General Education Committee Meeting
Library Conference Room
Wednesday September 12, 2019

In attendance: Valerie Guyant, Spike Magelssen, Cristy Ozburn, and Kasthuri Udayakumar
Absent: Charlie Mack, Aaron Riggins
Guest: Interim Dean Darlene Sellers
Recorder: Jenn Anderson, however, minutes subsequently prepared and submitted by Cristy Ozburn

Meeting called to order at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes from previous meeting dated March 11, 2019 were approved by all members.

No old business or proposals were discussed.

New Business:

Vote for new chair. Cristy and Kasthuri nominated Valerie Guyant. Valerie nominated Cristy Ozburn. Following this meeting, Jenn Anderson emailed all committee members to solicit any other nominations for Chair and received none. An email vote proceeded, and all but one committee member voted. There were 4 votes for Cristy and 1 vote for Valerie. Cristy Ozburn is the new Chair of the General Education Committee (emails attached).

Response to NWCCU Recommendations. Darlene Sellers discussed the disuse of the system in which General Education assessment data had been collected in the past, and the need to develop an entirely new plan to identify, collect, and report data for the General Education core. Darlene displayed a draft document she had prepared to be included in the upcoming report in response to NWCCU recommendations, as well as the newly created General Education program in Taskstream, in which she had inputted goals, objects, measures, and findings. Darlene advised that she needed the help of the Committee to review the draft report to NWCCU and the program in Taskstream, and would email all Committee members the report and facilitate their access to the General Education program in Taskstream. It was also discussed that faculty who had not yet entered their 2018-2019 data into the existing system would be requested to do so ASAP.

On September 14, 2019, Darlene sent an email (attached) to all committee members stating that she met with the Provost following our September 12, 2019 Committee meeting and it was decided to suspend the entering of data by faculty who taught General Education courses in 2018-2019. Additionally, she wrote in the email that the draft she displayed during our committee meeting would be realigned, and that upon completion of the new version of the draft, the General Education Committee would be called together again for feedback and input.

As of October 9, 2019, committee members had not yet been granted access to the General Education program in Taskstream.

On Saturday September 28, 2019, Darlene sent an email to Cristy and Valerie providing a new draft response to the NWCCU recommendations and soliciting comments for input into the final report by Monday September 30, 2019. On September 28, 2019, Cristy responded by email to Darlene with her comments. On September 30, 2019, Valerie (in her capacity as CASE Department Chair) responded by email to Darlene with her comments (emails attached). Due to the quick turn-around, the NWCCU draft response provided by Darlene was not provided to the full committee, however, it has been attached to these minutes, as well as the comments provided by Cristy and Valerie.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm

From: Cristy Ozburn
Sent: Saturday, September 14, 2019 12:17 PM
To: Darlene Sellers
Subject:Re: Special Meeting with General Education Committee for NWCCU

Thank you for the update. Please let me know if there's anything I can do to help you.

Cristy
Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 14, 2019, at 11:47 AM, Darlene Sellers <sellersd@msun.edu> wrote:
Hello. Spike, Cristy, Aaron, Kasthuri, Charlie, Valerie and Neil,
After our meeting on Thursday, I met with the Provost. It was decided to suspend the entering of data by faculty who taught General Education courses in 2018-2019. The self-study of our efforts in collecting these data, having an additional year of data available in its current form is unnecessary because no meaningful data analyses can be made or supported with our current practices.

I've continued gaining information relevant to the NWCUU recommendations. With a report from Fall, 2013 Peer Evaluation by NWCCU, we are able to more fully understand the context for current Recommendation 2: General Education. Here is a brief summary:
The comments at the visit included the current General Education is too complex. It was noted a lack of evidence of anchors within in each course of the many and multiple General Education Outcomes. In addition, there was a lack of evidence of accurate, reliable and valid data of General Education and thresholds. It was suggested Northern consult with other university models of General Education for major re-construction, such as the Oregon system, as an example.

Therefore, the draft we began reviewing in the meeting last Thursday is now re-directed beyond the focus of the first draft. Upon completion of this new version of a draft, the General Education Committee will be called together again for feedback and input. I'll keep in touch with you all and get the new draft to you soon.

