

**MINUTES – GENERAL EDUCATION POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE (GEPRC)
ROOM D281, Science – October 26, 2011, 9 a.m.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: N. Fernando, D. Guay, G. Olsen, R. Olson, J. Rohrer, J. Sage,
J. Schneider, R. Sirabian

MEMBERS ABSENT: M. Bixby, J. Houghton (excused)

1. D. Guay called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.
2. The minutes of October 12, 2011 were approved by general consent subject to minor revisions to page two.
3. Announcements.
 - G. Olsen shared information from a recent conversation with School of Education faculty. It was shared that it appears likely that with transition to the General Education Program (GEP), it will be possible for elementary education students to complete their degree in four years. He explained that although this might be possible for elementary education students, it wouldn't be the case for secondary education students. Secondary education students have additional concentration requirements.

4. New business:

Review campus feedback on Step 6

D. Guay informed GEPRC members that two feedback comments had been submitted. One comment was in regards to using the math placement exam as a means for testing out of the quantitative literacy (QL) requirement, and a second comment noted a revision needed in the transferring credit to UWSP area related to a recent change in the UW System (UWS) transfer policy. Discussion of the comments followed.

The GEPRC agreed that suggested language put forth to replace the current text of the second bullet point under Transferring credit to UWSP, 2B proposal (*UWSP Catalog*) should be used. J. Schneider will notify C. Glennon about the change to the transferring credit to UWSP.

The committee discussed issues related to the comment regarding QL test-out. GEPRC members noted that the UWS math placement was a test taken by all incoming UW students. The UW-Stevens Point Department of Mathematical Sciences chooses use of the UWS math placement test functionally as its test-out measure. D. Guay advised that the difference between a code 7 and 4 was Math 109. GEPRC members discussed that although test-out exams didn't directly map to learning outcomes, students success in test-out exams showed a proficiency in the material and demonstrated competency to meet the learning outcomes. J. Schneider advised that should a department feel that something is lacking in the GEP related to their specific program, the department could add what it feels is lacking to their in the major requirements. The GEPRC discussed what QL courses might be brought forth by the Department of Mathematical Sciences, and discussed departments' responsibility related to the QL requirement. The GEPRC responded to the feedback comment stating that a math placement score of 7 indicates that a student has demonstrated that s/he would be able to meet the learning outcomes if s/he would enroll in a QL course. A math placement score of 7 indicates that a student has tested beyond Math 109 which has been submitted to the General Education Committee as a GEP QL course. The response noted that all students take the math placement exam which in essence means that every student is taking a test-out exam for QL. It also noted that individual departments would be responsible for bringing courses to the GEC for approval to meet QL learning outcomes as appropriate. The response advised that the list of courses brought to the GEC for approval for QL designation by the Department of Mathematical Sciences appeared sufficient to meet the needs of the diverse science majors on campus

Review open forum comments regarding Step 6

R. Sirabian shared feedback he had received regarding the administrative position recommendation for the Assessment Coordinator (AC). He stated that for assessment to work as it should the AC would be key and the faculty would need to have faith in the AC and the firewall. He put forth the suggestion that the AC position be a .5 FTE faculty, elected position. R. Olson and D. Guay voiced their opposition to the suggestion. Discussion followed on options and recommendations related to the AC position. R. Sirabian stated the necessity to clarify that the faculty learning community would be the entity writing the report; the AC, who would have knowledge of and/or experience with assessment, would work in a facilitator role. J. Sage advised that the faculty learning communities would forward reports to the GEC; the GEC would be the committee responsible for making any revisions and forwarding the reports to Faculty Senate. Although the AC would be in close consultation with the faculty learning communities, the AC would be unable to assert any (feared outside or personal) agenda(s). R. Sirabian recommended that the proposal clarify who the AC reports to. The following was added to the administrative positions recommendations under the AC section:

The Assessment Coordinator will work with the GEC to form faculty learning communities, assist the faculty learning communities to develop a report of the course portfolios, and integrate institution-level assessment measures. ... Finally, the Assessment Coordinator will help to facilitate the work of the Assessment Subcommittee by assisting with providing feedback on assessment reports, collecting and analyzing assessment data, and making recommendations for improvements to our assessment efforts to faculty governance.

