

**WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE
COMMITTEE TO OVERSEE GENERAL EDUCATION
Minutes of 27 January 2011**

Members present: Roberta Allen, Raja Aravamathan, Marcia Fetters, John Geiser, Edwin Martini, Mustafa Mughazy and David Reinhold. **Liaisons present:** Margaret Hamilton and Kevin Knutson. **Guests:** Leigh Ford, Director, School of Communication, and Christopher Pearl, Associate Professor, Biological Sciences. **Also present:** Janice Anderson, Faculty Senate Office.

Procedural Items

COGE Chair Marcia Fetters called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

*Acceptance of the Agenda
Approval of Minutes from 13 January 2011*

It was moved and seconded to accept the agenda. Motion carried.

Members were asked to approve of the 13 January minutes by email after the meeting.

**Continuing Action Items –
Two Curriculum Proposals from the College of Arts and Sciences**

Representatives for JRN 4100 and BIOS 3500 attended to discuss how the courses met the baccalaureate-level writing requirement. [COGE had reviewed and tabled the curriculum proposals for these courses at its 2 December 2010 and 13 January 2011 meetings.]

College of Arts and Sciences - School of Communication

1. JRN 4100 Specialized Reporting [CAS 755] – change course title to *JRN 4100 Multimedia Reporting* and change course description. Previously approved for Proficiency 2, Baccalaureate-Level writing.

[COGE felt the course syllabus did not clearly demonstrate writing requirements for baccalaureate-level course.]

Leigh Ford informed the committee that JRN 4100 was a capstone journalism course which provided continued writing, editing and rewriting opportunities.

It was moved and seconded to approve JRN 4100 changing the title of JRN 4100 from Specialized Reporting to Multimedia Reporting and change the course description. This course retains its previous approval for Proficiency 2, Baccalaureate-Level writing. Motion approved.

College of Arts and Sciences - Department of Biological Sciences

2. BIOS 3500 Human Physiology for Majors [CAS 765] – change course description. Previously approved for Proficiency 2, Baccalaureate-Level writing.

[COGE felt the course syllabus was unclear as to how the baccalaureate-level writing requirements were to be fulfilled.]

Christopher Pearl discussed the ways writing was incorporated into this course. COGE encouraged including more evidence of that in the syllabus for the benefit of not only COGE, but students taking the course.

It was moved and seconded to approve changing the course description of BIOS 3500. This course retains its previous approval for Proficiency 2, Baccalaureate-Level writing. Motion approved.

**New Action Item –
Curriculum Proposal from the College of Health and Human Services**

School of Nursing

1. NURS 3550 Perspectives in Women's Health [CHHS 020-10-R1] – new course, requests approval in Area III, The United States: Cultures and Issues

COGE reviewed the curriculum proposal for NUR 3550 Perspectives in Women's Health, as a new course requesting approval as a general education course in Area III, The United States: Cultures and Issues. Although the committee liked the course itself and agreed it had great rubrics and would fit in general education Area III, discussion was tabled based on several concerns:

- (1) The purpose of general education is to provide courses that students in all areas may take to advance general knowledge outside their own areas of study. NUR 3550 appears to be designed specifically to provide general education credit to nursing students.
- (2) The number and nature of the required pre-requisites are restrictive and serve as a deterrent to students outside of nursing. It is questionable whether non-nursing major would be willing to take the prerequisites required to enable them to enroll in NUR 3550.
- (3) There were no support letters from the chairs of either Biological Sciences or Psychology stating their departments could handle increased student numbers in the pre-requisite courses.

The committee requested the School of Nursing be contacted and asked to address these concerns before the committee could return to consideration of this proposal.

Continuing Business

COGE Re-Approval of General Education Courses in Area IV, Other Cultures and Civilizations, and Area V, Social and Behavioral Sciences

Those departments that had not yet submitted their requested materials for course re-approval were contacted again and notified that the committee set Tuesday, 15 February, as the deadline for submission of outstanding materials. Courses not reviewed will not be eligible for re-approval as general education courses.

Each of the three subcommittees shared their recommendations with the committee as a whole.

- Subcommittee #1 – Ed Martini, Kevin Knutson and Roberta Allen
- Subcommittee #2 – John Geiser, Marcia Fetters and David Reinhold
- Subcommittee #3 – Raja Aravamuthan, Mustafa Mughazy and Margaret Hamilton

General Education – Reconceptualization and Assessment of General Education and Baccalaureate-Level Writing

Materials received from Bruce Ferrin, chair of the Undergraduate Studies Council, were discussed by the committee.

New Business

After discussion of JRN 4100, Leigh Ford inquired about a writing intensive special topics course which is taught with six different subtopics. She asked if each of the six subtopic courses required COGE approval or if being under the umbrella of JRN 4100 approval each of the subtopic courses were automatically approved.

Another inquiry on special topics courses was received from the English Department. The question concerned courses approved for general education being changed to special topics courses and if those courses retained general education approval or if each set of subtopics courses also required COGE approval.

The current policy on special (or variable) topics courses was reviewed and members agreed that policy should stand and that each subtopics course requires its own general education approval.

NOTE: From the General Education Policy, in the section on Criteria for Selecting and Evaluating General Education Courses, Criteria Applicable to All Courses:

6. In the case of variable topics courses which may be taken more than once for credit when the subject matter is different, the different course subtopics should be reviewed for general education credit, and not simply the basic courses.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Janice Anderson
Faculty Senate Office