**General Education Policy Review Committee**

**Minutes of the November 2, 2010 Meeting**

Present: Don Guay, Gary Olsen, Michael Bixby, Nisha Fernando, John Houghton, Randy Olson, James Sage, Julie Schneider, Robert Sirabian, Greg Summers, Mary Holland.

Guest: Provost Mark Nook.

Called to order at 3:08pm.

The minutes of October 19 were amended.

Announcements.

1. The course approvals for spring FYS courses will be going to Faculty Senate tomorrow.
2. The Degree Requirements Subcommittee for AAC met last Friday. Julie Schneider drafted a one page simplified version of the current UWSP degree type definitions. The subcommittee would like our feedback on the definition for the Associates degree.
   1. The Associate’s degree from UW-system website is a basic liberal arts foundation degree in order to demonstrate fundamental skills and interdisciplinary studies. 40-45 credits of GEP; 60 credits total.
   2. UWLC -36 credits of GEP; 49 credits total.
   3. UWGB -40 credits of GEP; 12 credits emphasis.
   4. UWEC -39 credits of GEP; 60 credits total.

Feedback:

- Add Experiential Learning.

- The in the major requirements by definition have one foot in Gen Ed, and one foot in the major. These requirements really don’t fit in an associate degree since they are really graduation requirements for 4 year degrees.

New Business. Discussion with Provost Mark Nook regarding campus feedback.

The committee explained that many questions the committee is facing from campus feedback are regarding the implementation of Gen Ed and resources which we really can’t address without guidance from administration.

Mark Nook stated that he has intentionally tried to stay out of the committee discussions but asked, “What questions are out there?” and “What administrative structure can we provide to answer those questions?” Though Mark Nook may not have immediate answers to the questions, he must become aware of them to figure out what needs the most immediate answers and bring these to Administration to work out answers.

The committee listed questions:

-How to finance and how to staff:

* 1. First Year Seminars
  2. Communication in the Major
  3. Experiential Learning Work Load Hours
  4. Capstone in the Major

-Expand the adjunct pool?

-What sorts of resources will be coming by shifting or increasing of workloads?

-For more layers of administrative work perceived to be needed; for example for the additional 80 sections of the First Year Seminar.

-Shifting demands for seats based on changes in the department; for example 3-credit communication requirements when in past 2-credit communication.

Mark Nook asked to what extent is the fear of losing currently hired people versus loss to normal attrition and movement of positions. There is a huge difference. “I can reassure people they won’t lose colleagues”. He also added that open positions have sometimes shifted in the past and this will continue based on campus needs.

The committee replied that the worries are not differentiated; but written comments were about positions, not faces of people except for newly hired faculty.

Mark Nook replied that as departments have this conversation I can imagine non-tenured faculty will be nervous even though there is no intention by anyone to cut a staffed position.

None of this will result in the loss of people who are currently hired. So we need to get some of this in writing to address these fears, to make it more difficult for anyone to change these promises.

The committee stated that a lot of questions are about resources.

Mark Nook asked if we can we build a fiscal proposal for the conversion? We may need to have this by early next year spring semester break. We need to set it down take the current GDR program to see what is likely to move around. That’s a big process to get done.

The committee asked if a pool of money would be regarding retention.

Mark Nook replied here is a high impact model for the new program. For the First Year Seminar here is a pool of money for 2 years for each discipline to convert to the new curriculum. We might be able to come out and say yes we’re putting money to help with this Gen Ed conversion already.

The committee inquired about the resource issues for team-taught Interdisciplinary courses not related to First Year Seminar, then how is SCH divided, and are some seats given up?

Mark Nook replied that department issues will have to be figured out in Department. They will each have to figure out their own priorities.

The committee pointed out that the old structure wouldn’t allow for this. The concern is that currently ‘the SCH number is what gets me the number of faculty here’.

Mark Nook replied that as the curriculum changes the financial model has to change too. I’m open to suggestions as well as collecting questions.

The committee suggested a written statement stating SCH numbers will not affect loss of positions. The committee stated there are questions about enrollment caps.

