

FHSU General Education Committee

Minutes

Meeting Called by

Glen McNeil, Chair

Date:

Thursday March 2, 2023

Time:

3:30-4:30

Location:

Rarick 107

Members

Douglas Drabkin (AHSS)
Marcella Marez (AHSS)
Christina Glenn (BE)
David Schmidt (BE)
Sarah Broman Miller (Ed)
Sohyun Yang (Ed)
Denise Orth (HBS)
Tanya Smith (HBS)
C.D. Clark (STM)
Todd Moore (STM)
Robyn Hartman (Lib)
Justin Greenleaf (Senate)
Emma Day (SGA)
Cheryl Duffy (Goss Engl)

3:33 (1 minute) All members were present with the exception of Day, Greenleaf, Miller, Orth, and Yang. Marez served as proxy for Orth, and Schmidt served as proxy for Miller. Gene Rice (philosophy), Brett Whitaker (leadership studies), and Brad Will (director of general education) were also in attendance. Determined that a quorum was met.

3:33 (seconds) The minutes from the February 2 meeting were approved.

3:34 (22 minutes) The purpose of this week's meeting was to discuss, and if possible act upon, proposals to revise three sets of learning outcomes: (1) the engaged global citizens and intercultural competence set, (2) the personal and professional development set, and (3) the critical thinking and persuasive writing set. (For the charge to our committee regarding this, see the [minutes from December 8, 2022](#).) Our discussion began with a presentation by Whitaker of his proposal to replace the CORE program's objective 3.2 and 3.2 with the following merged objective:

Students will appreciate the complexity of people from other cultures, and social dynamics at a global scale. They will develop the knowledge and skills necessary to engage effectively and collaboratively with diverse others, and will foster attitudes of civic agency.

To measure this, he proposed the following two outcomes:

1. *Analyze a global (complex and cultural boundary-spanning) issue, considering the various cultural dimensions of those involved.*

2. *Produce a work that reflects on the student's learning from an experience with substantial opportunity for cross-cultural engagement.*

A brief discussion followed his presentation which centered on what the university is going to mean by "global" in the context of this objective. Would a course focusing exclusively on complex social dynamics in a particular U.S. city or state, for instance, be considered "at a global scale"? We set the discussion aside and moved on to the next outcome set.

3:56 (21 minutes) Rice presented his proposal to replace CORE outcomes 1.5.1, 1.5.2, and 1.1A.1 with the following:

1. *Identify the basic components of logical arguments (premises, conclusions, types of propositions, etc.) and classify fundamental types of arguments (inductive, deductive, etc.).*
2. *Analyze and evaluate the components of at least three standard forms of reasoning (such as inductive generalization, analogical/modeling, causal analysis, propositional logic, deductive syllogisms, etc.) including related fallacies.*
3. *Create a formal paper on a difficult topic that analyzes a specific argument according to relevant standards and carefully evaluates at least one reasonable objection to the thesis.*

He also provided recommendations for how these outcomes might be handled in versions of this course designed to provide students special training in analyzing and evaluating arguments characteristic of particular academic disciplines. Quite a lot of discussion of these outcomes had already occurred on Teams prior to the meeting, especially concerning the helpfulness or unhelpfulness of the parenthetical terminology, and we didn't go over this again in the meeting. One thing new that came up, beyond the Teams discussion, is whether we should require more of the elements from the old 1.1A.1 in the new formal paper outcome, and in particular, "appropriate documentation of sources." This is something taught in the English department's composition courses, and will be assessed, beginning in Fall 2023, through the university's CORE program; but this will only be done "at an introductory level." And while conventional citations will naturally be part of senior-level writing in most disciplines, the senior-level discipline-specific writing project has been moved out of the CORE program and made instead a university graduation requirement; so citation conventions in the major will fall outside of assessment through the CORE program. We set this discussion aside and moved on to the next outcome set.

4:17 (23 minutes) Hartman proposed the following objective to replace the CORE program's 3.1:

Students will reflect on their strengths and capitalize on opportunities for growth in their personal decision-making, and/or in universally transferable professional skills such as career exploration, collaborative relationships and teamwork, computing or technology literacy, equity and inclusion, financial literacy, interpersonal relationships, leadership, physical and mental health, and professional ethics.

To measure this, she proposed the following three outcomes:

1. *Explain the importance of personal and professional development in lifelong learning.*
2. *Identify goals for their own growth in a personal or professional area.*
3. *Create an appropriate individualized plan or decision-making process to achieve identified goals.*

Again, we had just the briefest of discussions of this proposal, continuing what had begun on Teams. The main concern was the scope of the objective. Would a skill set like speaking a new language, for instance, which

clearly is a kind of personal development useful across a wide range of careers, count as the sort of thing encouraged by this objective? Should it? Would a course like Introduction to Computer Information Systems, which currently doesn't require a student to develop an "individualized plan or decision-making process" for their training in the Microsoft Office suite, work for these outcomes? And so on.

4:40 (18 minutes) We decided to return to the critical thinking outcomes first, as that was the set about which the committee seemed closest to consensus. Duffy suggested that "including credible sources and appropriate documentation" be added to the second outcome, but that wording was not added, as most believed it would be understood with the wording "formal paper." The committee voted, 9 in favor and 1 opposed, to recommend approval of the following two outcomes:

1. *Systematically evaluate arguments of various kinds.*
2. *Write a formal paper that uses a standard form of reasoning to argue in support of a controversial thesis and then defend this reasoning from a significant objection.*

5:08 The meeting ended. Discussion of the other two objectives and outcome sets will continue on Teams. Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday March 9, same time and place.

Submitted by D. Drabkin, Recording Secretary

