**Council on General Education Minutes**

**April 19, 2018 – 3:30 p.m. – Stipes 501**

**Spring 2018 CGE Membership**

Steve Bennett Geology (Math/Natural Sciences)

Krista Bowers Sharpe Library (At-Large)

Ute Chamberlin History (Humanities)

Jonathan Day Political Science (Social Sciences)

Gary Daytner Educational Studies (At-Large)

Keith Holz, Chair Art (Humanities/Fine Arts)

Bob Intrieri Psychology (Social Sciences)

Kishor Kapale Physics (Math/Natural Sciences)

Mike Lukkarinen RPTA (Human Well-Being)

Kathleen O’Donnell-Brown English (Basic Skills/Writing)

Betsy Perabo Liberal Arts & Sciences (Multicultural)

David Zanolla Communication (Basic Skills/Public Speaking)

Colton Markey Student Government Association

Kyle Mayborn College of Arts & Sciences (Ex-Officio, Deans’ Council Rep.)

Nancy Parsons Office of the Provost (Ex-Officio, Provost’s Rep.)

Michelle Yager Advising Center (Ex-Officio, COAA Rep.)

##### GERC Members

Marjorie Allison English (Past Chair, CGE)

Cheryl Bailey Communication (Fine Arts & Communication)

Kristine Kelly Psychology (CAGAS)

Martin Maskarinec Computer Sciences (Business & Technology)

Gordon Pettit Philosophy (Arts & Sciences)

Diane Sandage Sociology & Anthropology (Past Chair, CGE)

Emily Shupe DFMH (Education & Human Services)

**CGE Members Excused/Absent**: Daytner

**GERC Members Excused/Absent:** Allison, Shupe

**Ex-Officio Members Excused/Absent:** None

**Visitors:**  Lori Baker-Sperry (Liberal Arts & Sciences, Provost’s Office Intern)

#### Call to Order, Approval of Minutes, and Changes to Agenda

Changes were made to the first and last pages of the minutes of April 5, and they were approved as corrected. Dr. Day thanked the Recording Secretary for taking minutes for the council. There were no changes to the agenda.

**Announcements** – None

##### New Business

**Provost’s Office Report** – Associate Provost Parsons had nothing to report.

**College of Arts and Sciences Report** – Dr. Mayborn had nothing to report.

**University Advising Report –** University Advising and Academic Services will be registering new students tomorrow (April 19). Ms. Yager reported that 57 transfer students will be on campus to register. There are about 80 additional new transfer students who registered with their advisors separately.

**Faculty Senate Report –** Dr. Perabo had nothing to report.

**CGE Report –**

#### Incoming and Outgoing CGE Members

Chairperson Holz reported that new members have been appointed to CGE: Bill Knox will be replacing Kathleen O’Donnell-Brown to represent the category of Basic Skills (Writing); Karen Zellmann will replace Mike Lukkarinen in the Human Well-Being category; Lori Baker-Sperry will replace Betsy Perabo to represent faculty in the Multicultural category; Pat Anderson will replace Bob Intrieri for Social Sciences; and Todd Lough will replace Krista Bowers-Sharpe to represent the faculty at-large. New members will be invited to the May 3 meeting to vote for next year’s officers. New members will replace outgoing members at the table during the voting.

Dr. Kapale announced that he will be on sabbatical during fall semester. Ms. Hamm stated that the Senate Nominating Committee nominates replacements for faculty on sabbaticals or leaves at the first fall Senate meeting.

