**Council on General Education Minutes**

**April 5, 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**: Bennett, Intrieri, Kapale, Lukkarinen, O’Donnell-Brown

**GERC Members Excused/Absent:** Allison

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

**Visitors:**  Davison Bideshi, Chair, Council for International Education; Magdelyn Helwig, English, Writing Director

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

Changes were made to pp. 3 and 6 of the minutes of March 22, and they were approved as corrected.

Chairperson Holz suggested that agenda item 7 under New Business, “Written comments from 12-17-2017 by Department of Mathematics and Philosophy Chair Iraj Kalantari in response to 11-17-2017 GERC Subcommittee Recommendations,” be removed from the agenda. Three members of GERC had emailed their opposition to Dr. Kalantari’s request that his responses to the subcommittee report be added retroactively to the December 2017 CGE/GERC minutes and included in an appendix to the CGE/GERC final report.

Dr. Kalantari told Dr. Pettit today that the document he provided was not really a response to the November 2017 subcommittee report. Dr. Kalantari thought he would be invited back when CGE/GERC voted on the subcommittee’s naming proposal; instead, he received a revised rationale for the changes proposed by the subcommittee after the November 17 meeting, and he was responding to this document. Dr. Pettit stated that, now that Dr. Kalantari has been told there is no need for him to return to a CGE/GERC meeting, he wanted his comments sent to the group; since the vote did not occur, he did not come back to respond in person. Chairperson Holz observed that Dr. Kalantari should no longer have any objections because everything he wanted to achieve has been resolved. Dr. Pettit responded that Dr. Kalantari wanted a record of his remarks for posterity. Chairperson Holz reported that Dr. Kalantari wanted to read his remarks into the minutes, but he told Dr. Kalantari that he did not need to come back to a CGE/GERC meeting and asked him for a statement instead. Chairperson Holz stated that in response Dr. Kalantari sent a statement from December 2017 answering the Natural Science/Mathematics subcommittee’s recommendations, which is now a moot point. Chairperson Holz plans to explain to Dr. Kalantari tomorrow what is going on now with the GERC review since he has not been in communication with Dr. Kalantari following the vote by GERC to retain the status quo. He added that all members of CGE/GERC seem to be on the same page that Dr. Kalantari’s disagreement with the subcommittee’s original recommendations can be summarized in the final report.

**Motion:** To remove item 7 under New Business from the agenda (Maskarinec/Perabo)

#### MOTION APPROVED 13 YES – 1 NO – 0 ABSTENTIONS

**Announcements** – None

##### New Business

Provost’s Office Report – Associate Provost Parsons is still missing a few fall assessment reports.

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

University Advising Report – Ms. Yager told the council that the University Advising and Academic Services Center has been responsible for maintaining the online General Education handbook. Last summer her office developed a new S-guide for use during Summer Orientation and Registration (SOAR) to help freshmen pick Gen Ed courses, and it contains a fair amount of the material also included in the Gen Ed handbook. The mobile-friendly S-guide can be accessed by parents and students on their phones at SOAR to help them choose FYE, Gen Ed, or other courses available for entering WIU students. Ms. Yager related that using the S-guide made the process less confusing and cumbersome for students and allowed them to register quicker. Her office has found that few people are using the online Gen Ed handbook; they are using the S-guide or the undergraduate catalog. Ms. Yager stated that, unless there is any opposition, her office would like to stop maintaining the handbook and just maintain the S-guide rather than keeping up two similar websites.

Associate Provost Parsons asked what the S-guide helps students with; Ms. Yager responded that it helps them with the SOAR process. She explained that on the first day of SOAR, representatives from her office walk students through a workshop on picking out FYE and Gen Ed courses so that the next day, when they actually register, they will have already made some choices to be able to more easily build a schedule. Chairperson Holz asked if the paper copy of the General Education handbook is no longer printed; Ms. Yager confirmed that it has not been printed for a couple of years. She added that her area has not replaced three advisors and no longer has the manpower to keep maintaining a document that no one is using. Chairperson Holz recommended that CGE/GERC members familiarize themselves with the Gen Ed handbook and that a decision be made at the next meeting whether to continue with it.

