General Education Committee Meeting Minutes
September 12, 2013

Meeting began:  12:30 p.m.
Meeting adjourned:  1:20 p.m.

Present:  Dr. Courtney Vahlberg, Mary Turner, Brent Noel, Catherine Kinyon, Jay Ramanjulu, Dr. Jennifer Allen, Doug Gregory, Anita Williams, Ernest Gobert, and Dr. Kathy Wheat, and Dr. Max Simmons.

Absent:  Julie Rice-Rollins, Pam Stout, Dr. Glenne' Whisenhunt, Dr. Janet Perry, and Greg Gardner.

Courtney began the meeting by welcoming everyone and requesting introductions.  There was a brief discussion about new members and the purpose of the committee.

Next, there was discussion of the minutes from the previous meeting which was in April of 2013. Max made a motion to accept the minutes.  Doug seconded the motion.  The vote was unanimous to approve the minutes.

The first item of business was to discuss the General Education Charter.  Courtney presented updates regarding the change from six academic divisions to eight, as the two largest divisions were split. Furthermore, the deans of the eight divisions agreed to reduce the representatives on the committee from two per division to one per division.  After a brief discussion, Courtney made a motion for the committee to accept the proposed changes to the Charter.  Brent seconded the motion, and the committee unanimously approved.  The proposal will now be forwarded to Dr. Felix Aquino.

The next item of business involved the assessment that the committee does each year, and the ongoing need for artifacts.  Catherine and Courtney outlined the work they had done (thank you Catherine) in cleaning up some of the content that has been in the college catalog for a while. The section that addresses general education requirements and electives (pages 47-50 in the 2014 catalog) now reads more clearly and better represents what the committee has been working toward in recent years.

This led to a brief discussion of the ongoing problem of helping faculty members understand that artifacts may lend themselves to more than one outcome and are no longer specifically tied to courses or departments.  Courtney and Darby Johnsen will lead a session during the Prep and Planning week in January 2014 to help address this with faculty.  Currently, it is difficult to gather artifacts, especially those that lend themselves to certain outcomes.  The inconsistencies in which artifacts are submitted, the numbers submitted, and the various assignments from which they originate make reporting the data in a meaningful way challenging.  Many of the small committees who evaluate artifacts each summer have been working together for a while and have a system that works for them, but it is still difficult to extrapolate from the small numbers of items to the larger scheme of courses and assignments from which artifacts might be pulled. With data based on very small numbers, making recommendations is difficult.

Anita Williams, who is new to the committee, asked for clarification about what the committee does. Courtney explained that the committee makes recommendations that go to Dr. Aquino. She also stated that she hoped that Recommendation 4, "Consolidate the General Education Outcomes of Social Institutions and of Human Heritage, Culture, Values and Beliefs into a single outcome: Human Heritage, Culture, Values, Institutions and Beliefs" would stay on the recommendation list. Committee members agreed that they would also like for it to stay.

In the time remaining, Courtney thanked Catherine for the hard work she had invested in the General Education Committee website. From the college homepage (www.occc.edu), select "Academics," then "Academic Affairs," and finally the link on the left side of the page for "General Education." The menu clearly identifies "General Education Documents," "General Education Courses," General Education Assessment," "Outcomes and Rubrics," "Resources for Students," and "General Education Committee Minutes."

Committee members agreed that there needs to be a push to encourage faculty teaching online to submit more artifacts. One of the recommendations from the HLC was to separate outcomes data by whether the artifacts are from on site or online classes. Courtney asked everyone to review the recommendations and data for the next meeting on October 10.