Update on Cessation of Gen Ed Handbook Publication

Chairperson Holz related that he had thought that Ms. Yager was asking for CGE’s approval or authorization to discontinue the Gen Ed Handbook at the previous CGE/GERC meeting, but he now understands that CGE does not really have the authority to grant approval; the information that Ms. Yager shared at that meeting was merely informational. Chairperson Holz stated there are currently four versions of the Gen Ed Handbook that students, advisors, faculty, and staff can access. Advising will no longer publish the full 64-page Gen Ed Handbook, which was formerly on paper but has been digital for a number of years. General Education information can still be found in the undergraduate catalog, which is mostly offered online with just a few hard copies printed each year; the STARS Course Search function, which is heavily used by everyone; and the new S-Guide, which is very mobile-friendly and was developed for use during Summer Orientation and Registration (SOAR). Chairperson Holz stated that the Gen Ed Handbook includes some information in the front describing the purpose of General Education that is not included in any of the other formats, so he thinks it would be wise for CGE to have a copy of the Handbook before it is eliminated. Ms. Yager stated that if CGE wants to maintain the files, they could be sent to someone. She offered to send the Recording Secretary an electronic copy of the Handbook so that it can be retained in the Faculty Senate Office’s CGE files or on the CGE website. Chairperson Holz remarked that the Handbook is highly duplicative, but CGE might want to salvage some of the language and review it. He added that anyone can still download the Handbook until it is taken down this summer.

#### Assessment Subcommittee Report

Chairperson Holz told the members that the new document prepared by the subcommittee has never been discussed or voted on, and the current document is from February 2007. Dr. Bennett stated that the subcommittee was composed of himself, Drs. Kapale and Shupe, with Associate Provost Parsons and Dr. Baker-Sperry acting in an advisory capacity; the members had one meeting and worked on the rest via email. The subcommittee created a proposal on November 2, 2017. Their main change to the 2007 document was to the former “Feedback Loop” section, which is now “Impact.” Dr. Bennett stated that the changes from the original document mainly involved reorganization into a more readable format and relabeling. He said the revised document now mirrors the way that departments are already reporting assessment. Dr. Baker-Sperry explained that the 2007 document was approved after the last review but never implemented. Associate Provost Parsons agreed that the November 2, 2017 document is the important one and the one that should be used going forward.

Chairperson Holz remarked on a statement that was added to IV.A.2., “Consider using assessment processes to aid in retention of students in the course by identifying areas related to the learning outcomes that are deterrents to student success (tough concepts or processes) and using assessment of student learning to help students improve in these areas.” He does not think it is clear whether this refers to students currently in the course or future students. Associate Provost Parsons responded that sometimes it is difficult to help current students because assessment is typically not done until the end of the class and those students leave or graduate. She often tells departments to keep in mind that, although they may not be able to help current students, they are helping the next cohort or class that is coming through the program. She added that the statement can be read as “either/or” current or future students. Chairperson Holz originally thought the language made it sound like the assessment was solely intended to help current students, which would be very intense for professors to accomplish, but agrees that it can be understood as applying past assessment processes to the current course. Associate Provost Parsons pointed out that technically the course is not assessed but the skills, knowledge, or specific outcome are being assessed.

Dr. Kelly asked if a professor can adjust how the course is taught if he or she finds that students are struggling with one of the Gen Ed goals. Associate Provost Parsons responded affirmatively, adding that the professor might be able to provide more information about that goal the next time the course is offered or teach it earlier in the semester. Chairperson Holz observed that much assessment takes place and is calibrated at or near the end of the course, and the results are applied the next time the course is taught. Associate Provost Parsons pointed out that this is not always the case; some professors make adjustments throughout the semester.

Dr. Day asked what happens to the Gen Ed data once professors fill it out and turn it in to their department chairs. Associate Provost Parsons replied that the data comes to her. Dr. Baker-Sperry explained that the current model is that instead of a meta-analysis at the University level, assessment goes on in the programs and courses through the learning outcomes. She added that the only thing that is done with the data at the University level is that the Provost’s office can say “We are doing Gen Ed assessment.” She stated that a university could give a test similar to the ACT in order to show that assessment is being conducted, but students do not do well with only one learning outcome, and it becomes difficult to determine which program or department needs to be changed. Associate Provost Parsons stated the concept of Gen Ed and program assessment is that it should happen within the department; how Gen Ed is used across the goals and any discussions or alterations should be happening within the department where that assessment takes place.

