

General Studies Council
May 5, 2022 @ 3:30 pm
Warner Conference Room or via Zoom
**** Approved via Email ****

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

Guests: Bobbi Ludwig, Amanda Sladek

Absent: Beth Hinga

I. Call to order:

- **Approve Agenda:** Unruh/Bohaty moved to approve the agenda. **Motion carried**
- Minutes from April 7 (approved via email)

II. Old Business (Open Items):

- JAPN 200 and 201 for LOPER 6 (Humanities) and LOPER 10 (Respect for Human Diversity)
 - There were no comments from campus.
 - Wells/Blauwkamp moved to approve JAPN 200 and JAPN 201 for LOPER 6 & LOPER 10. **Yes-13/No-0 Motion carried**
- Changes to First-Year Seminar structure / course submission
 - There was only one comment from campus, deeming it unnecessary to state that LOPR 126 seminars could collaborate across divisions of CAS as well as colleges and departments, since the divisions contain different departments. No action was taken on this comment.
- Updates to First-Year Seminar Checklist
 - Updates to the First-Year Seminar Checklist were made directly in the First-Year Seminar Checklist document. The updates addressed the shift from co-requisite sections to one 3-credit course and the change from 3 required disciplines to two or more, and we also clarified some submission instructions.
 - Blauwkamp/Reeves moved to approve the First Year Seminar Course Structure & First Year Seminar Checklist. **Yes-13/No-0 Motion carried**

III. New Business:

- Thoughts after APR written comments – The Council agreed that the APR team’s report would be an agenda item for meeting(s) at the beginning of next year to more fully consider how to respond to the team’s recommendations.

Three of the APR team’s recommendations were discussed.

Under **Coherence and Value**, Recommendation 2 (p. 6): “Consider opportunities to develop thematic interdisciplinary pathways through the existing General Studies program that are relevant to the challenges of the contemporary world.”

Blauwkamp suggested that Learning Communities on campus could work with departments to teach the designated sections for their students around a common theme. Thompson Scholars and the Loper Democracy Project have special LOPR 126 seminar sections for Fall 2022. Wells inquired how many students were involved; the Council needs to monitor offerings to ensure there are enough general registration classes available to other students. Several members wondered if students who came in with credit for a particular LOPER category or had already taken a suitable course would then need to retake if their Learning Community had a designated class. Rundstrom and Neal explained that TSLC students have to take their cohort courses that are tied to scholarship money, but other Learning Communities do not have that requirement.

Under **Governance and Campus Communications**, Recommendation 2 (p. 9): “Recommend ensuring timely and regular updates to campus stakeholders of decisions, actions, and discussions taken by the General Studies Council.”

Minutes of General Studies Council meetings are included in the Faculty Senate packets. It was agreed that the minutes also should be posted on the website, on the General Studies for Faculty Canvas organization, and on the Library’s ‘open spaces.’ Neal shared the link: <https://openspaces.unk.edu/communities.html>

Under **Assessment**, Recommendation 1 (p. 7): “Consider automating the collection of assessment data using existing campus tools to alleviate faculty workload. The Canvas Learning Management System, already widely used by faculty at UNK, has existing functionality that can potentially be used to assist in the collection and analysis of General Studies assessment data.”

This recommendation was mentioned as a possible means to address the faculty concerns about assessment that were discussed as the final agenda item (see below).

- Discussion on GS Assessment

Umland stated that some faculty members are unhappy with the collection of assessment data from every course every semester. Sampling courses would be easier for faculty and for the Council trying to process the data.

Brown explained what the Council team took from the AAC&U assessment workshop the group attended last summer. It is important to have benchmarks by which to evaluate individual courses. Getting information from all courses avoids problems with sampling error. The Council can still sample from the population data for analysis. It is important too to build a culture of assessment. Faculty members who assess every semester make it routine, but when they only collect assessment data every three years, it is easy to forget. The goal of assessment is to identify outstanding courses and courses that need help, not to be punitive.

Dillon stated that he had received questions from faculty regarding how to fill out the rubric and what needs to be submitted. Umland and Sladek expressed the English Department concerns about how to match their holistic grading practices to the assessment reporting requirements. The rubric has a space to list the applicable assignment being used to assess each learning outcome. That could be the same assignment for all objectives, a different assignment for each, or holistic (a brief description of the set of assignments being used), depending on the course. Instead of an individual assignment, it is fine for an instructor to use course grades or lab grades for the rubric scores. The instructor should not submit the assignment instructions, only the course syllabus, along with the completed spreadsheet.

Umland said that she does not think the learning objectives fit every course. Blauwkamp noted that the assessment process also should tell us whether learning objectives for any categories need to be revised.

It was agreed that Director Brown would attempt to clarify these matters to faculty when he sends out the reminder message. Assessment information from instructors is due two weeks after the end of the semester.

McKelvey noted, per the APR team's recommendation above, that Canvas can be set up to associate learning objectives with particular assignments and collect grade information automatically. Unruh expressed support for using Canvas to collect the data as UNO and UNL are already doing based on the APR report.

- IV. Farewell to departing Council members: Jeong Hoon Choi is leaving UNK and Doug Tillman's term has ended. Deans of CBT and COE have been asked to nominate new members as soon as possible, so the vacancies can be filled before Dr. Bicak's retirement. Jeremy Dillon has agreed to serve another term.
- V. Other:
- VI. Adjournment: **Unruh/McKelvey moved to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 4:25 pm.**

Next meeting: September 1, 2022 @ 3:30 pm - Warner Conference Room, Warner Hall

