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

**ROOM 110 NOEL FINE ARTS CENTER – April 28, 2011; 9 a.m.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: J. Houghton, R. Olson, J. Sage, J. Schneider, G. Summers

MEMBERS ABSENT: M. Bixby (excused), N. Fernando (excused), D. Guay (excused); G. Olsen (excused); R. Sirabian

1. J. Sage called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

2. Announcements.

J. Schneider and G. Summers announced that degree requirements had passed Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) and would be moving forth to Faculty Senate for action. J. Sage asked if there was anything to note with the degree requirements. G. Summers shared that he anticipates discussion regarding foreign language not being a component in the B.F.A. and B.M. He also anticipates that the B.S. degree definition may generate discussion. He noted that although mathematics was referred to in the B.S. degree definition, there wasn’t an absolute requirement. The rationale for this was related to the diverse programs offering a B.S. and establishing a degree definition that covers all B.S. programs. J. Schneider stated that each degree definition included a descriptor line of what needed to be embedded into the major to satisfy the degree type. A brief discussion followed on possible varying perspectives related to degree requirements. J. Schneider sensed that there may still be a desire for listings of courses; J. Sage agreed. J. Sage cautioned that a listing of courses may become a hindrance with students potentially having listed requirements that are lower level than major requirements that would need to be satisfied. A brief discussion followed on a foreign language requirement in the B.F.A. and B.M. J. Sage noted that B.M. and B.F.A. programs were externally accredited and had standards that were accountable to external agencies. The GEPRC discussed the various programs offering B.S. degrees. Discussion followed on the evolution of the degree requirements from the first GEPRC proposal to the approved AAC proposal.

J. Schneider shared a student’s question regarding the requirement of general degree requirement (GDR) credits and the subsequent discussion with the student. The GEPRC discussed the increase in coursework over time in the GDR and some professional programs to accommodate advanced knowledge and advancements in the field.

J. Schneider inquired who would have authority for setting Math 90 as a remedial course. G. Summers responded that that would be under the purview of the AAC; the GEPRC could put forth a proposal as a subcommittee of AAC. J. Schneider shared information regarding math requirements from UW-Lacrosse, UW-Oshkosh, and UW-Eau Claire. A brief discussion followed on the status of a Department of Public Instruction minimum four-year mathematics requirement for high school graduation.

3. Old Business.

Form: GEP Course Application & Approval

J. Sage noted that that forms would begin via a paper process and not electronic at this point. R. Olson stated that what enrollment is being requested should be specified. G. Summers noted that presently enrollment referenced on the curriculum forms pertained to section enrollment. The enrollment expected area was updated to specify “per section.”

The committee discussed whether individual faculty potentially teaching the course should be listed or if a broader qualification such as “member of department” or those completing specific training would be appropriate. J. Houghton questioned how the General Education Committee (GEC) would determine instructor qualifications without individual instructor names. G. Summers noted that what was required (a specific faculty listing or broad qualifications required) would be dependent upon the course. G. Summers and J. Houghton stated that if the GEC had questions, it would need to follow up with the appropriate department for answers. J. Schneider added that once a course was approved, it was approved regardless of who may teach it in the future. G. Summers noted that after a course was approved it would be up to the department to staff it properly unless a clause was built in for review. The additional notation of “name of instructor/s, or brief description of preparation/qualification/training” was added to clarify what was being sought in the “who will teach course” area.

A preamble on the coversheet was the only remaining area to be completed on the GEP Course Application & Approval form. G. Summers advised that the GEP Course Application & Approval form would need to be complete and ready for use the first day of fall 2011 semester.

Form: GEP Course Portfolio Assessment

G. Summers suggested that the GEPRC delay discussion on the GEP Course Portfolio Assessment form until the assessment plan had been completed. He suggested that the GEPRC move to discussion of the general education assessment plan proposal.

4. New Business.

General Education Assessment

J. Schneider asked if on page 2 of the proposal was the first time that the general education program (GEP) learning outcomes had been mapped to the different GEP levels; she noted that this was the first time that she recalled seeing them mapped. G. Summers stated that there was a curriculum map in Step 4 information; he noted that ideally all learning outcomes should be carried through the curriculum. J. Sage and G. Summers acknowledged that the mapping wasn’t perfect and some flexibility would be required.

G. Summers informed the GEPRC that the *University Handbook* changes for assessment would be an item before the AAC at its next meeting. He inquired, if the proposal was approved, if the Executive Committee might be able to give conditional approval of the changes since the AAC action wouldn’t get to Faculty Senate until fall 2011. R. Olson responded that he would prefer that proposed changes to the *University Handbook* go before the full Faculty Senate. He noted that Todd Huspeni had been a member of the AAC and would have background of the action to put it forth appropriately at the Faculty Senate next fall.

G. Summers gave background and current status of the Assessment Subcommittee proposed name change. At this time a proposal has not been put forth to change the name. A constitutional amendment proposal will be put forth in the future that incorporates all needed updates and may include a subcommittee name change.

