

**General Education Committee  
Minutes**

October 8, 2002

<b>Present:</b>	Mark Hardt George Benedict Barbara Zuck	Randall Gloege Squy Wallace Sandie Rietz
<b>Absent:</b>	Janie Park – <i>ex-officio</i> Joe Michels – <i>ex-officio</i> Randy Rhine – <i>ex-officio</i> Dan Zirker – <i>ex-officio</i>	George White – <i>ex-officio</i> John Cech – <i>ex-officio</i> Curt Kochner – <i>ex-officio</i>
<b>Guests:</b>	Michael Dennis	
<b>Presiding:</b>	Mark Hardt, Chair	

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Mark Hardt called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m. in CEHS 216.

The minutes from September 24, 2002 were approved.

I. NEW BUSINESS

**A. Memo from Keith Edgerton, Chair of the Academic Senate.** The memo stated that the Senate desired that the General Education Committee formulate a strategy and timeline for moving forward. The memo noted that a suggestion was made in the Senate meeting that the Committee perhaps meet with departments to help decide the aims of the program.

It was noted that meeting with departments was not necessary at this time. The timeline and concerns of the memo will be addressed at the next meeting.

II. OLD BUSINESS

**A. Work on Assessment Chart.**

It was noted that if the assessment chart were distributed to faculty, most likely there will not be a large response. There may be no response. The best thing to do may be to just propose something and then “let the fur fly.” It was also noted that faculty seem very disinterested. It was cited that faculty need to know that the committee is doing something. Then they may be more interested.

It was stated that over the years, plenty of talking was done, but we always end up with the same potpourri program. It was suggested that outcomes assessment will cause a change. Inventing measurable outcomes will cause the program to change. It was also noted that NorthWest doesn’t know what they want, in terms of outcomes.

It was then stated that which courses being offered in the program should be a decision of this committee. However, the content of those courses should be left entirely up to departments.

It was noted that with five categories and eight departments, it will be a big mess trying to organize the courses into categories. This committee should decide which departments work with which, and how many courses each group must offer. It was noted that the 60 courses voted on last year is an arbitrary number. A limit was needed, and 60 was selected.

It was then noted that there should be some sort of requirement that students learn a body of knowledge in Gen Ed. It was cited, however, that although Math and the Sciences are relatively easy to fit into a body of knowledge, subjects like History, Art, and Literature are much more difficult to fit into a body. It's a subjective decision as to what would be included.

It was noted that the University could take a military-like approach and give the students no choices. They must take this list of courses, and that is all.

It was noted that the Gen Ed Committee should have some sort of guides as to what will be cut and what will be accepted for the courses in Gen Ed. It was noted that this could be the UCC's job.

It was cited that NorthWest wants to see outcomes, but they are not particularly interested in content. They want to see that the University is working with and using outcomes.

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On the Chart, it was noted that the Spiritual category does not sound right. It should be changed to Moral & Ethical Development, making it a broader category. It was also noted that Physical Development is not needed. It was therefore cut from the chart.

It was then noted that the (now) fourth category, Moral & Ethical Development, could be the Milestone course, taught from the Philosophy department.

It was also suggested that the category be called Ethical Development, as the word *moral* is often used interchangeably with *ethical*, though their meanings differ.

It was stated that most students will not be ready for such "high" treatment. It may go over their heads. They do need to learn, however, that not everyone thinks like they do.

It was suggested that the Milestone indeed be an ethics course. The students could discuss all the ethical issues they have encountered in their Gen Ed courses. Ethics is inherent in almost any course from Literature to Biology. The goal of the whole Gen Ed Program is some sort of ethical development. It was noted that because ethical development is at least one goal of Gen Ed, it should be kept at a category, rather than just the Milestone.

It was noted that as part of the prose in the catalog about Gen Ed, we could state that there is an ethical code in all education, and encourage faculty to talk (at least briefly) about ethical issues in all their courses. It was cited that the Milestone as an ethics course would give the student a structure in which to look back on all ethical issues in Gen Ed courses.

It was cited that the Milestone course will get in the way of transferability.

It was stated that Development of Individual Attitudes and Dispositions should also be removed. Those cannot be taught. It was suggested that we don't teach those attitudes, but instead how to develop them. Development of Individual Attitudes and Dispositions was moved to Intellectual Growth, as a subcategory.

It was noted that we may be expecting too much. It's important to be modest in our goals. Simplifying is important.

It was noted that Gen Ed could have a dual outcome. (1) Students should know that we expect them to change and (2) that change will be proven in the ethics milestone. The concept of mentors could be employed. The idea of the program would be a student becoming a mentor—an older, wiser person.

The next step in this chart will be to fill in the outcomes for each point under the categories. After that, we will figure out what courses fit those outcomes.

The meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna