

Minutes of the Carolina Core (General Education) Committee Meeting

February 9, 2010
12:30-2:00 p.m.
204 Thomas Cooper Library

Members Present:

Cheryl Addy, Pam Bowers (ex-officio), Jim Burns, Mary Ann Byrnes, Helen Doerpinghaus (ex-officio), Kris Finnigan (ex-officio), Kimberly Glenn, Susanne Hicklin, Mary Hjelm, Stuart Hunter, Miriam Johnson, Carolyn Jones, Sheryl Kline, Gene Luna, Michael Matthews (co-chair), David Miller (co-chair), Susan Parlier, Joseph Rackers, Rick Stephens, Terrie Smith, Irma Van Scoy, Virginia Weathers

Members Absent:

Elise Ahyi (ex-officio), Richard Clodfelter, Phil Moore (ex-officio), Patrick Nolan (ex-officio), David Tedeschi, Jennifer Vendemia (ex-officio)

Faculty Content Consultants Present: Claudia Benitez-Nelson, Erik Doxtader, Lacy Ford, Andrew Graciano, Jerry Hackett, Sam Hastings, Ken Kelly, Doug Meade, Marja Warehime

Faculty Content Consultants Absent:

None

Minutes of the January 12 meeting were approved.

Helen welcomed members and thanked them for their commitment to general education. She introduced two new ex-officio members: Kris Finnigan, director of academic programs in the Provost's office, and Jennifer Vendemia, associate professor of psychology.

Helen asked faculty to continue to encourage their colleagues to use the online comments capability on the general education website to provide their input into the committee's work.

At the previous meeting, it was suggested that student focus groups be held to gain students' perspectives on the Carolina Core; arrangements are being made for those groups and members of this committee may be asked for assistance with identifying students to participate.

A committee has been created to gather information about Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) academic credit and related considerations for the Carolina Core. Loren Knapp, Arts and Sciences, will chair the committee; members will include Mike Perkins and Carolyn Jones. The group will study gather information about AP/IB policies and practices from the perspectives of the state's Commission on Higher Education (CHE), the university and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

Several members provided brief reports on their interactions with Deans and faculty in their respective colleges to inform them about the Carolina Core and encourage their consideration of the possible impact of Core changes on existing curricula.

- Mike's discussion with the Council of Academic Deans was moved to their March meeting; he will discuss the timeline for review of existing curricula and implementation of new Core requirements
- Rick stated that he had alerted leadership of the college of mass communications and information studies that representatives of the Carolina Core would be contacting them. He also mentioned that a school director said she would like to be able to read comments submitted online regarding the Core.

- Helen said that the Carolina Core / general education website has been revised; changes include a more concise FAQ section, the implementation timeline, minutes of meetings of this committee, and other information.
- Kim said that faculty in nursing are generally more directly involved with upper division coursework, and are not as “tuned in” to general education, although they recognize that the quality of the general education curriculum affects their students and programs.
- Mary Ann said that the college of arts and sciences is “tuned in;” the Dean regularly reviews the website and leads frequent discussions on potential issues.
- John said that the Honors College folks have been discussing the curriculum changes; the Dean plan to share comments and concerns at the Council of Academic Deans meeting in March.
- Carolyn said the business Dean is aware of the proposed changes.
- Joe said the music Dean and faculty are generally comfortable with the proposed changes
- Mary said she has passed information along through appropriate channels for system communication, but is not sure how far communication has reached. She said there is awareness that the changes will impact system campuses.
- Terrie said that the changes have been discussed at Faculty Council meetings for regional campuses.
- Helen reminded the group that the campuses in Columbia, Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter and Union are all accredited together, and that many students transfer general education coursework from regional campuses to the Columbia campus.
- Sheryl said that faculty in the college of hospitality, retail, and sport management are concerned that an increase in the number of hours required for general education would increase their students' time to graduation. They also wonder about the process for “qualifying” courses for inclusion in the Core.
- Irma said education faculty are more involved in upper division coursework, but recognize the importance of the Core; they are comfortable with changes and supportive; an increase in the number of hours would be of concern to them; the Dean is informed regarding the revisions.
- The social work Dean has been briefed; leadership team for the new undergraduate program is sorting out the implications for the program.

Helen thanked members for their efforts to inform the campus community about the work of the committee, and asked that any issues or concerns be brought to her attention.

Mike reported that he, Helen and David are working to incorporate comments from the Faculty Forum into the Carolina Core document's appendices. As they've worked through them, most suggestions are clarifications, a few are additions that seem obvious for inclusion. They are trying to use words that allow for and promote flexibility and creativity (help folks see how they fit). Mike commented that the relatively few revisions needed to the document are a reflection of the work of the committee to provide good communication about the revision process.

David reviewed the charge to the working groups (provided in advance via email). In summary, the groups are to review what is currently being done in courses related to the new learning outcomes, and consider the number of credit hours that will be needed to fulfill the expectations for students' achievement. With the report date of the March 16 meeting, work groups are asked to meet with colleagues in relevant content areas to discuss course syllabi and goals for courses, consider how these relate to new learning outcomes, discuss what should be included in course syllabi for the new curriculum, and determine the number of hours needed to achieve the new outcomes. The review of current courses is to gather information only, not to consider current courses for approval into the new Core. Some points to consider during this group work:

- Intent is to grow understanding of what's needed and what's not needed (that's currently being done) in these courses.
- Try not to let review of existing courses constrain thinking about “what could be.”

- Some shift is required - from existing courses to new curriculum – just to accommodate additional learning outcomes.
- We shouldn't change "it" until we know what "it" is.
- We are shifting from a menu of courses from which a certain number must be selected and completed to a set of learning outcomes that must be achieved.
- The primary goal of the work group – by March 16 – is to create understanding of the number of hours needed to accomplish the learning outcome(s).

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.; work groups met following adjournment. The next meeting is Tuesday, March 16 at 12:30-2:00 p.m., location to be determined.

Submitted by Pam Bowers.