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September 26, 2008

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael K. Mahoney".

From: Michael Mahoney, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs

To: Carl Bellone, AVP, Academic Programs and Graduate Studies
Sally Murphy, Director, General Education Program

Subject: MOU Meeting – General Studies Program

On September 18, 2008, I met with Carl Bellone, AVP, Academic Programs and Graduate Studies; Sally Murphy, Director, General Education Program, Armando Gonzales, AVP Academic Resources and Administration; and Aline Soules, Chair, CAPR to discuss the Program Review for the General Education Program and to develop an MOU as required by CAPR 9.

The responsibilities and duties of the Director of the General Education Program have grown significantly over the years. The General Education (GE) Program is responsible for the GS (General Studies) classes, the First Year Experience, GE advising of students, GE evaluations at graduation, GE Cluster scheduling and enrollment, orientation of cluster faculty, enforcement of remediation, academic advising of international students, plus many other duties similar to an undergraduate dean at many universities. As a result, the office staff consisting of the Director, two support staff, and one evaluator, are extremely busy.

The budget for the GE Program is insufficient. There was a deficit from last year and the growth in our first time freshmen will make it larger this year because there will be a significant increase in GS sections. In Fall Quarter 2007 there were 46 GS sections. In Fall Quarter 2008 there will be more than 70 sections. Funding for the GS faculty is not part of the FTE funding formula so it must be dealt with separately. The GE budget has not been seriously looked at for at for 10 years.

This was the first time CAPR has reviewed the GE Program. Previously, it was reviewed by CIC. CAPR praised the GE Program for many outstanding achievements including the nationally recognized freshmen learning communities. CAPR's main concern was the lack of institutional support for the GE Program. CAPR made five recommendations as follows: 1) the GE Program needs a broad campaign to publicize the benefits of the GE Program, 2) the GE Program needs more input from regular faculty, 3) faculty who

teach in the GE Program need better compensation, 4) the GE Program needs additional resources and staff support, and 5) the GE Program needs to expand its assessment efforts.

The results of the MOU meeting are as follows:

1. The university should do a much better job of publicizing such an outstanding program particularly the freshmen learning communities. The AVP of Academic Programs and Graduate Studies will work with the Catalog Editor to expand the description of the GE Program in subsequent online and printed University Catalogs. In addition, the AVP will work with University Advancement to see how the program may be better publicized in their current and future publications.
2. Outside of three faculty committees, the GE Subcommittee, CIC, and CAPR, there has been little involvement of regular faculty in the GE Program. As a result, there is no other faculty person on campus intimately familiar with the entire GE program except the Director. The CAPR proposal for “faculty-in-residence” is commendable. Unfortunately, the funding for the assigned time for faculty assigned time is seriously constrained due to the reduced university budget. If and when such funding becomes available, serious consideration will be given to the “faculty-in-residence” model for GE.
3. One of the big problems facing the CSUEB GE Program is the lack of an adequate reward system and support for faculty who teach GE courses. The freshmen learning clusters work best when faculty collaborate and integrate their clusters courses and also when they work with the Composition and Information Literary courses. However, faculty are apparently reluctant to do this extra work without some form of compensation. The suggestions offered by CAPR for supporting faculty who teach in the clusters such as additional WTUs is good. But unfortunately, once again allocating additional resources is a serious problem due to the reduced university budget. If and when additional funds become available in Academic Affairs, serious consideration will be given to increasing the support for faculty who teach in the freshmen learning communities.
4. The need for additional support staff in the GE Office is clear. The AVP of Academic Programs and Graduate Studies (APGS) will work with the Director of the GE Program to how the APGS might be able to provide additional resources to the GE Office.
5. The GE Program has done a wonderful job of assessing GE in the Freshmen Learning Communities (FLC). However, assessing GE outside of the Learning Communities has been much more challenging. A student pilot with good results was conducted for the WASC accreditation involving several GE requirements in the curriculum. It is important to note that the new CSU Executive Order on GE requires assessment. Although assessing GE outside of the learning communities

is complex and difficult, CIC needs to take up this important issue in 2008/09. The Director of the GE Program and the AVP of Academic Programs and Graduate Studies are urged to bring this issue to the attention of CIC.

I sincerely appreciate the mission-critical work that goes into making our general education program work. Dr. Sally Murphy has done a phenomenal job with general education in the freshman clusters—especially given the insufficient resources available to her. However, we need to identify ways that we can get more of our faculty involved with both lower and upper division GE across the university. I recommend that the Academic Senate and the faculty undertake a strategic review of general education overall.

I'd like to thank Carl Bellone for his strong oversight of the GE program and also the CAPR members for their time and useful report.

cc: Aline Soules
Armando Gonzales