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

**ROOM 110 NOEL FINE ARTS CENTER – March 31, 2011; 9 a.m.**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: N. Fernando (furlough)

VISITOR: M. Nook

1. G. Olsen called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

2. The minutes of March 17, 2011 were approved by general consent.

3. Discussion with Provost Nook regarding Step 6

The Associate’s Degree (AD) was discussed briefly. Provost Nook stated that the AD was an important piece of the GEP and should be communicated clearly. He shared that through the Project Win-Win initiative, approximately 200 students would be awarded the AD this spring. Data from this initiative showed that approximately ten students leave UWSP per year completing an AD without the AD being awarded or transcripted. Approximately 19 students leave UWSP each year who have only a minimal number of credits (six or less) left to complete an AD.

Committee members asked Provost Nook what he would like presented for needed general education program (GEP) staff and resources. G. Summers asked Provost Nook if it would be more helpful for the GEPRC to propose specific positions with specified responsibilities, or propose something more general such as a listing of responsibilities that will need to be addressed. Provost Nook encouraged the GEPRC to put forth recommendations through the faculty governance process. He stated that the GEP was critical and it would be valid for the GEPRC to put forth recommendations for needed staff. He suggested that the GEPRC approach the recommendations as a department would in making requests related to a new program; the department makes requests for resources needed to provide the new program. He advised that final decisions regarding resources were under the authority of the administration.

R. Sirabian questioned whether resources needed for the GEP would lessen resources available for department resources and staffing in particular the First Year Seminar (FYS) and Communication in the major. Provost Nook responded that there are limited resources. He advised that with the new GEP there will need to be a paradigm shift; departments will need to make changes to their curriculum. Students will have fewer GEP courses required; the lower GEP requirements could be offset for departments by FYS offerings. He noted that monies to develop the FYS were provided for two purposes, to determine how best to provide FYS and to support departments through the GEP transition. He advised that there had been an early investment made and it was anticipated that additional monies would be needed with implementation. He stressed the importance of departments thinking about how they are affected with the implementation of the new GEP and what changes might be needed. Provost Nook stated that assessment will be vital in making sure that a proper array of courses is being offered and learning outcomes are being satisfied. R. Sirabian asked if the GEP would be given priority related to resources. Provost Nook responded that a university could not run without a GEP. He clarified that GEP courses would be in departments and some tied to majors; he noted that it wouldn’t necessarily be a choice between resources for departments and the GEP, as much as curriculum and educating students. Provost Nook stated that UWSP has a history and legacy of providing a solid liberal arts education and skills. He anticipates that the new GEP will strengthen the general education offered at UWSP with the relationships it builds among the curriculum.

Provost Nook gave the GEPRC a budget update. He reported that the proposed budget reduction would not be figured in biennial math as was previously thought. The tuition increase of 5.5% per year authorized by the governor had not been approved to date by the Board of Regents (BOR). He advised that if a tuition increase was approved by the BOR, those additional monies would be used to offset the budget reduction. He noted that if differential tuition was put in place at UWSP that those additional monies could be focused to support the GEP and advising. Provost Nook reported on other potential areas of funding to offset the budget reduction. He advised that financial estimates were based upon continuation of present enrollment numbers. Some GEPRC members questioned whether cost savings measures could be implemented as soon as fall 2011 with registration taking place in the near future.

J. Schneider asked if tuition increases would be based upon biennial math. Provost Nook responded that they would. A brief discussion followed on tuition increases; it was noted that although the proposed increase wasn’t giant, no increase in tuition was insignificant. The group also discussed decreased Pell grant funding.

Provost Nook stated that although the state allocation was decreasing, the state would still be providing just fewer than 50% of the GPR funds for UWSP. He noted that the state was changing the model and UWSP would need to determine how best to work within the revised model. Provost Nook doesn’t anticipate state funding to increase to higher percentages of the past. He stated that the goal of UWSP would remain the same, to provide students with a good education to be successful upon leaving UWSP.

Discussion of the AD resumed; Provost Nook and the committee reviewed the AD transfer documentation. The group discussed whether it was necessary to include the Experiential Learning, Communication in the major, and Capstone components in the AD transfer document. The committee determined that those three items should be deleted from the transfer document. Only items that the AD satisfied would be included on the AD transfer document; although other areas could be evaluated to determine if credit could be given, those particular areas were not part of the AD. Provost Nook emphasized the need for AD credit to be standard regardless of where the AD was obtained. If an AD was completed there should be a standard listing of items that the AD satisfied. He noted that the UWSP AD and the list of satisfied items should be consistent. Provost Nook reminded the committee that the transfer policy would also need to take into account students who may transfer as upper classman. The group briefly discussed the pending revision of the AD at the UW System level. It was noted that the present UW System AD requirements were very specific. The present AD requirements dated back to 1987 and were somewhat inconsistent with newer models. G. Summers will contact UW System to find out the status of the revision.

