

**Annual Report
Council on General Education
AY 2019-2020**

Meeting Schedule

The Council on General Education (CGE) convened eight meetings throughout the Fall and Spring semesters. We were scheduled to meet every other Thursday afternoon from September 5, 2019 through April 30, 2020. The final meeting was moved up to April 23, 2020 to allow consideration of a course proposal before the Faculty Senate adjourned for the summer. Five meetings were canceled due to a paucity of agenda items. The April meetings were conducted via Zoom.

Membership on the Council on General Education for the 2019-2020 academic year included: Andrea Alveshere (*Chair*, Social Sciences), Lori Baker-Sperry (Multicultural), Greg Baramidze (COBT), Seyfi Turkelli (Math/Natural Sciences), Gordon Pettit (Fall only, *Secretary*, Humanities), Craig Tollini (Social Sciences, *Secretary*, *Spring only*), Seongchan Kim (Fall only, At-large), Keith Holz (Fall only, Humanities/Fine Arts), William Knox (Basic Skills/Writing), Joyce Runquist (Spring Only, *Secretary*, At-large), David Zanolla (Basic Skills/Public Speaking), Wanmo Koo (At-large), Karen Zellmann (*Vice-Chair*, Human Well-Being), Marjorie Allison (Spring only, Humanities/Fine Arts), Robert Kelly (Spring only, At-large), Sherry Lindquist (Spring only, Humanities/Fine Arts).

Ex-officio members for the past academic year included: Mark Mossman (Office of the Provost), Michelle Yager (University Advising), and James Schmidt (Dean's Council).

Ryan Homer served throughout the 2019-20 academic year as Student Government Association representative.

The Faculty Senate charge regarding the constituency of the General Education Council states "the Council shall consist of sixteen members, including one undergraduate student selected by the Student Government Associations." With twelve elected members at all times, three ex-officio members, and one student representative active throughout the year, the Council on General Education fulfills its charge for membership.

At its last meeting of the 2019-2020 academic year, CGE held elections for its officers and welcomed the following members appointed by Faculty Senate for 2020-2021:

Election of New Officers for 2019-2020 (May 2, 2019):

*Chair: Andrea Alveshere (Sociology & Anthropology)
Vice-Chair: Karen Zellmann (Health Sciences & Social Work)
Secretary: Craig Tollini (Sociology & Anthropology)

Appointment of New Members beginning 2020-2021:

Lia Petracovici	Math & Philosophy	(Math/Natural Sciences)
Emily Shupe	Kinesiology	(Human Well-Being)

Summary of Activities

The year began with the election of the new Council President and Secretary, as those elected in Spring 2019 had stepped down. The Council had several new members, so all were provided the opportunity to read and discuss the CGE 2018-2019 *CGE Annual Report, Recommendations by the IBHE Faculty Advisory Council on Program Prioritization and Consolidation, IBHE Faculty Advisory Council Recommends Supporting Liberal Arts & Sciences Programs*, and the IBHE Faculty Advisory Council Working Groups Paper.

At the October 17th meeting, Special Guest, Amy Carr, Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) Representative to the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) provided an overview of the work of the FAC, and led a discussion of current issues. Amy shared that the FAC is concerned that there are large numbers of students arriving on campus with several general education hours. Council members commented that some faculty in English reported concern about deficiencies in writing skill exhibited by many students who come in with credit for English 180 and 280. The FAC is aware that some smaller institutions are suffering financially due to accepting more students with general education hours. The Council discussed the existing rules regarding the number of credit hours a student must accumulate at WIU (and at a four-year institution), and that there is currently no cap on the general education hours a student may bring in. Council members noted that those who come in with their general education hours met did not have the opportunity to explore certain disciplines that were not likely offered in a dual credit program. Our student representative noted that there is often a strong financial motivation for taking dual credit hours.

The Subcommittee on Assessment of Student Learning in General Education, chaired by Lori Baker-Sperry, set a schedule for the academic year, with the aim of having Fall 2019 assessment reports ready for the upcoming Higher Learning Commission (HLC) reaccreditation visit. It was initially thought that this visit might occur as early as February 2020. Due to recent WIU procedural changes, assessment reports from departments would now be reviewed first by Lori Baker-Sperry and Associate Provost Mark Mossman, and then the other subcommittee members would review those to provide feedback to departments. The Council discussed how the feedback reports would be returned to departments. It was noted that disconnects can occur in assessment feedback information-sharing, especially since the Departmental Assessment Chair is not necessarily the Department Chair, and a high rate of Assessment Chair turnover occurs in some departments. It was also noted that another change mandated by the HLC in recent years was that Assessment Impact Reports needed to detail how previous year's assessment data had been used to improve student learning in the reported year (as opposed to indicating changes planned for the future, based on the most recent data). Throughout the year, CGE heard periodic reports from this subcommittee, delivered by Lori Baker-Sperry.

Beginning at the December 5th meeting, the Council began a series of discussions about the online delivery of General Education courses. These initially stemmed from a concern expressed by a member of Academic Advising about a limited availability of General Education courses for online majors. It was noted that having online majors can help keep programs viable through economic challenges, as students who need full-time work need not be limited to the employment options in university communities. Data from the Anthropology major, which began offering a fully online option in 2017 were considered as an example, including the fact that many of the majors reside in Peoria, Chicago, and even in distant states such as Alaska and Texas. Concern was expressed that those already holding an undergraduate degree must pay graduate tuition when working on a second bachelor's degree, potentially discouraging non-traditional students from choosing WIU when pursuing new career paths.

