

**General Education Committee  
Minutes**

January 28, 2013

<b>Present:</b>	Mark Jacobson	Bernie Quetchenbach
	Melinda Tilton	Kurt Toenjes
	Rhonda Dillman	Mike Havens
	Jennifer Lynn	Tom Regele
	Mark Fenderson	Leanne Gilbertsen
	Patricia Nichols	Michael Scarlett
	Scott Harris	Elizabeth Fullon
	TyRee Jenks	Daniel Barnhart (student)
	Matt Redinger (ex-officio)	Becky Lyons (ex-officio)

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Mike Havens called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. in the Missouri room.

The minutes of December 10 were accepted as amended.

**I. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS**

**A. Major Capstone Courses and ETS Testing**

We need to order the tests now if we're going to do them in April. The administration has decided not to use ETS broadly across the University; this test will only be for Gen Ed. We can test as many students as we want, within reason, because student fees are paying for the tests.

We had discussed using big sections of Biology and Psychology, but those do exclude certain majors. If we use senior capstone courses for our sample, we will get a better variety but will have to depend on many instructors' cooperation. Some majors will not be able to accommodate another test in their capstone course. For instance, the business majors' capstone is already very test-heavy. If the capstone course specifically will not work, we can ask departments to suggest another senior-level course we could use.

The question was raised as to why we can't make the test a requirement when applying for graduation. It was noted that we need a controlled setting in which to administer the test, and students just walking in to apply for graduation does not provide that. There is an online test offered by ETS we could use in the future, but we do not have time to implement it for this spring semester.

The issue of incentives for the students was raised. Students with no incentive to do well on the test, do not do well on the test! If we do decide to give an incentive, perhaps a randomly given prize, the students who take the bogus test would have to be included. If the result of the test is tied to the incentive (i.e., top score wins a prize), that also excludes the students

who took the bogus test. It was noted that if we use only capstone courses, we probably don't need a bogus test because capstone courses tend to be under ten students.

It was cited that we will also need to indicate which students are transfer students. This can be included as a question on the test, such as "Did you bring Gen Ed credits from another institution?" We would want to separate out the transfer students, but they would be as valuable to test as a non-transfer student.

It was agreed we will use capstone courses, or another department-suggested senior-level course, and see how many students that will be. We will need a person to visit each class and make the same statement about what the test is for, and we will likely need that statement in a written form as well, to include with the test.

The incentive could be a prize for the top score. Another suggestion offered was to simply recognize the top ten percent of students at Convocation. The students would receive certificates and they could cite this distinction on their resumes. It was noted that some juniors do take the capstone courses, so we would have to hold their recognition until they graduate.

It was noted that in order to get the results back in time for Convocation, we will need to complete the tests by the end of March. We can and will return each student's score to him or her.

We also need a sample from City College. What course would give a good sample of students?

The test is about \$20 per student, and that includes scoring the tests, data aggregation, and data comparison with other universities.

## **B. Reducing Gen Ed to 30/31 Credits**

The idea mentioned last week of losing all 100-level writing courses will be a problem, at least temporarily, for City College.

It was noted that no unit in the University System is actually doing 30 credits of Gen Ed, because even the courses with embedded labs are 4 credits, resulting in a total of 31 credits. Most students get through Bozeman's Gen Ed with 33 credits.

It was suggested that instead of making a second writing course a hidden prerequisite for Gen Ed, students could choose between WRIT 101 and the 200-level courses, based on their COMPASS scores. That one course would count toward Gen Ed. Then major programs could require any writing beyond that. It is unreasonable to assume any given major will not include more writing courses.

The question was raised as to what happens with those 6 credits if we free them from Gen Ed. It was noted that the majors can use them in a program if that's what faculty want and staffing can provide, or they would just be electives.

It was cited that the Chancellor's request for us to look into this issue said nothing about the nature of our categories and how the courses are organized, only the total number of credits.

It was agreed to start an email thread to discuss options for reducing Gen Ed credits.

The meeting adjourned at 4:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna.