**MINUTES – GENERAL EDUCATION POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE** (GEPRC)

**ROOM D281, Science – November 30, 2011, 9 a.m.**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: M. Bixby, N. Fernando (excused)

1. D. Guay called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

2. The minutes from November 23, 2011 were approved by general consent.

3. Announcements:
D. Guay reported that the AAC had begun discussion of the Step 6b proposal and had amended the proposal by adding Experiential Learning (XL) as an exception to test-out and credit-by-exam. A brief conversation followed regarding AAC Step 6 proposal discussion.

4. New business: Advising Manual

G. Olsen shared that he had reviewed some of the sample advising manuals from URL links provided by J. Schneider. He found the samples to be complicated, not user friendly and similar in language to the *University Handbook*.

J. Schneider advised that she had gone through Steps 1-5 and listed basic information that advisors would need to know. She noted that initially, advisors would need to be provided basic information, but subsequently would need more in-depth information. She stated that general protocol and practices for advising would be beneficial. A brief conversation followed of varying advising practices on campus. J. Schneider informed GEPRC members of some students’ misunderstandings regarding the registration process. D. Guay suggested that this could be addressed in First Year Seminar (FYS) courses.

G. Olsen inquired if it would be helpful to include explanation of learning outcomes in the advising information or if it might confuse the issue. He noted that learning outcomes would provide background information. J. Schneider thought it would be good to include. J. Houghton suggested that the learning outcomes explanation could be included as an appendix item.

G. Olsen noted two issues related to GEP advising, training advisors and creating an advising manual. He questioned if a checklist format might be beneficial for the manual. He advised that learning outcomes would also need to be addressed at training workshops to make sure that advisors could convey the value appropriately to students. J. Sage asked if the goal was to have advisors talk about learning outcomes at advising sessions with students. G. Olsen anticipated that to be a goal but he didn’t expect that it would occur next semester. J. Sage stated that ideally, students and advisors would view areas of the General Education Program (GEP) by learning outcomes and abilities that would be attained. G. Olsen suggested use of a gauge to show a student’s progress in the GEP.

J. Sage shared that catalog editor, Libby Raymond, had compiled GEP listings of GEP designated courses by discipline and GEP category. He advised that work would be taking place to update the beginning portion of the catalog. He noted the need for clarifying to students that not all GEP designated courses would be available every semester. J. Sage recommended that initially, less would be more in regards to advising information. He suggested that links could be supplied to additional resources. He viewed that there were two advising needs to address: 1. Advisor training and a comprehensive manual, and 2. a condensed information sheet. J. Schneider inquired whether this advising work was within the purview of the GEPRC or should be turned over to the advising work group. J. Sage responded that providing a framework would be helpful to the advising work group. D. Guay recommended that the information sheet be abbreviated with links that would provide more detailed information. He suggested that the information sheet could be laminated and given to every advisor on campus.

J. Schneider inquired how the GEP would be communicated to students. She noted that the present General Degree Requirements (GDR) booklet used at summer orientation wouldn’t be a good model to follow. The following additional items were added to the listing of advising issues needing to be addressed: 3. Communication to students regarding the GEP, and 4. Internet resources for two-year colleges and other institutions. J. Houghton added that programs that had articulation agreements with UW-Stevens Point would also need to be alerted to transition to the GEP. He advised that the College of Natural Resources (CNR) had begun the process of alerting programs that had articulation agreements associated with the CNR. R. Olson noted that there were also international articulation agreements that would be affected. G. Olsen advised that training next semester would be needed to address these issues. J. Schneider added that training would also be needed for advising transfer students on both the GDR and GEP, for which program might be more beneficial for the student.

J. Sage informed GEPRC members that information for the GEP would be included in the catalog prior to implementation. He recommended that a GEP general information website be created that contained GEP information. The information could be divided appropriately for specific populations, similar to the Information Technology website.
J. Houghton emphasized the need for the website to be very user friendly.

J. Schneider inquired if there would be mini-catalogs for both the GDR and the GEP during transition. G. Olsen anticipates that there will be one mini-catalog that contains both GDR and GEP information. J. Schneider suggested that the GEP chart be included with registration materials. R. Olson recommended that next year, GEP information be added to registration materials; some fall 2012 students will be looking at completing the GEP rather than the GDR. D. Guay anticipates that some 2011 freshmen will also want to complete the GEP rather than the GDR. J. Schneider advised that the SAAC office prepares a booklet for summer orientation and will need to know what should be included. R. Olson suggested a page or two regarding the GEP in next year’s booklet and the following year the booklet should be exclusively GEP information. Discussion followed of advising complications with undeclared students. R. Olson suggested that undeclared students could be asked whether their areas of interest were geared more towards the arts and humanities or the sciences; this differentiation should help advisors in guiding undeclared students.

