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

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

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: M. Bixby, G. Olsen (excused)

1. D. Guay called the meeting to order at 9:11 a.m.

2. The minutes of October 26, 2011 were approved by general consent subject to suggested amendments.

3. There were no announcements.

4. Old business: Revision of the Step 6 proposal

The GEPRC continued discussion of Step 6 revision with the listing of issues compiled by J. Sage. The GEPRC discussed briefly whether specific references to the Center for Academic Excellence and Student Engagement (CAESE) should be removed from the Step 6 proposal and a more general term used. D. Guay voiced his support of removing specific CAESE references and using a more general term; GEPRC members agreed. J. Sage shared that the CAESE name may change. The CAESE advisory group will be charged with looking into alternate names for CAESE. J. Sage will remove specific CAESE references in the proposal.

J. Schneider questioned how the concern of additional work resulting from GEP assessment should be addressed. D. Guay acknowledged that assessment would amount to additional work and there wasn’t any way of getting around that reality; GEPRC members agreed. J. Sage noted his previous suggestion of reducing the portfolio requirements. D. Guay stated that reducing the requirements of the portfolio would be a loss to assessment. He noted that the amount of work related to the portfolio had yet to be determined.

J. Schneider shared that the administrative positions proposed were more “middle management” positions similar to the many other directorships across campus. She suggested that removing “administrative” where possible might provide for this clarification. A brief discussion of proposed position titles followed. J. Sage noted that the positions recommended would administer the General Education Program (GEP). The labels (director and coordinators) were selected carefully based upon level of authority needed. For example, the Director of the General Education would have similar authority to the dean of a college in granting exceptions. GEPRC consensus was to leave the position labels as is and remove “administrative” where possible. GEPRC members reviewed and revised the administrative positions recommendation portion of the proposal. J. Schneider questioned if “administrative” could be deleted from the title. D. Guay responded that the charge to the GEPRC was to recommend administration and therefore “administrative” shouldn’t be deleted from the title.

D. Guay inquired what would happen if a student failed or withdrew from a First Year Seminar (FYS). J. Sage noted that those potential circumstances suggested that a small percentage of the FYS should be offered in the spring. The spring FYS offerings would not only accommodate those circumstances but also transfer students. J. Sage shared that typically it was an 85%/15% split between fall and spring semesters respectively.

J. Sage shared that there appeared to be some misconceptions of hiring plans related to CAESE. He stated that UW-Stevens Point personnel would compete equally well for CAESE leadership; a national search would not exclude internal UW-Stevens Point applicants. He advised that there were also misconceptions related to CAESE programming and workshops. Past practice of drawing upon experts within UW-Stevens Point for CAESE programs and workshops would continue. A brief conversation followed regarding internal hiring rules. R. Olson stated that the *University Handbook* stipulates search and screen committee make-up, procedures, and process for director level positions and above, but doesn’t dictate how widely positions must be advertised (Chapter 3, Section 6).

GEPRC members discussed use of the term “assessment team” versus “faculty learning communities.” The GEPRC’s consensus was to leave the teams referenced as “faculty learning communities” in the proposal.

Example course portfolios were discussed. D. Guay, N. Fernando, and R. Sirabian will provide additional information (statement of alignment, example assignment, grading rubric, student work examples) to examples previously submitted, if possible. J. Sage asked N. Fernando to assemble a summary of student achievement and a reflective statement of what might be done differently in the future. He stated that having a variety of different style examples should be beneficial to illustrate flexibility.

R. Sirabian asked if the GEP application and approval form would be in an electronic format.
J. Sage responded that the application form should be finalized at the next General Education Committee (GEC) meeting. He anticipates that the form will be in either MS Word or PDF fillable format. N. Fernando cautioned against the use of PDF fillable format. She informed J. Sage that the ability to fill in the PDF document only works if the user has Adobe Acrobat Pro software; the Acrobat Reader is not sufficient. R. Sirabian inquired if there would be word limits established for the statement of alignment, description of example assignment, and explanation of how student learning will be assessed areas of the GEP application and approval form. He favored providing word limitations. J. Houghton suggested providing a maximum limit but not establishing a minimum. J. Sage noted that the conciseness desired could be illustrated in the examples.

The GEPRC discussed the recommendation to phase in the Interdisciplinary Studies (IS) and Experiential Learning (EL) portions of the GEP. A brief conversation followed of concerns regarding sufficient IS course availability. D. Guay stated that once the GEC had completed grandfathering of General Degree Requirement courses to GEP designations, he anticipates that majors with IS will bring courses forward as well as a call being made to departments to start thinking about courses for areas of the GEP that appear deficient in course offerings. Discussion continued regarding the recommendation for phasing in the IS and EL courses. J. Schneider anticipates that there will be many requests for EL mentors; she recommends offering training for EL Activity mentors. R. Sirabian advised that some flexibility and accommodation will be needed from colleges for departments with faculty participating in team taught IS courses. He noted that if flexibility and accommodations were not offered, departments may have to opt for the logistically simpler single instructor offering an IS course. R. Sirabian added that finding faculty and staff willing to be EL mentors might prove difficult due to time constraints. He questioned whether target goals should be provided for departments related to GEP offerings.
R. Sirabian suggested the benefit in broadening the definition of IS initially. R. Olson cautioned against broadening the IS definition for fear that the definition may not return to the original.
J. Houghton anticipates that departments will begin considering whether their programs might be suitable for IS designation.

