

FHSU General Education Committee

Minutes

Meeting Called by

Bradley Will, Chair

Date: Thursday May 9, 2019

Time: 3:30-5:00

Location: Smoky Hill Room, Union

Members

Douglas Drabkin (AHSS)

Marcella Marez (AHSS)

Jessica Heronemus (BE)

David Schmidt (BE)

Sarah Broman (Ed)

Kevin Splichal (Ed)

Trey Hill (HBS)

Glen McNeil (HBS)

Joe Chretien (STM)

Tom Schafer (STM)

Robyn Hartman (Lib)

Helen Miles (Senate)

Adam Schibi (SGA)

Cheryl Duffy (Goss Engl)

Tanya Smith (Grad Sch)

3:30 (1 minute) All members were present with the exception of McNeil and Schibi. Miles served as proxy for McNeil. Determined that a quorum was met.

3:31 (29 minutes) Chair informed the committee that faculty senate voted, on Tuesday May 7, to postpone consideration of the CORE program policies and procedures. Our first order of business was trying to figure out why the vote went this way. The explanation we came up with was complex, with five main strands: (1) Senate began considering it late in the meeting, and some senators felt that more time should be given to something as important as this. (2) The academic affairs committee had not considered the document, and so they were in no position to advise the senate-at-large. (3) Some senators were apparently ill-informed about the CORE objectives and outcomes that were approved last semester, let alone the implementation policies and procedures under consideration. (4) Some senators expressed dissatisfaction with particular aspects of the CORE policies and procedures. And (5) the policies and procedures were presented as bare rules, without any of the reasoning that went into the many decisions leading up to them (e.g., why we decided to limit departments to offer courses for only two of the six modes of inquiry). This combination of factors led the senate to step on the brakes and put a decision off until the fall semester.

4:00 (15 minutes) Discussion turned next to the implications of the faculty senate postponement. Chair reminded the committee that a Fall 2021 launch date for the CORE program requires a full slate of CORE courses to be approved at three levels -- the general education committee, the academic affairs committee, and the faculty senate -- by October 2020. The UNIV courses being proposed to handle the information literacy outcomes and the upper-level writing and

critical thinking outcomes for departments not handling these in the major could take some of the pressure off the course development and approval process, effectively buying us a little more time to get the program off the ground. But there is no sugar-coating this: there is going to be an enormous wave of courses (syllabi, assignments, and rubrics) that will need to be drafted, and submitted, and revised, and resubmitted, and approved to meet an October 2020 deadline. And by choosing to postpone approval of the implementation policies until Fall 2019, senate appears to have shortened the window of time in which this work can get done. There is always more time to work on projects like this early in the fall semester, and if policies and procedures don't get approved until the October senate meeting (a real possibility if the September meeting is given over to discussion), then the burden of course approval is going shift to Spring 2020.

4:15 (15 minutes) Discussion turned next to what we should do next, given these implications. Three positive next steps were identified: (1) Deans could be asked to identify which faculty members should serve on the faculty review panels so that these will be ready to go should the policies and procedures be approved by senate in the fall. (2) Chair could meet with the chairs of all the departments over the summer so that (a) the CORE outcomes and objectives are in perfect focus, (b) the proposed policies and procedures are understood, (c) some early steps can be taken to design new courses or make existing courses CORE-ready, and (d) any serious problems with implementation are identified. And (3) senate could be asked to prepare for an expedited-but-not-rushed consideration of the policies and procedures, perhaps by scheduling an August meeting as well as a second September meeting, and encouraging the academic affairs committee to make this work their top priority. (The faculty senate president might also consider appointing a group of unusually clear-thinking workaholics to next year's academic affairs committee.)

4:30 (22 minutes) The final reflections of the meeting were on the CORE program itself -- its aims, the restrictions under which it was crafted, and why some of our colleagues may be uneasy with it. We reminded ourselves, in the course of our reflections, of six things: (1) that the program aims to identify measurable learning outcomes, (2) that these are to be *common* outcomes, not merely a list of desirable outcomes from which students get to choose, (3) that our university's accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission depends on our collecting student achievement data with respect to these outcomes, (4) that we designed the program in part to decrease the size of the general education program, helping major programs that are having difficulty keeping under the 120 hour cap set by the Kansas Board of Regents, (5) that we designed the program to fit in with the larger Kansas Board of Regents system, enabling the transfer of courses into and out of our program, and (6) that we designed it to do what is best for our students, all things considered, not what is best for any particular college, or department, or program.

4:52 The meeting ended. The committee will next meet sometime, somewhere, in August.

Submitted by D. Drabkin, Recording Secretary



Festina lente