

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY SENATE  
COMMITTEE TO OVERSEE GENERAL EDUCATION  
Minutes of 23 April 2010

**Members present:** Roberta Allen, Raja Aravamathan, José Brandão, Marcia Feters, John Geiser, David Reinhold, and Mary-Louise Totton. **Members absent:** Robin McKinney and Mustafa Mughazy. **Liaisons present:** Tammi Roberts (for Kevin Knutson). **Liaison absent:** Margaret Hamilton. **Also present:** Janice Anderson, Faculty Senate Office.

**Procedural Items**

COGE Chair José Brandão called the meeting to order at 4 p.m.

*Acceptance of the Agenda  
Approval of Minutes from 9 April*

It was moved and seconded to accept the agenda. Motion carried.  
The minutes of 9 April minutes had been approved electronically prior to the meeting.

*Chair's Remarks*

Brandão commented this was the last COGE meeting of the 2009-10 AY and that he would be going off the committee as chair and member since he would be on sabbatical next year. He thanked the members for all their work, especially for reinstating the general education re-approval process and doing so much additional work outside of the scheduled meeting times to complete that task. Members expressed willingness to respond to any last minute issues that might arise pertaining to COGE over the summer.

**Action Item**

A course proposal from the Lewis Walker Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnic Relations was reviewed.

- LWIR 3000 Immigration, Race and Ethnicity in the U.S. [CAS 603] - New course, approve in Area III The United States: Cultures and Issues

Members commented on inconsistencies in the grading scale pertaining to assignments that appeared in the course syllabus, but agreed the course did satisfy requirements for general education in Area III.

Feters moved approval of LWIR 3000, as a new course in general education in Area III, seconded by Aravamathan. Motion carried.

**Discussion Item**

Actions pertaining to COGE re-approval of general education courses in Area II, Humanities, and Area III, The United States: Cultures and Issues were finalized.

**Other**

Reinhold said the provost was interested in a standard syllabus template being developed. As a result of COGE members having completed a review of over 70 syllabi from across campus, members entered into a conversation about what a good syllabus should include. The following were mentioned:

- Instructor's name
- All meeting dates with topics to be discussed and assignments listed.
- Course objectives, goals and outcomes and how those will be achieved.
- Outcomes should be linked to the general education area or proficiency
- Course description
- Course number and name must match what is listed in the course catalog
- Due dates for all assignments
- Grading scale
- Calendar

It was felt the syllabus was a contract between instructor and student. Without wishing to infringe upon faculty rights to develop their syllabi, COGE members agreed a syllabus template could prove useful to faculty and students alike. Brandão suggested forwarding a memo from COGE that summarized the committee's recommendations regarding syllabus design to the Undergraduate Studies Council. It was agreed he would write and forward the memo to members for input prior to forwarding it to USC.

To encourage instructors to incorporate specific general education policy descriptions (for both areas and proficiencies) into their syllabi, it was suggested the General Education Policy guidelines might be reformatted to include itemized/numbered sections.

Concern arose during the re-approval process that several programs at the University use either students with bachelor's degrees or master's degrees to teach whole or significant portions of their general education curriculum.

A standard day and time to meet during the next academic year still needs to be arranged.

**Adjournment**

It was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 4:45 p.m. Motion carried.

Janice Anderson  
Faculty Senate Office