G. Olsen suggested that a GEP information sheet be provided to faculty at the meeting for summer orientation. J. Schneider advised that unfortunately many faculty members didn’t attend the meeting; she anticipates better turnout if attendance was required by the provost. G. Olsen suggested that a college-by-college meeting might deliver better results. J. Sage informed GEPRC members of Dean Cirmo’s interest in revitalizing advising. He shared that Dean Cirmo expects departments to have an advising plan, a department liaison, and greater attention to advising. J. Sage shared with GEPRC members a practice he had used while chair of the Philosophy Department that seemed successful. R. Sirabian stated that faculty advisors would need to be knowledgeable of new GEP information; rationale for a student completing the GDR or GEP should be defined unrelated to more or less credits. A brief discussion of making comparisons by “shopping” using the Degree Progress Report (DPR) followed. D. Guay anticipates that Communication in the Major and the Capstone Experience in the Major may be the determining factors for some students. GEPRC members discussed the need for department flexibility in course designations for courses taken prior to being designated for GEP designation.

R. Sirabian foresees that Interdisciplinary Study (IS) course offerings may initially be lacking in number. He noted that students would have IS certificates as an option.
R. Olson and G. Olsen advised that there weren’t presently IS certificates available.
G. Olsen asked if any IS proposals had been submitted to the General Education Committee (GEC). J. Sage advised that the GEC hadn’t begun accepting proposals for new GEP designations. He shared that it had been noted at the Academic Affairs Committee meeting that the 2-3 year timeframe for departments to work on IS and XL offerings wasn’t accurate; transfer students would need IS and XL courses sooner. The timeframe for needing IS and XL courses would be less than 1 ½ years. J. Sage shared that he would be bringing the issue to the GEC and the need for an alternative plan for the IS and XL. He advised that the FYS, XL, and IS were three new components to general education and it may take time to build the offerings to the capacity needed.
R. Sirabian advised that it would be good for departments to begin thinking about IS offerings, especially those that might be team taught. He noted that the team taught IS courses were promising but logistically more challenging; he suggested that a reminder be given regarding flexibility needed for team taught IS courses related to student credit hour issues. R. Sirabian noted that it will be a challenge to some departments to find staff available to offer IS courses; some departments are stretched to the limit.

The GEPRC discussed what GEP diagram would be best to include in the advising manual, and subsequently what changes to the diagram might provide greater clarity and ease in understanding. R. Sirabian suggested that a skit could provide another means for training. The skit could be combined with informational handouts. D. Guay recommended that explanations be given of the various areas of the GEP diagram in a bulleted list format. The GEPRC continued discussion of recommended changes to the diagram. Clarification was made that university degree requirements applied to graduation requirements (credits in residence, GPA, etc.) and not to specific baccalaureate degree requirements. It was noted that it would be difficult to adequately reflect the integration of the GEP components in a linear diagram. A brief conversation followed regarding foreign language credits in the B.A.

GEPRC members continued discussion of the advising guide. R. Sirabian asked if there was a sense of what format the guide should take. He noted other issues needing to be addressed such as strategies for advising students for FYS courses. J. Schneider noted that this information would be included in an advising manual and not in the condensed advising information sheet. R. Sirabian will look over the advising guide information compiled thus far and reformat and reemphasize information as necessary. The advising guide information could serve as a compliment to the advising information sheet.

The GEPRC began review of basic advising information that had been compiled from Steps 1-5. J. Schneider noted that information included in the various steps had been written in useable language and that language should be used in advising materials for consistency sake. GEPRC members discussed what information should be included for Quantitative Literacy, whether a student’s math placement code was included on their DPR, and what information should be included for Wellness The GEPRC reviewed the investigation information. D. Guay reiterated the goal of having a concise information sheet that provided links to more detailed information. Revisions and deletions were made under Integration for IS and XL. The importance of including specific Experiential Learning Activity (XLA) information was noted. J. Schneider recommended that a link be provided to the XLA guide. Deletions were made in the Communication in the Major and Capstone Experience in the Major sections. The committee began review of information from Step 6.

The GEPRC will continue work on advising information at the next meeting.

5. The meeting was adjourned by general consent at 10:58 a.m.

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