Minutes of the Special Faculty Senate Meeting Devoted to General Education, 15 January 2008

The Faculty Senate met on Tuesday, 15 January 2008, at 5:00 p.m. in Wachovia Auditorium. This was the eighth special meeting of the academic year dedicated to the General-Education Proposals formulated by the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education.

After calling the meeting to order, Speaker Joe Kelly noted that a clean (and slightly re-formatted) copy of the amended Gen-Ed document (which included all amendments passed in previous meetings) was being handed out to the Senators. He said, too, that a Parliamentary procedure must be found that will allow the Senate to incorporate into the current Gen-Ed document Goals 1.1 and 1.2, which had been approved by the Senate last spring (4/10/08). He announced that he would entertain a motion to insert the goals into the document after the Senate finished its page-by-page deliberations on the document through page 18. The Speaker then asked for comments about the form of the re-formatted document and said that it could be formatted differently if the Senate so desired. Rohn England (Mathematics) said that he would like the document to be formatted in the form that it will appear in the catalog—or at least in the form that those outside the Senate (students, general faculty, administrators, the public) will end up reading.

*The Senate then resumed its discussion of p. 13 (Goal IV.1) of the Gen-Ed Proposal, where it had left off at the previous meeting.*

Jack Parson (Political Science) moved that the following changes be made to p. 13:

### Defining Characteristics

Students should deepen their understanding of contemporary international and global contexts one or more countries outside the United States by doing one or both by doing both of the following:
1) Develop knowledge of one or more regions or countries outside the United States through analysis of examples of those regions’ or countries’ contemporary social, political, economic and cultural life; that country’s literature, culture and/or intellectual achievements
2) Develop understanding of contemporary interconnections between regions/countries related to one or more global issues, themes and/or conflicts.

### Requirement

Students must complete one approved course.
Approval Criteria

1) Course must deepen students’ understanding of contemporary international and global contexts one or more countries outside the United States.

2) Course must include components of both focus on at least one of the following:
   a) Developing students’ knowledge of one or more regions or countries outside the United States through analysis of examples of those regions’/countries’ contemporary social, political, economic and cultural life; that country’s literature, culture and/or intellectual achievements. Course presents these works as reflections of the country or region where they were created.
   b) Developing students’ understanding of contemporary interconnections between regions/countries related to one or more global issues, themes and/or conflicts. OR

3) Any course taken for credit while on a study abroad program.

Key elements of the proposed amendment include inserting the phrase “contemporary international and global contexts” in the Defining Characteristics and Approval Criteria, making Defining Characteristics #1 and #2 and Approval Criteria (a) and (b) required elements (rather than options), and allowing a study abroad program to satisfy the requirement. Mr. Parsons argued that the language “contemporary international and global contexts” clarifies that the goal seeks to help students gain knowledge of global issues that bear on our own time as opposed to a recent period.

George Hopkins moved to extend debate on p. 13 by fifteen minutes. The motion received a second and passed.

Godwin Uwah (guest) asked why literature had been removed from the goal and asked what the consequences of such a decision would be. Mr. Parson responded that he didn’t intend to exclude literature, and that certain courses focusing on literature could still satisfy the goal. Mr. Uwah wondered why literature couldn’t remain in the goal, since literature is part of culture and culture is part of literature. Mr. Parson replied that literature was implied as a possible subject because it fell under the broad heading of “cultural life.”

Jeffery Diamond (History) asked for more explanation as to why the term “modern” was removed. Richard Nunan (at-large) responded that the word “contemporary” refers to what is happening now, but that “modern” can mean several things. For example, in philosophy “modern” refers to a period beginning with Descartes in the seventeenth century. Evan Parry (Theatre) noted that historical knowledge is often needed for understanding current issues; so to preclude a historical perspective from Goal IV.1 might be a mistake. Calvin Blackwell (Economics and Finance) asked why a history course wouldn’t satisfy this goal.

Addressing a different issue, Maureen Hays (Sociology/Anthropology) asked whether any study abroad course would automatically count as satisfying the goal. Would a study abroad course in calculus, for example, taught in Australia count? Mr. Parson said yes. By virtue of being abroad and living in a different country, a student taking such a course is learning about
the culture and thought of a region of the world outside the USA. Given that explanation, Ms. Hays responded that she would like to see language in the goal that reflected that the study abroad experience is what is valued. Mr. Parson then proposed inserting the following phrase in item #3 of the Approval Criteria: “an experience of study abroad reflected in a course taken for credit in a study abroad program.”

