

FHSU General Education Committee

Minutes

Meeting Called by

Bradley Will, Chair

Date: Monday October 30, 2017

Time: 3:30-4:30

Location: Rarick 205

Douglas Drabkin (AHSS)
Marcella Marez (AHSS)
Jessica Heronemus (BE)
David Schmidt (BE)
Kevin Splichal (Ed)
Teresa Woods (Ed)
Trey Hill (HBS)
Glen McNeil (HBS)
William Weber (STM)
Tom Schafer (STM)
Robyn Hartman (Lib)
Helen Miles (Senate)
Adam Schibi (SGA)
Cheryl Duffy (Goss Engl)
Kenton Russell (FYE)
Tanya Smith (Grad Sch)

Members

3:30 (1 minute) All members were present with the exception of Hartman, Heronemus, Miles, Schafer, Schibi, Smith, and Woods. A quorum was (barely) met. Paul Lucas returned as an observer.

3:31 (20 minutes) Jill Arensdorf, representing the university's twelve-member RFY Steering Committee, presented an overview of the committee's work. "RFY" stands for "Reimagining the First Year." This three-year project, coordinated through the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, is currently near the end of its second year at FHSU and at 43 other institutions around the country. (See Appendix for "About RFY" taken from AASCU's website.) The RFY committee is trying to track, and suggest changes that might improve, five things: credit accumulation, credit completion, gateway course completion, fall-to-fall persistence, and selection of major in the first year. They define "gateway courses" as the five courses most commonly taken by FHSU freshmen, which at present are English Composition I, English Composition II, World Geography, Personal Wellness, and Introduction to Computer Information Systems. And they are working under the assumption that it is desirable for students to select a major before the end of their first year. One idea that Arensdorf explained is that of "co-requisite remediation." The idea here is to provide remedial lessons in writing, for instance, in the same semester that a student is taking Composition I, or remedial lessons in high school algebra in the same semester that the student is taking College Algebra. This could either be through a separate remedial course taught alongside the standard college course or through a specially designed five-hour combined course.

3:51 (11 minutes) Drabkin asked why it is supposed to be a good thing for students to select their major while still freshmen. Arensdorf replied that the idea is to provide the student “an academic home.” She didn’t elaborate at first on what this means but it eventually became clear that she was talking primarily about academic advising: students benefit from academic advisors who know them well and guide them well. But she also noted that students commonly switch majors in their first year, sometimes more than once. So the value of early major selection is unclear. Chair noted that academic advising is uneven across campus, and asked if the RFY committee had given consideration to the proposal sometimes called “comprehensive advising reform.” This is the idea that an advising center be set up and full-time advisors hired to focus on the needs of freshmen and sophomores. Arensdorf said that this idea is currently on hold, and will likely remain on hold until the university’s new upper administration is in place.

4:02 (11 minutes) Returning to last week’s business, the committee set up the working group for determining measurable learning outcomes for the **mathematical** mode of inquiry. Weber (mathematics) will serve as lead, and stakeholders will include: Joe Chretien (applied technology), Janett Naylor-Tinknell (psychology), Mohammad Riaz-Kermani (mathematics), Scott Robson (communication studies), Tanya Smith (nursing), Janet Stramel (teacher education), David Tostenson (philosophy), Lanee Young (mathematics), and Hongbiao Zeng (computer science).

4:13 (17 minutes) The committee turned next to setting up the working group for determining measurable learning outcomes for objective 1.2, **quantitative literacy** (“students will recognize quantitative relationships, use multiple approaches to analyze these relationships, and apply knowledge of these relationships to solve practical problems”). Weber (mathematics) will serve as lead, and stakeholders will include: Amanda Buday (sociology), Eric Deneault (applied technology), Loretta Dorn (chemistry), Yuxiang Du (communication studies), Susan Dumler (allied health), Tom Johansen (economics, finance, and accounting), Theresa Madden (nursing), Steven Sedbrook (health and human performance), Craig Smith (agriculture), and Brett Whitaker (leadership studies).

4:30 Meeting ended. The next is scheduled for Monday November 6 at 3:30 PM in Rarick 205. Business will include approving the survey tool for gathering stakeholder feedback on proposed measurable learning outcomes.

Submitted by D. Drabkin, Recording Secretary



Appendix

From AASCU’s <http://www.aascu.org/RFY/> web page:

Re-Imagining the First Year (RFY) is a project aimed at ensuring success for all students, particularly those who have historically been underserved by higher education: low income, first generation, and students of color. With support from the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#) and [Strada Education Network](#) (formerly, [USA Funds](#)), AASCU has created a coalition of [44 member institutions](#) that are working together for three calendar years (2016-2018) to develop comprehensive, institutional transformation that redesigns the first year of college and

creates sustainable change for student success.

The goal of RFY is to dramatically improve the quality of learning and student experience in the first year, increase retention rates, and improve student success. The RFY project is a groundbreaking collaboration to substantively and sustainably alter the first-year experience for students at participating AASCU institutions.

The first year of college has emerged as the critical barrier to college success, the point at which colleges experience the greatest loss of students. The RFY project recognizes that no single intervention will solve student performance, and that solutions that fail to reflect the differing needs of a changing student body will not be successful. RFY seeks to inspire redesigned approaches that work effectively for all members of an increasingly diverse, multicultural, undergraduate student body, eliminating the achievement disparities that have plagued American higher education for generations. Ultimately, re-designing this critical first year will allow for broader reform of the undergraduate experience in the future.