General Education Committee

Annual Report to Academic Senate

May 6, 2015

Membership:

Members of the committee sometimes are appointed and/or resign during the year; this list does not distinguish among them.

Voting members (7):

CHABSS – Humanities/Arts: Ibrahim Al-Marashi, Marilyn Ribble

CHABSS – Social Sciences: Joely Proudfit

CSM: Julie Jameson, Marshall Whittlesey (chair)

COEHHS: Lori Heisler

Library: Yvonne Meulemans

Non-voting members and others in attendance: Regina Eisenbach (Academic Programs), Dawn Formo (Dean of Undergraduate Studies), Mads Nilsen (ASI), Melissa Simnitt (Academic Programs), Gretchen Sampson (Academic Programs), Virginia Mann (Academic Programs), Andres Favela (Student Affairs), Vonda Garcia (Financial Aid/Scholarships)

The GEC would like to thank Gretchen Sampson (September/October) and Virginia Mann (October-May) for drafting its minutes each week.

Review of the lower division curriculum

Over the past two years, the General Education Committee (GEC) exercised its duty to review curriculum periodically, which the GE Philosophy Statement directs:

All courses certified for General Education shall be evaluated periodically to determine if they satisfy all applicable General Education criteria.

- New courses will be reviewed after the second semester in which they are taught.
- All courses will be reviewed every three years.

This policy was written in 1994 when the curriculum was small. The size of the GE curriculum (about 107 lower division and area E courses, and about 325 upper division courses) now makes the job of satisfying this policy difficult. Procedures for review are to be established by the GEC, and the 2013-2014 committee chose to use the new GE forms (approved by Senate in Spring 2013) as a tool of review. Then the committee began by asking all departments and programs to state which courses they wishes to submit for review and ‘recertification’ for GE. Any course not submitted would be automatically...
decertified. On the other hand, decertification is not a permanent status, so any course not recertified in this review could be later submitted for recertification.

The GEC deems the lower division/area E recertification process complete. Of 107 courses listed (see attached spreadsheet), 76 have been recertified, 8 were certified for this first time, and 23 have either not submitted materials for recertification or recertification is incomplete. GEC plans to decertify these 23 courses effective Spring 2016. GEC still has one more meeting on May 7 where this list could change. Also, the mere fact that the decertification is not effective until Spring 2016 means that the proposers can still submit materials in the Fall of 2015. Decertification will occur sometime between the end of Fall 2015 registration and the beginning of Spring 2016 registration.

For future reference, the faculty should note that 100+ courses took nearly two years to review. In order to review more quickly, a review probably has to be done in less depth. The number of courses in the GE curriculum continues to be a challenge for GEC, and the faculty might want to consider whether reducing this number might be in CSUSM’s best interest.

A major portion of the recertification effort involved getting faculty to think about broad student learning outcomes and assessment in their classes. GEC frequently returned recertification documents to proposers asking them to cite specific examples of assignments in the class that could be used for assessment. The faculty should be aware that GEC did this because as we move into assessment of GE program learning outcomes in 2015-2016 and beyond, faculty teaching GE courses will be asked to come up with an assignment and assess a program learning outcome appropriate for that assignment.

All forms submitted to GEC as approved in their final form are available at the GEC moodle page. We hope these forms provide a resource for future proposals.

Assessment of General Education Program Learning Outcomes

In 2015-2016, GE approved an assessment plan for GE program student learning outcomes. Such assessment is required by our accreditors. It is supposed to be a tool by which we decide whether learning outcomes for the program are being achieved, and is supposed to be a tool for review of the curriculum.

Full details of the assessment plan are available at the GE moodle page, but highlights are as follows. In the spring of 2014 GEC presented to Academic Senate a list of nine GE program student learning outcomes. These are high level outcomes that are to be viewed as things a student will be able to do after having completed the entire GE program. As a practical matter, many of the outcomes might be achieved as the result of a course (e.g., outcomes in the physical and natural world) but others might be outcomes arising from many courses (e.g., writing, critical thinking). At GEC’s suggestion, this list of outcomes has not been made official policy, but is a ‘working list’ of outcomes that GEC will use for assessment and modify as needed. GEC plans to assess these learning outcomes in a five year cycle by selecting two outcomes per year, finding courses where those outcomes are assessable, and taking an assignment from each of those courses to use as an assessment tool. The plan maps each program learning outcome with a GE area (e.g., A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, etc.) where the presumption will be that most if not all of the courses in that area achieve the outcome. In coordination with the Office of Academic Programs, the GEC will select courses from that area to do assessment of the learning outcome. We do not have to do assessment
of all courses satisfying a particular outcome, but do a representative sample. The plan is to start with a
small number of courses in the hope that starting small will help us do it well. We ask for the faculty’s
cooporation on this task.

The GEC is most grateful to Melissa Simnitt, Assessment Specialist in the Office of Academic Programs,
for drafting the assessment plan.

Review of the upper division curriculum

Because of the amount of time required (2 years) to do the lower division review, GEC decided to do a
scaled-down review at upper division. The committee has prepared a form to be used for recertification
of upper division courses next year. The main work to be done will be: for each course, check off which
GE program student learning outcomes are attained in the course, and explain how the area content
criteria are satisfied. The faculty should expect a due date for these forms sometime in Fall 2015. GEC
plans to have examples of correctly filled out recertifications available.

