

**General Education Committee  
Minutes**

October 11, 2011

<b>Present:</b>	Bernie Quetchenbach Matt Redinger Mark Fenderson Elizabeth Fullon Becky Lyons (ex-officio)	Melinda Tilton Tom Regele Patricia Nichols TyRee Jenks
<b>Absent:</b>	Kurt Toenjes Mike Havens – <i>excused</i>	Neil Suits – <i>excused</i> Michael Scarlett – <i>excused</i>
<b>Presiding:</b>	Matt Redinger, Chairperson	

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Matt Redinger called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. in McMullen 305.

The minutes of September 13 were accepted as presented.

I. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

**A. Chancellor Groseth's Opinion on the Freshman Seminar**

Dr. Redinger stated that as soon as Chancellor Groseth received our memo, he asked to meet with Dr. Redinger. The result of that meeting was learning that Dr. Groseth agrees the freshman seminar is essential to students' wellbeing, but not appropriate for Gen Ed. Dr. Groseth stated that he would not mandate that the course be required of all students.

Dr. Redinger also met with our new Provost, Mark Pagano, who understandably did not know about the course. He understood why it would not work in Gen Ed but wants to continue discussions with the Academic Support Center staff to move the course in a direction to allow it to fit in Gen Ed.

Ultimately, the freshman seminar course is no longer on our radar, but the ASC's goal is to require it of all students in the future. The ASC staff wanted to know where the course stood with the GEC, and now they know.

**B. Gen Ed Webinar Debriefing: Melinda Tilton**

Dr. Havens was unable to attend the meeting, but Ms. Tilton shared her thoughts on the presentation. The slides are attached to these minutes.

Ms. Tilton noted that Nebraska had similar problems to our own with assessment. They completely overhauled their program, but began communicating with students and faculty early and often. Everyone wanted change and was involved in creating the new program.

There were no surprises thanks to the level of communication. Faculty were involved in roundtables and all groups involved were surveyed and interviewed. Faculty were also trained in the use of the TaskStream software, and financial incentives were offered.

Students moved through a pyramid of courses, beginning with the foundational core; the portal, which is like our freshman seminar; distribution; and a discipline-specific capstone. Throughout the entire process, using the TaskStream software, students could see their progress based on a rubric. The capstone course closes the loop and provides assessment of everything the student has learned in both Gen Ed and the major. As part of the portal step, six different projects are set up and instructors choose one appropriate to the discipline. These six projects have clearly defined parameters and outcomes that any faculty member can use. The entire TaskStream system, which the students love, is funded by students fees and run by one full-time and one part-time person. Students appreciate that they can sign into the TaskStream system and see exactly how they are progressing in a given course and also in their whole college career.

Ms. Tilton noted that the presentation did not give a lot of detail on courses, but she believes the students do not pick from a smorgasbord of courses in Gen Ed. It's a much more structured system and as a result, they have much clearer and more concise outcomes. The reason Nebraska changed their Gen Ed program was because the smorgasbord approach was not working for them. It was noted that it is important for students to be able to pick and choose—and perhaps flounder a bit—before deciding on their majors. However, our students have responded that they have *too many* choices in our current Gen Ed program, but no choices whatsoever may not be the solution either.

It was agreed that we do not need to completely adopt the Nebraska program, but we can pick out what we like. We don't have a mandate to update or overhaul our Gen Ed program, so we can take our time and think about this proposal.

The meeting adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna.