

**General Education Committee
Minutes**

October 19, 2015

Present:	Don Wilathgamuwa	David Craig
	Melinda Tilton	Kurt Toenjes
	Matthew Queen	Mike Havens
	Jennifer Lynn	Tom Regele
	John Roberts	Leanne Gilbertsen
	Scott Harris	Alan Loomis (student)
Absent:	Patricia Nichols*	Rosemarie Dugi*
	Elizabeth Fullon*	Megan Thomas*
	Colin Buck (student)	

*excused

Kurt Toenjes called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m. in McMullen 305.

The minutes of September 21 were accepted as presented.

Dr. Toenjes noted that we still don't have our assessment data from last year. He will look into the delay.

I. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Retention and General Education

We have issues in Gen Ed, such as inappropriate placing of students due to misleading testing scores or not having the right skills going into a course which lead to a lot of students failing. Students should not be taking the same math course over and over and failing; they should have been advised into a different course to begin with. It was cited that students definitely do not want to fail a course in their first semester at MSUB.

It was suggested that the GEC develop a guide for advisors on which Gen Ed courses are most appropriate given a student's skills. This is especially important now that some departments are moving up the advising switch from the Advising Center to faculty advisors much sooner, in some cases the Fall semester of a student's first year. There is also an initiative to move undeclared majors to faculty advisors, which will make a Gen Ed course guide even more valuable.

While students who fail out of courses and do not return are a problem, students who are not challenged by their courses, especially Gen Ed courses, leave because they are bored! We need to give them an option to use upper-level, more challenging courses in Gen Ed if they can and want. The Advising Center may also not be able to meet these students' needs.

These high-level students may not know they can substitute upper-level courses for Gen Ed requirements. The GEC could recommend to the Academic Senate that we create a policy statement that other courses will satisfy Gen Ed requirements with permission of an advisor. This could be capped at two or three courses, as well.

It was further noted that we also lose students for reasons beyond the curriculum, such as frustrations with Financial Aid and the Advising Center.

Over the last few years, there has been a huge change in who teaches Gen Ed courses. Courses that had been taught by Ph.D.s are now being taught by part-time faculty with master's degrees. Every two years the GEC asks department chairs to report on their Gen Ed offerings, if they are still appropriate to Gen Ed. Chairs are afraid to report that, yes, there are major issues with Gen Ed offerings and staffing. Sections with 60 or 100 students are definitely detrimental to the quality of that course. Part-time faculty with a master's degree in an area other than the discipline they are teaching are also an issue.

However, moving advising to the faculty rather than the Advising Center does not guarantee better advising. We should evaluate faculty advising just as we do teaching. We need to train all faculty on how best to advise. The GEC can and should put together a guide of which courses are appropriate for what kinds of students. The guide could also include contact people for each discipline where a student or faculty member could ask questions about which course is most appropriate in a given situation.

The meeting adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna.