Wednesday, March 7, 2018
General Ed Committee Meeting
9 College Way, Room 202

Committee Member present – Lisa Covert, Kevin Keenan, Wesley Burnett, James Bowring, Susan Divine, and Mary Beth Heston

Ex-officio non-voting member present – Lynne Ford and Giocondo Quesada

1. Lisa Covert asked for a vote to accept the minutes. Lynne Ford made slight corrections to previous minutes. All members approved the amended minutes.

2. Discussion and vote on proposals:

   a) ANTH 203 – Tracy Burkett is a guest representative from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. Kevin Keenan had questions about the Signature Assignment for the proposed course – he implied it does not follow the rubric. Lisa Covert suggested that the department might want to revise the assignment. All committee members voted in favor of accepting the proposed course.

   b) HONS 169 – Kevin Keenan commented about the Signature Assignment, as an example for ANTH 203. Lisa Covert proposed a question about the course being offered as a Special Topics course – Tracy Burkett indicated that the “Special Topics” designation is a typo. Lisa offered to verbally comment on the typo in case it’s brought up at the Faculty Senate. Tracy agreed to allow Lisa to comment verbally at the Faculty Senate. The entire committee voted in favor of accepting the proposed course.

   c) RELS 223 – John Huddlestun is a faculty representative from the Department of Religious Studies – he was present for the meeting. No committee member questions about the proposed course. All committee members voted in favor of accepting the proposed course.

   d) RELS 276 – John Huddlestun was present as a faculty representative. Lynne Ford had a comment about the syllabus – she is concerned about the lack of “primary source material” in the outlined course. John asked what would constitute a “primary source?” Lisa Covert commented that one or two listed sources may be primary; and, she commented that [the committee] has interpreted “primary source material” fairly broadly in the past. Kevin argued that the source material might be seminal, and therefore, constitute a “primary text.” John commented that Todd’s (LeVasseur) proposed syllabus might imply that the source material is “primary” according to Todd’s subdiscipline’s definition of primary material. John offered to contact Todd, and have Todd send a one-paragraph explanation about the source material. The committee
decided to wait for the email explanation before voting – it was suggested for the committee to vote via email after the explanation is received.

3. Lisa Covert mentioned that the meeting in March is arguably too late to offer a new course proposal, so she said we will meet two more times (in March and April) to tie up loose ends. Math/Logic Alternative Update – Jim Bowring said that Computer Science seemed reluctant to offer a General Ed course due to the assessment component. As a rebuttal, Lynne suggested that the Math/Logic Alternative is not necessarily an education “program;” and thus, an assessment is arguably not necessary. Lynne offered that she hopes various departments and programs may be more willing to adopt the Math/Logic Alternative if an assessment component is not required. Lynne claimed that she has not spoken with Divya Bhati (AVP for Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning) yet; however, she has spoken to the Provost (Brian McGee) in regards to this matter. She stated that she and the Provost have interpreted this matter differently. Lynne argued that we are not assessing the students’ math ability, but rather the efficacy of the Alternative program.

4. Lisa Covert mentioned the Gen Ed Month materials and artifacts collected during Gen Ed Month (February 2018). She suggested that the committee explore all of the material offered by the various programs and pull out the overarching themes. She posed the following questions to the committee: (1) “Where do we go with this?” (2) “What else should we do with this information?” Jim Bowring pointed out that a few faculty members, within the Department of Computer Science, suggested that we get rid of assessment all together. Lisa offered a suggestion of rotating, over the course of several years, when courses are assessed. Kevin Keenan suggested that the sample size (of Gen Ed Month responses) is too small to draw any inference from the comments, and he was worried that the comments may stray from the original intent. Gia Quesada offered to ask the Chairs (from across campus), about assessment, at an upcoming meeting in May. Jim asked if assessment actually affects change within the curriculum at the College. Lynn and Gia offered that foreign language and writing courses have been changed because of findings within the assessment process – Lisa added that small changes have been made in history as well. Kevin argued that a group discussion about gen ed assessment would likely lead the discussion into a direction of criticizing the assessment process and not necessarily guiding the discussion of future improvements to the process.

5. Lisa Covert closed with a brief discussion of feedback from students. A longitudinal study was conducted among students at the College. The study started when the current students were freshmen, and the students are now juniors. There are a couple of artifacts, from the survey, pertaining to general education assessment. Lisa suggested we explore the survey results at the next meeting. She also suggested, at the next meeting, that we draw up a general report on the artifacts gathered from Gen Ed Month.