Dr. Day asked if faculty members are expected to change their style of teaching based on the assessment data. Dr. Baker-Sperry replied this is part of Impact; the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) requires that the University show how departments are using the data to change student learning. Dr. Day asked if there are anecdotes of departments or professors that improved their classes based on assessment data; Associate Provost Parsons replied this is included in the Impact Report. Dr. Intrieri stated that he has used the assessment data for about ten years, but he can only count on one hand how many other individuals he knows throughout the University who have utilized that data effectively to change an instructional objective. Dr. Baker-Sperry stated that this is specifically a Gen Ed problem; when the model was accepted and programs did not submit information about what they had done with the data, nothing really happened. She related this is the reason that responsibility for program responses was moved from CGE to the Provost’s office; the Provost’s office manages major and graduate reports and will tell programs that the HLC requires impact statements. She said at the end of the last GERC review it was recommended that CGE complete this step, but since CGE did not do this the programs failed to act on the data. Dr. Baker-Sperry added that the University is getting ready next year to start HLC accreditation visits, and there is no solid data from Gen Ed assessments because CGE did not require and follow up on that. She does believe, however, that Psychology uses its data because they have submitted reports. Dr. Kelly stated that the data she recalls seeing shows that Psychology students are doing pretty well; Dr. Intrieri countered that they are doing well on some objectives but not on others. Dr. Kelly does not remember Psychology students being very low on any objective, but Dr. Intrieri believes there are some objectives that they are not doing terribly well in.

Chairperson Holz asked if the last paragraph on the last page of the proposal, addressing those actions that the Council on General Education will take, is a new addition; Dr. Bennett replied that it is not. Dr. Bennett pointed out that this section does not say that CGE will gather everyone’s assessment plans, but any time a new plan is implemented CGE is supposed to look at it, as well as to consider all plans for new Gen Ed courses. Chairperson Holz asked if it is rare for a current course to change its assessment plan. Associate Provost Parsons replied that the change in assessment plan form has never been used, although some departments change their method of collection without informing CGE. She added that some courses do not match the plan that was approved when the new course first came through CGE. Associate Provost Parsons keeps a binder with all of the assessment plans; every class has a plan, and Associate Provost Parsons sends those out to the departments upon request, which often happens when a department gets a new chair.

Chairperson Holz said it is unclear how the cooperation between Associate Provost Parsons and CGE works. Associate Provost Parsons responded that her office is the holder of all plans. When a department wants to change its assessment plan, she provides them with the existing plan and tells them that if they want to make changes they should contact the CGE Chair.

Chairperson Holz asked about the last duty for CGE, “Report on the Council’s participation in General Education assessment annually in the full Council on General Education Report to the Faculty Senate.” Associate Provost Parsons stated that this refers to the annual report made by each Faculty Senate council or committee at the first fall Senate meeting. She added that CGE’s report should talk about assessment. CGE members suggested that this sentence be changed to “Report on the Council’s participation in General Education assessment ~~annually~~ in the ~~full~~ Council on General Education **Annual** Report to the Faculty Senate.”

Chairperson Holz asked what the relationship is between the Proposal for the Assessment of Student Learning in General Education and the University’s Student Learning Assessment Committee (SLAC). Dr. Baker-Sperry responded that whatever is approved by the council will be plugged into the appendix of the University-wide assessment plan, which contains within it how WIU does Gen Ed assessment and the HLC requirements. She stated that SLAC does not have the authority to approve assessment plans; CGE does that. She added that SLAC is waiting on the updated University assessment report, and this piece is not in there yet.

**Motion:** To approve the revised Proposal for the Assessment of Student Learning in Gen Ed (Maskarinec/Sandage)

#### MOTION APPROVED 16 YES – 0 NO – 1 ABSTENTION

Proposal on Writing in Gen Ed (Writing Subcommittee)

Chairperson Holz explained the proposed paragraphs, if approved, would replace the introduction to the current CGE website page on writing. He recalled that the council had a robust discussion on this topic at the last meeting, and he is struck by the eloquence of the statement proposed by the Writing Subcommittee. Ms. O’Donnell-Brown explained the subcommittee wanted to emphasize the substantive and discipline appropriate writing that everyone in Gen Ed classes will be expected to do, but they did not want to tie this to enrollment numbers or a percentage. The proposal reads:

Writing is one of the most important tools for achieving the goals and benefits of general education. The Council of General Education requires that general education courses include writing as an integral learning tool. Although the type and amount of writing is best determined by the instructor and department, the Council of General Education requires that all courses include substantive, discipline-appropriate writing. The Council will use the following guidelines when considering courses for inclusion in General Education or in reviewing current course syllabi.

