

GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
October 12, 2017 Minutes

Meeting Began: 12:30 p.m.
Meeting Adjourned: 1:20 p.m.

Present: Ernest Gobert, Mary Turner, Dr. Courtney Vahlberg, Brent Stafford, Dr. Shanna Padgham, John Helton, Dana Tuley-Williams, Dr. Max Simmons, Stacie Warner, Michael Boyle, and Dr. Jeff Anderson.

Absent: Jennifer Brumley, Dr. Janet Perry, Greg Gardner, Charles Myrick, and Dr. Glenne Whisenhunt.

The first item of business was to review the minutes from the previous meeting. Brent made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Michael seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted with unanimous approval.

Next, the discussion turned to what recommendations the committee should make to Academic Affairs regarding last year's outcomes. As was discussed in the March meeting, Greg Gardner presented on the change in the pass rate for math due to the change in the rubric (scores on specific skills sets on the rubric are no longer averaged together, but have become a pass/no pass dichotomy requiring a passing score in all three areas). It was agreed that an emphasis should be placed on students' ability to think critically, especially in math. It was suggested that faculty could be encouraged to consider adding a specific objective for their respective courses that would tap into critical thinking. The person in charge of the curriculum development for that course could write one question that all faculty teaching that course would use. Max stressed objectives must be written in an actionable way. Courtney added that the question should require the students to interpret a numerical answer. Critical thinking is the ability to interpret and understand the result of a computational process. Jeff posed a question about whether faculty are including interpretation in their instruction. He offered an example from his psychological statistics course in which he asked students to write a paragraph explaining correlation coefficients to someone who wouldn't understand them. His students couldn't do this even though they "knew" what these were. Mary suggested that an understanding of language or how to communicate effectively might be negatively influencing the students' ability to interpret information.

Another related issue discussed by the committee is that the two most common general education math courses that a majority of students take to complete their math requirement are college algebra and pre-calculus. These classes are skills-based. The two general education math courses that require more critical thinking are contemporary math and statistics. Fewer students take these courses.

There was a brief discussion about whether adjunct instructors could, or were encouraged to, contribute artifacts. Adjuncts can, and do contribute them, but only about 20% of artifacts are contributed by them. It was suggested that in addition to the general emails sent out soliciting

artifacts that faculty members could speak directly to one or two of their colleagues with whom they have regular contact and encourage contributions.

The remainder of the meeting was spent discussing public speaking artifacts. A question was posed about whether the committee wanted to see more artifacts contributed or whether the emphasis should be on artifacts coming from a more diverse set of courses. In general, it would be nice to have both. The manner in which such artifacts could be recorded was discussed. Mary asked about using the Speech Lab, but Michael indicated that it was too small to hold an entire class. Faculty who do record speeches should be sure to indicate the names of the students whose speeches they want assessed. Lastly, it was suggested that faculty be reminded that group discussions or presentations can be used as long as the eligible students are identified.

The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.