Mark Long at this point (Political Science) moved to extend debate on p. 13 by fifteen minutes. The motion received second and passed. Ms. Hays then moved to adopt Mr. Parson’s language for Approval Criteria # 3. Frank Morris (at-large) pointed out that the Requirement of the goal stipulates that students must complete an approved course, but the amendment says something else. The Senate voted on Ms. Hays’ motion, which passed.

The Senate then voted on Mr. Parson’s amendment, which passed.

Mr. McNerney returned to the issue brought up by Mr. Morris and suggested that the word “course” be included in item #3 of the Approval Criteria to accord with the language in the Requirement of the goal. This sparked considerable discussion about the wording of item #3 and various proposals to refine the wording. In the end, Darryl Phillips (at-large) moved to strike item #3 altogether, and the motion passed.

Having finished its discussion of p. 13 of the Gen-Ed Proposal, the Senate turned its attention to p. 14 (Goal IV.2 Experiencing, Understanding, and Using Multiple Cultural perspectives).

Mr. Nunan asked for unanimous consent to strike Requirement #2 (“Courses satisfying this requirement may be used to satisfy the foreign language requirement if they are above the 202 level”), as the Senate had done with other sections of document where this statement has been found. Unanimous consent was granted.

Larry Krasnoff (Philosophy) asked for unanimous consent to strike Approval Criterion #4 (“Course must give students a culturally-derived frame of reference for interpreting the material being studied”). Unanimous consent was granted.

Having finished its discussion of p. 14, the Senate turned its attention to of p. 15, (Goal V, Personal and Ethical Perspectives).

Mr. Nunan moved to strike the entire page, arguing that some educational goals, while admirable, aren’t easily achieved through courses. Goal V, he said, was one such goal. Gen Ed, he continued, is about courses, and this goal is not therefore really relevant to the Gen-Ed Proposal. Moreover, if the College were to make a serious effort to devise courses to reach this goal, some factotum would have to track and make decisions about those courses, which would waste the College’s resources. Julia Eichelberger (guest) responded that the goal is in the proposal because the Gen-Ed Committee had received so much input about the need for such a goal. Students, also, have made efforts to establish such a goal. She added that though a factotum would have to track student progress toward the goal, the main trackers would be students themselves, who could use their online record for the task. Many other institutions, she continued, have mechanisms for tracking students’ efforts in this area. Also, having the
goal in the Gen-Ed document sends a message about the importance of ethical development in education.

After several Senators elaborated on various points made by Mr. Nunan and Ms. Eichelberger, the Senate voted on Mr. Nunan’s motion, which passed.

*Having finished its discussion of p. 15 of the Gen-Ed Proposal, the Senate turned its attention to p. 16, (Expression of Intent Regarding Goal V).*

Mr. Nunan moved to strike this page. He said that since it was tied to page 15, which had just been deleted, it was logical to delete this page as well. *After receiving a second, the motion passed.*

*The Senate turned its attention to p. 16 (Expression of Intent Regarding Goal V).*

Mr. Nunan moved to strike this page. He said that since it was tied to page 15, which had just been deleted, it was logical to delete this page as well. *After receiving a second, the motion passed.*

*The Senate turned its attention to p. 17 (Goal VI. 1, Advanced Knowledge and Skills in Major Area of Study).*

Jason Overby (Chemistry and Biochemistry) remarked that this goal struck him as odd because it is about the major, not Gen Ed. Senators Diamond (History) and Keyes (at-large) agreed, but Ms. Eichelberger pointed out that these goals and sub-goals are found on p. 36 of the Gen-Ed document, and that it seemed right to include the goal about the major because it is a fundamental part of each student’s education. Scott Peeples (English) said that he thought keeping the goal in the document was important because it made clear the connection between Gen Ed and the major. He reminded the Senate that the sense of disconnection between the major and Gen Ed perceived by both students and faculty has been a key reason for reforming our Gen-Ed program. Mr. Krasnoff responded that anyone who thinks even briefly about education knows that Gen Ed and the major go together; but in his view, this document was not the appropriate place for making a statement about their connection.

Mr. Krasnoff moved to strike p. 17. The motion passed.

*The Senate turned its attention to p. 18 (Expression of Intent Regarding Goal VI).*

Hugh Wilder (Philosophy) said that while this page states some useful information, it is not appropriate for this document. Mr. Overby then moved to strike p. 18, and the motion passed.

The Senate completed its *seriatim* review of the first Gen-Ed Proposal. Speaker Kelly reminded the Senate that at the next special meeting (scheduled for January 29) the Senate would discuss the proposal in its entirety and be able to propose further amendments. The Senate adjourned at 6:40.

Respectfully submitted,

Terence Bowers
Faculty Secretary