In ALL General Education courses, students should have at least one written assignment with written or oral feedback from the instructor with an opportunity for revision. This formal written assignment will be done in the style most appropriate to the academic discipline of the class. It is also expected that multiple writing assignments, which can take on different forms, will be given in a class. The length of the writing assignments, along with their number, will vary with classroom size and within disciplines.

Dr. Perabo remarked she is unsure the statement is forceful and specific enough. She recalled that the council has talked about having weekly assignments as the norm and being more specific about them, and the reference to “multiple writing assignments” seems weaker to her. Dr. Day suspects that if the statement were any more specific it would encroach upon a professor’s ability to conduct his or her class. He thinks that saying there need to be multiple written assignments with opportunity for revision is strong enough to encourage faculty to provide the necessary rigor for their courses, given their expertise in their fields. He added that for larger classes, faculty can make adjustments based on of how many papers they can grade.

Dr. Intrieri remarked that there is no mention of the type of class – face-to-face versus electronic delivery. He suggested this could be specified in the last sentence. Associate Provost Parsons explained that how courses are conducted should not change, whether they are offered online, face-to-face, hybrid, or live stream; a course is developed as a course and delivered in different ways. Dr. Day remarked that oral feedback may be good for a face-to-face class but not practical for an online class, which is why the subcommittee specified either method in the statement. Associate Provost Parsons agreed that this statement would not pigeonhole professors into one method or the other. Ms. Sandage is amazed at the detail she gets from oral feedback with students and how helpful it can be to them. Associate Dean Mayborn agrees that it is sometimes impossible to conduct oral feedback with all students, but he does not think it should be eliminated; he also assumes that students are writing down what is being orally discussed with them. Chairperson Holz thinks written or oral feedback is fine, and noted that some courses include online chat; he believes almost anything that is possible in the classroom is also possible to do online, and in some cases more can be done. Members discussed whether to add “mode of delivery” or “type” in the last sentence, but decided against this.

Dr. Perabo understands that the type of writing should be left up to the faculty but wonders if the statement should be strengthened in terms of expectations. She observed that it seems the assumption is that faculty will moderate their expectations for Gen Ed classes that are larger, such as those over 100, but will still need to require one written assignment with feedback. Dr. Baker-Sperry suggested that when GERC is disbanded, CGE may want to survey faculty teaching large Gen Ed classes to see how they manage feedback. She added that CGE could also change the plan for large classes without undergoing a full review if it was thought that the writing or feedback component should be revised.

The council debated other revisions to the paragraphs, such as underlining, italicizing, and minor word changes, with the final document reflecting these changes:

Writing is one of the most important tools for achieving the goals and benefits of general education. The Council ~~of~~ on General Education requires that general education courses include writing as an integral learning tool. Although the type and amount of writing is best determined by the instructor and department, the Council ~~of~~ on General Education requires that all courses include substantive, discipline-appropriate writing. The Council will use the following guidelines when considering courses for inclusion in General Education or in reviewing current course syllabi.

In *all* General Education courses, students should have at least one written assignment with written or oral feedback from the instructor with an opportunity for revision. ~~This formal written assignment will be done in the style most appropriate to the academic discipline of the class.~~ It is also expected that multiple writing assignments, which can take on different forms, will be given in a class. The length and style of the writing assignments, along with their number, will vary with ~~classroom~~ class size and ~~within~~ among disciplines.

Dr. Chamberlin also recommended that the first sentence in the paragraph after the bullet points on the website be changed to “~~In other words, using this kind~~ It is strongly recommended that faculty use these kinds of writing exercises in the class on a daily or weekly basis ~~would~~ to facilitate student learning of course material while providing students with essential writing.”

