General Education Task Force Meeting Notes (2/28/11)

Present: Cliff Abbott, Lucy Arendt, Derryl Block, Kevin Collins, Tim Dale, Heidi Fend, Debbie Furlong, Scott Furlong, Regan Gurung, Ray Hutchison, Andrew Kersten, Donna Ritch, John Stoll, Bryan Vescio, Georjeanna Wilson-Doenges

Guests: Chairs – Angela Bauer-Dantoin, David Coury, Greg Davis, Alison Gates, Susan Lepak-Gallagher, Jennifer Mokren, Kim Nielsen, Marilyn Sagrillo, Brian Sutton
General Education Council – Andrew Austin, Stefan Hall, Jennifer Ham, Steve Meyer

1. The Task Force approved the notes from the last meeting.

2. Scott welcomed the Chairs and members of the General Education Council. He began the discussion by reviewing the General Education purpose and mission previously approved by the General Education Council and Faculty Senate. The objective of this meeting was to obtain feedback on the “draft” model of general education; he asked the guests to think about the model without considering resource implications.

3. Below is a summary of the questions/comments that various individuals expressed.
   - What role does breadth play in the general education model; how important is specific breadth based knowledge to general education program?
   - The “draft” model reflects purpose and mission; model was developed from a consensus view
   - There are two tensions: How much do we commit to content vs. something more flexible (general areas)
     - Content vs. skills – are classes devoted to skills or are they weaved into courses?
   - Not certain quantitative competency required for AVD students; response that the idea behind this category is to enable students to use formulation for reasoning, such as 2D and 3D art
   - Question about philosophy of general education program; is the general education program a group of minimal competencies for students or does it bring student further than they were?; response is that it is part of path to producing an educated student and ideally it consists of a scaffolding of courses
   - If breadth requirement is a list of courses, it only reinforces students to complete courses and check them of a list; response included liking the idea of flexibility and letting students take courses that they find interesting
   - Nothing in “draft” model about English composition and writing emphasis courses; students would still need to meet English competencies; writing emphasis courses have not been discussed; task force needs to spend time on writing emphasis requirement
   - How does general education “draft” model work for transfer students? Would transfer students be required to take a senior capstone seminar?
   - The “draft” model is a compromise; it consists of some new ideas and maintains some consistency with what we have done
   - Question regarding first year seminars in light of Faculty Senate voting down resolution; first year seminars, which more appropriately should be freshmen seminars in this case, were supported by more than 50% of faculty that completed general education survey, the seminars may be a different format than what we currently offer

Scott told the group that members of the Task Force would also like to attend Unit meetings to get feedback from faculty on the “draft” model.

At future meeting, the Task Force should discuss:
1. Incorporation of a Gender Studies category in perspectives; students would select courses in two out of the remaining three categories; ethnic studies is required
2. Should perspectives courses be blended with freshmen seminars

Next Meeting: TBD