Associate Dean Mayborn asked Ms. Yager what she meant when she stated that “a fair amount” of the General Education handbook material is included in the S-guide. Ms. Yager explained that the General Education handbook was created for use at SOAR, but it included 300- and 400-level classes that freshmen could not take; that has been cleaned up in the S-guide so that incoming freshmen are only looking at courses they can actually register for. Associate Provost Parsons stated that the purpose for creation of the Gen Ed handbook was so that students would not have to carry around undergraduate catalogs at SOAR; later it was put online. Chairperson Holz asked how many hits the website has been getting. Ms. Yager replied that this was brought up at the Council of Academic Advisors meeting. No advisors are using the website, but her office has not done a formal study of its use. Dr. Day asked if Ms. Yager can get the website data; Ms. Yager replied that she will ask Jeremy Meritt, University Technology Assistant Director for Web Services, for that information. Chairperson Holz will send a link to the Gen Ed handbook to the CGE/GERC members.

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

CGE Report: Chairperson Holz suggested that elections for the CGE Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary occur at the last meeting on May 3. He stated that new officers would begin their terms after GERC is officially disbanded by the Faculty Senate, but the Recording Secretary clarified that actually terms for new officers would begin at the first fall meeting. Chairperson Holz expressed his interest in running again for Chair.

Chairperson Holz stated that the driving urgency of completing the Gen Ed review is that new courses cannot be submitted for General Education consideration until the review is final. He asked council members to let him know of any agenda items that should be brought up before the end of the semester. Chairperson Holz hopes to have the GERC final report completed by May 15, with the vote to accept the report occurring at the first August CGE/GERC meeting. Four CGE members will be leaving at the end of the semester and replaced by four new members at the first fall meeting. Chairperson Holz stated that outgoing CGE members will be invited back for the first fall meeting but will no longer be voting members. Associate Provost Parsons pointed out that if the final report can be completed this semester, current CGE members could vote for it and GERC members could be released. She urged CGE/GERC to complete their charge this semester.

**Recent CIE Recommendations on Global Issues:** Chairperson Holz told the council he received minutes from a Council for International Education (CIE) meeting of February 26 which includes the details of a focused range of goals or objectives recommended by CIE. He stated that the idea of an integrative approach to the Foreign Language/Global Issues (FLGI) requirement is intriguing, and the document sets forward some ambitious terms. He added that CGE/GERC is interested in hearing the rationale for this kind of proposal.

CIE Chair Davison Bideshi related that CIE'sdocument stems from GERC'S Interim Reportof May 2017, which included language related to FLGI: “While we in CGE/GERC maintain that the goal of Gen Ed and the goals of FLGI are admirable and that an ‘extra’ course on Global Issues might be a sound educational demand, we suggest that if the goals and intentions of the Global Issues designation can be met with one Gen Ed course, that the CIE be encouraged to reassess the need for the additional FLGI requirement. That assessment ought to include the question of which GI courses that do not fit into Gen Ed would continue to be taught by departments if the FLGI requirement was abandoned.”

Dr. Bideshi pointed out that the FLGI requirement can be met with one 3 s.h. course out of the 120 required for graduation. He said CIE posed the larger question of what kind of students they would like to see graduate from WIU and whether one course would allow students to be competent in a global environment and decided that the answer is no because 3 s.h. does not allow competency in anything.

The CIE proposal connects the FLGI requirement to the mission statement of the University, which states that “Western Illinois University empowers students, faculty, and staff to lead dynamic and diverse communities.” CIE does not believe that the FLGI requirement is taken seriously across the board. The council invited the deans of the four academic colleges to attend their most recent meeting and provide feedback as to whether they would support the direction that CIE would like for the FLGI requirement to go. The Council thinks, however, that their proposal for revision of the FLGI requirement will have to wait until the new Provost is hired to see what direction that person envisions the University going.

