Minutes of the General Education Subcommittee
April 4, 2016
SF 329
4:00 pm – 5:50 pm

Present: Eric Fricke, Julie Glass, Zach Hallab, Rita Liberti, Sarah Nielsen, Maureen Scharberg, Aline Soules, Nancy Thompson, Mitchell Watnik
Absent: Lawrence Bliss, Yi Karnes.
Guests: Glen Perry.

The Chair (Glass) called the meeting to order at 4:05.

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

2. Approval of the minutes of March 28. (M Thompson/S Liberti/P). The minutes were amended to accurately reflect the date and subcommittee membership.

3. Reports

   a. Chair. Glass indicated that CIC passed the overlay outcomes with little discussion. Moreman has commented on overlays and she expects that he will comment within the Senate.
   b. GE Director. No report.
   c. Semester Conversion. Perry noted that there was a contract extension for consultants. His sense is that, over the summer, the graduation requirements will be entered into PeopleSoft and will accurately reflect policy. There was a question about prerequisite enforcement.

4. New Business

   a. Further discussion regarding Writing II

      There was a discussion about Writing II. Questions about whether programs that were already approved (such as BS Physics) that have a second comp course in upper division would be allowed to continue. Watnik speculated that they might be grandfathered in. He noted that there are a few programs in Science with a vested interest in upper division in the discipline writing courses. Thompson noted that there are issues

   b. Cluster structure.

      Thompson sent an email to subcommittee with information, including the current structure. There were questions in the current structure whether remedial students are clustered for English (they are not for Math). The answer was mostly yes,
but, in the Spring, some clusters have to be collapsed. There is block enrollment for a full load. There is chaos associated with students who want to change clusters (because of job or home issues, for example). Thompson recommends a sophomore clusters that is not necessarily linked to the first-year clusters and includes information literacy. These would include a seminar class that would inherently have writing and research. It would “Deal with an important question of contemporary relevance” and would either meet GE or major requirements. The discussion focused on freshmen clusters and there was discussion on whether the clusters should be better connected to the major. Subcommittee members discussed the “holistic picture of GE”. There were questions about whether the clusters had to be one discipline course, then A1/A2 and GS. It was noted that there could be flexibility to allow a second or third discipline course. There were questions as to whether strictly discipline courses are really “cluster” as envisioned. Some major clusters are “facilitation for the major”, which has some value. There was discussion about cluster sizes and it was brought up that some clusters have 90 students per class and one actually has 120 students (though it is broken up into smaller lab sections). Glass suggested using a pie with wedges rather than checkboxes to visually indicate how the requirements fit together. Scharberg spoke about block scheduling at SJSU, which they borrowed from CSUEB. There was discussion about holding freshman to 13-14 units per semester. There was consensus regarding calling the courses block enrolled together as “first year experience”, with the thematic courses being the “cluster”, but being block enrolled together. There was discussion about have course caps of 30 for the “linked discipline” (cluster) courses. Scharberg noted that the small classes really help in the Fall semester. There was discussion of providing a multiplier to WTU for cluster teachers.

5. Adjournment. (M Calvo/S Watnik/P).  (M Calvo/S Liberti/P) to not schedule a meeting on 4/18 if there is a strike. The meeting was adjourned at 5:55. The subcommittee will meet next week at 2 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell Watnik, subcommittee secretary