Please know I appreciated the rich conversation we shared on Thursday which encourages me to continue this work. Please share with me your thoughts, concerns, questions.

Darlene J. Sellers, Ph.D., NCC, LCPC
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From: Darlene Sellers

From: Darlene Sellers
Sent: Saturday, September 28, 2019 8:41 AM
To: Valerie Guyant; Cristy Ozburn
Cc: R. Neil Moisey; Dave Krueger; Lindsey Brandt-Bennett
Subject:RE: Recommendation 2: General Education for NWCCU
Attachments: Recommendation 2 - General Education.docx

Valerie and Cristy,
Attached is the response to Recommendation 2 for General Education for NWCCU. I apologize for getting this document to you so late. I was still working on it after 5 o'clock yesterday. I would appreciate your comments for input and realize the short notice for your review may limit your response. The Provost plans to submit the report on Monday.

The central theme of the response to Recommendation 2 is that we are embarking on major changes to how we view and assess General Education at Northern. The Provost assured me of his support for the General Education Action Plan as a working document and holds full expectations we will modify our action plans throughout our efforts for continuous improvement.

Nasty weekend weather—praying our beautiful trees are saved from devastation. And, hoping for a win today at Home Coming for our courageous and never-give-up Football team

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<div style="text-align: center">Standard 2.C.10 General Education</div>

The institution demonstrates that the General Education components of its baccalaureate degree programs (if offered) and transfer associate degree programs (if offered) have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that are stated in relation to the institution's mission and learning outcomes for those programs.

<div style="text-align: center">Revised Recommendation 2: General Education</div>

The Evaluation Committee recommends that MSUN continue to **(A) refine its processes for general education assessment**, to **(B) clearly document the identified course outcomes**, the **(C) thresholds for achieving these outcomes**, and the **(D) assessment of achievement of each of the stated outcomes** as stated in Recommendation 2 of the Fall, 2013 Peer - Evaluation.

<div style="text-align: center">General Education Mission Statement</div>

General Education faculty's adopted a mission statement in 2018-2019 reflective of the ~~university's~~ University's Mission and the Core Themes' emphasis on preparing students for successful careers and productive lives.

> MSU-Northern's General Education Core provides students with breadth and depth in their education in order to enrich the specialized knowledge developed in a major field. These requirements are intended to foster **critical thinking skills**, **support integrative learning**, widen **social and cultural perspectives**, and aid students in developing into **well-rounded, civically engaged** professionals.

<div style="text-align: center">General Education Program Assessment</div>

The General Education Committee, a sub-committee of the Academic Senate[1], is charged with the development and implementation of an assessment ~~system~~plan. The tool used as a data collection system was an Excel database; faculty teaching General Education courses are responsible for entering data. The management of the database has been the duty of the elected Chair of the General Education Committee.

An Interim Dean of Arts, Sciences and Education was appointed in January 2019, at which time. ~~S~~ she was given the charge to review General Education, in light of the NCCUW's Fall 2013 Peer - Evaluation. The Interim Dean and the 2017-2018 General Education Committee Chair met during the spring semester. Documents reviewed ~~provided~~ included faculty generated data, such as which General Education courses were offered each semester, the ~~method of~~ assessment of achievement of each of the stated course outcomes ~~used~~ (e.g. quizzes, tests, essays), number of students in each course, and percent of students meeting the established threshold for achieving the course learning outcomes.

Following the General Education Committee's recommendations to include General Education in Tasks Stream (General Education Committee meeting minutes, April 5, 2018), a Tasks Stream General Education shell was created late spring and summer 2019, as well as, the General Education's program

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[1] Montana State University Northern Senate By-Laws. (2016). Article VI, Section 7. Retrieved from http://www.msun.edu/provost/senate/docs/AcademicSenateBy-laws_02-2016.pdf.

mission. Additionally, the General Education, categories' learning goals and outcomes, assessment plan, and findings were entered into Tasks Stream for academic years 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018.

