

General Education Committee
September 29, 1999

Present: Abdella, Bauer, Hoekstra, Lund, Wicks, Day, O'Leary, Sorensen

Guest: Mark Allister, Director of Writing

1. Eric Lund called the meeting to order at 3:20 p.m.
2. Minutes. The September 15, 1999, minutes were approved as distributed.
3. Future agenda item. Lund alerted the committee to a memo from Carolyn Jennings, Associate Dean for Fine Arts, concerning prerequisites, GE credits, and the monitoring of GE courses.
4. Discussion of writing issues. Lund asked Mark Allister to discuss with the committee five topics Lund had asked of Allister prior to the meeting:
 1. What he thought of the WRI component being the only GE requirement not requiring approval by GEC.
 2. Whether the Director of Writing had enough information to judge whether the faculty was observing the spirit and/or the letter of the WRI requirement.
 3. Whether the Director of Writing was able to monitor effectively the offerings of WRI courses.
 4. Whether the guidelines for the WRI requirement were sufficiently clear.
 5. The present status of the Writing in the Disciplines requirement.

These questions became the foci of much of the ensuing discussion.

For his part, Allister distributed a sheet providing an "Overview of the writing program in regards to faculty development and monitoring," concerning FYW, WRI, and Writing in the Disciplines.

Concerning the first question, Allister intends to remind instructors to send copies of syllabi to himself and to the relevant department chair, as provided in the guidelines. He will use them as an occasion of conversation with instructors. This will give him more insight into the issues raised in the second question.

There was some concern that the guideline #3, which required revision, was in conflict with the comment to guideline #3, which says the student should be given the opportunity to revise. (This discussion covered issues raised in the third and fourth question.)

Concerning the fifth question, about Writing in the Disciplines, Allister noted some pockets of activity, but that in general he was not aware of widespread engagement with this part of the Writing requirements. Allister intends to emphasize this part of the Writing requirements this year.

Allister noted that some years ago, departments were asked to write "plans" describing how they meet this requirement. No one on the committee had a recollection of where this stood.

[Subsequent to the meeting, the Secretary pro tem. discovered the file containing the "plans" Allister spoke of. There were 7 such plans in the folder from the following departments:

- Classics
- Economics
- Mathematics
- Music (2 pages plus a 12-page appendix)
- Norwegian
- Nursing
- Political Science]

Day raised the issue of staffing of the FYW courses, GE 111. This year may be an anomaly, but two faculty members were hired solely for the purpose of teaching this course. While Allister and Day have every confidence that students are receiving a good education, this approach to teaching writing in the first year was the approach intended by the faculty in moving to a first-year seminar system.

Lund thanked Allister for his presence and his insights on this important part of the curriculum.

5. Course Proposals. The following courses were reviewed for GEC credit:

#759 Management Studies 232: Technology and the Entrepreneurial Spirit. *ORC -- approved*

#757 History 129: Witchcraft & Gender in Europe and America. *HWC -- approved, MSC-D -- approved*

#132 Biology 127: Genetics, Evolution and Society. *NST-L -- approved*

#516 Classics 130: The Singer of Tales. *ORC -- referred*

#758 Biology 136: Health Care: A Global Perspective. *NST-B -- approved*

#760 History 253: Violence and Warfare in Early America. *HWC -- approved, MCS-D -- approved*

6. Next Week's Agenda. The committee will meet October 6 and discuss course credit on the International Studies accompanied program in German, and other issues.

7. The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
John T. Day, Secretary, pro tem.

