

General Education Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 8, 2018
Ventress Hall Conference room

Members Present: Noel Wilkin and Lee Cohen, Co-chairs; Holly Reynolds, Rich Forgette, Bob Cummings, Katie Busby, Kate Kellum, Stephen Monroe, James Reid, Danielle Ammeter, Mindy Noss, Nancy Wiggers, Jason Ritchie, Deborah Mower, Ashley Bodie-Jones, Hunter Myers.

Members Absent: Maurice Eftink, Ginny Chavis, Jon Moen, John Chappell

In the fall 2017, several subcommittees were formed to provide an overview of the current state of different general education competencies and create a proposal for improving student learning.

1. The Mathematical Reasoning Subcommittee presented their report, including a one-page document of their talking points. See both report and summary attached.
 - a. Katie Busby discussed how the committee was expanded to include Kerri Scott (Chemistry) and Paige Gillentine (Mathematics). They looked at the existing data and professional best practices for this important skill for all our graduates. They identified two specific learning outcomes: execute mathematical procedures and demonstrate a conceptual understanding.
 - b. James Reid reviewed the subcommittee's recommendations, such as a one-stop shop for tutoring, adoption of common assessment measures across campus, and a pilot placement program for developmental students. See the attached reports for more details and recommendations.
 - c. The committee asked a variety of questions and the conversation included a discussion of the results of mathematical reasoning assessment, the specific learning outcomes, and the tutoring center. The subcommittee was thanked for its efforts.

2. The Oral Communication Subcommittee presented their report, which was a continuation of earlier work on oral communication. See both report and summary attached.
 - a. Ashley Bodie-Jones presented the report. They wanted to get a clearer picture of how many students are reached with oral communication instruction and in what ways/courses. Similar to the mathematical reasoning group, they also needed to specify specific outcomes. They mapped out the results of their campus-wide investigation on page 7 of their report. Pooling everything together – benchmark courses + hybrid courses + program assessment, about 25% of undergraduates are still not touched. If they are not getting oral communication in a formal class, what are they getting? See page 10. For those getting oral communication training in benchmark courses, they are really having a great experience and have thorough assessment goals.
 - b. The recommendations include having speech courses included among more general education requirements in programs across campus and hire more faculty to teach benchmark courses.
 - c. The committee asked a variety of questions and the conversation included a one hour class that began this year to focus on job interview communication skills, creating oral communication assignments within existing required courses, the high demand of the existing SPCH courses and how the Department of Writing and Rhetoric converted a writing position to a speech position, creation of a Speech Center (that was approved by this committee but not funded), how often general education requirements are reviewed by programs or schools, and creation of oral communication badges.

3. Katie Busby provided an update on the QEP committee. The QEP, which will focus on critical thinking, will focus on lower-division courses. The committee is narrowing down on suggestions and creating a plan. Their initial draft is due in June.

4. Several committee members urged the leadership to make a few decisions based on the recommendations of these two subcommittees. Stephen Monroe suggested that he be allowed to hire two instructors out of his current search for another speech instructor. Dean Cohen agreed that one-time funding requests are certainly easier to approve than permanent funding. Associate Dean Reynolds was asked to look into the Speech Center idea.
5. One member of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning urged that faculty teaching general education courses make sure they identify the general education outcome or competency on their syllabus.
6. Holly Reynolds mentioned that Dr. Eftink recently shared a draft of the SACS-COC 9.3 report. He requested that the committee review the draft.