

General Education Council Minutes

Date: 4/23/2012

Meeting Location: JCK 880

Council members present: L. Harney, D. Feakes, E. Blunk, K. McCurdy, C. Russian, J. Moczygamba, J. Butler, G. White, P. Suckling, G. Passty, M. Houser, S. O'Neal, T. Hindson, S. Beebe, R. Brown.

Visitors: S. Seidman, B. Wuest, W. Brittain, E. Close, H. Close, D. Donnelly, M. Hennessy, B. Erhart, M. Sorto, S. Meroy, B. Habingreither, J. Tomasso, D. Lemke, A. Batey

Minutes compiled by: S. Beebe

Discussion and Actions:

The GEC meeting was convened at 3:30 p.m. by R. Brown.

Council members introduced themselves to visitors, who were in attendance specifically to address issues and questions regarding positioning current natural science core courses in the new core curriculum—specifically, in the Life and Physical Sciences component area and/or the Component Area Option.

After briefly reviewing for visitors the Council's charge, R. Brown mentioned to the visiting College of Science and Engineering representatives that although only science courses for non-majors have so far been included in general education SACS assessment, in the future this assessment will include all core science courses. Brown then invited Dean S. Seidman to present to the Council.

Seidman distributed in writing and discussed a prepared statement of the commitment of the College of Science and Engineering "to the idea that laboratory experiences are an essential part of a university core curriculum" and to the position of the College "that all core-curriculum science courses should be 4-hour courses that include a laboratory experience" and that they are "adamantly opposed to a further reduction [of the core requirement] to 6 hours of science, whether this comes by eliminating laboratories or by reducing lecture hours."

Discussion ensued among GEC members and visitors. Although supportive of the value of the science lab, P. Suckling pointed out that approximately half of Texas State's current graduates are transfer students who have completed only 6 hours of science in their core, and that 6 of the 9 other Emerging Research and Research institutions in Texas have 3-hour science courses for non-majors. B. Wuest confirmed these figures.

G. White and guest B. Habingreither responded that regardless of these data, it is in the students' best interest to have a science lab experience.

Various other related factors and issues were discussed. These included the possible development of a "pathway" that would satisfy Coordinating Board requirements while continuing to provide a lab experience, course sequences and prerequisites, the additional science requirements of various programs and degrees, and the creation of new courses that might meet both State requirements and students' needs.

P. Suckling then spoke in support of keeping geology and meteorology offerings in the core requirements; B. Erhart advocated that biological anthropology remain in the new science core.

Guests were excused at 4:35.

R. Brown noted that departments considering new offerings for the Component Area Option would be invited next to present to the Council. He also agreed to invite Provost Bourgeois to attend an upcoming meeting to clarify his position on the place of the science lab requirement in the new core. Finally, Brown discussed briefly an additional possibility for the Component Area Option, which would be to offer a menu of choices for 3 of those 6 hours.

Brown will notify Council members of the date for the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.