CIE advocates for an integrative approach instead of offering a 3 s.h. requirement which does not speak to competency. Dr. Bideshi explained that, independent of the course being taught and whether it is designated as Global Issues, all courses, from100-level to 400-level, would have to have some component of multicultural or global issues so that the curriculum overall would reflect an international approach. CIE envisions a deadline of ten years in the future for this change to be accomplished. According to the proposal presented to CGE/GERC, CIE would develop a metric that could be utilized in the construction of courses and “the overall expectations would reflect a knowledge-based approach to diversity.” CIE suggests that 10 to 40 percent of the semester hours for a bachelor’s degree could be reasonable figure to aspire toward.

Associate Provost Parsons recalled that incorporation of multicultural aspects used to be one of the criteria the CCPI looked at in new courses before the decision was made to infuse multiculturalism into the curriculum across the board. She related the decision was made partly because it had become *pro forma* for departments to just put a generalized statement on the CCPI request form and even to ask the Recording Secretary what statement they used last time to get the course passed rather than giving it genuine reflection. She stated that some of the ways that courses were encouraged to incorporate multiculturalism included using textbooks from authors with a multicultural background or researching multicultural aspects of the course topic. Associate Provost Parsons said it became apparent for certain classes that multicultural perspectives just do not fit well. She applauds the effort on behalf of CIE but wonders how it would be implemented. She suspects this would have to involve CCPI because that council approves new courses before they go forward to Faculty Senate. She suggested that archival CCPI minutes might be able to provide insight into the discussions when the Committee on Multicultural Education considered how to better infuse multiculturalism into teaching rather than having it be a rote sentence on a CCPI document. Ms. Sandage agreed that at some point it seemed departments were just throwing words out without any intention of really doing anything to include a multicultural aspect to their courses, and it was frustrating that people did not take this requirement seriously.

Dr. Bideshi related that CIE talked about holding faculty accountable for what they are doing in their classes and asking them to justify why the course meetings the requirements; they have been working on a metric for the last couple of months. Dr. Pettit stated that the change to the CCPI form was made not merely because faculty were considering it too pragmatically but also because there were concerns about courses like calculus or coding that seemed to be more universal. Associate Provost recalled that CCPI discussed that routing in Nepal is the same as routing in the United States. Dr. Maskarinec pointed out that there are disciplines that involve practical skill acquisition. He explained that law enforcement and business do have an international component, but computer science and some of the natural sciences are universal; things are done the same way in the United States as they are in India or anywhere else. Dr. Bideshi stated that CIE proposes that to meet the requirements would require a default of 3 s.h. or 6 s.h. of coursework; if a discipline could not do what CIE is asking, that major would default to the 3 s.h. requirement. He added that CIE realizes some departments could make this change easier than others, which is one issue that the council is struggling with now. Chairperson Holz said when he read CIE’s proposal, the only way he could imagine it working is if every department had a plan to go beyond the 3 s.h. (2.5 percent) dosage of global issues programming. He pointed out that some disciplines might come up with a robust program with 20 to 40 percent global issues content where one class might be 90 percent global issues, but every department is not staffed the same in order to adequately be able to accomplish this. Chairperson Holz thinks there might be some merit to departmental plans; the explanation from Computer Sciences as to how they would meet the requirement would be very different from Anthropology.

