

Approved  
12-1-14

The Minutes of  
**THE GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
**OF**  
**ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY**

The General Education Committee met Monday, September 29, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. in Rothwell 308. The following were present:

Dr. Jackie Bowman	Dr. Theresa Herrick
Dr. Cheryl Chaney	Dr. Justin Killingworth
Ms. Nancy Cox	Dr. J.J. Mayo
Dr. Patrick Hagge	Ms. Karen Riddell
	Dr. Jeremy Schwehm

Absent: Ms. Gwen Faulkenberry and Dr. David Roach

Guests: Dr. Monica Varner, Mr. Kyle Bush and Dr. Joseph Swain

Call to Order Dr. Swain called the meeting to order and thanked the committee for all their hard work in the past year and turned the meeting over to Dr. Mayo as the incoming chair. The committee thanked Dr. Swain for his leadership of the committee last year and commended him for all things he was able to get accomplished during that year. Dr. Swain left the meeting.

Welcome and Introductions Dr. Mayo welcomed everyone and since it was the first meeting for some faculty, he asked that everyone introduce themselves to the committee.

Approval of Minutes Dr. Mayo then asked for approval of the April 24<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. Dr. Bowman made the motion to approve, seconded by Dr. Chaney. Motion approved.

Moving Forward Dr. Mayo then distributed a copy of the General Education Committee Annual Report that Dr. Swain and Dr. Varner had put together at the end of the spring 2014 semester. This report outlines the action items and initiatives of the committee for the 2013-2014 academic year. This report included three recommended changes that the committee approved that will also need approval by the Curriculum Committee, Faculty Senate and the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The three recommended changes were:

1. New criteria for the General Education Goal, Civic Involvement

2. Revised criteria for the General Education Goal, Ethical Perspective

3. Relocation of the Wellness Concepts goal from the General Education Goals to the University Strategic Plan

Dr. Varner said she was not sure where in the process all of these were, but they had gone to the Curriculum Committee on June 4, 2014. She commented that she hoped these would be through all of the approvals by the spring. Dr. Mayo asked if anyone had any questions regarding the report. There were no questions.

Dr. Varner

Dr. Varner started by telling the committee that the General Education Committee is really tied in to what she does with Assessment and that she is always looking at how Assessment can help for ease of usage. She stated that she always goes back to the 2008 memo that states the charge of the committee. That charge states that every five years the committee needs to revisit the General Education Goals and that last year was the fifth year. She stated that last year was a great year as far as looking at charges. She has been looking for gaps that need to be filled in. Dr. Varner said that the CPGE (Course, Program, and Gen. Ed. Assessment System), which was developed by Wyatt Watson and Carey Roberts, is a great system that they have been using. Tracdat is just storage, but CPGE has an infinite amount of variables.

Dr. Varner distributed General Education Program Peer Review Evaluation reports on Scientific Reason and on Critical Thinking and went over these reports with the committee. She said that she had started with the curriculum map for the reports. She used data from the 2012-13 and 2013-14 academic years for these reports for comparison. She has a goal of covering two or three General Education Goals per year to keep the assessment doable and sustainable. She doesn't want it to become overwhelming for any department.

Dr. Varner said that we have to make sure that students have enough opportunities to practice for these outcomes and pointed out that we are doing the best with Critical Thinking and worst with Oral Communication which we only have one course assessing. Dr. Herrick questioned why there is only one course assessing Oral Communication. Dr. Bowman stated that she was on the committee when the mapping was done and that the Speech Department had not wanted other departments assessing this. Dr. Herrick stated that we probably needed to revisit that. Dr. Varner suggested that we wait until we get a system in place and then

revisit. Dr. Killingworth asked for clarification on the “looking at two to three goals per year” and asked if that just meant the analysis of the data and not the collection. Dr. Varner said that was correct and that data collection needs to be ongoing. Dr. Mayo asked who was in charge of running the report and Dr. Varner said that for embedded courses it would be the department. Dr. Varner also pointed out to the committee that this process is a “living process” which may change, but right now the process is to assess two or three goals each year. Dr. Varner said the next step was to send the course data to the departments and ask them to complete TracDat by January. After that the General Education Committee can review. Kyle will get ten courses set up in TracDat. This year will serve as a pilot for the process.

