

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE

UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES COUNCIL
Tuesday, 13 March 2012, 3 p.m.
Faculty Lounge, Bernhard Center

Members present: A. Anderson, N. Andreadis, R. Aravamuthan, K. Baldner, B. Ferrin, K. Hearit, K. Hillenbrand, P. Krawutschke, M. Kritzman, D. Ravotas, D. Sachs, V. Torano, G. Whitehurst

Absent without substitution: P. Egan (for C. Thralls), D. Reinhold, C. Rettich

Also present: Jeanine Bartholomew, academic advising liaison, and Betty Dennis, associate dean, Extended University Programs

Procedural Items

Council Chair Bruce Ferrin called the meeting to order at 3 p.m.

Acceptance of Agenda

Whitehurst moved acceptance of the agenda, seconded by Torano. Motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes

Krawutschke moved approval of the minutes of 14 February 2012, seconded by Kritzman. Motion carried.

Chair's Remarks

Chair Ferrin was not yet able to finish reviewing the academic policy drafts, proposed as satisfying requirements from the Higher Learning Commission. He will have this completed by our next meeting.

Action/Discussion Items

Committee to Oversee General Education and Lee Honors College

At a past meeting questions were asked concerning Lee Honors College offering courses meeting general education requirements. COGE subsequently approved a proposal allowing "Colleges, institutes, and centers ... [to] offer a course for general education one time, prior to review by COGE." This gives such bodies the opportunity to offer Gen. Ed. courses that arise because of visiting faculty, etc. After this one time offering, the course would need to go through regular COGE

approval to be counted towards general education. Ferrin will re-write the proposal with changes suggested by the council, and bring it back to the council for approval at our next meeting.

Anderson moved approval of Item 4 for Criteria Applicable to All courses, seconded by Kritzman, that "All courses included in general education must have syllabi consistent with the syllabus template adopted by the Faculty Senate on October 6, 2011, in MOA 11/02. Syllabi and other related materials must be made available to the COGE as part of the request for a course to be granted general education status. Motion carried.

General Education Assessment Process

Reinhold proposed to the Faculty Senate Executive Board a process for specifying "learning outcomes," necessary for assessment of general education, with the specific proficiencies and distribution areas of general education policy. That proposal follows.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kent Baldner

**Outline For Assessment of General Education
Submitted to the Faculty Senate Executive Board on 12/12/11**

The first issue that needs to be resolved is the disconnect between criteria for acceptance of courses in the various general education areas, and the published learning outcomes. I would volunteer to take the criteria COGE uses to accept courses and write learning outcomes from them. This would simply be a first attempt. I would then share those outcomes with the members of COGE to get their feedback. This seems the most appropriate audience for this since they are the faculty who evaluate the courses and approve them. I would also give the Faculty Senate Executive Board a copy of the learning outcomes for their comments.

Assessment of the Proficiencies:

I would recommend that COGE be responsible for the assessment of the 4 proficiencies. I would also recommend a 3-year cycle for this assessment.

Year 1: Writing (Proficiencies 1 and 2)

Year 2: Math (Proficiency 3)

Year 3: All Proficiency 4 courses

Each Proficiency review would take 3 years. One year would be gathering data for which the Office of Assessment and Undergraduate Studies would be largely responsible. The second year would consist of COGE analyzing the data and recommending changes with input from the departments/faculty involved in teaching the courses. The third year would involve implementation of any recommended changes for improvement. The entire process would look like the following (year numbers have been chosen to correspond to those above).

Year 0: Data collected for Proficiencies 1 and 2

Year 1: COGE reviews data from assessment of Proficiencies 1 and 2. Data collected for assessment of Proficiency 3.

Year 2: Improvements for Proficiencies 1 and 2 implemented. COGE reviews assessment data for Proficiency 3. Data collected for assessment of Proficiency 4.

Year 3: Improvements for Proficiency 3 implemented. COGE reviews assessment data for Proficiency 4. Data collected for assessment of Proficiencies 1 and 2

(Cycle repeats and continues)

Initially, I would recommend that AACU rubrics be used in these areas whenever possible. Additional rubrics from other sources may also be used. As time goes on, COGE may want to have discussions with faculty that teach courses in these areas and the University Assessment Steering Committee in order to establish other assessment tools.

Assessment of the Distribution Areas:

Again, I recommend a three-year cycle.

Year 1: Distribution Areas I – III

Year 2: Distribution Areas IV – VI

Year 3: Distribution Areas VII and VIII

This cycle would look very much like the one for the Proficiencies. For each Distribution Area, there would be one year to gather data, one year to analyze the data, and one year to implement changes for improvement. As before, the Office of Assessment and Undergraduate Studies will be responsible for collecting the data. In the case of the Distribution Areas, a committee of faculty who teach course(s) within the distribution area will analyze the data and suggest changes for improvement. Each committee would only need to be formed once every 3 years. The planned sequence for this assessment would be:

Year 0: Gather assessment data for Distribution Areas I – III.

Year 1: A committee of faculty members who teach in Distribution Areas I – III will analyze the data collected the previous year and recommend changes. Data for Distribution Areas IV – VI will be collected.

Year 2: Changes for Distribution areas I – III will be implemented. A committee of faculty members who teach in Distribution Areas IV – VI will analyze the data collected the previous year and recommend changes. Data will be gathered on Distribution Areas VII and VIII.

Year 3: Changes for Distribution Areas IV – VI will be implemented. A committee of faculty members who teach in Distribution Areas VII and VIII will analyze the data collected in the previous year and recommend changes. Data will be gathered on Distribution Areas I – III.

(Cycle repeats and continues)

Initially, I recommend that the rubrics developed in 2004 and 2005 and modified in 2011 be used for these courses. The faculty committees may develop additional tools for assessment in future years.

I would recommend that at the end of each year, committees write a short report of their decisions and actions. This report should simply consist of the data that was analyzed (supplied by the Office of Assessment and Undergraduate Studies), the benchmarks used in making decisions, and the recommendations for improvement based on the data. If no recommendations are forthcoming, the report should have a brief description of why improvements were not necessary. The report would then be forwarded to the Faculty Senate Executive Board, the University Assessment Steering Committee and the Office of Assessment and Undergraduate Studies. These reports will not only help organize information for future accreditation visits, but they may also help the recipients of the reports see where they may be able to help faculty improve general education and the assessment of the program.

The one issue I have not covered is how these committees will be formed. Obviously, this is not an issue for the Proficiencies since COGE already exists. It is an issue for the Distribution Areas. I would suggest that the Faculty Senate form the committees by some mechanism yet to be described. The Office of Assessment and Undergraduate Studies would be happy to supply the names of faculty who teach courses in each of the distribution areas. Thus, forming the committees would simply be a case of contacting those faculty and asking for volunteers. I believe a request coming from the Faculty Senate will be more effective than a request coming out of the Office of Assessment and Undergraduate Studies. It also makes the process more faculty driven when the faculty organizes it themselves.

Dave Reinhold