General Education Council Annual Report 2010-2011

According to Senate Resolution 35-2, the mandate of the General Education Council (GEC) is to “promote excellence in general education at UIS by facilitating development approval, and evaluation of courses; developing policies and rules for implementation of the curriculum; and recommending to the Undergraduate Council and the Campus Senate policy changes of the general education curriculum.”

The Campus Senate Bylaws require that the General Education Council submit a report about its activities to the Undergraduate Council and the Campus Senate each year.

During AY2010-11, Heather Dell chaired GEC.

This has been a highly productive and busy year on the Council. Dialogue on issues has been very thorough and lively. I am pleased that the Council engages its members such that most have offered to renew their membership for another several years. I thank my colleagues for their very fine work.

GEC accomplished the following:

- Reviewed 19 courses, approving 14 and tabling 5 for additional work with faculty or for revision of course approval criteria. No courses were denied.
- Reviewed eight petitions from students to use transfer credit in ECCE categories. We approved 1, denied 3 and requested more information on 4.
- Hosted workshop for faculty of Comparative Societies courses on assessment materials needed and pedagogy challenges and successes (March 2011).
- The Council conferred on whether we needed to provide permission to faculty who want to remove a course from general education or ECCE. The Council sees this as a faculty decision, but the Council should be informed through the Office of Undergraduate Education when this happens.
- Conferred with the Math Department on their vision of applied math course criteria. An ad hoc committee of the Council met with other departments interested in offering courses in this category. There was consensus on offering statistics courses that could meet IAI guidelines. During last and this year, the ad hoc committee met to draft language for this second math course category. After two years of attentive work, the Applied Math course approval category language has been completed and approved.
- Reviewed Campus Senate Resolution 34-15 (the resolution that created the General Education Curriculum, approved in spring 2005) for substantive changes in offering Freshman Seminar in lieu of one Comparative Societies course, reducing Freshman Composition courses from 4 to 3 credit hours, and in allowing flexibility in upper division Engaged Citizen Common Experience courses by eliminating the Elective and mandating students to take one Speaker’s Series and two of the three categories (U.S. Communities, Global Awareness and Engagement Experience). The Council worked hard to make the process reflect our commitment to shared governance by soliciting response through email, memo, several open forums, and a meeting with the Undergraduate Council.
• An ad hoc committee of the Council met to draft course category language for the Freshman Seminar. A final version of this category will be made available this semester in order to solicit course proposals for Fall 2012 from interested faculty and Student Affairs staff. The course category is open to all disciplines as well as welcoming interdisciplinary courses. All proposals must have an academic department affiliation. Teachers in this category will receive funding to participate in training next year in teaching core introductory college skills.

• Comparative Societies category language was revised to reflect the reduction to one course in this category in either Humanities or Social and Behavioral Science.

• Several members of the Council obtained assessment training through the American Association of Colleges and Universities General Education and Assessment 3.0 Conference in preparation for assessing Comparative Societies course materials in May.

**Plans for Next Year**

• Evaluate and select faculty and staff Freshman Seminar syllabi proposals in early Fall 2011.

• Design and deliver training in College Skills Building content and pedagogy in Spring 2012 for those teaching Freshman Seminars in starting in Fall 2012.

• Continue to work to make the forms and processes more user friendly.

• Clarify the language of US Communities Category Criteria by working with those who teach in this category. If time, accomplish the same process of clarification of the Global Awareness Category Criteria.

• Continue assessment of General Education courses by category. We will have completed a preliminary assessment of artifacts in May of the Comparative Societies courses, will evaluate it as a model, and will proceed from there.