

**General Studies Council**  
**December 1, 2022 @ 3:30 pm**  
**Warner Conference Room or via Zoom**

**\*\* Approved via Email \*\***

**Present:** Joel Berrier, Joan Blauwkamp, Jeremy Dillon, Sherri Harms, Toni Hill, Miechelle McKelvey, Tim Obermier, Rochelle Reeves, Sri Seshadri, Rebecca Umland, Nita Unruh, Melissa Wuellner, Greg Brown, Mark Ellis, Lisa Neal, Jessie Bialas, Joel Cardenas, Amy Rundstrom, Beth Hinga, Tristan Larson

**Guests:** Nanette Hogg, Jacob Howe (Student Senator)

**Absent:** Noelle Bohaty

I. Call to order:

- **Approve Agenda**-Unruh/Obermier moved to approve the agenda. The vote was unanimous. **Motion carried.**
- Minutes from November 3, 2022 meeting (approved via email)

II. Old Business (Open Items):

- Course proposals (review for final approval): PHIL 125, 150, 205, 209, 214, and 261

No comments on these courses were posted on the General Studies for Faculty Canvas forum during the campus comment period. Brown suggested tabling the final course approvals for Philosophy as the CAS Ed Policy Committee has requested revisions to the syllabi.

Seshadri/Obermier moved to table the course proposals for Philosophy until the February meeting. The vote was unanimous. **Motion carried.**

- Responses to APR (ongoing): Director Brown had prepared for the Council's discussion some draft responses to the APR team's recommendations for inclusion in the Council's action plan. The discussion took up each recommendation in turn.
  - *Coherence and Value – recommendation 1: To establish means of connecting faculty teaching General Studies courses.* The Council discussed the draft response of having exceptional teachers prepare videos on their teaching. More collaborative options, such as a conference or regular roundtable discussions were preferred. Roundtables or brownbag lunches would be easier for faculty to participate as they are less time intensive than a conference. A

discussion forum on GS teaching also could be added to the General Studies for Faculty Canvas organization.

- *Coherence and Value – recommendation 2: To consider opportunities for students to take LOPER courses integrated by a thematic emphasis on a contemporary issue or challenge.* Director Brown suggested the possibility of a minor in General Studies. Tristan Larson opined that the LOPER Program’s structure already does a better job of showing students why they are taking particular courses and how the program fits together than the old program did. One option would be to identify a variety of themes that existing GS courses address and put together some literature for academic advisors that helps to direct students to courses across multiple LOPER categories that would tie into a particular thematic interest, perhaps in conversation with Living and Learning Communities. Students would not have to take courses integrated by a theme – some programs are more prescriptive than others as to which course a student must take for a particular LOPER, but there would be opportunities for integrated GS coursework for interested students.
- *Assessment – recommendation 1: To consider using Canvas to automate collection of assessment data.* The Director looked into this option earlier this semester with UNK IT Services. The course structuring within Canvas at UNK and the Canvas package UNK uses differ from UNL and UNO and would not allow easy automation of assessment data collection. Although the assessment data collection process is in its second semester and faculty are still learning it, the data collection spreadsheets are not onerous.
- *Assessment – recommendation 2: To clarify processes and procedures for ‘closing the loop’ about campuswide assessment of GS outcomes.* The Spring 2022 assessment report was shared in October with opportunities for faculty comments on the General Studies for Faculty Canvas organization. An in-person and Zoom open discussion forum also was held on October 27. This practice will continue each semester. Ellis reminded the Council that SVC Majocho has determined that data collection should proceed under the current assessment plan through the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 semesters, but changes that the Council may wish to make to the assessment plan could go into effect for Fall 2023. The CAS Council members have proposed a set of discussion questions and suggested changes to the assessment plan, which will be on the agenda for the February 2023 meeting. Director Brown stated that the assessment plan was assembled rapidly with the expectation that it will not be static but continue to evolve as we learn from the data.
- *First Year Experience Course – recommendations 1 and 2: To consider focusing LOPER 1 on making a successful transition to college including Wellness.* Director Brown reported that Jordan McCoy from

the UNK Health Promotion Office will present at the February 2023 GSC meeting, regarding how first-year students' health needs might be addressed in LOPR 126 courses, and whether that can be done with co-curricular activities or needs to be the focus of the entire class. Various Council members indicated that they agree with the APR team that the LOPR 126 courses are trying to do too much with both 'welcome to college' skills and resources and a multidisciplinary academic focus. Dr. Bicak's directive was for the First-Year Seminar to be multidisciplinary and oriented toward big ideas or problems, but there may be other ways to make the seminar a 'transformational' course for first-year students. The Council is mindful that we just changed the structure last year, and we can't redesign LOPER 1 every year. The Council will continue to evaluate LOPER 1 and consider what changes might be advisable.

- *Governance and Campus Communication – recommendation 1: To clarify the governance structure to stakeholders across campus.* The General Studies Council governance document is posted on the website and on the General Studies for Faculty Canvas organization. It is not for the Council to advocate for the existing structure. Whether the current structure of the Council is beneficial or changes should be made is a conversation to be had with SVC Majocho.
- GS credit for previous military and/or work experience: SVC Majocho had asked the Council at the November 3 meeting to discuss the possibility of granting this credit.

How such programs work at other schools, the similarity to the ACE review of credit for military training that UNK does already, and what kinds of experience might qualify were discussed. Dean Ellis stated many universities are now offering credit for prior learning to attract students to their universities. He suggested the logistics for how the credit would be awarded should be addressed within college educational policy committees and the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee, not the Council.

Dillon/Obermier moved to send the following statement of support to Dr. Majocho: *The General Studies Council supports in principle the idea of granting University credit for prior learning, including GS credit, to qualifying students.* The vote was unanimous. **Motion carried.**

### III. New Business:

- Course proposals (new): No new proposals were submitted.
- To be completed this year: Student representative to work with the Director of General Studies to solicit and evaluate student nominations for faculty members to be recognized for excellence in teaching General Studies courses

Director Brown asked the Council for input on who should review the nominees (student-driven award, so student panel), how many awards and how distributed (one faculty member per year from CBT and COE and two from CAS), and where awarded (Larson suggested presenting the awards at the Student Senate Inauguration).

IV. Other: No other business.

**V. Adjournment: moved to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned @ 4:50 pm.**

**Next meeting: February 2, 2023 @ 3:30 pm-Warner Conference Room or via Zoom**