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

**ROOM 110 NOEL FINE ARTS CENTER – May 5, 2011; 9 a.m.**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: M. Bixby

1. D. Guay called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. D. Guay added “summer schedule” to the agenda as the first item under new business.

2. The minutes of April 14, 2011, April 21, 2011, and April 28, 2011 were approved by general consent subject to minor edits.

3. Announcements.

D. Guay announced that degree requirements had been approved by Faculty Senate.

J. Schneider reported that she had met with Patricia Ploetz, Center of Academic Excellence and Student Engagement, regarding advising workshops and training. She shared a tentative plan of workshops and training. The year of general advising workshops would kick-off with the Wisconsin Academic Advising Association conference, hosted by UW-Stevens Point next September. Two subsequent workshops were planned for the fall; one would focus on assessment. In January 2012 the teaching conference will be held; a component of the conference could be how faculty could develop themselves professionally in the advising realm. A workshop is planned prior to spring break and an April workshop to introduce the general education program (GEP). A series of training opportunities will take place in 2012-2013 prior to the GEP implementation focusing on transitioning from the general degree requirements (GDR) to the GEP; advising resources, paper and electronic format, will be available at that time. J. Schneider noted that the proposed schedule was ambitious.

It was noted that a meeting of G. Summers, J. Schneider, and Angie Kellogg with Dean Cirmo was scheduled. J. Schneider shared the importance in determining what faculty wanted regarding advising training. The College of Letters and Science (COLS) faculty advising preferences and issues will be discussed with Dean Cirmo. She noted that the other colleges tended to have advising practices that were more systemized. N. Fernando shared that CPS advising representatives have been meeting as a group; they were hopeful that the efforts would help the transition to the GEP. J. Schneider inquired who was leading the group. N. Fernando responded that Julia King and Maggie Beeber had taken lead of the CPS group. J. Sage suggested that Rhonda Sprague would be a good resource; she had talked with COLS chairs earlier in the semester regarding assessment of advising.

4. Old Business: General Education Assessment

D. Guay asked the status of the GEP assessment plan. J. Houghton shared that he had given much thought to resolution of concerns related to individual faculty assessment data. He noted that a level of trust would be needed; trust that the assessment information would not be used in a manner in which it was not designed. He questioned if it was possible to put safe guards into the policy that would alleviate concerns. Discussion followed on concerns related to individual faculty assessment data and current information used for evaluating faculty. G. Summers questioned whether the assessment would be robust enough to determine what component (e.g. instruction, student unpreparedness, etc.) was responsible in those cases where the learning objectives were not met. J. Houghton noted that when course evaluations were put in place they were designed to be information for the individual faculty member. He advised that course evaluations are now requested for retention, promotion, and tenure evaluation purposes. J. Sage suggested that in addition to the GEP assessment policy in the *University Handbook*, safeguards could be included in the document provided by the provost for teaching, research, and service. He added that the backing of the deans would also be helpful in stopping any issues at the college level; the deans could be an additional safeguard. J. Sage reiterated a statement made by G. Summers that there should be room to fail as long as it was a constructive, reflective type of failure. G. Summers offered that trust would still be a component and a consistent assessment culture was needed. He advised that policy should be clear in the *University Handbook* to build upon, and if necessary to fall back upon. D. Guay questioned if the policy should be proposed as part of Step 6. G. Summers stated that procedurally the action should be processed through Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC). R. Olson advised that the most efficient means would be to forward a proposed draft policy to FAC. J. Sage suggested that the GEPRC contact Kevin Hefferan to inform him of the assessment plan and proposed policy for safeguards prior to next academic year; G. Summers agreed. He informed the GEPRC that depending on the outcome of the collective bargaining question, there could be implications to assessment policy.

J. Houghton noted that on page 3 under “The General Education Assessment Process”, item 1, it stated that “Each team will include 8-12 faculty members teaching courses in the areas under review.” He questioned whether a number less than that could accomplish the task. Discussion followed on what would be the minimum number that could effectively accomplish the assessment team (AT) task and whether the Assessment Coordinator (AC) and General Education Committee (GEC) representative were included in the AT number. Committee consensus was that AT membership should be adjusted to 4-6 faculty members; the AC and the GEC representative would be in addition to the faculty members. The GEPRC discussed GEC members representing a GEP category as members of the AT. D. Guay asked if modification should be made to the assessment plan to direct that the GEC GEP category representative is a member of the appropriate AT. J. Sage noted that the responsibility hadn’t been included as part of the GEC information but perhaps could be incorporated as a general operating procedure. G. Summers suggested that the provision be included in the assessment plan; the GEC could be notified and the provision incorporated into GEC procedures. J. Houghton inquired when ATs would first begin activity. G. Summers anticipated that it would be approximately two years before the ATs would be formed. J. Houghton advised that it wouldn’t be an issue for current GEC members who ran for the positions without knowing of the added responsibility; none of the current GEC members would have a term longer than two years. J. Houghton inquired if the GEC was subject to term limits. R. Olson confirmed that term limits would apply to GEC members.

