

**General Education Committee
Minutes**

February 25, 2002

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

Mark Hardt called the meeting to order at 3:39 p.m. in CEHS 216.

The February 18 meeting minutes were approved.

I. Mission Statement/Objective

Another suggestion was offered for the Title and Objective. It was noted that this draft gets rid of the built-in assumptions of the first title and object statement. It was stated that this new statement may be less biased, but it's bland and flat. It seems very wish-washy.

It was noted that dignity is defined as sophistication and artificiality. Humility replaces dignity in the new statement. It was also cited that the original statement is a very lofty goal, and mostly what Gen Ed consists of here at MSU-B is remediation. It was argued that we should still have lofty goals for our students.

It was also noted that humility is appropriate because the more one learns, the more one understands why humility is needed. Students should realize their own ignorance.

It was noted that the committee is working with ideology, which is a hard thing to define, let alone work with.

It was cited that a focus on human dignity is a focus on human arrogance, which should be avoided. It was also noted that in the past, dignity was directly associated with belief in God. Dignity is too loaded a term to use in this object statement.

It was then cited that the new object statement has nothing to do with gender or species. It also mentions nothing about content, measurement, or how far a student will go after taking Gen Ed. That is why it works, because everyone (all departments) can fit into that statement. It was also noted that we have an opportunity to refocus and reinvent the Gen Ed program, and lead our students in a new direction. It was cited that it is important that the program *not* be the same old, same old, and to be conscious of needed change.

It was cited, however, that the document this committee is working on will not bring about an ideological change, regardless of how it's written. A change in ideology will come from the faculty, not a document. It was also noted that no matter how carefully this document is worded, someone else will perceive it differently than we do.

It was suggested to replace dignity or humility with wisdom. Animals do not have wisdom, even if they have dignity. Wisdom is also a less charged term.

The question was raised if wisdom can be used as a goal. It was cited that in the past, we have not done a good job with treating each other and the entire globe well. It is, however, essential to set students on a path that will lead them to wisdom. We will not necessarily give them wisdom, just point them in a direction to better themselves. It was also noted that the path to wisdom illustrates that one does not have wisdom—that implies humility.

It was noted that the original intent of the original title and object was that students know where we came from and as humans we have the ability to change where we are going.

This title was then suggested: A critique of human civilization and exploration of the grounds for making informed choices.

It was cited that it should say that some choices are better than others. It was noted that it is hubris to think there is only one good choice, but to say that there are some better than others is what education is about. It was cited that just because something is *not bad*, does not mean that it is *good*.

This title was then suggested: A critical examination of the development of life and its potential.

It was noted that potential is not a strong enough word. We should ask more of our students than just knowing the potential.

This title was then suggested: A critique of human civilization and the potential dignity/wisdom of the individual.

It was stated that we should not tell our students what they must do. However, we should not just ask them to reflect and consider. That is not enough.

It was noted that the Gen Ed program can be called the core if needed, but there are already other cores in other programs, and it is important not to confuse the students with too many cores.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna