

Special Meeting of the
General Education Council
Minutes
June 17, 2013
PAC 493

Present:

Steve Schnebly
Samia Ahmad
Tung Nguyen
Donna Bussell
Harshavardhan Bapat
Patricia Byrnes
John Martin
Dorothy Hemmo
Richard Gilman-Opalsky
Karen Moranski

Visitor:

Dr. Chung-Hsien Sung

- I. Thank you to all General Education Council members from the Academic Year 2012-13 who came to campus during their summer break for this special meeting. We have eight voting members and all attended. We welcomed Dr. Chung-Hsien Sung, Chair of the Math Department who joined the discussion.
- II. PSC 242: Statistics for Social Sciences – Mathematics – Stats

We discussed how the course was approved in spring, 2013, whether it should have been approved as a Gen Ed Math (Stats) course, and whether it will be approved for future semesters.

The minutes of February 11, 2013 were reviewed to see what concerns the Council had after the first review of the course.

In the spring, Tung Nguyen offered to speak with the PSC 242 instructor regarding clarifying some issues in order to meet the Gen Ed math stats criteria. They were:

- Use of software relative to hand calculations
- 8 weeks listed on summer schedule compressed, not enough details on topic coverage.
- Amount of homework, number of problems week to week, and is there enough time to teach concepts
- Topic of counting, IAI rules not covered in textbook he uses.

It was also stated that this course should have a prerequisite of intermediate algebra/geometry and students should receive a minimum grade of C or better.

The instructor made changes and presented his revised syllabus to Steve Schnebly, Chair of the General Education Council. It was not clearly stated that the Council wished to see this course again, and like so many other courses where the Council charges Steve and Karen Moranski to approve once revisions come back, Steve and Karen approved the course for summer, 2013.

The discussion began with a question regarding how prerequisites could be monitored. Karen Moranski stated that the department's support staff usually monitors these as they do in other departments and colleges. It was stated that the prerequisite checking should be turned on in Banner; but there are other problems with this function due to the fact that transfer students may not have had their transcripts fully entered into the system and they are stopped from registering.

Another problem was that this time the list of courses that were approved by the Chair and Associate Vice Chancellor did not make it on the agenda for the next meeting so Council had no idea of its status. It was suggested that we deal with the course content first then suggestions for changes in procedure in which the courses get approved next.

Since Tung met with the instructor, he was asked by Council what pieces he feels are still missing from the syllabus.

- He brought up the level issue: he felt it should be a 400 level course and not a Gen Ed course due to the content.
- 15 week schedule is missing – only 8 weeks for summer. He wants to know how the 8 weeks would stretch over a 16 week period and what would be covered.
- Software was mentioned in one syllabus but not the other
- There is mention of counting in the syllabus but not in the textbooks. There is no foundation of math in the book. He is concerned that Gen Ed Math skills are not being effectively covered.

A summary of the discussion is as follows:

- Course level and whether or not it is a Gen Ed Math Stats course even though there may not be enough basic math problems in it. Should PSC 242 be bumped to a 300 level? Dr. Sung stated that this is a good course but should be taught at a 400 level as long as there is a basic stats prerequisite. Patti Byrnes stated that the course could be Gen Ed. Math Stats (with revisions), and that it should be a 300-level course.
- There is a question of whether or not counting, probability and distributions are being taught sufficiently and thoroughly. Tung stated that because the topic of “counting” was not covered in the textbooks, there was reason to believe that it would not be sufficiently addressed in the course.
- Can students meet the learning objectives with regard to basic math skills?
- Prerequisites need to be there

The next question is what to do with the current state of the course for summer 2013 and should we go forward with it in the fall since it is already on the schedule and the class is full.

Donna Bussell asked Council if this course meets the criteria as it stands now or can it be made into a good General Education course?

Patty Byrnes suggested leaving the course alone for summer and fall 2013 The course meets the basic criteria but still has issues. We should meet again with the instructor after he teaches the summer course to go over the necessary changes.

ACTION:

Samia Ahmad motioned to ask the instructor to revise and resubmit the syllabus for approval for the spring, 2014 semester (the default alternative being to deny the course on the basis that it could not be revised in a manner that would allow GECCO approval as a Gen Ed Math (Stats) course). The motion carried 5 YES to 2 NO. One voter had to leave which brought us to 7 voting members and a quorum of 5.

Discussion:

Since students are already registered and we will not be meeting until fall, then we have to wait for discussion on the process we have used on previous occasions to sign off on courses after revisions are made. We should meet with the Dean of the College of Public Affairs and Administration, the Department Chair of Political Science and the Instructor of PSC 242 regarding this specific course; and then work on process issues.

ACTION:

Karen Moranski will work with the Dean, the Chair and the Instructor to inform them of the circumstances regarding this course.

ACTION:

Steve Schnebly motioned that PSC 242 be offered in the fall 2013 (with Gen Ed status), and that he and Patti Byrnes work with the instructor prior to the fall semester to implement the council's recommended changes. However, to be offered beyond fall, 2013, the course must be resubmitted to and approved by the Council. Samia Ahmad seconded the motion and the vote was 5 Yes; 1 No; 1 Abstention.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Ply