

General Education Council Meeting Minutes
January 25, 2016
3:30pm, JCK 880

Attendees: Brown (Chair), Burns, Close, Gonzales, Grasso, Hamilton, Hanks, Harney, Hawkins, Hindson, Merit, Passty, Pizer, Rivero, Russian, Supancic, White, Wilson, Yoder, Cathy Lamm (Administrative Assistant)

Absent: Carter, Erhart, O'Neal (ex), Rohloff

Guest: Beth Wuest, Gail Ryser, Micky Autrey, Heather Galloway, and Diann McCabe

Brown thanked everyone for coming and informed members that Merit will substitute for O'Neal this spring and then welcomed Grasso in absence of Erhart, and also welcomed back student representative Yoder. All others present introduced themselves.

The minutes of September 14, 2015 and November 23, 2015, were presented for approval. Harney moved that the minutes of September 14, 2015 and November 23, 2015, be approved, seconded by Gonzales. Motion passed unanimously.

Brown distributed two handouts for the Council's information and review: Character Traits Associated with the Five Dimensions of Personal and Social Responsibility from AACU and Degrees of Ignorance from The Chronicle of Higher Education.

Ryser gave a detailed status report on the Collegiate Learning Assessment, now referred to as the CLA+, and advised that it is being discontinued at Texas State. GEC members were informed that TREC has temporarily moved and is located in Nueces. Ryser advised that the last time the CLA+ was given was in FY 2014-15, and was given to 100 freshmen in the fall and 100 seniors in the spring. She reported that scores obtained as Freshmen predicted scores of seniors based on certain criteria. Ryser advised that the CLA+ was originally used for the Volunteer System of Accountability and that the 2015 scores could be reported for three years. The decision to discontinue CLA+ resulted from institutional costs—very expensive to give. She explained the nature of the test and reported that Texas State students reported that they took it seriously. She also noted that there are nine local survey questions on the CLA+ that were tied to the Gen Ed core in Texas.

Beth Wuest then spoke about the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), the national group that manages data, and the projected changes in SACSCOC. She advised that information is uniformly provided to VSA so that Texas State employees can make better decisions, however, the information is not being used effectively and information was not being reporting due to results not being reliable. VSA informed last year that institutions have to begin reporting, but will only have to report once every three years due to the high costs. GEC member Close inquired as to who mandates the VSA. Wuest will get specifics and give to Close. It was noted that mainly larger institutions were reporting.

Wuest then reported on SACSCOC and stated that the standards will change in 2017, and student learning will be on the forefront in the next reporting standards. It was noted that a lot more

information will have to be provided on retention and completion, and that completion is a major issue with the Department of Education. This interest trickles down into our accrediting bodies. General education will still be a strong part of reporting, but will have a new set of standards. Hawkins inquired on what was expected on a completion rate. Wuest advised it depends on how you define it, for instance Texas State's 4-year graduation rate is 30-40% with a higher 6-year completion rate, based on the native freshmen. Gonzales inquired as to how other universities did that reported. Wuest stated that we fare pretty well out of the ones that did report and there are several factors involved, like a student transferring and completing at another university, as well as many other variables. She reiterated that our numbers are decent compared to other schools. Hindson inquired about the significance of student ethnicity, and Wuest responded that minorities tend to do better. Harney inquired about the low completion rate stating that university leadership gave high numbers on completion rates. Wuest advised that it may be due to limited classes like nursing where only a certain number of student are accepted so others may transfer elsewhere, but that statistics can be tracked if students are in-state. Brown advised that a 4-year graduation rate is 25% and 6-year is 65%. Wuest informed that Institutional Research is putting together pivot tables and moving to TABLO, which is a much easier system to be able to locate data, and will be able to present data in more graphic forms to view retention, etc., and is to be presented at CAD next week.

Autry reported that the PFW 1301 course is anticipated to be submitted to the Coordinating Board Monday or Tuesday (Feb. 1 or 2) and will let everyone know the outcome.

