

General Education Task Force Meeting Notes (12/15/11)

Present: Cliff Abbott, Lucy Arendt, Derryl Block, Susan Cooper, Tim Dale, Heidi Fencl, Debbie Furlong, Scott Furlong, Andy Kersten, Sue Mattison, Donna Ritch, John Stoll, Bryan, Vescio, Georjeanna Wilson-Doenges

Guest: Provost Julia Wallace

1. Cliff summarized his visit with the Human Biology faculty. The majority of the faculty supported the proposed model for General Education. Faculty expressed a concern about the lack of ability to double count major courses as general education courses. They felt that Human Biology majors should not have to take further science courses as general education requirements. Currently, faculty are heavily invested in issues and values courses; they suggested that perhaps an ethics category be added to the perspectives array. The courses they currently offer may fit into categories of the proposed model if the prerequisite is removed. A question arose as to why first year perspective courses were capped at 25, while capstone courses were capped at 35 in the model. Overall, the faculty felt that this was an opportunity to make Human Biology more efficient and were happy with the general design.
2. Scott volunteered to write up a summary report to distribute to the units. It will include: a restatement of goals, how skills will be incorporated in the model, and assessment.
3. Task force members outlined and discussed lingering questions with inclusion in the summary report.
 - Can a capstone course be offered through a disciplinary program, such as Psychology? The task force did not come to a definite conclusion on this issue.
 - Transfer issues
Students that come in with an Associate Degree would continue to have their general education requirements met as the current policy states. When students transfer in with 15 or more credits, they are designated as “transfers.” We would not require a first year perspectives course, but would provide one as an option. This led to a discussion of offering the first year perspectives courses both Fall and Spring semesters.
 - Resource Issues
The task force has run a model that incorporated a number of assumptions regarding what classes may fit within the model’s categories. It represents one of what could be many simulations for how the transition could work. One possible scenario for how we proceed will be to have the units engage in a simulation whereby they populate the necessary classes and seats under the new model.
 - Foreign language
A few units raised the issue of having a foreign language requirement as part of the general education program or university requirements. While UWGB does not have such an admission requirement, data provided Institutional Research suggest that a large majority (89%) of our students meet the common requirement of having two (or more) years of high school foreign language when they enter. The task force members decided not to pursue any additional language requirements at this time.
 - Incorporation of Academic Skills into Model
 1. Give the Gen Ed faculty responsibility for teaching at least the introductory levels of the skills
 2. Communicate to students that general education courses will improve their skills, and that general education isn’t merely about content
 3. Encourage individual faculty to experiment and innovate with methods of incorporating skills into their curriculum

4. Give individual faculty the flexibility to change skill elements within a given course from semester to semester
5. Track the presence of the skills in each student's Gen Ed experiences at the level of the individual student, as reported by the student
6. Use incentives and training to deepen the presence of desirable skills across the curriculum

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, January 19, 2012 at 8:30 AM