Mercer University

General Education Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 24, 2022 (Zoom)

Committee Members present: Achim Kopp (co-chair), Tammy Crutchfield, Stephen Hill, Sharon Augustine, Linda Streit, Hollis Phelps, Nannette Turner, Suzie Madden, Candace Barnett, Renee Hayslett, Susan Malone, Danielle Buehrer, Kelly McMichael

Co-Chair Achim Kopp called the meeting to order at 2 p.m.

1. Approval of minutes from February 24, 2022 meeting (posted on Canvas)

Approved unanimously

1. Point of Information: CoPA report on faculty development for Qualitative Reasoning

Hollis Phelps reported that CoPA recently offered well-attended faculty workshops on Oral Communication (Dr. Bernstein) and Quantitative Reasoning (Dr. Miller).

1. Update on Scientific Reasoning assessment: Revision of competency language, SLOs, and rubric (posted on Canvas)

The committee affirmed the following revised language for the Scientific Reasoning competency and SLOs:

Competency: Scientific reasoning involves the understanding and the coordinated use of empirical data with testable predictions or theories.

Student learning outcomes:

Students will demonstrate competency in scientific reasoning by:

1. Organizing empirical data using appropriate scientific methods.
2. Analyzing data using testable processes appropriate to the discipline.
3. Communicating empirical findings and conclusions appropriate to the discipline.

The revised language will be added to the existing Competency document on the UGEC Canvas site. The rubric will be posted elsewhere on the site.

Since the Townsend School of Music had no representation at the meeting, co-chair Achim Kopp will inform TSM reps by email.

1. Discussion: How do globalization and internationalization relate to Mercer’s general education program?

Hollis Phelps explained that while at the moment there is a competency for “Critical Thinking from Diverse Perspectives,” there is no competency for global issues. Should such a competency be added? Achim Kopp asked if global issues might be integrated into “Critical Thinking from Diverse Perspectives.” Hollis Phelps and Sharon Augustine indicated that CoPA and Education might be amenable to that. Susan Malone suggested that we should find out how other institutions handle this. It was decided to pursue this topic further in AY2022-23.

1. Report on GenEd-related data from the HEDS Senior Survey conducted in Spring 2021

Susan Malone showed the committee the HEDS data located on the UGEC Canvas site (under “Files”), focusing specifically on the data relating to Oral Communication, Written Communication, Quantitative Reasoning, and Critical Thinking. Overall, Mercer’s scores have dropped slightly in recent years. The next HEDS results will become available in 2024. Achim Kopp suggested that we use the 2024 results to determine if the COVID-19 may have been the reason for the recent declines.

1. Other business

There was no other business.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:08 p.m.