G. Summers noted his concern of workload and meeting schedules during the academic year. J. Sage stated that there shouldn’t be an enormous amount of work required of the ATs during the fall. He shared that AT groups would require some time in the fall to form as a group. The first assessment portfolios from summer and fall courses would be submitted January 15. J. Sage questioned if the AT would be requested to start review of assessment portfolios in the spring semester. G. Summers noted that in the fall semester AT members, with the AC, could serve as resource people to faculty putting assessment portfolios together. The AC would be the primary resource person; the AT members could be additional resources. J. Schneider asked if there would be too long a time between summer and fall courses and feedback the following summer. G. Summers questioned whether it might be beneficial to form the ATs in the spring semester prior to help guide and shape the process, as well as helping to field questions. D. Guay agreed that forming the teams earlier might be helpful, especially for the first assessment cycles. G. Summers shared that he could see the benefit of assessment meetings during the pre-contract period to orient faculty undergoing assessment to the process. He again noted his concern of the extra workload involved. He advised that assessment was integral to successful instructing, but it wasn’t something that was presently being done and there still was plenty of work. He questioned how the issue might be resolved. J. Schneider asked if assessment could be considered as scholarship. She suggested that that might make the assessment task more attractive to those interested in scholarship. G. Summers shared that the idea of an online journal had been shared with the Teaching Conference Committee; Kathy Davis was interested in pursuing the idea. He noted that UW-Milwaukee had a strong presence in the UW System for scholarship of teaching and learning; UW-Stevens Point would still have a variety of niche areas it could be involved in.

G. Olsen inquired how Capstone and Communication in the Major would be assessed with the GEP and department integration. He questioned if they would be assessed at the department level. G. Summers responded that Capstone would be the culminating experience for majors and he anticipated that departments would assess the Capstone from that vantage. He suggested that it might be advantageous to use Capstone assessment throughout the process to get back to program level outcomes; Capstone learning outcomes were fairly basic and pointed back to program level outcomes. The Capstones could be divided into several groups with some being used each year. J. Sage questioned if the Capstones could be coordinated with the reporting cycle. A brief discussion followed on assessment of the Capstone requirement. G. Olsen noted that it was possible that some Capstones wouldn’t address all four program learning outcomes. G. Summers advised that a strategic schedule would need to be determined that made sense based upon program learning outcomes.

J. Sage put forth a general timeline for ATs which would begin with the call for AT members in the spring semester. The ATs would meet in the pre-semester timeframe; during the fall semester the AT would form, act as a resource, and may review previous assessment report findings in preparation for future assessment scheduled. In the spring the AT could begin reviewing January submissions and providing individual feedback. In the summer a core AT group could work with the GEC and AC to write a summary report; the summary report would have all identifying information removed. J. Sage questioned how spring assessment portfolios would get individual feedback. G. Summers responded that individual feedback from spring assessment portfolios might need to be an additional responsibility of the summer group. J. Sage stated that if that was the case, then it may require that the larger AT group remain together beyond the contract period to provide consistent feedback. This would involve additional payment to all AT members. J. Schneider suggested that the larger group could provide feedback and a smaller core group work on summary reports. G. Summers questioned whether the AC could provide the summary report; the AT would provide individual feedback and provide suggestions to the AC for the summary report. A draft of the summary report could be provided to the AT for input prior to submission to the GEC. G. Olsen suggested winterim and spring courses could be assessed in the fall, and summer and fall courses could be assessed in the spring. He acknowledged that this schedule would delay receipt of individual feedback but shouldn’t require work over the summer months. G. Summers proposed assessing only in the fall; he questioned if that might be a realistic way of handling the workload concern. The assessment process would take place in the spring semester. D. Guay questioned whether a consistent assessment portfolio deadline of January 15 might be helpful; assessment would be on the calendar year rather than academic year. He asked if each faculty member teaching a course would need to provide an assessment portfolio or if faculty could combine efforts and submit one assessment portfolio for each course. The GEPRC discussed the benefits of assessing only summer and fall courses related to workload, financial implications, and summer responsibilities. J. Sage noted that the summer/fall assessment could be a starting point with the potential of eventually assessing spring courses too. D. Guay inquired how the GEPRC felt about a provision of one assessment portfolio for each course. Discussion followed on the advantages and disadvantages of a collaborative assessment portfolio. N. Fernando shared that for Interior Architecture accreditation, a course binder was requested that was a compilation of all sections/instructors for specific courses. Discussion followed on leaving the decision to the discretion of departments, in consultation with the AC. The GEPRC continued discussion on “individual faculty” versus “course” assessment portfolios; expectations relating to adjunct faculty were also briefly discussed. J. Houghton questioned whether the assessment being proposed might allow some courses or instructors to elude assessment. He suggested that over the course of the review cycle that full assessment of courses and instructors take place. J. Schneider stated that if all GEP instructors were required to submit an assessment portfolio for each GEP course taught, that would amount to a huge number of assessment portfolios being submitted. GEPRC members discussed the potential number of assessment portfolios and the work required in creating an assessment portfolio. G. Olsen noted the benefits of a well presented assessment portfolio. R. Sirabian proposed that the ATs could require individual or group assessment portfolios based upon what was deemed appropriate.