Galloway presented the spring 2016 Honors College topics courses to the Council for approval. It was noted that the Honors College has until the end of February to schedule students into these classes. Galloway advised that Honors has changed how to get classes into the core curriculum and that all courses have been resubmitted back to the departments for any concerns. She informed there was one math, one science, one history, two communications, and five literatures, and asked the members if there were any questions about the courses. Wilson expressed concern about HON 2309J in that the assignments should be more literature based since it counts as a literature course. Wilson also expressed concern over the narrative of a map for the title and that it doesn't suggest literature. Galloway will bring Wilson's concerns to the department's attention. Galloway advised that the same person will be teaching the class semester-after-semester and the professor should continue to teach according to the original outline. It was noted that Honors now has an assessment process and will be able to track data in the future. It was suggested that HON 2306D was a little offensive, but Galloway reiterated that the name brings out an historical component. Brown stated a subcommittee strategy should be used to go through the courses.

Supancic distributed a handout outlining his concerns. Galloway stated she will work with staff to correct student schedules. It was noted that the Registrar will allow name changes through the end of February to represent what students are taking. It was also noted that the catalog will not be amended until fall 2016. Galloway emphasized she would prefer the courses be approved now. It was noted that these courses do not go to the Coordinating Board, they are handled internally. Hawkins expressed concern that the title of HON 2309H, Great Ideas: Humanities 2, was not very specific. Galloway informed that faculty were divided on whether it was a good name. Harney stated the class is chronological where one class is taken in the fall and the other

in the spring, and that topics can vary greatly, depending on the professor. Galloway noted that not a lot of students take both classes. Brown asked the members for a recommendation. Inquiry was made if courses could be approved pending recommendations. Brown stated they could if there were no substantive changes. Harney advised would like to discuss the minimal literature included in the course at a later date. Galloway informed that the maximum class size is twenty. Gonzales moved to adopt the courses with the noted corrections, Pizer seconded. Discussion continued. Supancic questioned the astronomy course. Galloway informed it was modeling graphing, but that she will add more detail to the class description. With the expectation that Galloway will address the issues raised by the Council, none opposed approving the courses. Inquiry was made as to the effective date and Galloway advised that with approval today, will get new forms tomorrow. Autry informed changes can be made up until the twelfth class day. Supancic noted that HON 2309F, item 17, has a missing component. Galloway stated she can have to Autrey soon and will not move students until Gen Ed approval received. Galloway stated she can meet with Supancic since he had the most comments and meet with others individually. Galloway will revise the forms and present to the Council at the next meeting.

Brown advised that, after looking at the approved learning outcomes, some things needed clarification and that, between now and next year, there should be clearer processes. Brown will follow-up with each of the departments regarding this. Brown advised that the outcomes must show continuous improvement and if Gen Ed is not happy with them, they will not be approved until satisfactory. It was also noted that Council members should pay more attention to things not being attained so that it can be brought to the department's attention in order that changes occur. If there are no changes from year-to-year, it will not look good to SACSCOC. Brown advised that off campus SACSCOC reviewers cleared the Gen Ed outcomes; however, Texas State received some negative comments from one person in 2009, but he wasn't able to do anything because of the approval of off-campus reviewers. Brown stated it is very important to do things right before the next SACSCOC review, and Council members will look at the report in May or June. Brown reiterated that he wants Council members to be very clear about the processes that were inadequate so that departments can improve their outcomes next year.

Brown asked the members if there were any concerns or topics needing to be discussed from the GEC membership. Brown informed the group that Gen Ed used to be a unique American phenomenon and that skills and information were absent from typical college freshmen, which is why Gen Ed was created. Brown also informed that there have been efforts to extend Gen Ed to other parts of the world, particularly in Germany. Wilson inquired if it matters when a student takes core classes during their four-year plan. Brown reported that, technically, core classes should be done early in the undergraduate experience, and that there have been problems with a decrease in students due to not taking core classes early. Galloway added that with regard to some core classes, it would not be a problem waiting to take that specific core class such as Art until their senior year; however, other classes, like English, should be taken early. It was also noted that some students are being advised to take their core at community colleges due to costs and less difficult, which also reduced our enrollment for core classes.

White moved to adjourn, seconded by Burns. Meeting adjourned at 5:05p.m.