J. Schneider noted under “the General Education Assessment Process” it stated that “At the beginning of each academic year, the GEC will establish Assessment Teams for each area of the curriculum being assessed during that year.” She asked how learning outcomes to be assessed would be established. G. Summers explained that each faculty member would assess one learning outcome; the team would gather information on all of the learning outcomes. J. Sage added that individual faculty would choose what learning outcome to assess. J. Houghton questioned what would happen if a specific learning outcome wasn’t assessed. G. Summers and J. Sage agreed that the lack of assessment might be revealing in itself. J. Schneider asked who would be submitting portfolios for assessment. G. Summers responded that all faculty teaching GEP courses in the academic year would be required to submit an assessment portfolio. J. Schneider questioned whether instructors were aware that all learning outcomes needed to be assessed; she questioned whether it was a good idea to leave the assessment of all learning outcomes to chance. J. Sage advised that assigning learning outcomes would equate to telling an instructor what to do in his/her classroom. He advised that learning outcomes being assessed might change throughout the year. G. Summers concurred; he noted his preference in leaving the learning outcome assessment choice to the individual faculty member. He advised that a learning outcome not assessed may require additional focused study the subsequent year. G. Summers emphasized that philosophically, any assessment work done should be useful immediately to the faculty as an individual. R. Olson added that learning outcome priorities might very likely differ among faculty members depending upon discipline, course, etc.

J. Houghton stated that the proposed assessment plan would require participation of approximately 40-48 faculty members. J. Sage agreed that it would require a serious investment of human resources. He noted that if the Deans’ support and expectations were communicated regarding participation in assessment that would be helpful in garnering participation. Discussion followed on competing priorities and expectations. The scholarship of teaching and learning was also discussed. J. Sage shared an idea that had been brought up by a member of the Center for Academic Excellence and Student Engagement advisory board for sharing teaching and learning experiences. G. Summers advised that there will be much time and effort invested in assessing what is happening in the classroom; he noted the benefit of the information being published and valued as a scholarly activity.

J. Schneider inquired who would provide training for the assessment teams. G. Summers responded that the training would fall under the responsibilities of the Assessment Coordinator.

J. Schneider noted that the proposal called for individual feedback to be provided to instructors. She asked if all individually identifying information would be stripped from the information prior to it being shared with department chairs, deans, etc. J. Sage confirmed that the individual feedback would be only for the individual faculty members.

J. Houghton asked when assessment teams would review instructor assessment portfolios; he noted that most faculty were nine month appointments. G. Summers responded that assessment team participants would be paid for additional time over the summer months. J. Houghton advised that most College of Natural Resources (CNR) faculty were involved in summer programs which might limit the participation of the CNR. J. Sage stated that assessment teams would be formed during the fall semester. Assessment portfolios from the fall semester were proposed to be submitted by January 15; the assessment teams would begin review work in the spring semester. He advised that the proposed deadline for assessment portfolios from the spring semester is June 1. He anticipated that subsets of the teams could work over the summer months. A brief discussion followed on the contract year-end date. J. Sage advised that institutional level assessment would also be taking place and could be incorporated into the assessment report.

Discussion followed regarding implementing the assessment plan in the current work atmosphere. J. Sage and G. Summers stated that not assessing the GEP was not an option for UWSP. J. Sage advised that an alternative option would be imposing upon students an external assessment measure that has no faculty involvement and not necessarily meaningful. Discussion followed on differing assessment perspectives and the need to convey the right message regarding assessment. It was noted that information from assessment must be found useful, the assessment process must be engaging such that it produces energy to sustain the work, and the work must be appreciated via retention and tenure.

J. Sage suggested that each member of the GEC representing a specific category of the GEP could serve as the head of an assessment team. J. Houghton agreed that it was a good suggestion, but noted that for the upcoming year it could not be implemented as those elected were not aware of the additional responsibility. J. Sage stated that the assessment teams wouldn’t necessarily come into play until the GEP was populated. The GEPRC agreed to incorporate the suggestion into the proposed assessment plan. G. Summers noted that his understanding was that the Assessment Coordinator was to serve as coordinator of the assessment teams; he questioned whether some non-voting members would be desired on the assessment teams.

The GEPRC discussed similarities of instituting the assessment portfolio and course evaluations. G. Summers emphasized the need for language to be included in the *University Handbook* that clearly stated that individual faculty assessment information would have no impact whatsoever in retention or tenure, unless the faculty member chose to share the information. J. Sage asked if an assessment portfolio could be requested by the provost. G. Summers reiterated that the assessment portfolio would only be accessible to the assessment team or GEC. The team report would be stripped of all individual identifying information; the team report would be public information. J. Schneider asked if there would be any conversation at the individual instructor level related to assessment. G. Summers anticipated that if conversation was needed, the Assessment Coordinator or representative from the GEC would serve that role. J. Schneider confirmed that conversations would not be shared with department chairs.

The GEPRC discussed the assessment portfolio R. Olson informed the GEPRC that if an assessment portfolio contained samples of student work, it would be considered private and not subject to open record law. J. Houghton noted that the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act would require that all student names be removed from information. G. Summers suggested specifying that the assessment portfolio and individual assessment information were private.

J. Houghton inquired if approval for assessment measures would need to be obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). G. Summers responded that IRB approval would not be needed for assessment done for internal use; if assessment information was published then students would need to be informed and IRB approval would be needed. J. Sage noted the careful balance between privacy and scholarly use of teaching and learning information. Discussion followed on issues related to maintaining instructor privacy. G. Summers noted the importance of allowing for room in the assessment process to fail without being punished. Additional discussion ensued regarding privacy of individual instructor assessment feedback.

5. The meeting was adjourned by general consent at 11:08 a.m.

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