FHSU General Education Committee Minutes

3:31   (1 minute) All members were present with the exception of Day, Duffy, Glenn, Greenleaf, Miller, Moore, and Orth. Schmidt served as proxy for Miller, Clark served as proxy for Moore, and Marez served as proxy for Orth. Determined that a quorum was met.

3:31   (seconds) The minutes from the September 29 meeting were approved.

3:32   (2 minutes) Chair informed the committee that *PHYS 312: Scientific Computing and Productivity*, which is being proposed for satisfying the *1.3 outcomes (computing literacy)*, has been sent off to the faculty advisory panel for their consideration.

3:34   (3 minutes) Chair informed the committee that *ECON 202: Principles of Macroeconomics*, which has been proposed for satisfying the *2.1F outcomes (social scientific mode of inquiry)*, remains tabled, as we haven't heard back from the department regarding the questions raised last week. (See the entry at 3:34 in the minutes for September 29).

3:37   (11 minutes) The committee considered a revision of the proposal for *ART 280: Principles of Creativity* to satisfy the *2.1A outcomes (aesthetic mode of inquiry)*. Continuing a discussion that had been carried out on Teams, the committee arrived at the following:

The committee finds that:

1. The course is clearly appropriate for the Aesthetic Mode of Inquiry and is capable of meeting the outcome set.
2. The course has a plan to assess the outcome set.
3. Outcomes 1 and 2 are assessed with an essay. For this essay, students are asked to compare their own photographs to those of another student. Students describe and interpret both sets of photographs which will allow the instructor to determine if they can identify concepts used to analyze and interpret a photograph.
4. Outcome 3 is assessed with a short answer quiz. The quiz asks the student to describe their views, values, attitudes, culture, and background, and discuss how a piece of art relates to these.

The committee notes that:

1. The Unit 5 Beauty and Repulsion assignment description contains an error. Items 2 and 3 are repeated, one presumably is supposed to refer to "another student's" photos.
2. The rubric descriptions could be better. The proposed rubric is a checklist of things to look for in the student's work. It would be better to describe the quality of the student's work.
3. The quiz used to assess Outcome 3 does not explicitly ask the student to explain how the work of art clarifies their views, beliefs, or attitudes.

None of these problems were deemed significant enough by a majority to warrant the course not moving forward. The committee voted -- 8 in favor, 1 against, 1 abstaining -- to recommend that the proposal be **approved** as is.

3:48   (5 minutes) Clark drew the committee's attention to the work of the six-person **KBOR-CORE alignment** working group. Notes from their second meeting are below in **Appendix A**, and notes from their third meeting are below in **Appendix B**. Committee members are invited to send any questions about these summaries to the working group via a discussion forum he is setting up through Teams.

3:53   The meeting ended. Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday October 13 at 3:30 PM in Rarick 107.

Submitted by D. Drabkin, Recording Secretary

Appendix A (notes from the KBOR-CORE working group's second meeting):

The meeting started with some discussion of the writing outcomes that had come up on Teams. Matthew spoke to some faculty familiar with Composition I and II, and the concern was that the Outcome set 1.1-A was written for senior-level writing, not a freshman level course. So it should be made clear that students are expected to have an introductory-level accomplishment of the outcomes. This seemed

reasonable to all, and there was agreement that English should be in charge of their outcomes and if they say we can't expect freshmen to master the outcomes after two English classes, then we agree.

There was also concern expressed that departments should not consider Comp II, and its assessment of persuasive writing, as the only writing a student needs. Writing should continue across the curriculum, and persuasive writing should be part of that. However, the second writing outcome, and its flexibility of writing style, is necessary for any departmental writing requirements, whether as part of General Education or as a university requirement for graduation.

Next there was a brief discussion about the Math outcomes and if we wanted to merge the two sets or just retain one. It was decided that the recommendation would be to have the Math department merge/cut as they see fit with the goal of including Statistics.

The Natural and Physical Sciences Discipline Area was discussed next. It was pointed out that the natural mode of inquiry outcome set has been a challenge for courses to implement. Early on, most (all?) of the science courses being proposed were missing the mark. This was the motivation for the college-wide assessment being developed. There has been an effort to rewrite these outcomes in the General Education committee, but nothing has been approved yet. The second outcome, requiring the students to evaluate the merits of natural science research is particularly difficult. A few members feel it is unreasonable to ask students to evaluate research after one course. It was pointed out that the introductory level science classes are knowledge based, and evaluating merits of research would be a higher-level skill. There was agreement that the college (WCoSTM) should rewrite these outcomes to reflect what is feasible, and that it should be very straightforward for the list of classes identified by KBOR in the area to satisfy the requirements to be listed in our CORE.

Recommendation would be to rewrite the outcomes to align with the introductory level courses, for both majors and non-majors, to allow more classes to be considered and easily approved for this area.

The Social and Behavioral Sciences Discipline Area was discussed next. The courses in the social scientific mode of inquiry courses would all fit in the area well. It was also noted that all of the courses that have been approved so far for the Engaged Global Citizen outcome set would also fit here, so Ginger had the idea that perhaps those two outcome sets could be used for this area. The idea would be that students take two courses from the area, and they would be required to take one from each set. Everyone thought this was a good idea, especially since some of the courses in the Engaged Global Citizen outcome set are listed by KBOR for this area. This would keep those courses from having to resubmit to satisfy a different outcome set.
It was also noted that there are courses (but not all) in the Intercultural Competence outcome set that would fall in the area as well. It was discussed as to whether or not these could be put in this area as well, which raised the question: would it be possible to put different courses from the intercultural competence outcome set into two different areas?