In the process of developing the General Education program for the Tasks Stream assessment system, deficiencies in General Education's program assessments and practiceassessment plan were realized and which pointed to the need for meaningful understanding of and deliberate investigation for General Education in order to achieve its mission. The following narrative presents the review findings, along with action plans targeted to meet Standard 2.C.10 General Education by having "identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that are stated in relation to the institution's mission and learning outcomes for those programs."

<div align="center">Program Review for Current General Education Program Assessment</div>

Using Recommendations for Standard 2.C.10 as benchmarks for the General Education Program, the following represent the findings in current practice and action plans for the Revised Recommendation 2: General Education. (See Action Plan for General Education.)

Recommendation A: Refine processes for general education assessment.

Findings and Action Plans - Refining the process for General Education assessment

Finding 1: With the adoption of the Mission Statement, the current 7 categories in the General Education program lack alignment with educational foundations of general education (skills, knowledge, habits of mind, and values) as outlined in the Mission Statement:

- o Critical Thinking
- o Integrative Learning
- o Social and Cultural Perspectives
- o Well-rounded, Civically Engaged

Action Plan: The Provost will convene the General Education Committee and Curriculum Committee to jointly establish a working model for general education competency areas that reflect the educational foundations of the University Mmission sStatement and the General Education Mission Statement. The **Action Plan for General Education** shall include the development of:

a. Rubrics for evaluation of the General Education Assessment process will be developed (e.g., "General Education Rubric" [2]).
b. A core curriculum, as a set of general education course requirements, for all students will be developed.
c. Rubrics will be created for each General Education Course Assessment to provide reliable and valid measurements of related learning outcomes. (See VALUE Rubrics[3])

Commented [VG4]: As Cristy notes below, we have a core curriculum in place and guidelines for how courses are included. However, if we are suggesting a General Education reform that will alter not just which courses are part of core, but how our core is determined, as we've discussed in meetings before, I would suggest that THIS item be more clearly indicative of that approach. Perhaps even A refined core curriculum of General Education courses that aligns more consistently with the University and General Education Mission Statements.

Commented [CO5]: Isn't it for all students who are seeking degrees in programs that require the Gen Ed Core? Not all of our students are required to complete the Gen Ed Core.

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[2] Senior College and University Commission. (2013, October). General Education Rubric: Rubric for assessing general education assessment process. Retrieved from https://calbaptist.edu/educational-effectiveness/General%20Education%20Rubric.pdf

[3] Association of American Colleges & Universities. (n.d.) VALUE Rubrics. Retrieved from https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics.

Finding 2: No evidence was found to support faculty inter-rater reliability in the assessment of categories' learning outcomes, student outcomes, and the related performance measurements for evaluation tools used for General Education courses.

> Action Plan: T~~Included in t~~he **Action Plan for General Education** will include The Office of Teaching and Learning Excellence facilitating a series of seminars to develop faculty's knowledge and skills in assessment, development and use of rubrics, and inter-rater reliability training. Further norming workshops will be held regularly in order to ensure inter-rater reliability within General Education Assessment.

Recommendation B: Clearly document the identified course outcomes.

Findings and Action Plan -- Clearly document the identified course outcomes

Findings: Within the current General Education courses, learning outcomes lack clear documentation of alignment to the General Education learning outcomes in the respective category.

> Action Plan: General Education courses will contain learning outcomes with clear documentation of alignment to General Education learning outcomes. (See **Action Plan for General Education**.)

Recommendations C: Thresholds for achieving these outcomes.

Findings and Action Plan -- Thresholds for achieving these outcomes

Findings: General Education course data were inconsistently entered into the data base. There were no data which were reliable to establishing a threshold for achieving outcomes. While a threshold level for proficiency was identified for categories, courses within a category did not use common rubrics to assess general education's learning outcomes, data collected for learning outcomes across categories were not valid, reliable or accurate.

> Action Plan: Rubrics will be developed; faculty will be provided professional development for writing measurable learning outcomes, use of rubrics, and inter-rater reliability. Recommendation A's action plan addresses this deficiency. (**See Action Plan for General Education**.)