Halualani and Associates Diversity Mapping Project

In Spring 2014, CSUSM contracted with Halualani and Associates to do a study of diversity on campus.
A portion of this study involved studying where diversity occurs in our curriculum. The full report is
available on the university web site. A highlight for GE is a recommendation that our campus
“implement 2 general education diversity areas - Domestic and International/Global Diversity Issues &
Multiculturalism.” Halualani and Associates also reported a finding that of what it deemed ‘ideal’
diversity courses in our curriculum, only about a third of them are certified for GE. Halualani and
Associates suggested we consider why this is the case. A list of these courses is available at the GE
moodle page for future study. Also, Halualani and Associates set forth an opinion that a course in
multicultural studies should not be viewed as doing diversity unless it studies issues of inequality, power
and social justice. It seems likely that some faculty at CSUSM do not share that view.

In response to the Halualani and Associates diversity mapping and recommendations, GEC is planning a
2015-2016 assessment of the General Education Program Student Learning Outcome in diversity:
“Describe the importance of diverse experiences, thoughts and identities needed to be effective in
working and living in diverse communities and environments.” Hopefully the results of this
assessment would provide more information on the nature of students’ knowledge and skills in diversity,
and give a picture as to what extent the diversity that occurs in our courses covers issues of inequality,
power and social justice. In connection with this assessment, GEC proposes to empanel a task force
which would be charged with carrying out the assessment: selecting courses, selecting an assignment in
these courses to be assessed, and evaluating the assignments. The GEC suggests this assessment as
something the president could provide resources for, as follow-up to the diversity mapping.

The GEC discussed the recommendation from Halualani and Associates that our campus “implement 2
general education diversity areas - Domestic and International/Global Diversity Issues &
Multiculturalism.” A proposal to implement something of this sort at upper division was discussed in
2011-2012 but did not receive enough support among the faculty. A significant problem is the 120 unit
limit makes entirely new requirements difficult to implement without removing/modifying existing
requirements. Also, regarding Halualani and Associates’ position that a course in multicultural studies
should not be viewed as doing diversity unless it studies issues of inequality, power and social justice: it seems likely that some faculty at CSUSM do not share that view.

As part of the lower division GE review, GEC asked all proposals for course recertification to articulate how diversity is covered in the class (this is in Part C of the form ‘CSUSM 1’.) This is a potential resource for information and insight as to what is happening the curriculum. These responses are all available at the GEC moodle page.

New GE Executive Order 1100

Executive Order 1100 will now govern GE policy in the CSU. The main change in this executive order is that it mandates that student must earn a grade of C in order to obtain GE credit in GE areas A1, A2, A3 and B4, as has been the case for community college transfers. The principle behind the executive order is that nominal standards should be the same at the community colleges and the CSU campuses. No other areas have such a minimum grade requirement. There is one area of uncertainty: EO 1100 does not specifically say whether it allows C-minus to count (i.e., it does not specify a grade point of 2.0). State regulation specifically disallows community colleges from using the C-minus grade, so it leaves open the question of whether a student who does C-minus work at a community college would receive GE credit or not. That is, if a student did C-minus work at a community college, would they receive a grade of C, given that the community college cannot give a C-minus – and hence receive GE credit? If so, it would be equitable for a CSU campus – and in the spirit of the executive order - to allow a C-minus to count for GE credit. GEC could look at this issue in 2015-2016.

BIOL 210

We filled in some details from an action we took in spring 2014 regarding BIOL 210 and the B2 requirement. The following text will be added to the catalog: students who take and pass CHEM 150 & BIOL 210 with a C or better can petition the BIOL department and GEC for B2 credit. Petition credit was granted in this manner to one student this fall.

Courses certified for GE credit in 2014-2015

B2 BIOL 104, BIOL 105
B3: BIOL 104
C1: VPA 180-5/V SAR 121, VPA 380-28
C3: MLAN 220 (not LOTER)
C3/LOTER: CHIN 201
D: LING 121, SLP 251
D7/D: LBST 100, BRS 100/ID 170-3
BB: BIOT 340
CC: LTWR 340, HIST 300-11,MUSC 323,VSAR 433, HIST 300-10, LTWR 334D, LTWR 304, MLAN 351, WMST 300-23
DD: ID 370-14, EDUC 374, NATV 380-3/SOC 489-8, WMST 380, SSCI 301, NATV 350/SOC 350
Proposed/suggested work for 2015-2016

1. Begin the process of GE assessment, starting with the diversity program student learning outcome and perhaps one other outcome in 2015-2016. The original plan called for assessing a program student outcome in area B.

2. Begin review of the upper division GE curriculum using forms prepared by the 2014-2015 GEC.

3. Further consider implications and possible changes relating to the diversity mapping report. This should include examining the results of the assessment of diversity. Other possibilities would be: consider changing policy in area D requirements to include inequality, power and social justice.

4. GEC drafted a revision of the lower division GE form as the result of its experience with the recertification process. Some concerns were expressed at Executive Committee, and the proposal remains on the table for the 2015-2016 GEC to consider.

5. Determine whether there is any possibility of making C-minus the minimum grade in area B4, probably the only area where it might matter.