

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

**Members present:** Roberta Allen, Raja Aravamuthan, John Geiser, David Reinhold, and Edwin Martini. **Members absent:** Marcia Fetters, Robin McKinney and Mustafa Mughazy. **Liaisons present:** Margaret Hamilton and Kerrie Jo Harvey (for Kevin Knutson). **Guests:** Tim Greene, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Jody Brylinsky, writer of the WMU Self Study Report for the Higher Learning Commission. **Also present:** Janice Anderson, Faculty Senate Office.

### Procedural Items

Interim COGE Chair Raja Aravamuthan called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Introductions were made and guests welcomed.

*Acceptance of the Agenda  
Approval of Minutes from 23 April*

It was moved and seconded to accept the agenda. Motion carried.  
It was noted the minutes of 23 April were previously approved electronically.

### *Acting Chair's Remarks*

No remarks.

### Discussion Items

*Remarks by Provost Greene*

An inquiry was made about a standardized syllabus and Provost Greene replied he was very much in support of a syllabus of record for each course that is taught within a department. This would be a syllabus agreed upon within the department by the faculty teaching the course and would be a basic guideline for the expected course content to be covered. In recognition of academic freedom, there would be a certain percentage of the course left open for the faculty to determine. If a faculty member felt he wanted to teach content far removed from the syllabus of record, he could always develop another course.

Provost Greene noted a syllabus of record is not a new concept and is a practice at other universities. The benefits of a syllabus of record were numerous for students and faculty as it would codify what is taught in each course. COGE members readily agreed it would be a beneficial tool for departments.

The provost said he very much appreciated all the hard work COGE members spend in service to the university and left the meeting.

### *Update on Higher Learning Commission Visit*

Jody Brylinsky provided several sections from the WMU Self Study Report specific to general education. The full report is available online at <http://www.wmich.edu/poapa/accreditation/Report2010.html>

Brylinsky noted the Higher Learning Commission had cited general education as an area of concern during its last visit. The university has taken steps to remedy that by appointment of an associate provost for assessment and undergraduate studies and undertaking a review of baccalaureate-level writing.

### Action Items

#### *Review of Curriculum Proposal from the Department of Foreign Languages*

- LANG 4040 East and West Literary Relations [CAS 677] - New three hour course requesting approval in Area II, Humanities, and baccalaureate-level writing proficiency.

Members felt the syllabus was weak and did not provide enough information in several areas. Although the syllabus mentioned it satisfied the general education requirements for Area II, how that was to be accomplished was not explained. The syllabus lacked course objectives, goals and outcomes and how those would be achieved. Outcomes should be linked to the general education area or proficiency.

It was not clear from the syllabus if students would receive feedback on their papers and be provided with the opportunity to rewrite and resubmit them for further review.

Martini moved, seconded by Geiser, that further discussion of LANG 4040 East and West Literary Relations be tabled until the committee received a more complete syllabus. Motion carried.

#### *Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2010-11*

Marcia Fetters was elected chair, Roberta Allen was elected vice chair, and Raja Aravamuthan agreed to serve as interim chair in the event neither Fetters nor Allen were in attendance. This was unanimously moved and seconded. Motion carried.

### Continuing Business

#### *COGE Reapproval of General Education Courses in Areas IV, Other Cultures and Civilizations, and Area V, Social and Behavioral Sciences*

As the deadline for departments to submit materials for reapproval of their general education courses in Areas IV and V approaches, several departments had submitted requests for clarification. It was agreed that if a department was planning to re-number a course and revise its course description as part of curriculum revisions, the course did not need to be submitted for COGE re-approval as the course will go through the re-approval as part of the curriculum review process.

In the case of some international courses, which are not traditionally structured and do not have syllabi, submission of course descriptions and enrollment data would be sufficient. Members felt this would be an appropriate time to review the process for general education approval of international courses. Past documentation will be reviewed and discussed by the committee.

#### **Other**

Reinhold reported he was coordinating assessment meetings for the tenure track Board of Trustees appointed faculty who taught general education courses in Area II, Humanities, and Area III, The United States: Cultures and Issues, which COGE had reviewed for re-approval last year.

#### **Adjournment**

It was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 p.m. Motion carried.

Janice Anderson  
Faculty Senate Office