Recommendations D: A**ssessment of achievement of each of the stated outcomes.**

Findings and Action Plan -- Assessment of achievement of each of the stated outcomes

Findings: Although thresholds for achievement were identified for each category (percent of students achieving learning outcome indicator) and courses approved for General Education were required to reflect at least 60 to 80 percent of the category's learning outcomes, there was no evidence course assessments were aligned with categories' learning outcomes.

> Action Plan: The General Education Program will establish thresholds for assessment of achievement for each stated outcome. (See **Action Plan for General Education**.)

Commented [CO6]: This action plan only refers to offering training on how to accomplish inter-rater reliability, not actually conducting a reliability review among peers. Isn't finding 2 asking for documentation that we actually conducted an inter-rater review, not just training about how to do it? If so, then as part of the Gen Ed Committee assessment plan, don't we need to include an inter-rater review? Would this review occur in Taskstream?

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Commented [CO7]: Are they going to be looking not just for the process employed, but to actually confirm if the data is accurate, valid, and reliable? This would tie back to my comment above (re: inter-rater review), that we may need to actually conduct a review to be able to say our Gen Ed Taskstream assessment findings are in fact valid, reliable, and accurate.

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Action Plan for General Education

No.	Task	By when or over what time frame?	Responsible	Accountable	Resources
1	Convene General Education and Curriculum Committee	November 2019	Academic Senate, Deans, & Provost	Academic Senate; Deans, Provost	
2	Appoint working committee members	November 2019	College Deans	Academic Senate; Deans, Provost	Stipends
3	Research general education programs; convene meeting with other state institutions' general education programs	January – May, 2019	Working Committee	Academic Senate, Deans, & Provost	
4	Working committee establish core curriculum for general education	Summer-Fall, 2020	Working Committee	Academic Senate; Deans, Provost	Summer stipends
5	Meet with General Education faculty to discuss alignment of educational foundations	October 2020 retreat	Working Committee and Deans	Academic Senate; Deans, Provost	
6	General Education core curriculum presented to CORE	November 2020 CORE meeting	Working Committee	Academic Senate; Deans, Provost	
7	Establish General Education New Assessment Process	Spring 2021	Working Committee	Academic Senate; Deans, Provost	
8	Develop rubric for General Education Process/procedures	Spring Semester 2021	Working Committee	Academic Senate; Deans, Provost	
9	Develop measurable learning outcomes for General Education core curriculum in each General Education course	Spring–Summer 2021	Working Committee and faculty	Academic Senate; Deans, Provost	Summer Stipends Outside consultant
10	Training for General Education faculty about rubrics	Spring Semester 2021	OTLE	Provost	
11	Develop rubrics for assessing General Education educational core foundations	Spring--Summer 2021	Working Committee and faculty	Academic Senate; Deans, Provost	Summer Stipends Outside consultant
12	Trial (alpha) test selected courses	End of Fall semester 2021	Working committee	Academic Senate; Deans,	
13	Expand to faculty to test with selected courses	End of Spring semester 2022	General Education faculty	Deans, Provost	
14	Working committee analyze data; recommendation to refine and modify	Summer 2022	Working committee	Academic Senate; Deans, Provost	Summer Stipends
15	Workshops to Launch General Education Curriculum	Fall 2022	Academic Senate, Deans & Provost	Academic Senate, Deans, Provost	
16	Close loop with Assessment System for General Education Program	End of Spring 2022	General Education Committee	Academic Senate, Deans, Provost	

Commented [VG8]: Darlene – do you mean 2020?

Commented [CO9]: Did a "working committee" get established, and conduct the tasks indicated? Who was a part of this working committee?

Commented [CO10]: We already have a "core curriculum for general education" – see catalog. None of the above findings found fault with the courses currently included in the Gen Ed Core, just with the process by which we assess them, right?. Why is this item listed as a task? And if it is determined that this review needs to take place, doesn't it fall solely under the purview of the Gen Ed Committee, rather than a "working committee"?

Commented [CO11]: What does "retreat" mean in this context?

Commented [CO12]: I can't imagine faculty are going to participate in this process during Summer 2021.

Commented [CO13]: Maybe, include the words "conduct inter-rater review"