**MINUTES – GENERAL EDUCATION POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**ROOM 164 NOEL FINE ARTS CENTER – March 17, 2011; 9 a.m.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: N. Fernando; J. Houghton, G. Olsen; R. Olson, J. Sage, J. Schneider, R. Sirabian, G. Summers

MEMBERS ABSENT: M. Bixby, D. Guay

1. G. Olsen called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

2. The minutes of March 3, 2011 were approved by general consent subject to corrections on page 3 under the “Transfer Policy” area. The minutes of March 10, 2011 were approved by general consent.

3. Announcements.

G. Olsen reported that the Faculty Senate had passed GEPRC recommendations for the transition from the General Degree Requirements Subcommittee to the General Education Committee (GEC). He asked if the Step 5d proposal had been addressed at the Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) meeting. J. Schneider and G. Summers responded that the proposal hadn’t been discussed. G. Summers shared that he would be speaking with Provost Nook regarding deadlines associated with the new general education program (GEP). The first deadline date was presently scheduled for November 2011.

4. Old Business: Step 6

* Administration

G. Summers advised that full position descriptions for the Assessment Coordinator and First Year Experience Coordinator had been added to the Step 6 worksite. The descriptions were taken from the Center for Academic Excellence and Student Engagement (CAESE) Advisory Board request that had been submitted to the Provost for proposed CAESE positions. The committee determined that the full position descriptions from the CAESE proposal should be used in the GEPRC proposal. The Director of the GEP position was not included in the CAESE proposal; the description drafted by the GEPRC would be used in the GEPRC proposal.

* Advising

J. Schneider reported that she and Angie Kellogg were scheduled to meet with the CAESE Advisory Board regarding advising. She shared that at a recent professional advisors’ group meeting, advising training for the GEP had been discussed. It was suggested that the “training the trainer” approach might be useful for GEP advising training. J. Sage stated that CAESE was available to help in areas of faculty professional development; training for advising would seem to correlate with CAESE services. He shared that CAESE would be involved in coordinating the new faculty orientation. Discussion followed on what role CAESE could play in the workshops on advising. G. Summers stated that CAESE could coordinate and facilitate training opportunities; the Student Academic Advising Center (SAAC) would need to help by providing its expertise to the training.

G. Summers noted that the SAAC was listed as the area responsible for advising. J. Schneider questioned the accuracy of that designation and how the designation had been determined. G. Summers advised that the conversation would be fitting for Academic Affairs re-organization discussions.

J. Schneider questioned whether advising could be incorporated into the January Teaching Conference. G. Summers responded that he had made the suggestion, but the CAESE Advisory Board appeared to have interest in other potential topics. J. Schneider suggested that a general advising session with a break out for the GEP could be incorporated. Committee members noted that the January Teaching Conference was often attended predominantly by new faculty and wouldn’t necessarily provide the broad faculty reach desired. The GEPRC discussed how the Teaching Conference might draw a broader range of faculty. It also discussed Deans’ support in advising and efforts in the different colleges.

* Budget Update

Due to the current budget constraints, G. Summers shared some pessimism for the possibility of all three proposed GEP administration positions being funded. He considered the Assessment Coordinator position as highest priority for funding. He explained that the upcoming Higher Learning Commission (HLC) visit would focus on assessment. The assessment program being put in place has been noted as “impressive” and “innovative” by assessment professionals, but he advised, the program will require much “hands-on” work with faculty and staff, as well as facilitation efforts. He viewed the assessment program as unsustainable without a coordinator to manage it properly; he sensed that the HLC would see it as unachievable without the presence of an Assessment Coordinator. G. Summers stated that conversations related to the budget recently were more about reductions; he advised that despite reductions there was still a need for strategic investment where necessary. A brief discussion followed on the possibility of combining the CAESE Director and Assessment Coordinator positions. The committee also discussed the Director of GEP and the First Year Experience Coordinator positions, and related work that could be accomplished via the GEC. Provost Nook will be attending the March 31 meeting to discuss the proposed GEP administration positions.

* Assessment

G. Summers voiced the need for UWSP to build a meaningful assessment process and supporting culture. He advised that the HLC will be looking for structures that are in place to support the assessment program.

N. Fernando questioned how the GEP was coordinated on other campuses. G. Summers responded that the GEP was usually coordinated in a university-wide office, typically the Provost’s office. He noted that with the re-organization of the Academic Affairs area, it wasn’t certain what structure would ultimately emerge. R. Sirabian expressed that there didn’t appear to be opposition to the GEP administration positions, but due to budget issues the positions were in competition with each other for funding. The GEPRC discussed the priority ranking for each of the proposed GEP positions. J. Schneider recommended that the proposal not be revised until after the GEPRC had the opportunity to meet with Provost Nook.

The committee discussed summer funding and whether it might be appropriate for the GEC to be funded for summer work. The GEC is responsible for the mapping of GDR courses to GEP designations to begin populating the GEP. The GEPRC discussed that GEC members may not be available during the summer months; the learning curve involved was also discussed. It was suggested that perhaps the mapping could be handled in a team approach; the GEPRC could prepare a first draft for the GEC. It was also suggested that new learning outcomes could be forwarded to departments for their assistance in the process as well. It was noted that until Step 5 was approved, this could not be done.

The GEPRC discussed the potential for delaying the start of the new GEP to 2013. The committee questioned what reaction the HLC might have to the delay. G. Summers advised that there was a question how the HLC would view the proposed first year alignment exercise; he suggested that delaying the start may actually be seen as a more acceptable alternative by the HLC. The delay would allow for a more meaningful mapping of courses and transition. He noted that regardless of the GEP start, the HLC comprehensive review would take place in 2017. He advised that Provost Nook would like the full curriculum assessed by that time. G. Summers sensed that if the Assessment Coordinator and the right procedures were in place, the HLC should be agreeable to the delay.

J. Schneider inquired if the First Year Seminar (FYS) courses offered this spring would be offered again in the fall. G. Summers responded that there will be approximately 25-26 FYS courses offered next fall. Some instructors will repeat their spring offerings while others have declined; some instructors will be teaching multiple sections. The committee discussed FYS feedback received from faculty and students.

The assessment plan was discussed briefly. It was noted that courses at the foundation level should have four years worth of assessment data, and English and Communication should also have 4-5 years of data. G. Summers shared that assessment would begin at the program level with a critical thinking pilot program. He noted that the pilot program would be comprehensive and would provide early feedback for the HLC.

* Degree Requirements

Committee members discussed GEPRC attendance at the upcoming AAC degree requirements open forums. Discussion followed on the degree requirements proposal.

5. The meeting was adjourned by general consent at 10:51 a.m.

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