

FHSU Liberal Education Committee

Minutes

Meeting Called by

Bradley Will, Chair

Date: Tuesday September 5, 2017

Time: 3:00-4:00

Location: Rarick 205

Members

Douglas Drabkin (AHSS)
not yet appointed (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)
not yet appointed (SGA)
Cheryl Duffy (Goss Engl)
Kenton Russell (FYE)
Tanya Smith (Grad Sch)

3:02 (1 minute) All were present except for Splichal and the as-of-yet-not-appointed members of the committee representing the Student Government Association and the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. Sangki Min, Assistant Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Improvement, was thanked for his willingness to meet with us once again.

3:03 (34 minutes) Min addressed the committee on the topic of observable learning outcomes and their importance for institutional assessment. He reminded the committee that FHSU is accredited through the Higher Learning Commission, or HLC,¹ and more specifically through the HLC accreditation path known as AQIP (Academic Quality Improvement Program). AQIP requires the identification of common institutional learning outcomes, or ILOs, things we expect all graduating students to be able to do regardless of chosen major program. Min hopes that we will, through the process of revising the university's general education program, successfully identify and describe these ILOs, and in so doing, help improve academic quality at the university. He gave an example: with respect to student writing proficiency, we need to be able to describe the minimum acceptable level of proficiency for our graduates. Min was asked how many learning outcomes the committee needs to identify per learning objective and how many there should be altogether. His reply, in essence, was: as many as necessary, no more, no less. The committee's task, for now, is to get in clear focus what it is all of our students ought to be able to do. And we should plan on reviewing and revising these ILOs in later years. The question arose whether co-curricular activities (non-coursework experiences) could count

¹ The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, our former accrediting organization, ceased to be in 2014.

towards satisfaction of general education learning outcomes (the ILOs). Chair observed that they cannot at present, but that this is likely to change in the future. It all will depend on whether the outcomes are achieved.

3:38 (2 minutes) Chair indicated that he has information on the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), if committee members would like more information on a reputable standardized test that focuses on reading, writing, and critical thinking.

3:40 (2 minutes) Chair indicated that, for the foreseeable future (the next several weeks), it is looking like the committee will need to continue to meet weekly. The schedule for the next few meetings will be made on the basis of online Doodle Polls and announced by email.

3:42 (4 minutes) Woods asked if we shouldn't have something like a training session for developing learning outcomes. It was decided after some discussion that this should take place at the meeting the week after next.

3:46 (24 minutes) Chair led the committee through an exercise where we were invited to consider which of the various academic departments should be consulted in developing learning outcomes for the various elements of our draft general education plan. The upshot was: this could be pretty complicated. Just considering some of the modes of inquiry: the aesthetic mode would likely involve at least Art and Design, English, and Music and Theater; and the mathematical mode may involve as few as just Mathematics and Teacher Education; but the natural scientific mode would involve at least Biology, Chemistry, Communication Disorders, Geosciences, Health and Human Performance, Nursing, Physics, and Teacher Education; and the social scientific mode could involve even more: Communication Studies, Criminal Justice, Economics, Geosciences, Health and Human Performance, Leadership Studies, Political Science, Psychology, Social Work, Sociology, and Teacher Education. (And Philosophy could be grouped in with any of them; describing epistemological categories and making distinctions between them is the sort of thing they think about.) Chair recommended that we look for "low-hanging fruit" (sets of apparently straightforward, easily identifiable outcomes) and then move on to the more challenging ones.

4:10 (10 minutes) McNeil observed that it is not too early to start talking logistics, particularly if the committee is going to recommend the development of new required courses. What do we realistically have the resources to do? We need to know as soon as possible whether it is a waste of time to propose structuring the new general education program one way or another. Chair agreed and mentioned some first steps he has already taken in consultation with members of the university administration to ascertain what is and what is not doable.

4:20 Meeting ended. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday September 11 at 3:30 PM in Rarick 205.

Submitted by D. Drabkin, Recording Secretary

