

General Education Committee
October 13, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Meeting began: 12:33 p.m.
Meeting adjourned: 1:23 p.m.

Present: Vicky Davidson, Jon Inglett, Yuthika Kim, Catherine Kinyon, Jorge Lopez, Dr. Janet Perry, Sherry Ray, Dr. Max Simmons, Pam Stout, Dr. Courtney Vahlberg

Jon began the meeting by presenting the minutes from the September 8, 2011, meeting for the committee to review and approve. Courtney made a motion to approve and the motion was seconded by Pam Stout. The minutes were approved unanimously.

After the committee members introduced themselves to its newest member, Sherry Ray, professor of mathematics, Jon Inglett reviewed the Fall 2010-Spring 2011 Recommendations of the committee (see Attachment) and the progress made on each. These recommendations focused on communication skills, because those had the lowest scores in the previous year and the lowest number of artifacts. Items 1-3 are completed, but items 4 and 5 by their nature are ongoing. This focus on communications skills did lead to a higher pass rate on 2010-2011 assessments and to an increase in artifacts evaluated.

Some discussion of the purpose of the Gen Ed committee ensued. The importance of continuing to collect artifacts and to base committee actions on the results of these artifacts was emphasized, as was continuing to encourage faculty to look at their curriculums with a mind toward incorporating Gen Ed skills. It was noted that we are continuing to encourage communication skills: in the Fall 2011 planning and prep week, during the General Faculty and Instructional Staff Meeting, Top Ten Writing and Speaking Tips and Global Components were presented and offered to any interested faculty. Catherine Kinyon will look into putting links to these three somewhere on the OCCC web to make them more easily accessible to faculty and students.

It was also emphasized that the one of the roles of the evaluation of Gen Ed assessment artifacts is to let OCCC know if the students are competent in the Gen Ed areas when they finish at OCCC.

Jon Inglett then asked the committee to formulate recommendations for Fall 2011-Spring 2012.

Recommendation #1

Continue emphasis on public speaking. Appeal for more artifacts and continue to focus on public speaking in regular instruction. Have a packet of public speaking artifact examples on line.

Recommendation #2

Review outcome areas to match Gen Ed goals. Gen Ed outcomes are perceived as being too discipline-specific.

- Oral communications instead of public speaking (interviews could be added to the current public speaking artifacts)

- Consider adding technology as an outcome.
- Problem-solving instead of math
- Critical-thinking instead of science methodology
- Global Ed instead of social institutions.

Max pointed out there may be resistance from the faculty to changing some of these names. Catherine Kinyon said there is a difference between the outcomes of the Gen Ed committee and a degree check. Changing Gen Ed assessment categories does not change OCCC's Gen Ed requirements.

Regarding these potential changes in categories, Max asked Jon to make specific recommendations and email them to the committee members. Also, it was stated that if the category headings do change that examples of artifacts for that category- many artifacts!-be made available to the faculty. And, if a category is modified, that assessments for the new category would begin in fall 2012. Finally, these modifications of category headings/descriptions are not so drastic that there needs to be a break between conclusions drawn from current outcomes and those from the proposed new ones, with the possible exception of critical thinking replacing science methodology.

Recommendation #3

The committee agreed it wants to encourage higher level critical thinking skills in assignments and in program reviews.

HLC Visit

As the final order of business, Max discussed the Nov 7-9 visit of the Higher Learning Commission and noted that HLC evaluators will want to meet with the Gen Ed Committee and asked committee members to plan to attend that meeting. Jon agreed to speak at that meeting, both to answer the evaluator's questions and to describe what the committee has done since the last review. Max also said there would be a pre-meeting of Janet Perry, Felix Aquino, Greg Gardner, Max Simmons, Jon Inglett and Courtney Vahlberg at a time and date he will set later.

The meeting adjourned.

ATTACHMENT

Fall and Spring 2010-2011 General Education Recommendations

To improve student success in the area of Communication Skills, the General Education Committee suggests the following actions:

1. We continue to provide student opportunities for successful communication skills through Student Life. In November, Professor Jeff Cleek will present a Brown Bag Luncheon Series on Overcoming Fears in a Public Speaking environment.
2. We encourage faculty and students to support the Public Speaking Lab open to ALL students at OCCC to practice speeches before they give them, to record speeches for an online environment, and/or to record speeches with other colleagues for group projects. By the Spring Semester, student workers will be hired to operate the Public Speaking Lab.
3. We encourage the continued success of the Cooperative Learning Training for faculty development. Cooperative Learning Training provides pedagogical approaches to active learning, cooperation, collaborative learning, and various kinds of communication skills (including listening skills) within the classroom. The next training session continues at the end of the Fall 2010 semester.
4. We encourage each Academic Division to review their curriculum to decide how communication skills can be integrated into their current or future syllabi and courses. In line with this goal, our recent Leisure Services Management degree requires COM 2213: Introduction to Public Speaking for the program.
5. We support the actions of the General Education Committee to review the current outcome related to communication skills. This outcome includes the following areas:
 - a. Students will demonstrate effective writing and public speaking skills
 - b. Students will demonstrate analytical reasoning and logic skills by using mathematical methods and tools.