J. Sage questioned whether faculty could submit assessment information for feedback for professional development that wasn’t necessarily in sync with the reporting cycle. G. Summers noted that realistically the ATs most likely wouldn’t have time for the additional work, but advised there should be room for the option of an instructor with five years of assessment data. R. Sirabian advised that multiple years of material could be included in the assessment report. He noted the benefit of adding yearly assessment information to the report annually for ease in creating the scheduled assessment report.

D. Guay asked if there was GEPRC consensus for summer and fall assessment. G. Summers questioned how that would work for Capstone courses. G. Olsen advised that departments could be responsible for assessing the Capstone. D. Guay asked about courses offered only in the spring that might be missed. Discussion followed on sequential and spring-only courses. G. Summers questioned what might be considered “good enough.” G. Olsen stated that summer/fall would be a starting point. D. Guay asked how the number of assessment portfolios would be determined; would every instructor put forth a portfolio or only a set percentage. G. Summers advised that requiring individual instructor GEP courses to submit an assessment portfolio would amount to an enormous number of portfolios. Discussion followed on submission of assessment portfolios. G. Summers suggested that portfolios could be submitted from every course. Areas with multiple sections taught by multiple faculty could consult with the AC to collaborate on one assessment portfolio that would be representative. This would provide an assessment portfolio for every course but not every instructor. D. Guay confirmed that the assessment portfolio would be reviewed by the AT and feedback to instructors would be provided by the end of the semester. He questioned if the summary report would be written by the AC or the AT. G. Summers suggested that the ATs could write the summary reports during the spring semester.

G. Summers advised that the HLC Assessment Academy team would revise the assessment plan to incorporate the items discussed by the GEPRC.

D. Guay inquired if there were any additional issues to be discussed regarding the assessment plan. J. Schneider asked who would define how program assessment would work. G. Summers responded that the assessment plan also provided guidance for department review.

5. New Business.

Summer schedule: GEPRC members discussed a summer meeting time. The GEPRC meeting time over the summer months will be Tuesday, 1-3 p.m. beginning May 31. The GEPRC will not meet May 19 or May 26.

D. Guay shared that Kami Weis would be attending the GEPRC May 12 meeting. She will be looking for feedback and concerns related to the Associate Degree (A.D.). A brief discussion followed on A.D. learning outcomes. G. Summers suggested that GEPRC members review the Lumina Foundation degree profiles for the A.D.; he noted that they were outcome based standards. He shared that the Lumina Foundation supported the establishment of consistent degrees nationwide.

Step 6: The Step 6 outline was reviewed. J. Schneider stated that there was a new folder, Test-Out, Credit-by-Exam, Placement, for examples of math placement from other comparable institutions. D. Guay requested that GEPRC members review the mapping document provided by Dan Kellogg; he asked that members look at the specific areas they had dealt with. G. Olsen noted that most areas seemed obvious but there were some areas that were questionable, such as Social Science 2. G. Summers suggested that mapping that was straightforward be drafted; mapping that was questionable be noted as needing GEC review.

6. The meeting was adjourned by general consent at 10:47 a.m.

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