J. Schneider noted that consideration of a minor was added to the B.A. degree definition. She voiced her wish that that would have been broadened to include certificates and emphases. IS certificates could be incorporated giving students more options. She noted that there presently weren’t many IS minors available. R. Sirabian suggested that the CAESE provide a workshop on certificates. D. Guay foresees that there may be more IS courses coming than what is anticipated. R. Sirabian questioned how much departments could take on with the many concurrent GEP initiatives (e.g., First Year Seminars, Communication in the Major, IS, EL).
J. Schneider questioned what the negatives were with phasing-in the IS and EL courses.
D. Guay noted that it would be a challenge. With the FYS, a replacement course could be taken but this would not be the case with IS and EL. J. Schneider asked if replacement courses could be offered for IS and EL. R. Olson noted that the IS and EL courses wouldn’t be happening in the near future, departments would have 2-3 years to work on IS and EL courses. D. Guay suggested that summer and winterim could be utilized to meet demands for IS and EL whereas it wouldn’t be possible for FYS. J. Schneider noted issues with summer (students working) and winterim (housing) offerings. R. Olson advised that ultimately this fell under the purview of the GEC.

R. Sirabian suggested that pre-class meetings could focus next year on other GEP initiatives.
J. Houghton noted that the information on grandfathering provided had moved departments along in the process; he anticipates that something on another topic might draw a similar effect. J. Sage advised that departments were already thinking about additional GEP initiatives and degree types. He is hoping to provide supporting materials over the semester break. He advised that this was under the GEC purview. A brief conversation followed on the amount of GEC work.

J. Houghton noted that there was a perception of the “portfolio” being a vast amount of additional work; this perception was problematic. N. Fernando advised that faculty should have all the information needed for the portfolio; it would be more a matter of assembling the portfolio. D. Guay added that examples should help to alleviate the problematic perception.
R. Sirabian advised that depending upon courses taught, a faculty member could be providing portfolios annually for different categories being assessed. Discussion followed of portfolio scheduling by department chairs to ensure adequate portfolios across the learning outcomes and consideration of work among faculty. R. Sirabian expressed that the theory and concept of assessment are agreeable, but there was the practical reality involved of teaching load, research, committee service, advising, etc. and only so much time. A brief discussion followed of UW-Stevens Point being a teaching institution and focusing on teaching. D. Guay and J. Sage anticipate that the faculty learning communities will involve more work than the portfolios.
N. Fernando questioned if a task list might be helpful to break down GEP initiatives into more manageable portions. GEPRC agreed that examples would be of great help to alleviate concerns of difficulty and time intensiveness of portfolios. A brief conversation followed regarding low campus morale due to political and financial factors. J. Houghton will facilitate a sample portfolio for a College of Natural Resources course.

The GEPRC discussed reporting of “in the Major” components. J. Sage suggested that the information could be collected annually but held for review in the year of GEP assessment.
D. Guay advised that this would alleviate the need for an “in the major” faculty learning community annually. Continued discussion followed regarding “in the Major” components being in the major (department purview) as well as part of the GEP and the appropriate assessment vehicle. J. Sage noted that comprehensive reports would take place in the fourth year of the assessment cycle. He suggested that the Assessment Subcommittee could be asked to submit a summary of trends, suggestions, and recommendations to the GEC that could also be shared among departments. Discussion followed of Assessment Subcommittee time-wise to prepare a summary and the formality desired of the summary report.

Discussion followed of how to adequately protect the portfolios from being included in public records. J. Sage advised that if the faculty learning communities are considered “subcommittees” then the portfolios would be considered public record, but if the faculty learning communities were considered “advisory,” then the portfolios would not be considered public record. He suggested that the portfolio be submitted to the Assessment Coordinator to be distributed appropriately. The GEC would not have access to the portfolios. The report that is provided to the provost and GEC would have all identifying information removed. D. Guay noted that no minutes would be taken at faculty learning community meetings. He advised that clear policy needed to be established that restricts portfolios from ever becoming public record; he suggested that this be *University Handbook* policy. N. Fernando agreed that complete confidentiality was essential. Conversation followed regarding the Assessment Coordinator.
D. Guay suggested that the Assessment Coordinator distribute the portfolios to the appropriate faculty learning community; the faculty learning community would serve in an advisory role and report to the GEC with no identifying information. Feedback to the specific faculty members would be done by a non-official committee assisted by the Assessment Coordinator. He suggested additionally that the Assessment Coordinator could develop a reporting rubric to equip the faculty learning communities. A brief discussion followed of who would be responsible for writing the report. GEPRC’s consensus was that the Assessment Coordinator would be best suited to write the reports for consistency.

Conversation of student evaluations followed. The GEPRC will continue revision of the Step 6 proposal at the next meeting.

5. The meeting was adjourned by general consent at 11 a.m.

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