The GEPRC discussed the recommendation of the AC being a faculty member and potentially an existing faculty member. J. Sage advised that two options seemed to exist:

Option 1:

Have the AC be an elected faculty member; co-chair of the GEC with a .5 FTE reassignment to service obligation. In this scenario the faculty member's department would likely lose two course sections and the faculty member would likely receive no compensation increase for being the AC. J. Sage noted that with the elected AC term being 1-2 years, the position would be rather transitional with qualifications varying among nominated faculty.

R. Olson noted that the Higher Learning Commission would likely not be supportive of the inconsistency this option presented.

Option 2:

Seek/hire a .5 FTE position with an administrative title. The person hired would be evaluated by people knowledgeable about assessment. A department would maintain the .5 FTE within the department, the .5 FTE AC would likely be paid at a slightly higher administrative level, and there would be consistency over time.

Discussion of the options followed. GEPRC's consensus was that it would be in UW-Stevens Point's best interest that the AC not be an elected position. Discussion followed of whether AC hiring should be from within UW-Stevens Point or via an open process. D. Guay questioned whether the Director of General Education and the First Year Seminar Coordinator position recommendations should also note "faculty" as a necessary qualification. The GEPRC added "from existing faculty" to the administrative position recommendation section that would apply to all three administrative positions. It was noted that "faculty learning communities" should be the consistent term used in the proposal; other references should be changed appropriately. J. Sage will edit for consistency of "faculty learning communities" and add specifics of what the AC will do for the GEP in the AC paragraph.

R. Sirabian shared that feedback he had received relating to learning outcomes suggested that rather than asking faculty randomly to assess one learning outcome, learning outcomes might be assigned to ensure that all learning outcomes are addressed over the five year period. He noted

that there was some concern in the potential of not having thorough data; the assignment of learning outcomes would assure the range. GEPRC members discussed assignment of learning outcomes and the timeframe of when faculty learning communities should begin meeting.

R. Sirabian suggested that another option was to require faculty to assess two learning outcomes. He noted the sensitivity in not overburdening faculty but yet having sufficient data that was credible and gave a reasonable view. He suggested that for multiple section courses, the GEC could determine the number desired and negotiate the specific learning outcomes with departments. J. Sage noted that for courses such as written communication, the requirement could be satisfied by only three courses which meant that all learning outcomes would need to be covered in the three course portfolios. A brief discussion followed of possible options related to assessing learning outcomes. The GEPRC agreed that faculty learning communities should organize early in fall to coordinate appropriate attainment of all learning outcomes. The following statement was added under the general education assessment process:

The faculty learning community will coordinate with faculty across campus to ensure the body of course portfolios will provide adequate evidence of student learning for each of the learning outcomes in the GEP category.

R. Sirabian noted concern of adequate autonomy for the faculty learning communities. GEPRC consensus was that flexibility in the process remained in that what was being recommended was that all learning outcomes were addressed; the recommendation was not dictating how or who. J. Schneider suggested that examples be provided to show how the process might work. R. Sirabian noted that sample template or rubrics could be helpful.

R. Sirabian expressed concerns shared regarding assessment materials. Concerns stemmed from whether assessment materials may ultimately factor into retention, promotion, and tenure decisions and how the information might be used once collected. He noted the potential difficulty in controlling unintentional use with the university's complex system. The information may end up being used in ways that are not intended presently. It was noted that faculty elected to the GEC may potentially be a member of a personnel committee; that was something that could not be controlled. Discussion followed on unintended use of assessment materials. G. Olsen advised that faculty could choose to incorporate assessment materials in their promotion materials. The GEPRC agreed that a paragraph should be included in the proposal encouraging departments to review personnel policy for directives regarding use of assessment materials for unintended purposes. R. Olson suggested that it might be beneficial to provide a suggested statement that could be incorporated into department personnel rules. It was noted that some faculty may need to be educated and convinced not to use assessment information for unintended purposes. D. Guay emphasized the importance in encouraging faculty to risk trying different things without fear of detriment. He advised that among all the improvement efforts, some efforts were bound to fail. Use of assessment information in personnel decisions would likely ruin the value of assessment in that faculty would be unwilling venture for fear of failing. A conversation followed about the history of student evaluations use.

The GEPRC will continue revision of the Step 6 proposal at the next GEPRC meeting.

5. The meeting was adjourned by general consent at 10:50 a.m.

Minutes Recorded by: Nanci Simon, Secretary to the Faculty Senate