Minutes of the General Education Subcommittee
April 11, 2016
SF 329
2:00 pm – 3:50 pm

Absent: Lawrence Bliss, Maureen Scharberg, Nancy Thompson.
Guests: Tom Bickley, Jeffra Bussmann, David Fencsik, Gr Keer, Chris Moreman, Glen Perry, Lettie Ramirez, Margaret Rustick, Diana Wakimoto.

The Chair (Glass) called the meeting to order at 2:05.

1. Approval of the agenda. (M Soules/S Calvo/P).

2. Approval of the minutes of April 4. (M Calvo/S Nielsen/P). Dean Scharberg should be changed to a subcommittee member from guest.

3. Reports
   a. Chair. Glass said that the contract agreement is helpful for GE continuity. She asked subcommittee members and guests to introduce themselves. She indicated that Ramirez might discuss potential aspects of sophomore clusters.
   b. GE Director. Not present.
   c. Semester Conversion.

4. New Business
   a. Cluster structure. Glass acclimated members and guests as to the process the subcommittee has followed. Librarians mentioned that they had to redundantly enter their courses into Curriculog to start the GE approval process. Library has had information literacy in clusters. Moreman said that many Philosophy courses are in clusters, but the A3 (Critical Thinking) course is not. He favors making it part of a sophomore structure, as students frequently put off the course. He said that his department is putting off the cluster course entries until the clusters are defined so that they can design the courses to fit. There was concern expressed about both Library and Philosophy’s abilities to link the course to the clusters. It was suggested that these would just be concurrent, not necessarily linked. There were objections to the phrase “close collaboration with Library faculty”, which seems to mandate the Information Literacy course become part of the linked cluster. Historically, this course has been stand-alone and can “link” with any course. Glass noted that the group is talking about proposals and is not ready to mandate such a link. Moreman added that A1, A2, A3 courses are not linked to the clusters. Soules
reiterated that frequently the clusters break down by the Spring and the plans for a regimented structure for two years is "not implementable". Watnik argued for considering the sophomore proposals as being more about block enrollment than about linkages. Keer said that her students advocate for more majors being included in clusters. She noted that block enrollment also has the issue of not meeting life schedules for some students. Glass reminded members that there is some bureaucratic cost with requiring a sophomore cluster to seek certification. Ramirez was asked to comment and she said that she likes the registration support. Ramirez spoke about "sophomore transition enrichment program" from the Hispanic Serving Institution grant. Calvo spoke about GANAS, which serves upper division transfer students. She noted that the upper division cluster-like courses form a bond that links the students together and makes the University "home". That program also features intrusive advising. The retention rates are "through the roof". There were questions about scalability for that program. Ramirez noted that "we don't know who's teaching [in the cluster] and what they're teaching" in contrast to GANAS courses. Moreman outlined how two of the better clusters operate. One has all three classes meet together and discuss the theme from the three points of view; each faculty member handles 1/3rd of the lectures and teaches all year. Another has the classes meet together occasionally (such as once a quarter). In either case, scheduling can be difficult. Calvo wondered whether students might be "done being freshmen" and prefer to move into the sophomore year. Ramirez was asked about the HSI grant support and she said that most of it was about access to counselors during the Summer. There was debate over whether there would be support besides block or some other priority enrollment. There was discussion over whether the current GS courses should stay or be replaced with discussion sections within the cluster structure. It was pointed out that there is little incentive for tenure-track participation in the clusters and that neither departments nor faculty are incentivized. Ramirez said that she has asked to speak with the Senate about the freshman drop-out rate.

5. Adjournment. (M Calvo/S Watnik/P). The meeting was adjourned at 4:01. The subcommittee will meet next week at 4 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell Watnik, subcommittee secretary