#### Elections

Dr. Mayo asked the committee for nominations for Chair-elect for this year. There being no nominations, Dr. Bowman volunteered to serve as Chair-elect. Dr. Bowman elected by acclamation. Dr. Mayo then asked for nominations for secretary. There being no nominations, Dr. Herrick volunteered to serve as secretary. Dr. Herrick elected by acclamation.

#### Meeting Times

The committee discussed options for meeting times for this semester and decided to continue to send out the scheduler for each meeting.

#### New Business

A copy of a request the Department of Biology had taken to the Curriculum Committee to add the prerequisite: Score of 19 or higher on the reading portion of the enhanced ACT or completion of ENGL 1013, Composition I, to BIOL/PHSC 1004, Principles of Environmental Science and to BIOL 1014, Introduction to Biological Science was distributed to the committee. Dr. Bowman made the comment that with the new curriculum process, the General Education Committee had inadvertently been skipped in the process and that the Curriculum Committee had passed this proposal. Dr. Bowman explained that the Biology G2C Committee had found that students still in the general remediation courses were not doing well in these biology courses and felt that the prerequisites needed to be added.

Dr. Varner pointed out that Dr. David Underwood had done an analytic study that showed students making a 19 or below on the ACT reading portion did just as well in these courses as those that made above a 19. She also commented that the study found that the only significant predictors for BIOL 1014 were the ACT science and the cumulative GPA. Dr. Bowman said that the committee did not have that data before taking the recommendation to the

Curriculum Committee. Dr. Varner also warned the committee that there could be unintentional consequences to adding the prerequisites. Dr. Herrick asked Dr. Bowman what Biology alternatives the university would have for the students that didn't meet these prerequisites. Dr. Bowman said that there is another Biology course that they could take. Ms. Cox commented that she had worked in the Academic Advising center and that the alternative Biology course always filled up very quickly and that not all students would be able to get in to this course. She wondered if more sections of this course could be added. Dr. Bowman said that there was not enough physical room for them to add more sections of these classes. After these discussions, Dr. Herrick asked again how the university would provide the students with the Biology courses that they needed and that if we could not do that, she did not feel the prerequisites needed to be added. Dr. Herrick made a motion that the General Education Committee does not support the proposal to add the prerequisites to BIOL 1004 and 1014. Dr. Mayo called for a vote on the motion. One opposed, the rest approved. The committee passed the motion with a majority.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

**Memorandum**

**To: Curriculum Committee**

**From: General Education Committee Chair, Dr. Joseph Swain and Dr. Monica Varner, Director of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness**

**Topic: General Education Program Recommended Changes and Annual Report**

**Date: June 4, 2014**

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Dear Curriculum Committee:

Please review the following proposed changes to the General Education Goals which have been approved by the General Education Committee. Every five years the General Education Committee is required to lead a focus review of the General Education Goals, and make necessary changes to the General Education Program Goals (General Education Committee Responsibilities, October 21, 2008). Please consider the following changes. At the completion of your review and approval, please forward this memo to the Faculty Senate for approval, who shall forward the recommendations to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for approval.

**General Education Committee: Recommendation 1**

On January 27, 2014, the General Education Committee unanimously approved the new criteria for the General Education Goal, Civic Involvement. The criteria sub-committee developed the following criteria.

Civic Involvement: New Criteria

1. Students will reflect on how their attitudes and beliefs are different from diverse others and what they have learned about self and diverse others from the service experience.
2. Students will identify and apply knowledge (concepts, facts, and theories) from the course to make relevant connections to civic engagement.
3. Students will provide evidence of experience in civic involvement activities.
4. Students will effectively communicate civic involvement experiences from an objective perspective.
5. Students will demonstrate leadership of civic action and achievement of civic purpose.

