

General Education Subcommittee Meeting

WebEx

Wednesday December 2, 2020

In attendance: Valerie Guyant, Gwen Hart, Charlie Mack, Joyce Mphande-Finn, Cristy Ozburn, Aaron Riggins, and Kasthuri Udayakumar

Absent: Spike Magelssen and Neil Moisey

Guest: Darlene Sellers

Recorder: Cristy Ozburn

Meeting called to order at 3:00 p.m.

Meeting minutes from the November 18, 2020 meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved.

No proposals were discussed.

New Business:

Cristy briefly summarized the conversation she had on November 30, 2020 with Kathleen Thatcher (MSU-Billings). Also present for this meeting with Kathleen was Val Guyant as the CASE Chair, and Gwen Hart given her prior experience with general education assessment. We discussed some of the concerns raised by faculty about the direction this committee is taking in creating the general education core assessment strategy, as well as some of the challenges this committee has encountered developing the rubrics. Kathleen suggested that, at this time, the committee consider shifting gears and returning our attention back to the creation/finalization of the (10 or less) overarching general education core learning outcomes.

As background, in late Spring 2020, we floated 8 overarching core learning outcomes to replace the 37 that are presently in the catalog. These 8 were disseminated via email to all faculty, however, very few faculty members responded/provided any input. It was these 8 overarching core learning outcomes that led to the creation of the draft rubrics this committee has been working on in Fall 2020.

During the Fall 2020 semester, this committee discussed and questioned whether or not we should consolidate some of the rubrics; whether or not to maintain one rubric for each of the 7 gen ed categories presently in the catalog; naming of the rubrics; and exactly what should be contained (criterion) in the rubrics. It appears that to address these concerns and answer these questions, the committee needs to go back to the beginning and decide exactly what our overarching core learning outcomes are going to be. These core learning outcomes drive the rubrics.

In making this decision to revisit the overarching core learning outcomes, Kathleen provided us some valuable information that we need to take into consideration. She said that modern assessment models are moving away from being rooted in disciplines, and

towards knowledge and skills. For example, the assessment category was previously called mathematics (discipline), but is now called quantitative reasoning (skill). She also reminded us that our accreditation authority, NWCCU, updated their guidelines this year, to suggest the following 7 competencies be included in the general education core: communication skills, global awareness, cultural sensitivity, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and logical thinking, problem solving, and information literacy.

The committee then discussed the 7 competencies suggested by NWCCU and concluded that these 5 competencies seemed more appropriate for our purposes at MSUN: communication skills, cultural, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and technology literacy. We would be inclined to create rubrics for these 5 areas, which would also incorporate attributes of global awareness, problem solving, and information literacy. This was the committee's first discussion on this matter, and nothing was finalized. The committee will revisit this first thing in Spring 2021.

Lastly, the committee discussed some ways in which assessment of the general education core learning outcomes could be easily facilitated. One possibility presented was to create a one credit interdisciplinary class that students take after they complete their entire general education core, and as a graduation requirement. This class would contain an assessment artifact that meets all competencies being assessed in the general education core. The challenge with this option is that adding even one credit to the general education core presents programmatic problems for at least three programs on campus.

A second idea was presented to utilize a capstone project to assess all competencies of the general education core. The challenge with this option is that not all programs have a capstone course.

A third idea presented by Kasthuri that's used by the Nursing program, is one in which students are asked in designated classes to write a reflection paper describing how they met specific program outcomes relevant to that class. These reflections are then submitted for a grade in the class, and also submitted to a designated assessment course shell.

The last possibility presented was a variation on the one used by the Nursing program, in which in one class students are asked to write a reflection paper describing how they met all program outcomes, drawing on their memory and experience from other program classes to complete the assignment. This matter would be further discussed in Spring 2021.

Meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.