

**General Education Committee
Minutes**

September 13, 2011

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

Matt Redinger called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m. in McMullen 305.

The minutes of April 13 were accepted as presented.

I. ELECTION OF CHAIR & CHAIR ALTERNATE FOR 2011-2012

- Melinda Tilton nominated Matt Redinger for chairperson, and Mark Fenderson seconded the nomination.

- Dr. Redinger agreed to serve.

Mike Havens volunteered to be chair alternate for the year.

II. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Proposed Faculty Workshop on Advising for Gen Ed

It was agreed that no one really remembered why we were going to hold a workshop.

The question was raised as to whether the list of “recommended courses” for Gen Ed was helpful in the Advising Center. Becky Lyons, Interim Director of the Advising Center, stated that the list may not yet be complete. It was cited that not all courses have recommended prerequisites. We have to be clear that these courses are not prerequisites, but rather courses that will be helpful to a student going into a given Gen Ed course.

B. Reworking/Rewording of MSUB Outcomes

This will be an ongoing task for the GEC, as the outcomes should always be under review. We will need to revisit them occasionally. The current outcomes will be sent out to all the Committee members for review.

It was noted that the assessment consultant who visited campus recently said we are really doing things all wrong. Our outcomes are not what NWCCU is looking for. She stated that they want very narrow, single-test-question tracking of student improvement.

C. Moving COMT 110 Interpersonal Communication from Social Sciences to Communication & Information Literacy

COMT 110 is out of synch with the rest of the University System, as most units list it under Communication rather than Social Sciences. However, it transfers to Bozeman as a Social Science course. It was noted that COMT 110 was originally put in the Social Sciences Category because it did not fit the original Information Literacy Category.

Melinda Tilton said she would begin work to move the course to the Communication & Information Literacy Category, effective with the next undergraduate catalog.

D. Proposal to Add the Freshman Seminar to Gen Ed

This is also a topic which will be on the GEC radar for this year. The Academic Support Center folks want to move the freshman seminar into Gen Ed to make the course “count” somewhere. This Fall, only two faculty members are teaching in the seminars. Last Fall, half of the sections were taught by faculty members.

It was noted that the seminar, as it exists now, does not meet the philosophical foundations of what Gen Ed is. It was responded that they may make changes in the course to make it fit better into Gen Ed. The Chancellor may also simply make a proclamation that all freshmen will take the course. However, we don’t have the staffing to handle that many students!

It was cited that if the freshman seminar is added to Gen Ed, it doesn’t really fit into any category. It would have to be in its own category, effectively doing the same thing a Chancellor proclamation would do. Plus, it would add credits to every program on campus, and many are already up against the 120 credit limit. BOR permission is needed to go beyond 120 credits. It’s also a big issue with the two-year programs at the COT, which have no credits to spare.

It was noted that there is a 15% increase in retention of students from Fall to Spring if they take the freshman seminar. However, we only have *one year* of data. We don’t even know if 15% is significant.

It was stated that the freshman seminar is not part of our mission as the Gen Ed Committee. However, every committee on campus is tasked with retention. Gen Ed is not about retention.

It was cited that there is a problem with the course if almost all of the faculty who taught it last year did not teach it again this year. Perhaps getting back to our discussion of defining Gen Ed will help us decide if the freshman seminar belongs in Gen Ed. The problem is, Gen Ed is ill-defined everywhere. It was noted that unless faculty do something with the course, through this Committee, the content will not change. If the course is required of all freshmen, who will control it? It was cited that the whole freshman seminar was an idea of the former Chancellor. We need to talk to our current Chancellor and get his thoughts on whether the course will continue, who will pay for it, and whether it will eventually be required of all freshman students. Dr. Redinger stated that he would write to the Chancellor and ask him about these issues. Therefore, the next meeting will tentatively be set for Tuesday, September 27, to meet with Chancellor Groseth.

The meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna.