Minutes of the General Education Subcommittee
May 5, 2015
LI 2250
8:30 am – 10:00 am

Present: Jennifer Eagan, Julie Glass, Zach Hallab, Linda Ivey, Yi Karnes, Rita Liberti, Sally Murphy, Diane Satin, Aline Soules, Mitchell Watnik.
Absent: Lawrence Bliss.
Guests: Darrell Hughes, Susan Ingram, Sarah Nielsen, Jason Singley.

The Chair (Eagan) called the meeting to order at 8:41.

1. Demographics and Background. Murphy explained the demographics of the student body, including the fact that most of the students are still transfer (around 1500 new freshmen vs. around 2500 transfer). Students who transfer in need exceptions to be admitted without 90 units. They must have the “golden four” (area A and B4). There is a surplus of upper division classes. Many of the upper division courses (with science being the exception) are major courses. Our freshmen generally need remediation (about 70% need remedial math and a little less than 50% need remedial English). There are very few “exception” admits amongst freshmen, in contrast to a few years ago when there was a push for admits. Murphy then argued for clusters for the freshmen. Glass argued for a PEIL call for semester GE courses (specifically clusters) in the middle of the year, not the end of the year. Murphy noted that, when the clusters started, the instructors were mostly tenure-track and there was funding for collaboration. Since the instructors were mostly tenure-track, there was genuine collaboration in the clusters amongst the teachers. Now faculty are most often lecturers and sometimes are hired very late. Soules pointed out that there are sometimes scheduling issues that might make collaboration during the term difficult. Murphy acknowledged that could be the case. This year, about 1/3 of the cluster faculty collaborated using the funding put forward by the provost. A concern about a cluster for international students was expressed. Murphy noted that international students fail disproportionately when they are in the usual clusters. Currently, clusters have 1 GE course per term, a GS course, and either LIB or COMM or (college-level) ENGL (remedial students might not take LIB or COMM, due to remediation courses). Eagan suggested that there be a GE course each semester, with a GS course. In the second year, there could be another GE course with information literacy in the fall and general education with critical thinking and/or second composition. Glass pointed out that advertising second year requirements might discourage students from coming. Murphy acknowledged that keeping a cohort together for two years might be “problematic”. (M Glass/S Murphy/P) motioned to support first year clusters (“first year experience”), with information literacy being in the
sophomore year. Soules pointed out that information literacy might be best if linked to second comp and/or critical thinking. Eagan interpreted the motion to mean this is a "creation in principle" and writing a document for later approval.

2. Adjournment. The chair declared the meeting adjourned at 9:55 AM due to time.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell Watnik, subcommittee secretary