

GE Task Force Minutes, July 22, 2004

Present: Mary Cisar, Jo Beld, Susan Bauer, Phyllis Larson, Solveig Zempel

Minutes of July 8 meeting approved

Discussion concentrated on learning outcomes for FOL, WRI (FYW, WRI and Writing in the Major), and PHA

A brief discussion of the FOL requirement ended with the conclusion that it works well and does not need further work

A description of the FOL requirement that focused on student outcomes might read something like this: **FOL**

Desired outcomes for students:

- effective and appropriate communications skills in a language other than one's native language, including both comprehension (reading and listening) and expressive (speaking and writing) skills at an intermediate level
- gain insight into a culture other than one's own
- gain understanding of language as a human phenomenon--awareness of language as a socio-cultural phenomenon and of the subtleties and complexities of human language, including one's own

The study of another language fits with the mission of the College in the commitment to the liberal arts and the global perspective. Foreign language courses emphasize both communication and analytical skills. The study of another language and another culture stimulates students' critical thinking and challenges them to be responsible and knowledgeable citizens of the world.

The Writing requirement discussion led to the following possible description:

Writing is considered a foundation study in the GE curriculum. .

First Year Writing: Desired outcomes for students

- write effective formal prose for the generally educated reader
- develop effective and appropriate use of essential tools for research, including library and internet resources
- develop effective and appropriate use of sources and the conventions of citation
- appreciate writing as a means of learning

FYW courses are to give sustained attention to writing as an ongoing process, including frequent writing, feedback, and revision. FYW does not emphasize disciplinary writing, rather, it emphasizes formal writing addressed to the general reader. Instructors wishing to teach FYW will themselves be engaged in scholarly/creative writing, they will have classroom experience in leading discussions and assigning written work that requires critical analysis of texts. The orientation program gives background in composition and is designed to help faculty move from assigning writing as a means of thinking and learning to making writing instruction central to a course. These faculty may be from many disciplines.

WRI (Writing in Context)

Desired outcomes

- write effective formal prose in a particular disciplinary or interdisciplinary field of study
- use writing as an active means of learning course content

WRI courses may take many forms, but must include explicit feedback and opportunity to revise based on the feedback received. The writing must be central to student learning in the course.

One suggestion for the WRI requirement would be to reduce to one or two courses, with an increase in the rigor of the requirement, including increased attention to information literacy/research skills, and a return to oversight by the GEC and/or the Director of Writing.

Writing in the major. This requirement has not been effectively implemented, and the task force recommends dropping it. The group discussed looking at how majors might support writing, information literacy, research skills and oral communication skills, for instance, by having courses required for the major which carry WRI and ORC attributes.

ORC outcomes can be described as:

- Students will improve their ability to listen and speak effectively in interpersonal, small group, and/or public presentation settings
- Students will develop confidence as speakers and listeners
- Students will increase their ability to use speaking and listening intentionally as a means of learning.

The ORC requirement would benefit by greater attention to its fit with majors. Attention to the fit between majors and GE requirements, especially Writing and ORC might be part of the next round of program reviews.

PHA. This requirement has many non-curricular elements, and engendered a long discussion. Many highly valued aspects of wellness and physical activity can and do take place outside the curriculum, and maybe do not need to be certified through curricular requirements.

Next week we will meet on July 29, and will discuss EIN, HBS (again, with Jo's revisions), and will decide how to divide up the task of writing the final report.

Solveig Zempel, Secretary of the day