**General Education Committee**

**October 9, 2014 Minutes**

Began 12:30 p.m.

Adjourned 1:25 p.m.

Present: Dr. Courtney Vahlberg, Dr. Max Simmons, Dr. Kathy Wheat, Mary Turner, Julie Rice-Rollins, Darby Johnsen, Brent Noel, Pamela Stout

Absent: Jay Ramanjulu, Catherine Kinyon, Greg Gardner, Dr. Janet Perry, Dr. Glenne’ Whisenhunt, Haifeng Ji

The first order of business was to discuss two courses for possible inclusion as general education electives. The two courses have been taught at the college for many years, but were listed under ENGL 2000, Special Topics. Marybeth McCauley addressed the committee on behalf of her class, ENGL 2213, Creative Writing/Fiction. Jon Inglett addressed the committee on behalf of his class, ENGL 2223, Creative Writing/Poetry. Both faculty members presented their rationales for requesting that the courses be added to the general education list and responded to questions regarding the transferability of the courses. Neither course has a prerequisite by design. Darby made a motion that the committee approve ENGL 2213 and ENGL 2223 as general education electives. Pamela seconded the motion. The committee approved the motion unanimously and then encouraged Marybeth and Jon to remind academic advising and other institutions that these courses now serve as general education electives.

Next, the committee reviewed the minutes from the previous month’s meeting. Courtney mentioned that Dr. Aquino immediately accepted the committee’s recommendation to include the Director of Academic Student Success as a voting member of the committee. Julie made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Max seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

Courtney said that she had made an Excel file that contains information about the Gen Ed artifacts for 2013-2014. She can now answer questions about the number of faculty who submitted artifacts by status (full-time/adjunct), division, and outcome. She also said that Catherine had requested the Gen Ed assessment results for students who were listed as liberal studies, diversified studies, and pre-education majors. Courtney stated that she could do this for the upcoming assessment year (2014-2015) as she processed the individual artifacts.

Next, the committee looked at a list of possible recommendations based on the 2013-2014 assessment results. Most of the discussion focussed on the recommendation regarading the encouragement of, and possible professional development for, the teaching of critical thinking skills. Darby recommended that she and Brent look at possible speakers to address this topic. Max suggested that the best time to bring a speaker to campus would be during Prep and Planning week. He also suggested that each academic division could select one faculty member who would become an expert in critical thinking for their respective content areas. Darby then mentioned the Tulsa Community College model of color-coding each level of Bloom’s taxonomy by division and including those with their course objectives. Kathy agreed that this would help close the gap between what we say we want students to know and how they demonstrate that to us. The fifth Tuesday of each month could be devoted to advancing critical thinking instruction. Further discussion included mention of The Critical Thinking Community (<http://www.criticalthinking.org/>) and the possibility of sending representatives to its annual conference.

The committee agreed to make a single recommendation this year, one that is actionable. There was only time to make the first draft of this recommendation, which follows:

*We encourage faculty to evaluate their course assignments to meet higher-level critical thinking skills. To this end, we recommend that OCCC start a series of conversations in each division about what critical thinking means and about how to teach and assess it.*

* *This would begin with developing expertise in each division by sending at least one faculty member per division to a national meeting on critical thought (e.g., the 34th International Conference on Critical Thinking and Educational Reform held last July in Berkeley, CA).*

As the meeting drew to a close, Courtney said that there might be a political science course for review as a general education elective at the next meeting. Also, she planned to meet with Dr. Ginnett Rollins regarding accepting artifacts in other languages.

The meeting then adjourned.