

Mercer University  
University General Education Committee Meeting Minutes  
Thursday 2/22/24 (Zoom)

Committee Members present: Achim Kopp, Colleen Stapleton, Suzie Madden, Abby Dowling, Christopher Schmitz, Maura Schlairet, Tabitha Anderson, Wesley Barker, Sharon Augustine, Troy Nash, Stephen Hill, Tammy Crutchfield, Nannette Turner, Kevin Gwaltney, Kelly Reffitt, Loleta Sartin

Meeting called to order by Colleen Stapleton at 2:00 PM

- 1) Approval of minutes from October 26, 2023 meeting
  - a. Motion to approve minutes by Suzie Madden, seconded by Nannette Turner. All approved. Minutes passed.
- 2) Proposal by CLAS to add THR 221 course to Gen Ed curriculum. CLAS Creative Expression: Performance/Production of Creative Arts block and University Fine Arts block will add THR 221 (Abby Dowling). Motion to accept by Stephen Hill, seconded by Loleta Sartin. Motion passed.
- 3) Discussion on how to add new Gen Ed courses to the catalog. Kelly Reffitt and Achim Kopp will work together this year. Once Gen Ed is updated, a list will be sent out to the committee. The unit should approve new Gen Ed courses and then bring it to the UGEC for point of information. Abby Dowling would like to be informed when the units add CLAS courses to their Gen Ed offerings.
- 4) Troy Nash led a discussion of a revision of the six Gen Ed competencies and the assessment cycle. Since Gen Ed is not included in this SACS review cycle, it is a good opportunity to think big picture and create a new plan for Gen Ed assessment. Two models presented in the assessment cycle document that was submitted to the committee were reviewed:
  - a. Model A in the document is similar to current approach.

- b. Model B adds one additional step. Year 3 is Fidelity Of Implementation (FOI), which focuses on data from faculty in implementing plans for improving student learning. Model B would generate more meaningful data but also would mean increased workload.
- c. Kelly Reffitt recommended a progress report in the middle of year three. It would be helpful to provide units with support in this phase of assessment.
- d. Abby Dowling is concerned about the volume of work that would fall on CLAS and CoPA.
- e. Wesley Barker recommended stipends for faculty who would like to learn more about the FOI component in assessment implementation.
- f. Troy Nash will provide more resources so the committee could get a better understanding of the FOI step. He will put together an FOI explainer.
- g. Troy Nash sees this as a University-level effort. We should be able to work collaboratively. This could alleviate the burden on a few individuals.
- h. Troy Nash explained the issue with the number of competencies in comparison to other institutions (see disseminated report). Workload is affected by number of competencies. If we have six competencies, we will be working on every competency every year using Model B. Compared to the universities in the report, Mercer is at the lower end. Mercer is comparable in its types of competencies.
- i. Wesley Barker would like to see a systemization of the process so it is more of a University effort.
- j. Tammy Crutchfield recommended competency teams with a competency manager.
- k. Troy Nash recommended automating much of the process with Canvas.
- l. Kevin Gwaltney recommended reaching out to other intuitions to see how they are handling the large amount of workload.
- m. Abby Dowling discussed the need for a staff member to manage the collection process.

5) Action items from the discussion:

- a. Achim Kopp, Colleen Stapleton, and Troy Nash will have a meeting with the Provost Office to discuss additional support and resource needs.
- b. Committee members from units will discuss the FOI model (Model B) in the units and bring information back to the March meeting. Also, the units will take a look at the current University Gen Ed competencies.

6) Other business

- a. This spring we should conduct a thorough scrubbing of the catalog.
- b. Chris Schmitz, Wesley Barker, and Abby Dowling announced potential proposals for the March 2024 meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 PM.

Submitted by Tammy Crutchfield