1) Call to Order

Committee Chair Lisa Pinley Covert called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

2) Approval of minutes from 11/8/17 meeting

Committee members present were:

Susan Divine
Jim Bowring
Kevin Keenan
Wesley Burnett
Mary Beth Heston
Lynne Ford
Gia Quesada
Lisa Pinley Covert

Mary Beth Heston made a motion to approve the minutes from the 11/8/17 meeting.

The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

3) Work on discussion points for “Gen Ed Month”

Lisa Covert asked the Committee to consider generating guidelines for the Departments and Programs that would help organize and facilitate group conversations during “gen ed month” in February.
Two types of guidelines are needed: a set is needed to help engage departments and programs that do not offer any courses in the gen ed curriculum while another is needed for those departments that do offer courses. In addition, Covert indicated that we should consider prompting departments and programs to have discussions that are both useful for the departments themselves, but which also might yield information to guide the Gen Ed Committee’s broader work. The committee’s intention is to help facilitate useful conversations and guidelines.

The Committee spent most of the hour discussing guidelines for departments that do offer gen ed courses, with the following recommendations resulting:

1. Consider reviewing the department’s current gen ed offerings as a faculty. There may be faculty who are unaware of their own department’s participation in gen ed, while all might have new ideas about contributions or engagement with gen ed.

2. Consider inviting emissaries, ARGS, or other representatives from Gen Ed to the Departments after the departments discuss gen ed. The goal of these visits would be to answer questions and provide additional resources that might be needed and/or requested by the department.

3. Consider framing the discussions as a “focus group” and include some broad, open-ended questions. An example is: “What do you understand the purpose of general education to be?” Another would be: “What does the data tell you about general education? Given the data, what would you like to see changed? What other data would you like to have?” [The gen ed Committee will provide relevant data to department and programs.]
4) Update on Special Topics courses/study abroad

The committee discussed creating “shell courses” that would serve as special topics in the general education curriculum when students go abroad. Such courses would have generic acronyms such as “HMT” for humanities special topics and “SSC” for social sciences special topics. When a student studies abroad, he or she would get these credits rather than the more cumbersome process of each individual department having their own special topics that are used. The goal is to avoid the situation where a department or program must include their special topics course in the general education curriculum to account for study abroad courses, but then has to use the special topics course in other circumstances for content that is not appropriate for general education credit. Lisa met with the Dean of HSS to discuss the creation of shell courses, and there was some confusion around whether or not this was possible on the Registrar’s side. Lynne indicated that she believed it was possible and would check with the RO.

5) Discuss spring agenda priorities

   a) Need to establish clear criteria for the “line” regarding what could be counted as a gen ed class and what would not be counted.

   b) Finalize math alternatives. The Committee has not received any submissions for math alternatives. There was some discussion about the Committee identifying courses, and then approaching the departments and asking them to include the courses as alternatives. Lynne Ford mentioned using the list that Jason Howell crafted before he left the College. Lynne and Lisa may also meet with chairs to discuss the need for math alternatives.

   c) Possibility of a ninth category of gen ed: data literacy.
d) Explore using gen ed rubrics in other areas of program assessment.