

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

The General Education Committee met Thursday, 17 October 2019 in Brown 355. The following were present:

Dr. Erin Clair	Ms. Katy Dodd	Ms. Ashtyn Mondy
Dr. Paola Gemme	Dr. Rajib Choudhury	Dr. Christine Austin
Dr. Alaric Williams	Dr. John O'Connor	Mr. Steven Junker
Dr. David Blanks	Dr. Wan Wei	Dr. David Ward
Dr. Jeremy Schwehm	Dr. Jay Post	

Minutes Dr. Blanks called the meeting to order and asked the committee for a motion to approve the minutes of the 12 September 2019 meeting. Two changes in formatting were proposed and accepted, and the minutes were approved.

“Chair’s Report on Meetings with VPAA and Faculty Senate Chair”

Dr. Blanks addressed Item 3 on the agenda: “Chair’s Report on Meetings”. Dr. Blanks presented the proposal to restructure the General Education Committee to Dr. Johnson and Dr. Eshelman. Dr. Johnson offered to attend in support of Dr. Blanks’ proposal to Faculty Senate. Dr. Blanks reasserted that the entire campus needs to be educated about General Education, and Dr. Johnson and Dr. Eshelman were generally supportive. Dr. Blanks noted Dr. Eshelman’s feedback that the Faculty Senate was generally conservative regarding change, so the implementation would need to be clearly defined. Dr. Blanks said, as a result, that the committee needs to address issues now so we can take it to Senate and get a vote.

“Revision/Discussion of General Education Committee Structure Proposal”

Regarding Item 4 on the agenda, Dr. Clair asked if we had models from other committees. Dr. Schwehm said he didn’t remember another formal proposal. Dr. Ward asked if, as roles changed, the previous roles would be dropped. Dr. Clair asked if that meant each year a new Vice Chair would be selected. Dr. Blanks said yes, and Dr. Ward said there would still need to be an election. Dr. Austin confirmed that the old structure would be terminated upon the adoption of the new structure. Dr. Schwehm advised that somewhere in the document it must say that our committee still answers to the Senate. Dr. Blanks said we should also include that we voted unanimously on the re-structuring.

The second issue that may come up, Dr. Blanks said, is that not every individual department is represented. Dr. Blanks also stated, though, that smaller departments were still represented by each college’s elected member. Dr. Schwehm asked why we’re asking deans to appoint members of a faculty led

committee. Dr. Ward said it is because we want the most committed appointees. Dr. Clair noted that volunteers are great too, but it's often the same people volunteering multiple times. Dr. Blanks agreed the committee should change the language.

Dr. Blanks said the next issue to address was if the proposal made the committee too large. Dr. Clair said no, because the committee is too important to be small. Dr. Austin agreed, stating that duties would be expanding too, which requires more people to complete the work. Dr. Post asked if elected members have the same abilities as appointed members. Dr. Clair and Dr. Blanks agreed that yes, they did. Dr. Post also asked if this gives too much power to more seasoned members of the committee. Dr. Austin said we have to move away from territoriality, and a bigger committee will help with that. Dr. Ward suggested each member talk to their senate representative, and Dr. Clair agreed. Dr. Blanks said Dr. Eshelman needs the proposal by November 29th, and Dr. Schwehm asked if there was a way, if things seemed to be getting off track, to suspend the discussion and come back to the Senate in December. Dr. Blanks confirmed that yes, this would be a good idea and we could now move forward.

“Student General Education Survey for IRB”

Regarding Item 5 on the agenda, Dr. Blanks stated that the goal is to get approval for the Mellon application to encourage the university to take General Education reform seriously. Dr. Austin said it can't be ignored because of HLC. Dr. Blanks said the sub-committees are now moving forward, and the data collection sub-committee will proceed with IRB after the survey feedback is implemented. Dr. Schwehm said the survey design is meant to be straightforward and short to capture student and faculty knowledge of General Education goals and importance. Dr. Schwehm said he modeled some best practices from other institutions, but that there are only two similar student-based studies and he needed feedback to improve the survey. Dr. Austin asked if the survey was only for assessment, or if it was also for research and writing opportunities. It was determined that the answer was no to assessment only, so the survey would still have to go through IRB. Dr. Blanks said there are huge opportunities for faculty and student publications based on findings.

Dr. Schwehm asked if the departments could hand out the survey and Dr. Clair and Dr. Ward said absolutely. Ms. Mondy asked if online would not be more efficient. Dr. Schwehm said that, statistically, we will get more responses on paper, but we could do both since this is a convenience sample. Mr. Junker asked if a similar survey would be created for faculty and staff. Dr. Schwehm and Dr. Blanks agreed that this is a secondary and long-term goal, but it will eventually be done. Dr. Ward stated that we might also want to add a question about how students accessed the survey. Ms. Mondy asked about duplicate surveys, and Dr. Ward stated that this could be facilitated by instructors. In response to a question

from Mr. Junker, Dr. Schwehm clarified that demographics would also be measured based on earned hours.

“Committee Assignments”

Regarding Item 6 on the agenda, Dr. Blanks said the sub-committees were clearly moving forward. Data collection and grant writing were both making progress. Dr. Blanks also stated that each sub-committee could decide if they need a chair or not. Otherwise, we would discuss overall progress at the next meeting on November 14th.

Meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.