Provost Nook shared that he was on a UW System task force for prior learning assessment. He anticipated that the work of the task force would be completed in May. He noted that the information from the task force should be helpful to the GEPRC in decisions regarding test-out and credit-by-exam. He advised that the task force would be proposing the use of portfolios; credit for prior learning would be based upon learning rather than experience. Provost Nook stated that departments will need a policy and mechanism in place to award credit for prior learning; he encouraged flexibility. J. Schneider asked whose purview it was to determine test-out and placement in the GEP. Provost Nook responded that the GEPRC could make a recommendation. Some means of awarding credit for past learning would need to be determined. A discussion followed on the unique use of entrance/placement exams for foreign language test-out, and issues related to test-out for mathematics and quantitative literacy. The GEPRC will solicit advice from the Mathematical Sciences area in regards to mathematics and quantitative literacy. Provost Nook noted that the means for determining prior learning would also be a part of the assessment process. Through the process of assessment, it would be determined whether the means being used was successful or might need some revision. He emphasized the need to evaluate prior learning to ensure that students were getting in the right courses and being awarded proper credit. The GEPRC discussed the need for some sort of a statement related to consistency of credit for prior learning.

D. Guay asked Provost Nook if he had any guidance regarding transition from the general degree requirements (GDR) to the GEP. Provost Nook responded that his number one rule is that no student will be hurt due to the transition. Students should not have to take additional courses related to the transition; he advised that both the GDR and the GEP will need to be in place for a time to allow for transition. He stated that GDR and GEP courses should be mapped based upon the course descriptions; he encouraged leniency rather than being overly strict. He noted that the mapping of general education courses would be the responsibility of the General Education Committee.

J. Schneider stated that the learning curve for GEP advising would be quite steep. Provost Nook agreed that GEP advising education sessions would be needed; he suggested some training times and the possibility of mandatory attendance. J. Houghton noted the importance of an online advising resource. G. Summers advised that an online advising resource was in development. Provost Nook directed that GEP advising training should take place prior to the GEP courses being available for registration; he noted that resources would be made available to help facilitate the advisor training needed.

Provost Nook thanked the GEPRC for its work and extended an offer, if needed, for future discussion.

 4. Announcements.

* G. Summers distributed a draft General Education Implementation Timeline. He advised the GEPRC that Provost Nook had agreed to delay implementing the GEP to Fall 2013. At the request of Provost Nook, the timeline was created to clarify the steps between the present time and Fall 2013. G. Summers noted that the delay would benefit the campus by providing additional time for advisor training, better understanding of the new GEP, and needed revisions related to degree requirements. It would also help to resolve some issues related to assessment and for compliance in informing UW-College students of a new GEP two years in advance. G. Summers asked for GEPRC members to provide him with feedback on the timeline draft.
* G. Summers shared that the HLC Assessment Academy team was presently at the point of processing feedback. He noted that the new assessment plan was a departure from what was traditional. The new assessment plan would be based on learning outcomes and provide for more meaningful data. He advised that Provost Nook recognized what was trying to be accomplished and was supportive.
* D. Guay inquired what the status was of the Step 5d proposal. G. Summers responded that the Step 5d proposal had not been discussed at the March 14 Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) meeting; the March 28 AAC meeting didn’t take place in lieu of open forums for degree requirements. A brief discussion followed on degree requirements revisions. D. Guay questioned whether it was anticipated that the Step 5d proposal would be on the April 4 AAC agenda. R. Olson responded that he had spoken with Mick Veum and anticipated that the Step 5d proposal would be addressed at the next AAC meeting.
* J. Schneider reported that the Center for Academic Excellence and Student Engagement was open to facilitating advising workshops. G. Summers suggested a two-year program for advising development. The first year would focus on advising in general and the second year on GEP advising.

The committee discussed how to move forward with the GEP position recommendations. It was suggested that a general recommendation be put forth at this time so the GEP responsibilities could be incorporated in budget decisions taking place over the next months. Full position description recommendations could be put forth next fall.

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

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