

General Education Council Special Meeting  
March 6, 2000

**Members Present:**

C. Schroeder-Student Rep  
T. Mandeville-Education  
K. Moffeit-Business  
R. Northcutt-Science  
G. Rydl-Applied Arts  
J. Ross-Business  
V. Sriraman-Science  
B. Melzer-Health Professions  
B. Brown-Liberal Arts  
C. McCall-Education  
S. Beebe-Chair Rep  
M. Brennan-Liberal Arts  
K. Margerison-Chair Rep  
F. Blevens-Fine Arts  
T. Sanchez-Student Rep  
R. Wellborn-Health Professions  
E. Nielsen-Fine Arts

**Members Absent:**

T. Mijares-Applied Arts

**Visitors:**

A. Ellis  
D. Glassman  
L. Estaville

Meeting convened at 3:35 p.m.

R. Brown asked the Council to review the minutes from the February 28<sup>th</sup> meeting. He duplicated materials for the Councils review. R. Brown set several rules for the meeting. The issues would be discussed and they could be adopted as proposed or a subcommittee could be appointed to gather information at length. Other options for the Council is the issue being tabled and the Council not being on a timeline to make a decision about the courses.

**Motion**

B. Brown moved the adoption of the Geography, Anthropology and Physics courses to the General Education Core Curriculum for the 99 catalog.

**Discussion:**

B. Melzer requested the Council review the Science Perspective. The State of Texas has 8 components for coursework: Communication, Mathematics, Natural

Science, Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts, SWT Component, Social and Behavioral Sciences. When component elements at another institution are fulfilled and the student transfers to SWT, those component elements are accepted for SWT Core Curriculum.

V. Sriraman had concerns about the proposed courses meeting the natural science objectives. He asked for clarification for all the proposed courses.

F. Blevens asked for clarification from L. Estaville about the status of Environmental Geography 2310. This course is not in the schedule of classes for Fall 2000 and this will be the first time this course is taught. F. Blevens also has the concern that if we have more transfer students who are able to transfer core components and the addition of the proposed courses from Geography, Anthropology and Physics, the SCH for those departments already considered natural science would be heavily affected.

He is also concerned that it will affect faculty already teaching these core component natural science courses. B. Brown asked F. Blevens if SCH is the primary variable for consideration of these proposed courses? F. Blevens told B. Brown that the course meeting the criteria to be a science course is most important.

K. Moffeit mentioned that a student taking a course or a student transfer would not be drawn here for one course with a wider offering of courses elsewhere. Her rationale is that students go home for the summer and take courses at community colleges because it's cheaper. These students are not going to be affected by the changed offerings in natural science.

M. Brennan suggested that students may think the course is easier elsewhere, so they take those courses at another institution. She also suggested the student might take the course here because we offer it.

G. Rydl has the concern that if we start substituting a lot of courses for natural science component, then every department will want to add a course or two to the natural science component.

B. Brown said that if the department has the resources to offer the courses and the courses meet the intent of the natural science component we should give the students the choice to take the class. He mentioned that the SWT Texas model for natural science course is one of the most restrictive. B. Brown asked if we have to have a smorgasbord, a restrictive model or can we have something in between the two? B. Melzer mentioned we already have a smorgasbord.

K. Margerison asked what is science? If we look at TAMU we can see what sciences they think every institution should have. The problem is this university is larger, more diverse and institutionally their requirements are different. F.

Blevens mentioned that TAMU has more funds so their SCH is higher and they would not notice the addition of a few courses, but SWT would.

R. Brown mentioned that Tech is the most permissive of Texas Universities.

K. Margerison mentioned that F. Blevens concerns about the SCH could not be ignored. It would not be good for the Council to undercut these departments without giving the consequences serious thought.

**Motion:**

R. Brown asked the Council if they would allow the visitors to respond to the concerns of the Council members, but for only 5 minutes each. K. Margerison moves to allow. F. Blevens seconds the motion. The Council agrees to this procedure.

L. Estaville told the Council he was not here for the SCH, but for the idea of natural science and student choice. In the catalog some departments can make the determination to allow certain course for the science requirement. The department already designates what sciences the students should take. He thinks equity and choice should not be limited at SWT. He is not concerned with the SCH business and department themselves decide. The institution should allow the students to make the choice.

F. Blevens told L. Estaville that his comments were good points. The issue of SCH is for other department other than Geography, Anthropology and Physics. The SCH is a primary measure for this university.

S. Beebe mentioned the Council had been discussion 5 issues for the past 33 minutes. The issues included the philosophy of the core, course components, SCH impact, GEO 2310 doesn't exist and what is happening at other universities. He thinks the most important issue is the criteria for a science course and do these courses meet that criterion. What makes science a science?

The Coordinating Board redefined General Education in 1999. What we have are the Coordinating Board statements and criteria for what makes a science a science.

R. Northcutt mentioned to the Council that what we want our students to have are mathematical and lab generated skills. What is it we want our graduates to have? The courses should have enough quantitative science to be apart of the core curriculum.

R. Wellborn mentioned that in 1980 the General Studies Perspectives were a political decision. The definitions were too vague and that was why they were revised. She thinks that Anatomy and Physiology should also be on this list.

D. Glassman told the Council that he did not create a class to get into the natural science component, but Physical Anthropology is human biology. Physical Anthropology fits the Coordinating Board definition for a natural science. Physical Anthropology studies evolution, genetics, ethics, statistics and many other scientific entities. The SCH would not be a problem for Anthropology.

R. Brown showed the Council the handout that indicated the majors that could be affected by the 7-8 hour natural science core curriculum.

A. Ellis told the Council to consider the proposed courses so the university would look more attractive for recruiting students. R. Brown mentioned that many of the schools mentioned also have Calculus requirements.

S. Beebe wanted specific criteria for each course. He wants to amend the motion from subset of the whole to address each course individually.

B. Melzer wanted to appoint a subcommittee.

S. Beebe suggested the subcommittee invite the departments, with a proposed course, to formulate the criteria for meeting the natural science perspective.

K. Margerison thinks the subcommittee should have a specific charge and a time limit.

**Motion:**

K. Margerison moved for a subcommittee to be appointed. B. Melzer accepts and S. Beebe seconds the motion.

Motion passed 13 for, 2 opposed.

The subcommittee will present at the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting in April. The subcommittee consists of:

B. Melzer-Chair

T. Sanchez-allowed to vote on subcommittee (agreed by Council)

S. Beebe

V. Sriraman

V. Luizzi

C. McCall

When selecting the members for the subcommittee, R. Brown disqualified B. Brown for reasons of conflicting interest concerning the proposed courses. R. Brown selected the Liberal Arts Chair to be represented on the subcommittee.

The subcommittee is charged with gathering information on each course criteria using the natural science and old general studies perspectives.

