

**General Education Committee**  
**April 19, 2000 Minutes**

Present: Abdella, Bauer, Day, Hoekstra, Sorensen, Wells

Guests: Jim May, Arnie Ostebee, Lynn Steen, Margaret O'Leary

1. Beth Abdella called the meeting to order at 3:20 p.m.
2. Discussion with the Associate Deans centered on the GEC charge to "monitor" and the Associate Deans charge to "manage" the GE curriculum.

It was acknowledged that some features of the GE curriculum were monitored in a general way this year as the committee spent meeting time with groups representing the ORC, WRI, and EIN features of the curriculum. This time was generally used to determine the "health" of the curriculum in these areas--whether enough seats in accredited courses were available for the students needing these course-types.

There was general agreement that the Associate Deans are responsible for making sure that staffing was adequate in areas where there is a high GE demand for faculty. The Associate Deans and the GEC will work together on making sure that the number of GE courses for any particular attribute remains adequate: the attributes have been assigned to particular associate deans.

There was general agreement that the GEC is responsible for two types of "monitoring."

1. quality control (of individual courses)
2. assessment of student outcomes

The strategies that seem most likely at this time are as follows:

1. quality control: provide department/program chairs with a list of some subset of the GE courses taught in their area (we cannot review all GE courses at once) and have them request from the instructor a recent syllabus and a statement of how the course is currently meeting each of the guidelines for which it is accredited. One possible strategy for selecting which courses to "monitor" first would be to start with the courses that were first approved for GE credit.

2. two strategies for the assessment of student learning were discussed:

- a. a student survey (probably of graduating seniors)
- b. Assessment of student achievement in the areas of writing, critical thinking, theological literacy, and global perspective. Assessment plans in these four areas already exist and GEC has some responsibility in carrying out these plans. These plans leave out some GE areas and thus may need further thinking. EIN has also been flagged for assessment but no evidence of a plan in existence has been seen.

A past member of the GEC informed the group that the GEC had, at one time, been developing student surveys for use in assessment of the GE curriculum.

A survey that gets at students' global perspectives may already exist (independent of the assessment plans mentioned above)--see Jim Tallon or Henry Kermott. A tool to assess critical thinking may also exist (independent of the assessment plans mentioned above)--see Bill Carlson or Henry Kermott.

The problems associated with the small size of the GEC and lack of a single Director were also discussed.

The GEC should designate a relatively small number of data that could be obtained yearly from the Registrar's Office in our role of monitoring. For example: how many WRI courses has a typical graduating senior taken by the end of his/her college career?

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth R.J. Abdella, Secretary Pro tem.