

General Education Task Force
October 17, 2006

Reminders:

There will be a special meeting of AP&P on Wednesday, October 25 from 3-5pm in IG Greer 224. Every task force member is strongly encouraged to attend. Dr. Keefe will speak for approximately ten minutes about the Goals and Outcomes as well as the accompanying report.

The next GETF workshop will be Friday, October 27 from 8am-3pm in the Hubbard Center classroom. The Chancellor's dining room has been reserved for lunch between 12:00-1:30. If anyone has any special dietary needs, please let Dr. Keefe know.

We need to formulate an agenda for this workshop. We should be able to establish this during next Tuesday's meeting.

Q: What do we hope to accomplish during this next workshop?

A: We need something concrete to present at the forum on the following Monday, October 30.

The next open forum will be Monday, October 30 from 3-5pm in the Linville Falls room of the Plemmons Student Union.

Announcements:

Some task force members met with the Geology department last week. Members of the department were very insistent about keeping labs and some sort of science sequence. Although there was not very much support for the general science course that consists of four mini-lessons, one faculty member admitted that this class has not been allowed to grow to its full potential in the past. Copies of the faculty grant applications were left with them in order to encourage participation in the new GenEd curriculum.

Comment: One of the reasons for the insistence upon a sequence may be that they want to address all of the goals as they appear in the document. We need to stress that the student will be expected to fulfill the goals by the time they fulfill the general education core, not necessarily in one class, or series of classes.

Comment: Most disciplines have primarily discussed the goals, not the outcomes. As a culture, we are not used to addressing things in this way, but we need consider the outcomes when developing the curriculum.

Comment: Further, we need to stress that the outcomes are presented in degrees from basic, to intermediate, to advanced.

Comment: Portland uses a rubric to assess outcomes when grading portfolios. (There is one for each of their goals.) We can also develop a rubric for assessment purposes, possibly for the forum on October 30.

Comment: When using the rubric, the first year student is not expected to develop mastery of these goals. They are, however are expected to address these concepts as they are presented in the goals and outcomes.

Comment: Since there are course sequences in other disciplines as well, we need to pinpoint the essence of the sequence and identify what is important about it before we insist on it remaining as such.

Dr. Keefe met with the English Department Chair, Jeanne Dubino, yesterday. She was actually on the GETF for Plymouth State for two years. From experience, she stressed “the devil is in the details,” when presenting a new general education curriculum. Therefore, we must think of ways to address possible concerns about the developing models and proposed classes.

When discussing the revision of certain English classes, Dr. Keefe encouraged a concurrent revision process between the English department and the GETF. This way, the goals and outcomes can be addressed while gaining input from faculty members.

We have been invited to the English faculty meeting in November. We will discuss possible attendance at a later date. If nothing else, Georgia will be in attendance to represent the GETF and field any questions they may have.

Dr. Keefe will meet with Laura Ives from the Art Department during the first week in November.

Discussion:

The GETF Report was revised this week by a subcommittee consisting of Dave, Greg, and David. Several grammatical and format changes were suggested and implemented. The points that merited discussion are as follows:

-The label of “part-timer” when referring to part-time faculty came into question. It was suggested that we refer to half or three-quarter time faculty as “non-tenure track” faculty. There are some faculty members, however, who have a PhD, are full-time, and have benefits, but are non-tenure track. For this reason, we will refer to these individuals as “part-time faculty.”

-After some discussion about rewording the section surrounding part-time faculty, Georgia offered to reword a few sentences to better reflect what we are trying to express in regard to the working conditions of these faculty members.

The committee agreed that no vote is needed to approve the document. The changes that were discussed will be made and the report will accompany the finalized Goals and Outcomes to Jeff Butts of AP&P. Also, Dr. Keefe will send out an e-mail to the entire faculty to let them know that both the report and the Goals and Outcomes can be found on the GETF website.

Q: Is the AP&P going to vote for or against these documents next week?

A: No, this is simply an informational meeting.

A summary of Friday’s model workshop was presented. Everyone agreed that we need to produce some sort of hybrid model that results in a common core experience and verticality. The emerging model includes: a first-year seminar, a sophomore seminar, and a capstone seminar in the major. There was also much interest in a cluster model which might assure content coverage and the integration of knowledge.

Q: Are we moving toward a common experience, then a cluster?

A: It’s not clear yet what the consensus is.

Modules (not entire courses) appealed to some workshop members on Friday.

Comment: We are actually using modules at ASU right now, especially in research classes. In this scenario, either a librarian or course instructor teach a research intensive portion of the class in the library. This module, of course, is directly related to the course.

Comment: If we pursue this option, the modules need to be deeply imbedded in the curriculum. Otherwise, they will just turn into a menu.

We might explore competency testing, perhaps JMU's model. Further, administration and assessment will also have to be addressed when we begin to develop the model. Dr. Keefe added the element of funding to the considerations. (Not necessarily for the GETF to take care of, but for the future administration to consider.)

Looking to the October 27 workshop, we need to establish our goals. In order to produce something to be presented at the October 30 forum, we must paint the broad brush strokes of the model while focusing a bit on content coverage. In regard to covering the Sciences, Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts, a show of hands indicated that all task force members were in favor of keeping some aspect of required courses from these areas in the developing model.

Q: Are we going to address the size of the core? (In regard to credit hours.)

A: It is currently 40-44 hours. It is probable that these hours will remain similar to what they are now. Of course, at this point, we cannot be certain.

Q: Should we hold this open forum at this time? If we are too general about the model, will this result in an explosion?

A: The explosion will happen regardless of whether we have a complete model or not. Since this is an inevitable result, we need to go ahead and hold the forum in order to get possible beneficial feedback from the ASU community.

Q: Do we need something more concrete to present?

A: We need to anticipate concerns and be prepared to address them.

Q: Would it hurt the situation too much to put it off by just a few weeks?

A: We really need to move along, especially due to the Summer Faculty Grant proposal deadline (January 8). The October 30 forum will be to present ideas. Then the November forum will be to present a more concrete idea of the model. By doing this, we will alleviate the "done deal" mentality because the faculty will see that we do not have a secret model ready to be implemented.

Since the last workshop went so well, the next workshop promises to produce some solid options for the new curriculum model. Issues that we need to be able to address are clusters, content, and the first year seminar. Next Tuesday, we may be able to begin preparation for the workshop. Those subcommittees that were assigned topics last Friday should continue to research possible options to present to the group.