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General Education Council

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9-2-2004

### September 2004 General Studies Council Minutes

University of Nebraska at Kearney General Studies Council

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**UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT KEARNEY  
GENERAL STUDIES COUNCIL  
Meeting of September 2, 2004  
Room 310 in the Nebraskan Student Union  
MINUTES**

**PRESENT:**

**Faculty:** Peg Camp, Valerie Cisler, Randall Heckman, Sonja Kropp, Larry Kuskie, John Lillis, Marta Moorman, Kenya Taylor, Vern Volpe, and Ed Walker

**Ex officio/non-voting members:** Kristi Milks, Glen Powell, Tanis Saldivar, Kim Schipporeit, and Bill Wozniak

**Kristi Milks, Glen Powell, Tanis Saldivar, Kim Schipporeit, and Bill Wozniak**

**Visitor:** Dr. Finnie Murray

**Absent:** Sandy Cook-Fong and Mary Daake

**Wozniak called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. in Room 310 in the Nebraskan Student Union.**

**A. REVIEW OF THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 19, 2004**The August 19, 2004 minutes were approved via e-mail.

**B. CD/WI COURSE SUBMISSIONS.**

**1. Writing Intensive:**

**a. none**

**2. Cultural Diversity:**

**a. none**

**C.**

**D. OLD BUSINESS**

**1. none**

**E. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Announcements:**

**Dr. Wozniak will be making a proposal at the Faculty Senate meeting tonight regarding moving the Writing Intensive and Cultural Diversity course approval process to Academic Affairs.**

**2. Discussion with Dr. Finnie Murray, SVCAASL**

**Dr. Murray made some opening remarks:**

- Dr. Murray asked the Council to understand that he will probably inadvertently use the terms General Studies, General Education, Liberal Studies, and Liberal Education interchangeably.
- General Education is the basis for an education rather than training.
- General Education is fundamental to a University being successful.
- General Education is indispensable and is our responsibility to prepare graduates for a rapidly changing world.
- With Liberal Education course requirements, many times parents and students are fearful they are receiving a compromised education. Not everyone understands Liberal Education and we need to communicate so everyone understands.
- We must communicate to students the value of a liberal studies education-to develop the capacity for critical thinking; to provide students with the ability for self-regulated judgment-to analyze and interpret information; to provide students with an education that serves as the basis for a lifetime of learning. Students must have an understanding of cultures and values other than their own and become involved in common service.
- Everyone needs to agree on what Liberal Education really means.
- Several Nebraska institutions are participating in the American Democracy Project (sponsored by AASCU and the New York Times) and we need to decide if we would be interested in participating. Dr. Murray supports the initiative.
- The General Studies Council needs to be willing to assess the effectiveness of our General Studies.
- The curriculum is the faculty's property. It is the responsibility of the faculty to look at the curriculum to make sure it is working well. It is imperative of the faculty to have ownership and it is vitally important to the success of this institution.
- Dr. Murray urges all faculty members to put students first in deliberations. What faculty members need is secondary. Just how well is our General Studies Program working for our students? Dr. Murray urged the Council to hold open dialogues with the campus; we need to have concise, understandable recommendations. Also, we need to assume we and our colleagues have capacity for a collegial discussion. The discussion should first focus on what we would like our students to have as a result of their General Studies Program (i.e., student outcomes.) The discussion of specific courses should come much later.
- Dr. Murray offered an example of how the review of Liberal Studies was taken up at another institution-by first agreeing ahead of time how discussion of

principles would be undertaken; then deciding what students need (agreeing that one's own discipline could not be put on the table by faculty members from that discipline); deciding then if there were any "holes;" then taking a semester to have open forums and discussions to provide focus for a new program.

- We must decide what the essential elements of a General Studies program, always keeping the students' needs at the center of our discussions.
- Assessment is important to how general studies are evaluated and advanced at UNK. We all need to be working to find ways we can be effective in assessment. It needs to begin immediately.
- Clearly defined governance and rules for decision making will also be important for General Studies.
- Review and assessment are vital to the institution's future and are expected on an increasing level. Dr. Murray recommended that we begin to assess our program in light of the APR suggestions. We must exhibit critical thinking in providing a set of reasons why we don't consider the recommended changes or the reasons why we feel what we're doing is better than what they proposed.

Wozniak stated institutions tend to resist change and how can we be more responsive? Dr. Murray indicated there is no good answer. Dr. Murray reiterated discussions that call for debate or dialogue is important and worthwhile. Have people read ahead on the general principle. What do students need and have discussions take place. A faculty member cannot put their discipline on the table until it is established what students need. We must come to a common understanding of what Liberal Studies means-"Liberal" as essential for a Free Society, preparing students to live effectively.

Wozniak suggested to begin with we need to develop a plan and possibly have a semester of discussions and open forums. To begin the process we need to assess how successful our general studies program is or assess what is happening in our general studies program. If there are truly things we are missing, then we need to look at changing it.

F.

#### G. MISCELLANEOUS

The General Studies Council will be hosting the Faculty/Staff Club on September 10, 2004 from 4:00-6:00.

#### H. NEXT MEETING

The next General Studies Council meeting will be October 7, 2004 at 3:30 p.m., at a location to be announced.

#### I. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 pm.