CAS, since Arts & Sciences are the core of General Studies (someone indicated that 82% of the courses were from CAS). Harms stated even though most courses are from CAS, general studies courses are taken by all students on campus. Harms stated she thinks there should be two GSC members from the business side and two from the technology side of CBT. Unruh stated then there should be four GSC members from COE as well. Dillon stated if they were going to do that then there should be eight members from CAS, so that each division in CAS would have two members on the Council. Blauwkamp noted that the voting rule allows the unified members of a single college to block a motion, even if it has majority support overall. Choi stated that CBT and COE provide the majors as “customers” for the CAS General Studies courses, and Wells replied that the customer model is inapt. The colleges all have valuable contributions to make to the University and to students – like a three-legged stool.
 - Ellis asked if there are concerns from the colleges/faculty about the number of members on the GSC. Unruh stated there is still veto power from all three Colleges with the voting rule. Choi stated he thinks one more GCS member should be added for both COE and CBT. There was no motion to change the composition of the Council.
 - Inclusion of Students on GSC
 - Brown stated he met with the Student Senate, and they are very enthusiastic about having a student member on the GSC. They were evenly split on whether to be a voting member or a non-voting member. Blauwkamp stated when students were on the GSC before they were non-voting members. Brown stated he recommends having students on the GSC.

- Unruh/Dillon moved to include one upperclass-standing student to represent the student body as a non-voting member on the GSC and the student representative would rotate from the three colleges each 1-year term.

Yes-11/No-0 Motion Carried

- Harms asked whether the student would bring student perspective to the Council or also report back from the Council to student government. Unruh stated the GSC should have the student government come up with the rules/duties for the student representative regarding attendance at meetings, etc. Blauwkamp stated the GSC could share the governance document with the student government to help them come up with the duties, modeled on the document language with duties for the Director and the Council, then after they come up with the duties, the GSC will vote on approving and adding them to the governance document. Brown stated he will give student government a month to get the duties for the student representative put together, so the Council has time to incorporate them into the governance document for the APR self-study deadline.
- What constitutes a “major change” or a “minor change” to the General Studies Program (which then influences the necessity of campus comments or campus vote to approve the change) see October (please refer to GSC meeting minutes of November 7, 2019)
- Blauwkamp stated any change to the number of hours/categories under the LOPERs Program would be considered a major change, since the program has restricted hours and only one required course per category. Dillon agreed. Blauwkamp stated tweaking the learning outcomes or assessment rubric would be considered a minor change. Wells asked whether changes to the governance document would be considered a major change. Blauwkamp stated that would depend on the change that is being made, such as changing the composition of the Council (major) or revising duties for a student representative (minor). Dillon agreed that changing the composition of the number of members to the Council should be considered as a major change. Ellis stated it would be better to use more general language as to what is a major or minor change. Unruh stated that the governance document should include examples of major and minor changes but allow the Council to judge whether other proposed changes are major or minor. Wells stated the comment period for major changes should be reduced from 60 days to 2 weeks. Unruh suggested 30 days. Wells agreed. There was further discussion of whether review by Academic Affairs and college educational policy committees for a major change should be simultaneous with the overall campus comment period. There was consensus that simultaneous review from committees and campus was best, as sequential review would likely prevent a major change from being made within a single academic year, essentially keeping the review period at 60 days (30 for committees to respond and another 30 for campuswide comments). Brown stated he will take all the comments and add them to the governance document and then get it back to the Council, so we can take another look at the revisions to that section during our next meeting.

- First-Year Seminars
 - Summary from discussion with current instructors

- Report on grades from 1st 5 weeks
 - Brown stated one student failed their first five week section but this particular student did not attend class at all for those first five weeks. Neal stated the student was offered to take an incomplete and then attend the course in the spring. The student has not reached out to the professor as of now. Neal also noted that most of the fall first-year seminars did not report grades for any sections yet, so even though 1 of about 200 students was failing from the reporting sections, that did not constitute a complete picture of how many students may end up failing part of their first-year seminar this fall.

- Neal proposed to have students sign up for one generic 3-credit hour LOPER 126, rather than three individual 1 credit hour -126 sections from different departments, listed as co-requisites. There was a discussion focused on the benefits in reducing confusion for the students versus the difficulties in terms of allocating credit hours to the participating colleges, departments, and faculty members and how grading and course evaluations would be handled. Brown asked the Council to keep thinking about whether a structural change for LOPER 1 is needed and whether the Council should be trying to make that change for spring 2022 or wait until there has been a full year of courses under the current system to illuminate any problems that might need to be addressed.

- Brown stated that there was a suggestion to have a -126 course that is geared to non-traditional students. The instructors who attended the discussion felt strongly that all first-time freshman students, even non-traditional students, needed to take a first-year seminar. Ellis stated there is also an increase each year for online only students and that there needs to be a LOPER 1 course that is online. Brown stated there is an online first-year seminar that is scheduled to be piloted the next semester. Ellis stated UNK Online is working to broadcast UNK events for online students.

- IELTS as ENG 101 Prerequisite – Council notification
 - Neal stated currently the International Education Office uses IELTS as a prerequisite for ENG 100 and would like to use this score as an ENG 101 pre-requisite. For ENG 101, the IELTS score has been converted to an equivalent TOEFL score but it would be preferable to add the IELTS score directly. Neal replied to a question: the TOEFL score also will continue to meet the ENG 101 pre-requisite, along with the other already listed options. IELTS is being added to the list, not replacing anything. Umland stated that English already offers a placement test, and is looking into a Directed Self-Placement Program.

- APR Teams / Timetable reminder
 - Reports due to Director of General Studies by December 31 (earlier is appreciated)

 - Compiled report returned to the Council by January 13

- Special GSC meeting on January 20 regarding APR

IV. Other:

V. **Adjournment: Unruh/Reeves moved to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned @ 4:55 pm.**

Next meeting: December 2, 2021 @ 3:30 pm-Warner Conference Room, Warner Hall or via Zoom