(Note: The Civic Involvement General Education Learning Outcome was approved during the 2012-2013 academic cycle. The General Education Committee postponed the development of specific criteria until they completed a review of civic learning best practices.

<http://www.oacu.org/value/rubrics/civicengagement.cfm>)

On February 27, 2014, the University Assessment Committee reviewed the criteria for Civic Involvement. The Assessment Committee supports the changes as proposed by the General Education Committee.

### **General Education Committee: Recommendation 2**

On March 19, 2014, the General Education Committee unanimously approved the revised criteria for the General Education Goal, Ethical Perspective. The criteria sub-committee developed the following revised criteria.

#### **Demonstrate Ethical Perspective: New Criteria**

1. Students will consider issues through well-established ethical and moral traditions.
2. Students will demonstrate ethical self-awareness.
3. Students will demonstrate an understanding of different ethical perspectives.
4. Students will recognize ethical issues.
5. Students will apply ethical perspectives.
6. Students will evaluate different ethical perspectives.

(<http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/ethicalreasoning.cfm> )

#### **Demonstrate Ethical Perspective: Old Criteria (Report on General Education Assessment, February 2009)**

1. Exhibit integrity and reliability in individual action and institutional activities.
2. Practice principle-centered leadership
3. Demonstrate responsibility when interacting with new technologies and information.

### **General Education Committee: Recommendation 3**

On April 24, 2014, the General Education Committee unanimously approved the recommendation to move Wellness Concepts to the University Strategic Plan, under the university value, "attention to individual students that nurtures personal growth and lifelong success." In 2012-2013, the General Education Committee dropped courses related to wellness due to the 120 hour degree policy. The General Education Committee believes this goal will be addressed more effectively by the university as a whole including services offered by the university fitness center, intramural sports, nutritional choices in the cafeteria, and other fitness and wellness activities and courses which are provided for students by the university.

On April 30, 2014, the Director of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness shared the following proposed changes with the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The General Education Committee exercises oversight for the general education program, while collaborating with administration, to assure the production of an effective General Education program. (General Education Committee Purpose, October 21, 2008).

### **General Education Committee: Annual Report**

The following is an annual summary/report of the General Education Committee action items and initiatives for academic cycle 2013-2014. On September 13, 2013, the committee approved adding AGBU 2063 and AGBU 2073 to the General Education curriculum, on November 19, 2013, the committee approved the Course Program General Education (CPGE) Assessment system form which was developed by the Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness. The form is designed to assist

faculty with CPGE Assessment system set up, the form can be found on the General Education Committee webpage. On January 27, 2014, the committee approved the General Education Evaluation form developed by the Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness. This form assists the General Education Committee with their oversight of the General Education Program. The form provides a General Education Program assessment process to help the committee determine the effectiveness of the program including the monitoring of the General Education Goals, the assessment of the General Education Program, review and or recommended proposals, the consideration of proposals for removal which no longer fit the General Education Goals and program, and the publically articulating the purpose, content, and intended learning outcomes of general education. (General Education Committee Responsibilities, October 21, 2008). On March 19, 2014, the committee approved an ETS Proficiency Profile Assessment Proposal from the Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness. The proposal requested adding a global general education assessment instrument for future implementation. The university presently utilizes ETS for education majors/programs and other disciplines. No further plans or processes were discussed, the committee will revisit the ETS General Education Assessment global initiative during the next academic cycle. On April 24, 2014, the committee approved the revised General Education Evaluation form from the Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness. The form was reduced to 11 criteria, includes specific assessment processes, and the types of general education and student learning evidence to be collected. A copy of the evaluation form can be found on the General Education Committee web page. This summary will be shared with the "Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Faculty Senate, the Curriculum Committee, and the Assessment Committee" (General Education Committee Purpose, October 21, 2008).

Please don't hesitate to contact Dr. J.J. Mayo, General Education Committee Chair for academic cycle 2014-2015 and Dr. Monica Varner, Director of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness for additional information.