CIE plans to send a questionnaire to every department to indicate where they are in regard to the FLGI requirement as it currently stands. CIE would also offer workshops through CITR. Dr. Bideshi stressed that discussions are ongoing, but he believes departments would have variability to meet the requirement at the outset and would receive help and support from CIE to do so. He explained there are certain people in every department that might be predisposed to be considered experts on international issues within their disciplines; CIE thinks they could identify these passionate people and ask them to mentor others in their departments. He added that this would need a lot of support from chairs and deans. Dr. Bideshi stated that, assuming everything went smoothly with the proposed process, CIE would need to identify how to measure the outcome for students. They thought about administering a survey of 10-30 questions to a representative segment of the student population in order to gauge certain markers. CIE also considered looking at syllabi based on criteria provided by the council.

Dr. Day pointed out that the way Dr. Bideshi is framing FLGI with an emphasis on competency of global issues and multiculturalism is different than General Education because students take a Gen Ed course here and there and could not be considered to be competent in any of the disciplines. He observed that the purpose of Gen Ed is exposure rather than competency. He stated that there are questions that could be used to see if students have been sufficiently exposed to global issues and multiculturalism, and he thinks the emphasis should be on exposure rather than on competency. Dr. Bideshi responded that the question to be asked is does the University want its students to be exposed to these subjects or to be competent in them. Chairperson Holz clarified that the CIE proposal, while it would incorporate General Education Global Issues (GEGI) courses, would not apply exclusively to Gen Ed. Chairperson Holz thinks an integrated approach across the University’s entire curriculum and programming might have some advantages.

Associate Provost Parsons pointed out that GI courses can be upper division while General Education courses generally are not, but GERC is charged to examine the Multicultural category in relation to other graduation requirements, such as FLGI. She pointed out that there are some global issues components in some Multicultural Gen Ed classes even when they are not formally designated as GI. Dr. Bideshi stated that it is inevitable that there will be some overlap, and CIE is struggling with definitions of these two areas. CIE was asked by CGE/GERC last year about the differences between multicultural and global issues courses and submitted their response but did not receive any feedback. CIE is currently working on three definitions that will hopefully be finalized by their last meeting in May. Dr. Bideshi expressed his thanks to the Senate Recording Secretary for providing CIE with a document outlining their 20-year history.

Dr. Kelly related that at its last meeting CGE/GERC passed a motion to maintain the status quo for General Education categories, descriptions, and credit hour distribution requirements. She asked if Dr. Bideshi is indicating that he does not agree with this motion and if there is something that CIE wants to change about the way Gen Ed is constituted right now. Chairperson Holz clarified that CIE and CGE/GERC are operating under different time tables, and the proposal provided by CIE predates the CGE/GERC vote of two weeks ago. He pointed out that CGE/GERC could wait until CIE has a viable, working, implementable proposal for the council to vote on, or CGE/GERC can talk about modifying the Multicultural Subcommittee recommendation from September and changing the emphasis to tailor it more specifically to where CIE seems to be going. He does not envision that anything concrete will come out of CIE at the moment, and he thinks, in terms of CGE/GERC support, it would merely be a matter of the subcommittee tweaking or adjusting their strong support of FLGI at WIU.

Ms. Bowers-Sharpe related the Multicultural Subcommittee felt they needed to say something about FLGI because they did not want it to go away, but they did not attempt to impose any structure on it since they did not think it was within the province of CGE or GERC. The subcommittee contacted CIE before discussing FLGI because they felt odd writing about something administered by another committee. The subcommittee came to the consensus that since Gen Ed’s Multicultural category was created first, it includes in its description things that would probably now be considered as falling under Global Issues; FLGI was created later and has a narrower and more specific definition. Ms. Bowers-Sharpe stated the subcommittee did not write up category language because they did not know whether the Multicultural category was going to stay in the ultimate General Education plan, but now they know that it is. She asked if CGE/GERC voted that no catalog language would be changed; Dr. Kelly responded that the vote was to maintain the status quo for Gen Ed categories and descriptions.