Motion: To accept changes and to revise the website with these changes (Day/Intrieri)

MOTION APPROVED 16 YES – 0 NO – 0 ABSTENTIONS

Ms. Hamm will upload the changes to the CGE website, which she maintains. Ms. O’Donnell-Brown offered to check the Resources page for any broken links that might need updated, but Chairperson Holz has already checked them and they all work.

Dr. Chamberlin pointed out that the course description for the Introduction to Theatre class specifies that “exams are a combination of essay and objective.” She asked if it is appropriate to include in the course description what types of assessment are used for the course. Associate Provost Parsons responded that course descriptions are approved by CCPI; she has served on and attended CCPI meetings for many years, but she is unsure how that got approved because it seems weird and unusual. She added, though, that it is within CCPI’s purview to address rather than CGE’s.

Recommendation on Gen Ed Requirements and Curricular Offerings in the Honors College

Chairperson Holz pointed out that Honors College Gen Ed is not in the charge to GERC, but the curriculum has not been updated for 15-25 years. He does not think there is much that needs to be done or changed, but he recommends that CGE/GERC ask the Honors College, given that they are somewhat autonomous, to review their curriculum to verify whether it is up to date with current Gen Ed guidelines. He noted that Honors Council Gen Ed does not include any Fine Arts, Human Well-Being or Communication tutorials but does offer tutorials from other Gen Ed categories. Mr. Zanolla pointed out that tutorials are special proposals from faculty who want to teach them in their disciplines, so those offerings ebb and flow. Ms. Sandage added that they are very interdisciplinary. Chairperson Holz suggested that the Honors College may want to retitle some of their tutorials. He does not want to subject their curriculum to an external review by GERC, but he would like for CGE/GERC to authorize asking the Honors College to conduct a review of their own. Associate Provost Parsons pointed out that the Honors College just underwent an external review.

Motion: To end discussion on this topic (Day/Kelly)

MOTION APPROVED 13 YES – 2 NO – 0 ABSTENTIONS

Motion: To end GERC and submit the report (Day)

Chairperson Holz pointed out that the Faculty Senate decides when GERC is ended. He suggested that Dr. Day might be suggesting that there is no reason for GERC to convene until there is a final report. Chairperson Holz stated that he does not expect to have the report done until late May, after the last scheduled meeting on May 3. He thinks he could get it done by May 10, however, and suggested that the council could meet then instead of May 3. Associate Provost Parsons pointed out that although Dr. Day is asking for GERC not to meet, there are still CGE members present, of which he is one. She pointed out that that ongoing CGE members will vote for new officers at the May 3 meeting. Dr. Maskarinec stated that CGE could convene on May 3, but he sees no reason to convene on May 10 after Faculty Senate has had its last meeting of the year. Chairperson Holz stated that he could post the GERC report on the shared Google drive for everyone to review, but current GERC and CGE members would have to come back at the beginning of the fall semester in order to vote on it. He added that GERC members could be dismissed from the May 3 meeting but will have to come back for one fall meeting, and CGE members would still meet on May 3.

MOTION DIED FOR LACK OF A SECOND

Dr. Day thanked Chairperson Holz for chairing GERC. Chairperson Holz thanked everyone who has served during the long review.

Chairperson Holz stated that since CGE members whose terms expire at the beginning of fall will be replaced with new members, there is some question who will be voting on the GERC report since that will occur after the summer semester. The Senate Bylaws define the voting members as the current members of its councils and committees, but it seems that those CGE members who worked so hard on the review should get to vote on the final report. Dr. Baker-Sperry stated that during the last review the members voted on the final report before the end of spring semester, so this was not an issue. Associate Provost Parsons would like to see the report completed and the vote taken before the end of spring semester because it would be cleaner; the report could then be submitted to the Faculty Senate at its first fall meeting, and GERC would be done.

Chairperson Holz asked if the members could vote on the report over the summer via email. Ms. Hamm will check to see if the Senate Bylaws allow for electronic voting for councils and committees. She will also ask the Executive Committee for an exception to normal procedures to allow the outgoing CGE members to vote for the GERC final report rather than the new fall CGE members.

Motion: To adjourn (Intrieri). Meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.