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General Studies

12-7-2023

December 2023 General Studies Council Minutes

University of Nebraska at Kearney General Studies Council

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General Studies Council

December 7, 2023

3:30 PM, Warner Conference Room

****Formerly the Chancellor's Dining Room, second floor of NSU****

**** Approved via Email ****

Present: Greg Benson, Derek Boeckner, Jonathan Dettman, Steve Hall, Megan Hartman, Kate Heelan, Suzanne Maughan Spencer, Tami Moore, Noel Palmer, Rochelle Reeves, Whitney Schneider-Cline, Mallory Wetherell, Melissa Wuellner, Mark Ellis, Jessie Bialas, Joel Cardenas, John Gibbs, Lisa Neal, Beth Hinga, Jacob Howe

Guests: Dr. Shaffer, Temo Molina, David Vail, Linda Van Ingen, Amber Alexander, Tim Jares

Absent: Greg Brown

I. Call to order:

- Presentation of the Inaugural Award for Excellence in Teaching General Studies (2022-2023 academic year)
 - Howe presented the Award for Excellence in Teaching General Studies to Dr. Vail.
- Approve Agenda
 - Moore/Dettman moved to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**
- Minutes from November 2, 2023 meeting (approved via email)
- Information Items
 - Need for LOPER 1 (LOPR 126) courses for spring 2024.
 - Gibbs stated they were able to get 3 additional sections for Spring 2024 and he is not confident any more sections would fill if they are added.
 - Approval of LOPR 126 Friendship Across Borders (Modern Languages, Philosophy, and Communications)
 - LOPR 126 Friendship Across Borders was submitted for review. Dr. Shaffer gave special permission for the General Studies Director to review the course. Dettman stated the course is currently held up in Ed Policy.
 - Removal of all remaining 188 and 388 courses from the academic catalog beginning in 2024-25 (this was approved when the LOPERs GS Program was approved)
 - Any remaining students that need a 188 (Portal) or 388 (Capstone) class should first be evaluated for moving to a newer catalog and

the LOPERs GS Program. If that would unfairly impact the student's academic progress then the academic advisor, the Registrar's office, and the Director of General Studies will develop an individual plan for substituting classes to ensure that the student has 45 credits of General Studies classes and meets all learning objectives as fully as possible (this should be less than 10 students).

II. Business

- Governance Document Revisions
 - GSC Composition
 - Wetherell said she would like to keep the Council composition the way it currently is now. Benson asked if the number of general studies courses that CAS offers will change when the faculty numbers change. He stated the current composition is not fair. Heelan asked if the Council is concerned about who teaches general studies courses or the good of the students. She stated every faculty member has students taking general studies courses. Hall stated what is important is what general studies courses the students should be taking not who teaches the courses. Dettman stated he can't vote to reduce the representation of his college. Boeckner stated the Council has already changed the voting structure and he thinks maybe the composition should be tabled.
 - Ellis stated the Council needs to keep moving forward and that a decision needs to be made. The Council cannot make any progress on new courses until the Governance Document is taken care of.
 - Hartman stated that she thinks that the comments on the faculty Canvas page are often ignored and suggested a 5/3/3/1 composition to acknowledge the comments and concerns that have been expressed. Wuellner said with a 5/3/3/1 there is still a way for a college to hold up the vote. Benson suggested 6/4/4/1.
 - Moore/Schneider-Cline moved to accept the proposed Council composition of 4 CAS/3 CBT/3 COE/1 Library. The 4 from CAS would be 1 from each division (Natural Sciences/Social Sciences/Humanities/Communication and Fine and Performing Arts). **Yes-8/No-5 Motion Carried**
 - Other things to consider about GSC Composition
 - How is someone appointed or elected to GSC?
 - Wetherell suggested that the Dean's making suggestions is good because the Dean's know the faculty members. She likes the idea of members being nominated.

- The consensus of the Council was to not alter the way Council members are appointed to the Council.
 - How long is the term of service? How many terms can a person serve?
 - The consensus of the Council was to not alter the term of service.
 - Removal of committee member for non-participation?
 - Boeckner/Schneider-Cline moved that a proxy attending the Council meeting would be considered an absence for the Council member. **Yes-10 /No-2/Abstain-1 motion carried.**
 - Should a department chair be on the committee?
 - Schneider-Cline stated that there have been times only the chair in her department is tenured.
- GS Mission

Mission

To support the university's academic mission by developing students' knowledge, skills, and abilities to understand the world, make connections across disciplines, foster their curiosity, and contribute to the solutions of contemporary problems.

Vision

To build characteristics of well-rounded, well-informed, productive individuals through development of

- *Oral and written communication*
- *Quantitative skills*
- *Skill in critical and ethical evaluation of information and environment*
- *The ability to locate, evaluate, apply, and acknowledge sources of information*
- *Social and civic responsibility*
- *Self-empowerment to excel academically, creatively, and practically*
- *Understanding of the physical world and its interactions*
- *Aesthetic appreciation*
- *Respect for and understanding of diversity in a local and global context*
- *Awareness of the different aspects of wellness*

- Benson/Heelan moved to approve the new Mission/Vision Statement. **Yes-12/No-0/Abstain-1 Motion Carried**
- Other revisions to Governance Document

- Name Change to General Education
 - Benson/Palmer moved to change the name from General Studies Program to General Education Program
Yes-13/No-0 Motion Carried
- What constitutes a quorum?
 - The consensus of the Council was to not alter what constitutes a quorum.
- What to do with a tie vote
 - The consensus of the Council was that the new voting policy is a simple majority plus one so a tie vote does not apply.
- 8 days before GSC meeting to submit a course proposal.
 - The consensus of the Council was to table this topic as the General Studies Director was absent.
- Recommend removal of a course from GS program for failure to comply with assessment or failure to acceptably meet learning outcomes.
 - Wuellner stated that when looking at assessment the Council needs to look at the history of the course not just one semester/academic year. Boeckner suggested that a committee get together to discuss this and come up with a proposal. Heelan stated that because the instructor is not doing a good job teaching the course does not mean the course itself should be removed. Wetherell said this may not happen very often and maybe the Council just needs some general language. Moore stated it would be best to take care of how assessments are completed before a decision is made on if a course is removed from the General Studies program.

III. Other:

- GSC retreat between end of fall semester and beginning of spring semester to complete revisions to governance document.

IV. **Adjournment: Moore/Hartman moved to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned @ 4:58 pm.**

Next meeting: February 1, 2024 @ 3:30 pm- Warner Conference Room