The recommendation would be to use the Social Scientific Mode of Inquiry and Engaged Global Citizens outcomes sets to assess this area and require students to take one course from each group.

[Submitted by C.D. Clark]

Appendix B (notes from the KBOR-CORE working group's third meeting):

It was noted that CORE is very complicated and hard to understand for someone just looking at it and trying to make sense. It seems like students will have difficulty understanding it, if at all. We hope that a result of this process will be to simplify the program.

Discussion about the process and transparency. We should be documenting arguments made for and against different options and provide a rationale for any "decisions."

Members of the committee have spoken with colleagues and noted that there is concern about the Provost hand-picking a committee to decide what happens with the Gen Ed program and giving a "starting point," which has already influenced what the outcome will be. This is understandable.

We have also heard concern about Philosophy's intentions when they sent an unsolicited document making the case for Critical Thinking as a requirement for all students to the subcommittee, effectively trying to influence the outcome by convincing six people rather than the larger committees and/or the University faculty. This is also understandable

It was also noted that the Philosophy department's decision to present their case was understandable, and the question was raised about asking for similar documents from the other areas. There is no clear feeling on this but is seems only fair to solicit input now.

It was noted that our role is to develop a plan that will be approved by the General Education Committee and Academic Affairs, which means we should be constantly communicating the discussion with our respective committees.

These summaries are being shared with the General Education Committee and attached to the minutes so that they are publicly available.

In looking at outcome sets to prioritize, Intercultural Competence looks like it could be cut or merged with Engaged Global Citizen. Several of the courses appear to be for department majors or would have a prerequisite that is already a General Education class. With CORE, departments were supposed to submit courses in their program to cover some outcome sets or else have to include it somewhere else and reduce the number of hours

Arts and Humanities Discipline Area: The discussion began by noting that there are at least 4 outcome sets in CORE that would fit into this area: The Aesthetic, Historical, and Philosophical modes of inquiry and Critical Thinking.

Possibility 1: Critical thinking and the Aesthetic, Historical, and Philosophical modes of inquiry all fit here, so we use them to assess this Discipline Area. We may want to ask Philosophy to combine Critical Thinking and Philosophical mode outcome sets (similar to the Math outcomes sets) since both sets are only assessed in Philosophy courses. Students would be required to take two courses, each from different outcome sets for this area.

Possibility 2: Use the Aesthetic, Historical, and Philosophical mode outcome sets to assess this area, but keep Critical Thinking separate, perhaps putting it in the Institutionally Designated area, or as a University requirement. Again, students would have to take two courses, each from different outcome sets for this area.

On the one hand, KBOR includes Philosophy classes in this Discipline Area, Critical Thinking is on the system-wide transfer list, and it is classified as a Philosophy course. On the other hand, critical thinking is a fundamental skill that will benefit students across disciplines. I.e., it is core and a transferrable skill.

Matthew expressed that he sees the CORE as just that, building core skills that will be useful across the curriculum, and job readiness is better handled within the major. From that perspective, the priority for courses that go into CORE should be those that develop fundamental, broadly applicable, skills that develop students as democratic citizens and learners. This is a vision of General Education that embraces traditional models of liberal arts and sees that model as supporting the notion that higher education is a public good, not merely a personal good (focused exclusively on career readiness). This is not, of course, to suggest that the skills developed in core won't enable students to flourish in careers, but it is focused on the building of skills and dispositions that enable participation in a democratic society.

Institutionally Designated Area: The discussion shifted to what the Institutionally designated area might look like because it will impact what needs to go into the other areas, specifically critical thinking. If critical thinking were to be put into this area stand-alone, it would reduce the number of potential outcome sets for Arts and Humanities.

Again, the discussion revolved around the idea that the courses in this area should be foundational. Critical thinking certainly seems to be foundational. Information literacy also seems to be foundational. It was noted that we want our students to know how to find, evaluate, and use information. It was also noted that the current information literacy outcome set is perhaps too narrow. The set requires specific artifacts that are not necessarily common in all fields, but the basic idea of find, evaluate, and use is common across fields.

On the other hand, this area could provide choice for the student, and by "student" we really mean the student, the program, and the advisor. A common theme in the discussions has been that given choice, the students will make the wrong one. By prescribing courses, we can keep that from happening. However, it was noted that the decision on which specific courses students will have to take could happen at the program level, rather than the group of 6 level.

It was mentioned that we could develop two or three alternative proposals and allow the larger committee to vote on them to select one.

There was discussion on the different options for incorporating critical thinking and information literacy into the program. These could be listed in a Designated Area, or they could be made university requirements. It was noted that senior-level writing and information literacy seem to go hand in hand. Would it be possible to somehow merge these in a way that they could be listed as a University requirement that is handled by the program?

The two main concerns expressed were: 1) the "persuasive essay" language is too narrow for some programs, and 2) we should not assess information literacy without teaching it. We should allow programs more flexibility in the genre of writing, and programs need to demonstrate that they will dedicate some time to teaching students how to find and evaluate information. This could be done by 1) showing that there will be modules dedicated to this in a major's course, 2) showing that this is scaffolding throughout several major courses in the program, or 3) having an information literacy course such as UNIV 301 as a prerequisite. The possibility was also raised of suggesting that a written artifact demonstrating information literacy accompany the senior-level writing that will be a University Requirement.

[Submitted by C.D. Clark]