Mark Nook explained that when considering an enrollment cap discussion, he uses his experience thinking as a Department Chair who wants to manage the department. Those enrollments are negotiated by the Dean. I didn’t want him to tie my hands regarding those resources at my disposal.

Mark Nook continued, I’m careful about setting enrollment caps across all departments across the university. I’d like to give Department Chairs and faculty the freedom to set those so they can manage their resources. Under current GDR’s regarding Communication and English 101, 102, 150 enrollment caps are set within their own discipline so there is no trouble about enrollment caps being set.

Mark Nook explained I’d only have a problem with enrollment caps if they affect other departments or other faculty. An Interdisciplinary course is the same situation. We don’t know anything about the resources that will need to be created; I don’t want the university to tie the hands of department heads and faculty.

Mark Nook pointed out that placing enrollment caps in the Handbook will make it a Faculty Senate revision process to change, even if just one department wants to change it. As a university, we want to be very careful about carving into stone these issues. We also have to be careful because administrations generally see enrollment caps as becoming enrollment minimums.

The committee stated the response of feedback was that the enrollment caps were different between First year Seminar English and Communication majors. Now that some First Year Seminar classes have been approved if we change the enrollment caps the fear is if we take the caps out then an instructor who expected 20 student classes may now face classes with 80 students.

Mark Nook responded that the advantage to not having caps for First Year Seminars is that we have no assessment for them yet, we only have national data. So we don’t know what works in 1-credit, 2-credit, and 3-credit courses. I’d rather give the faculty benefit of the doubt. Teach a class and assess it to help us figure out what works and what needs to be figured out. Assessment can help us set guidelines versus caps.

Mark Nook continued that we haven’t talked about team-taught courses, peer mentors, grad assistant course taught courses. Then does it make sense to talk about enrollment caps when we don’t know what specific resources? I think a Freshman English or Communication course might be ok to have a cap with the exception for team-taught courses.

The committee asked if by having the cap it says something about the commitment to having small classes; so we don’t always have to negotiate and defend against larger classes.

Mark Nook replied that as facilities change these enrollment caps might need to be changed.

The committee stated that on November 11, when the committee meets with the Letters and Science Chairs and faculty, they could provide further feedback on this issue. The committee asked if an enrollment cap is not in the Handbook where could it be codified. If this process of negotiation is between the Dean and Department/Discipline Chair, and if there are no written caps, then who decides?

Mark Nook replied that we know we’re going to need a certain number of seats out there. We’ll be able to figure out when we know how many people are out there offering a class, plus each individual faculty will provide numbers of students they could handle. It looks like we’ll have a Gen Ed Director so that’s another person who would help set this number.

The committee asked what if it was put in writing, suggestions for number of class sizes.

Mark Nook suggested what if instead of putting numbers down, use language such as “these should be small class sizes.” This will give individual faculty as much creative flexibility to develop this program as they need. This flexibility will allow one faculty member to have smaller numbers and more if other faculty members could handle a larger numbers; then average the number of students in all sections of First year Seminar.

The committee wondered if this might hurt the selling point of smaller classes for FYS.

Mark Nook suggested that a Peer Mentor could be a Capstone Experience for a particular student. That could be very valuable for some students so this would allow the building of relationships. There are different ways to think of having these courses because there’s a benefit to a course having a peer mentor; otherwise caps could tie hands against this kind of creativity. Its outside-of-the-box thinking that I’d like to encourage as long as we are still meeting, through assessment, quality and learning outcomes.

Mark Nook concluded that he’s willing to meet with the committee anytime. I’ve intentionally not come to as to not influence the process, but if you have questions I’m more than happy to help listen to planning administration of this. If I see administrative issues, I’ll make an offer to come to the committee but never a demand. Thank you!

Old Business. Update Step 5 draft.

The committee asked that a request should be made for someone to take minutes at the L&S meeting at 3-5pm on November 11. The offer was extended to all committee members to attend the L&S meeting. The L&S Chairs and any faculty and anyone else who wishes may attend.

Homework: James Sage wrote GEPRC Step 5 updates for the L&S committee that have been posted on GEPRC website. Please read and offer feedback before this Thursday.

Adjourned at 5:01pm.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Holland.