Dr. Kelly asked if CIE is proposing something different for the Multicultural category than what exists now or if CIE would be satisfied leaving it as is; Dr. Bideshi responded that CIE would be happy leaving it as is. He added that CIE is advocating for a more integrative approach, but they understand it is not possible right away. He thinks at some point the council will have to stop reinventing and start acting, and CIE thinks it is almost at that point. Chairperson Holz looks forward to a more specific proposal and to working with CIE closely in the future. He thinks all CGE/GERC can do is, at best, to offer supportive positions at this juncture because the proposal right now is too vague and ambitious to do more.

Dr. Perabo pointed out that GERC’s charge is not to determine what will happen with Global Issues but to examine the relationship between the Multicultural and Global Issues categories. She related that the subcommittee submitted definitions of the Multicultural category, and Global Issues is folded into that discussion. The Multicultural Subcommittee felt there was already a committee detailing with GI, so they did not try to integrate GI into a Gen Ed category or part of a category. She added that the subcommittee was very supportive of keeping the FLGI graduation requirement but not making a determination of what FLGI should look like going forward. Dr. Bideshi asked if the subcommittee finalized language. Ms. Bowers-Sharpe responded the subcommittee did not write category language; the report is a statement on the subcommittee’s stance, not specific language. She added that it was clear the Multicultural category description was created before FLGI because the FLGI definition is more specifically global while the Multicultural definition could be multicultural or global. Dr. Perabo believes one reason to maintain the current definition is because to revise the language so that it only refers to different cultures within the United States or to a comparison between different cultures or countries would not serve this category well because many courses developed with the existing language would have to be told they are no longer Multicultural. Ms. Bowers-Sharpe added that the subcommittee also found that different disciplines define multicultural differently. Dr. Pettit stated that when he read the subcommittee’s report his understanding was that they wanted to keep both the Multicultural and the Global Issues categories as is. Ms. Sandage added that the subcommittee would like to see more hours attached to the Multicultural category but did not think that would likely happen. Dr. Pettit stated that it sounds like this will be an issue for CCPI and Faculty Senate; CGE/GERC has done its part.

**Motion:** To thank CIE and Dr. Bideshi for their input (Day/Kelly)

#### NO OBJECTIONS

Ms. Sandage would imagine that because of the many upper level classes that are not Gen Ed but which count as Global Issues, many students end up taking more than one GI class by the time they graduate. Chairperson Holz suspects there are courses that do not have the GI designation but have a culture of global issues but they do not want to formally meet the FLGI requirements. Associate Provost Parsons stated that there would be no way to track this, but the University can track how many students take more than one GI course. Ms. Sandage related she is teaching a GI class this semester and asked her students how many were taking the course to fulfill the FLGI requirement and none of them even knew it was a GI course, even though she had worked hard to turn the class into one that would be eligible for GI designation.

Discussion and Progress Update on Writing (and class size) in Gen Ed (from new Writing Subcommittee)

Chairperson Holz told the members that Ms. O’Donnell-Brown submitted a document that includes current writing requirements and comments. He recalled that CGE/GERC engaged in extensive discussion about class size at its last meeting. Associate Provost Parsons takes offense at the third paragraph of the document proposing that “For courses with an enrollment of over 50 or in the areas of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and Human Well-Being, students should, as a minimum, write short informal essays or responses to the course material or other discipline-appropriate writing tasks, such as lab reports or essay questions.” She compares this with the proposed requirement “For courses with an enrollment of 50 or fewer in the areas of Humanities, Fine Arts, Social Sciences, and Multi-Cultural Studies, students should have at least one written assignment with written or oral feedback from the instructor with the opportunity for revision.” Associate Provost Parsons would prefer that everyone be assigned the same writing with no distinction between Gen Ed categories. She pointed out that currently every category has to require at least one assignment, with the difference based upon class size (over or under 50 students). She thinks the reference to separating out the Natural Sciences/Mathematics and Human Well-Being categories should be struck, and that all categories or none should be included in the other paragraph. She thinks that pulling out Natural Sciences/ Mathematics and Human Well-Being treats these categories as though they do not need to do as much writing, which is untrue since students do lab reports in science classes, for example, and have to be able to write to explain coding to those who do not code. Dr. Maskarinec confirmed that Computer Sciences students do written descriptions of certain problems and lab reports, and so does Mathematics. He is, however, a little concerned about saying that the writing has to be in essay form. Chairperson Holz recalled that at the previous CGE/GERC meeting there was discussion of discourse communities and he thought the Writing Subcommittee was asked to address something along these lines. Dr. Maskarinec said he likes that phrasing.

Dr. Day agrees there should not be a distinction between the Natural Sciences/Mathematics and Human Well-Being categories versus the rest of the Gen Ed categories. He wonders whether CGE/GERC wants to do away with the over 50/under 50 guidelines. He pointed out that eliminating that distinction would mean that every class, regardless of size, would need to require one written assignment, and it would be up to the professor how the written assignment – whether essay, reflection paper, or coded manual – is to be weighted regarding the grade, how much feedback will be given, and how extensive the assignment is to be. Dr. Day wonders if CGE/GERC wants to specify beyond that or just leave the requirement completely open and at the discretion of the professor. Chairperson Holz pointed out that Dr. Baker-Sperry had suggested keeping the writing requirement even for courses with enrollments over 50.

Mr. Markey brought up to SGA that CGE/GERC is thinking about increasing the writing requirement. He said students want faculty to give feedback about writing and not just write “good” or “great” on their papers; if students spend hours writing a paper, they want genuine feedback for their efforts. Chairperson Holz pointed out that the writing requirement is supposed to include “opportunity for revision.” He gives students the opportunity to revise their papers to achieve a better grade based on his comments, but he does not always *require* revision. When Dr. Shupe teaches large classes of 69 students, they are assigned a final project that is broken down question by question, and she writes all over their papers so that they can fix their errors. When she teaches a class of 20 students, they write essays, and she literally grades night and day everywhere she goes. She believes that in larger classes students can still put 10-15 pages into a final writing project and agrees that the over 50/under 50 differential should be maintained.

Department of English Writing Program Director Magdelyn Helwig stated that the important thing is that faculty recognize that when they assign a lengthy essay, it is important to give students feedback. This means that, in classes with more than 50 students, this type of assignment may not be appropriate unless they have teaching assistants, but if they can give adequate feedback then assigning an 8-10 page paper would be fine. She believes some classes with over 50 students may not have the resources or time to assign a lengthy essay, provide sufficient feedback, and have students benefit from that process. Dr. Helwig stressed that writing to learn should be emphasized for classes with fewer than 50 students; they should be writing informal, short papers all the time. She believes writing is one of the best learning tools to embed information into students’ minds, but the most important part of doing the writing is professors giving the feedback.

Dr. Day asked, given the previous discussions of discourse communities, whether Dr. Helwig would have a problem if a committee recommended that every Gen Ed course should have at a minimum one writing assignment. Chairperson Holz thinks feedback should be expected from the faculty member. Dr. Kelly thinks it depends on the class and whether CGE/GERC decides that writing be required of all Gen Ed classes or just those with under 50 students. Dr. Day said he would propose a minimum of one writing assignment and say that feedback is required. He stated that if the class has over 50 students, professors could have students write a two-page paper, and if there are under 50 students the professor could assign a much longer paper, or whatever the professor decides, but he thinks that one writing assignment with feedback required should be the simple proposal. Dr. Chamberlin asked if Dr. Day would propose eliminating the under 50/over 50 differential; Dr. Day responded affirmatively, adding that professors could decide what type of writing assignment is best for their classes.

Dr. Perabo pointed out that her proposal asked that classes under 50 students require students to write on a regular basis in a writing to learn mode; weekly writing should be normative for this size of classes. Chairperson Holz observed that professors need to be reminded of the range of what counts as writing, which could include essay questions on quizzes and online discussions. Dr. Perabo agrees that writing does not necessarily only involve graded assignments with revisions, although these are needed, too. Dr. Pettit suggested the council could say they expect a minimum of five or ten written assignments, but not all would have to require feedback or opportunity for revision. Chairperson Holz remarked that eight quizzes with all having essay questions does not sound like the total Gen Ed writing assignment for a course.

Dr. Helwig suggested that instead of saying there needs to be one written assignment it could be stated that there needs to be one formal written assignment; then professors can have as many informal written assignments as they want. She added that the formal assignment could require feedback and offer the opportunity for revision. Associate Provost Parsons pointed out that “formal” would need to be defined, perhaps with examples.

Dr. Day asked if there would be any sort of enforcement. Dr. Perabo responded that a chair can tell a faculty member that he or she has a syllabus that does not meet the acceptable level for a Gen Ed class. She does not think it is the business of the Council of General Education to enforce but, rather, to support; enforcement should be by the department. Dr. Day remarked it is a substitution change to say a professor can have five, ten, or fifteen writing assignments because the norm has been a minimum of one, and this is quintuple that number. Chairperson Holz likes the idea of multiple opportunities for writing, with weekly writing being the norm, and one formal requirement based on the discipline’s discourse community.

Dr. Perabo recalled that when CGE voted to remove the W requirement, it was because writing was to be part of all Gen Ed classes. She observed that there is currently an incredibly low requirement, but a survey of College of Arts and Sciences Gen Ed classes found that many professors already incorporate writing on a weekly basis, so what is being proposed may not be that much of a change. She noted that this may not be able to be the norm for statistics classes, but departments could decide on a case-by-case basis what is acceptable. She suggested that CGE/GERC give department chairs the tools and then they can enforce, if the council gives them the means to do so. Dr. Day thinks this might unnecessarily infringe on the academic freedom of the professors if they are now required to give weekly writing assignments or give a random quiz with one essay question. He thinks having a minimum level of one assignment and allowing the professor to decide how long it should be based upon class size is sufficient, although he hopes professors go beyond the minimum; Dr. Perabo replied that most do.

Dr. Chamberlin thinks that only requiring one writing assignment for a Gen Ed course is just pitiful. She pointed out that the current language recommends including writing as an integral learning tool, and requiring one assignment does not qualify as an integral learning tool. She believes assignments should offer opportunity for revision and, ideally, should include writing that is high stakes, low stakes, and everything in between in order to test the conventions of the disciplines. This is what integral learning tools mean to her, and she cannot go along with a one assignment requirement that gives room to operate freely within the discipline. She stated that “50 or fewer” and “50 or more” means, ideally, CGE/GERC wants class sizes where this kind of substantive writing is possible, and a concession is made to large classes because it is difficult, in terms of time, for the professor to review, grade, and revise. Dr. Chamberlin thinks that the council ideally likes smaller class sizes with several writing assignments integrated into the larger writing assignments and with concessions made for larger classes.

Dr. Day stated that one assignment with revision and feedback can be a substantial amount of writing; depending on the length, which could be 10-15 pages, writing the first time and revision the second time provides a lot of opportunity to learn through writing. He thinks this is different than a one- to two-page paper that is assigned ten times, but it depends on the way the professor teaches. He pointed out that grad school classes often assign one large paper at the end of the semester that students have to write. Dr. Chamberlin responded that by the time students get to grad school they will have completed all of the basic courses which incorporate writing.

Chairperson Holz asked the Writing Subcommittee – Drs. Allison and Day and Ms. O’Donnell-Brown, with the help of Dr. Helwig – to come back with a draft of their recommendations. Ms. Yager stated that the Advising and Academic Services Center works mostly with freshmen, and first-year students do better with more graded opportunities; the more times they are able to hand something in, the better they do in class, which leads back to retention.

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