

General Studies Council
October 5, 2023
3:30 PM, Warner Conference Room
****Formerly the Chancellor's Dining Room, second floor of NSU****
**** Approve via Email ****

Present: Greg Benson, Derek Boeckner, Steve Hall, Megan Hartman, Kate Heelan, Suzanne Maughan Spencer, Tami Moore, Noel Palmer, Rochelle Reeves, Whitney Schneider-Cline, David Vail, Mallory Wetherell, Melissa Wuellner, Greg Brown, Mark Ellis, Jessie Bialas, Joel Cardenas, John Gibbs, Jacob Howe

Guests: Sharon Campbell, Nanette Hogg, Dean Jares

Absent: Lisa Neal, Beth Hinga

I. Call to order:

- **Approve Agenda:** Maughan Spencer/Heelan moved to approve the agenda.
Motion Carried
- Minutes from Sept. 7, 2023 meeting (approved via email)
- Ellis announced that new course approvals will be suspended so that the Council can focus its time on addressing the charge from Dr. Shaffer to revise the governance document: mission statement, voting structure, Council composition, and elections/appointments to Council. The Council will return to regular business when the governance revisions are completed.
- Hartman/Schnieder-Cline moved to remove the old business section from the agenda and to add an item to the agenda regarding concerns about changes to the governance document.
- Campbell wanted the Council to know that not approving new courses is a disservice to the Theatre department. Ellis let the Council know there is some flexibility to approving new courses during the next couple of months if the governance document gets revised. Maughan Spencer stated that she does not think it is a good idea to not approve/deny the courses that are already on the agenda. Ellis again reminded the Council that new course approval is suspended.
- **Yes-10/No-0/Abstain-3 Motion Carried**

H. ~~Old Business (Open Items):~~

- ~~Course proposals (review for final approval):~~
 - ~~THEA 307 for LOPER 3 (Oral Communication Skills)~~

- ~~THEA 225 for LOPER 5 (Visual/Performing Arts)~~
- ~~THEA 300 for LOPER 11 (Wellness)~~

III. New Business:

- Course proposals (new):
 - Nothing at this time
- Governance Document Revisions/Concerns
 - Proposed revision to voting policy
 - Wetherell stated she thinks the Council first needs to tackle the voting structure. Vail stated he has ethical concerns with the direction of the Council business while the proposal of severe budget cuts is still being considered and because he does not know what the Council will look like in the future. Heelan stated the council needs to step away from who will be on the future Council and determine the voting structure.
 - Boeckner reminded the Council that at the last meeting they voted to have the voting structure be a simple majority plus one. He let the Council know that he thinks this is what the voting structure should be for ordinary Council business.
 - Boeckner/Reeves moved to send to campus, the proposal for the voting structure be a simple majority plus one for ordinary council business.
 - Hartman stated the Council structure should dictate the voting structure. She stated a 2/3rds majority may be better as the Council is not the same as the other governing bodies on campus and she is concerned with rushing into a new voting structure. Boeckner stated the voting structure could later be amended as the Council gets the governance document updated.
 - **Yes-12/No-0/Abstain-1 Motion Carried**
- Mission Statement
 - Boeckner explained how the Faculty Senate committee came up with their proposed mission statement. He stated that each member wrote what they thought the mission statement should be for their college. Then they took the three statements and came up with one mission statement. Wuellner stated the ad hoc committee looked at

other university websites to come up with a mission and vision and preferred a shorter mission statement. Boeckner stated there is a lot of overlap between the two statements but there are also differences. Brown suggested the Council split into two groups and have each group look at a mission statement and determine what they like and/or dislike. Wetherell suggested that when the Council breaks into two groups to look at the strengths and not the weaknesses.

- At 4:11 pm the Council broke into two groups to review the two mission statements. The Council came back together at 4:26 pm.
- The first group liked the following sentence from the Faculty Senate committee proposed mission statement: *This requirement is the foundation of the university's academic mission and is designed to develop students' essential reading, writing, and quantitative skills, with the goal of cultivating lifelong characteristics of critical reasoning and ethical discernment as students determine how to live their lives.* And the sentence: *These are the characteristics that lead to mature, well-rounded, well-informed, competent, trusted, and productive individuals who will benefit their local and global communities.*
- The second group looked at the ad hoc mission statement and liked the format of that proposed mission statement. They thought the students would understand the bullet points. Boeckner stated the mission statement is important for students to understand why they are taking general studies courses.
- The Council came up with the following mission statement proposal:

Mission

The UNK General Education Mission is to support the university's academic mission by developing students' knowledge, skills, and abilities to understand the world, make connections across disciplines, and contribute to the solutions of contemporary problems.

What is General Education at UNK

It is a shared education that blends an individual's lived experience with the development of the following:

- *Effective oral and written communication*
- *Essential quantitative skills*
- *Critical and ethical evaluation of information and environment*
- *Identifying, finding, evaluating, applying, and acknowledging sources of information*
- *Social and civic responsibility*
- *Self-empowerment to excel academically, creatively, and practically*

- *Emotional intelligence*
- *Understanding of the physical world and its interactions*
- *Cultural and aesthetic appreciation*

To this end, this General Education program provides accurate information and sound theory; develops the intellectual abilities to reason well, and the physical abilities to live well; fosters curiosity and appreciation of our world and of each other. These are the characteristics that lead to well-rounded, well-informed, competent, trusted, and productive individuals who will benefit their local and global communities.

- Ellis stated that Dr. Shaffer would like the governance document changes to go out in pieces to campus and not as a whole. He stated the mission statement and voting structure should be submitted to Dr. Shaffer. Hartman stated she would like the Council to sit with the mission statement and look it over before giving it to Dr. Shaffer. She suggested the Council look at it for a week then send it to Dr. Shaffer. Brown let the Council know he would put the mission statement on SharePoint for the Council to review.
- Wetherell suggested the Council look at the governance document between meetings to make better use of time during the Council meetings. Ellis stated the next matter the Council needs to work on is the council composition. Brown stated he will put the different council structure suggestions including the current structure on the General Studies Council Canvas discussion board to allow the Council to start making comments on. Maughan Spencer asked if the Council should also be discussing how council members are chosen. Ellis stated that is a good idea to discuss also.
- LOPER 1 Evaluation
- GS Assessment
 - Syllabus Review plan
 - Benchmarks

IV. Other:

V. **Adjournment: Hall/Wetherell moved to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned @ 5:00 pm.**

Next meeting: November 2, 2023 @ 3:30 pm- Warner Conference Room (formerly the Chancellor's Dining Room) or via Zoom