

Minutes of the General Education Committee
Wednesday, November 19, 2008
Hawai`i Hall 208

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:37 p.m. by Mike Kirk-Kuwaye, Chair.

Present: Lynne Higa, Susan Johnson, Mike Kirk-Kuwaye, Mike Nassir, Scott Rowland,
Carolyn Stephenson, George Wong

Ex officio: Ron Cambra (OVCAA), David Ross (SEC), Alan Yang (A&R)

Guests: Lisa Fujikawa (GEO), Duane Henry (GEO), Tom Hilgers (GEO),
Jo-Anne Nakamoto (GEO Recorder)

MINUTES: Minutes of the October 22, 2008 meeting were approved.

Chair's Report:

- Kirk-Kuwaye thanked Johnson for her E-Board liaison reports.
- O-Board will be modifying/making changes to Hallmarks language regarding the percentage of oral communication activities in variable-credit courses.
- UHWO is forming their own GEC, and would like UHM membership -- 2 non-UHWO members must be on GEC. At present, they meet twice a month, 10 a.m., Fridays. Any interested parties, please contact Hilgers or Kirk-Kuwaye.

ACTION AND INFORMATION ITEMS:

1. Vote on diversification and focus recommendations – Voting deferred to next meeting.
2. Data Review regarding FS requirement in the first year.
Henry distributed handout of two cohorts' course-taking patterns for their first year.
 - For the first cohort, 66.6% still had to take their FS requirement after completion of their fall semester.
 - Of the seats available in S07 (1,582), only 140 were left unfilled. It was noted that although there may be many open seats, they really aren't available for everyone to take (e.g., MATH 112 is exclusively for education majors)
 - i. MATH 100 was filled.
 - ii. In S07, PHIL 110/140 had 10 unfilled seats.
 - Re: F07-S08 cohort, of those that failed/withdrew (20), and retook course in S08, 7 failed again, 4 withdrew. In S08, a quarter of the failures/withdrawals were in MATH 241. Of the 39 that withdrew, one-half (17) were in MATH 241.
 - i. MATH 241 represents 1/3 of the FS seats.

DISCUSSION

- There appear to be two problems:
 - Issue of prerequisites
 - What/how do you deal with students in the "calculus series"?
 - Do we change the placement exam(s)?
- If a student is eligible to get into MATH 241, does that mean he/she has FS skills and can be exempted from the requirement?
 - Cambra stated that they have been examining different placement exams at various colleges. In some, they issue back credit as an incentive. Some have auto-placement. Others place immediately so that students won't register "downward" and take the seats of others.
 - Ross suggested General GRE could be used as a substitute placement exam.

- At Arizona State, incoming freshman are allowed to attempt placement exams twice before ASU places them. This assists with registration so freshman can get placed into the appropriate class immediately.
- It was noted that at UHM biology students are encouraged to take calculus in their second year, contrary to the stipulation of “first year” requirement.
- Biggest problem: placement in chemistry and math courses. Students register, then take the placement exams, and subsequently drop out.
- Some alternatives brought up by the GEC: something like the “English collection” option, an FS exam, or challenge via exam.
- GEC was reminded by Hilgers that we are working from the Chancellor’s vision for student success and improved graduation rate.

ACTION:

- Ask Foundations Board to review FS requirement, addressing possibility of making FS a sophomore requirement.
 - GEO to pull data for second year students in FS.
 Questions for data: Make FS a requirement “by the end of the second year”.
 Strongly recommend FS for freshman year? What is the relation of majors to FS? Sequential order of courses? Consider possibility of waiving FS requirement with a placement exam (some already exist, see math.hawaii.edu)?
 Placement exam waive a first year FS requirement (but should only get their FS once they complete the course into which they placed)?
3. Spring meeting time for GEC: timetables to be emailed to members. Schedules only to include class times, meetings, office hours and other fixed times.

The meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Next meeting: 1:30 p.m. on December 3, 2008, HH 208.

Submitted by Jo-Anne Nakamoto, Recorder