

**General Education Committee
Minutes**

September 19, 2002

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

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. in the Burgundy room.

There was not a quorum.

Mark Hardt handed out the report that was done in 2000 on General Education Assessment, as it was requested last year. He stated that this would just be a discussion meeting. He reviewed the actions of the Gen Ed Committee from last year. He stated that the committee voted to reduce the number of required Gen Ed credits to 32. One of those credits over 30 is for the science lab, and the other one credit is for a capstone course. The structure of that capstone has yet to be discussed.

It was noted that many departments, especially in Arts and Sciences, will say this cut will hurt their department, but this change should not greatly affect them.

It was also noted that the College of Business has three one-credit math courses that count toward Gen Ed, but are useless. Very little useful information is taught, and the course are not taught by math faculty. The question is, would the students take these three courses if they didn't have to?

Mark Hardt stated another issue the committee voted on last year. They voted to require that all syllabi for Gen Ed courses must specify what category the course is in, how the course meets the requirements of that category, and how the student is being assessed to ensure that he or she is meeting those requirements.

The committee also voted last year to reduce the number of courses offered in Gen Ed from approximately 120 down to about 60. The courses cut from the list would not disappear; they would be offered as electives or as part of a degree.

The committee also voted to prohibit double-counting of courses (the course counts as a Gen Ed and in the student's degree, or the course counts in two Gen Ed categories).

It was noted that the committee voted in all these changes, but none of them have been implemented yet. The Gen Ed Committee is a recommending body to the Academic Senate, and the Senate will implement the changes as they see fit.

Mark Hardt also stated that there are two directions the Gen Ed program can go. The first is to reduce the number of courses offered in Gen Ed, so the student can take one or more in-depth courses. The second is to offer integrated and multi-disciplinary courses like the integrated science course currently offered. There are some students who prefer the first, while others prefer the second option. It is possible to offer both.

Mark Hardt also noted that Sandie Rietz is putting together the views of the Senate members of what Gen Ed should be, and she will bring that information together for the Gen Ed committee at the next Gen Ed meeting. This information will help in identifying what faculty want students to learn in Gen Ed.

It was also noted that most faculty members don't know when the Gen Ed committee meets, and they are wondering why. It was suggested that notices of the meetings could be sent out on email through Admin_gen.

It was then cited that the integrated courses, especially writing courses, are very valuable. They would help to take the emphasis off number of credits and in effect make "credits that count." Outcomes that can be measured are also very important, so the University can say that it has put out a well-rounded, educated person.

It was pointed out that this committee needs to improve the quality and structure of a program that is out of control.

It was noted that there are two sides to the Gen Ed program: those that think the students should be finished with Gen Eds by the end of their sophomore year and those that think the students should be able to string out their Gen Eds through all four years. Upper division students may be able to appreciate a Gen Ed more than a freshman student. It was cited, however, that some courses should come as early as possible, such as writing and math. It was suggested to do both—require the student to take writing and math courses (chosen from a fairly limited list) early on, and then allow the upper division student to choose from a larger list of Gen Eds that would include all categories.

Another system was also suggested, where the student would take a capstone in their major. For example, a science major would take two required science courses as part of Gen Ed, and also take a science capstone. A history major would take the two required science courses, but not the science capstone. The history major would take a history capstone after his or her history Gen Eds.

It was noted that this is why the structure is so important—the students need to be able to make sense of why they take Gen Eds. It was also noted that we need to be quick. The University been working on changing Gen Ed for 2 years now, and it's time for some progress.

It was decided that the Gen Ed committee will have an agenda for all its meetings from now on.

A concern was voiced about courses taught at the COT that should count as the same on the main campus, but do not. It was cited that this could be a growing problem, because the COT will offer a full menu of Gen Eds, and they should be able to transfer. Communication will be key, because there will be many changes coming forth for the COT as it converts to a community college.

It was stated that the Gen Ed committee owes the Senate a report on what the Gen Ed committee did last year. This will be discussed at the next Gen Ed meeting on Tuesday, September 24. It was also noted that most likely, we cannot get these changes in this year's catalog.

The meeting adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna