

Meeting Minutes
General Education Committee
Friday, November 21, 2014
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
CPB 203, Lake Worth

Attendance:	Irving Berkowitz ☒	Jennifer Campbell ☒
Emma Chow ☒	Tracy Ciucci ☒	Tcherina Duncombe ☒
John Gaul ☒	David Knopp ☒	Holly Larson ☒
Marcie Pachter ☒	Karen Pain ☒	Ginger Pedersen ☒
David Pena ☒	Anthony Piccolino ☒	Sheila Scott-Lubin ☒
Helen Shub ☒	Debra Ann-Singleton ☒	Warren Smith ☒
Melissa Stonecipher ☒	Patrick Tierney, Chair ☒	Connie Tuisku ☒

ITEM 1. Approval of Minutes

Discussion: The minutes from the prior meeting were approved.

Source: None

Action: None.

ITEM 2. General Education Assessment Process - Overview

Discussion: Helen Shub provided the committee with an overview of how the assessment methodology for general education was developed. This overview served as a reminder for long-time committee members and as an introduction to those who are new to the committee.

The discussion that followed the overview led to several key decisions about the future direction of the assessment process. It was agreed that even in those cases where the assessment instrument should be strengthened, it is very important to close the loop. All disciplines will be required to submit improvement strategies for each general education course in their area. The improvement of the assessment instruments will continue, with the assistance of the General Education Committee, but the need for revision of the instrument will not preclude the use of the results to develop improvement strategies.

Looking ahead, the committee unanimously decided that it is unnecessary to measure every outcome every year. This is especially true when considering that improvement strategies often need time to take hold. However, continuity in measurement is also important, especially given that the College will be going through its fifth-year interim review with SACS in two years. It was decided, therefore, that for the next two assessment cycles, the process will continue in its current form – measuring one learning outcome from each general education course in every section taught and developing improvement strategies for each course aimed at increasing student learning. During these two years, committee members will work with faculty to discuss best practices in assessment with the expectation that those conversations will lead to improved measures and results. Also during this time period, the committee will begin conversations with faculty on ways to improve the overall assessment plan.

Source: None

Action: None

ITEM 3. Benchmarks and Improvement Strategies

Discussion: Professor Patrick Tierney led the committee in a discussion about chapter 15 in the Linda Suskie book, Assessing Student Learning. The focus of the discussion was on creating effective benchmarks. As a result of the discussion, the committee decided that rather than provide each cluster only with each general education course's average score, it would be better to also provide them with the percent of students who received each possible score. By presenting the data in this manner, the clusters will have a more robust way to set meaningful benchmarks.

The benchmarks set for this purpose will be “aspirational” benchmarks. The purpose is for the disciplines to stretch beyond their comfort zones to achieve increased student success. The General Education Committee and the Institutional Research and Effectiveness Office will set competency benchmarks for the purpose of the reporting to accreditors which may differ in some cases from the aspirational benchmarks. In addition, overall competency in general education will be determined by a multiple-measures approach and will not rely exclusively on the results of these embedded assessments.

Meetings will be held during February with representatives from each cluster to review their aggregated assessment results. In March, on Development Day, the clusters will be asked to set their aspirational benchmarks and to develop improvement strategies based on their assessment results. Ms. Shub will prepare a handout that provides faculty with ideas for improvement strategies to assist in their discussions.

A question was raised about whether it would be acceptable for disciplines that experience lower rates of student success nation-wide, such as Math, to set benchmarks that are noticeably lower than those for other disciplines. Ms. Shub will research if there is any literature that discusses this and report back to the committee.

Source: None

Action: Helen Shub will prepare a sample for of suggested improvement strategies for the cluster discussions.

Ms. Shub will research the issue of setting reasonable benchmarks in areas where students typically do not perform well, locally and nationally.

During the month of February, Professors Patrick Tierney, Marcie Pachter and Tracy Ciucci, Dr. Jennifer Campbell and Helen Shub will hold meetings on each campus to discuss the general education results.

ITEM 4. Meetings with Clusters

Discussion: Once the assessment results have been aggregated and reports have been produced, several members of the General Education Committee will arrange meetings with representatives from each of the general education areas to review the results. The purpose of these meetings will be five-fold:

1. To explain how to interpret the assessment results;
2. To discuss how to create meaningful benchmarks;
3. To discuss how to develop improvement strategies;
4. To explain future steps in the assessment process;
5. To listen and respond to faculty's concerns and questions about anything to do with general education assessment.

Source: None

Action: None

ITEM 5. Gordon Rule

Discussion: This discussion was deferred because several committee members who represent opposing opinions on this subject were not in attendance at this meeting. In order to allow for all voices to be heard, it was decided to wait until the next committee meeting to address this matter. Professor Tierney suggested that everyone read the Speech cluster minutes prior to the next meeting.

Professor Tierney brought up an idea proposed by Dr. Irving Berkowitz to have a panel discussion about academic freedom. The committee was divided in its opinion on this and it was decided to table the discussion until Dr. Berkowitz is present.

Source: None

Action: None

ITEM 6. Discussion Board

Discussion: Tabled until next meeting

Source: None

Action: None

ITEM 7. Information Literacy Plan

Discussion: Tabled until next meeting

Source: None

Action: None

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Submitted by:

Helen Shub, Scribe