Feedback was requested on a tentative proposal for offering "blended" courses in which fully online and face-to-face students could be combined into the same course section. Such courses could avoid the problem of needing to meet the minimum enrollments for separate online and classroom sections, and students would have flexibility regarding which (if any) class sessions they would physically attend. The Council discussed practical concerns such as student evaluations, and group discussions. It was learned that in the Art department, they already have "stacked" courses where two sections are combined, so that the total could exceed the minimum, whereas individually they would not; and that Marketing offers "Zoom sections" that can interact with face-to-face sections. Concern was expressed that the proposed "blended" option might lead to very few students taking a course face-to-face, as some faculty have observed that on-campus students will preferentially take a course online even if a face-to-face section is available. Several faculty who have experience teaching both online and classroom sections felt strongly that face-to-face sections are more effective pedagogically because the classroom experience provides valuable interactions that they feel cannot be replicated in an online course. It was noted that considerations about online delivery and possible "blended" course formats may be relevant for contract negotiations.

The topic of online delivery was revisited at the January 30th and February 5th meetings, in response to a then-recent email requesting faculty to volunteer to teach Dual Enrollment Live Stream General Education courses in Fall 2020. The proposed delivery method involved the on-campus class being connected (live-streamed) to a high school classroom via Zoom. Council members shared concerns about potential difficulties posed by limited faculty time and resources, and older technology on campus. Other questions raised included: What does the research show regarding dual enrollment classes and students' college experiences? Are all faculty able to effectively teach to the different levels of students in the classroom? Would there be a way to distinguish between college and high school students in the class rosters? Would technology on both ends be able to function reliably? Will there be pressure from administration to teach live-streamed classes, even if the instructor doesn't feel the format would be appropriate for the course delivery? Is the quality/integrity of a Zoom class the same as face-to-face?

The distinction between dual enrollment and dual credit classes was clarified, and it was noted that this proposal was about dual enrollment, in which students get college credit for a class that is taught by WIU faculty (as opposed to being taught by a high school teacher). For the February 13th meeting, Associate Provost Mossman provided dual enrollment programming data spanning the years 2010-13 and 2018-2019 showing consistency in both course grades and retention of dual enrollment students. Students in these WIU courses generally get grades of "B" or higher; approximately one-third of them enroll full-time at WIU after they graduate from high school; and freshman students who arrive at WIU with previous college credit have an average retention rate of 83%.

The potential class dynamics were discussed for situations in which college students (face-to-face) and high school students (streaming) are in the same class, and whether the cultural differences might negatively affect both participation levels and the overall experience of the class. Our student representative suggested that there might be a feeling of a two-tiered hierarchy of students if there are two classrooms (WIU and high school) connected, but that high school students might be more comfortable if the WIU class is an online class with individual WIU students logging in remotely, as well.

One question was whether CTR has any say regarding these Zoom classes, since they oversee online best practices. This question was brought to the University Technology Advisory Group for clarification, and it was reported back that CTR would not oversee the course format for the proposed Dual Enrollment Zoom courses. There are criteria for online course approval. There are no approval criteria for the use of Zoom, although the CTR website does list best practices. It was pointed out that part of the mission of general education is engagement, justifying the Council's concerns about whether engagement is occurring as effectively in all delivery methods. Technology problems occur with live streaming and can also negatively affect the experience of the class. Regarding recorded classes, concerns were raised about what happens to the recordings after the semester ends, and related issues surrounding intellectual property and faculty job security.

A suggestion was made to modify the "Request for Inclusion in General Education" form to include a question about delivery methods. The pros and cons of such a change were discussed, including whether delivery format really falls under the purview of CGE, and whether including the delivery method question might be perceived to indicate preferential treatment for certain modalities. Some Council members suggested that CGE should draft a statement/policy to be sent to Faculty Senate about our position on general education classes being taught through Zoom. It was determined that additional information would be helpful in determining whether to develop recommendations. The discussion was tabled until the March 16th meeting, by which time rapid community spread of the COVID-19 virus had begun in Illinois, shifting all WIU classes online, and rendering the preparation of any statement regarding the merits of online delivery moot. April updates regarding pandemic-related instructional changes answered many questions that had been raised in previous discussions.

CGE did not receive any new course proposals during Fall 2019, leading the Council to wonder whether faculty might not realize that the recent moratorium on new Gen Ed courses had been lifted. On November 21st, upon receiving approval from the Senate Chair, CGE issued an email to all faculty and department Chairs inviting submission of new General Education course proposals, and providing information about the process, including links to the requisite form and updated “Writing in General Education” document. During Spring 2020, CGE received three new course proposals: ANTH/REL 225, Myth & Ritual (accepted after minor revisions); QS 100, Introduction to Queer Studies (accepted without revision); and LAS 195, Introduction to the Liberal Arts and Sciences (accepted without revision).

General Education Course Articulation Requests

During the Fall and Spring semesters, articulation requests were managed by the Chair working directly with the appropriate subcommittee members who represent the General Education categories. As is customary, during the summer months when faculty are on leave, the requests were evaluated and processed by the Chair. The following two tables indicate the scope and distribution of requests, approvals, denials, and for which Gen Ed category the request pertained. The number of course articulation requests received/accepted this past year was 6/4. This is a significant drop in requests compared to last year’s 48/41.

August 6, 2019--August 5, 2020 CGE Course Articulation Requests

Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Summer 2020	Total
2 approved	1 approved	1 approved	4 approved
0 declined	2 declined	0 declined	2 declined
2 received	3 received	1 received	6 received

*August 6, 2019--August 5, 2020 CGE Course Articulation Requests Approved
By General Education Category*

	Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Summer 2020	Total Annual
Humanities	0	0	1	1
Fine Arts	0	0	0	0
Social Sciences	2	0	0	2
H. Health & Well Being	0	1	0	1
Multicultural	0	0	0	0
Natural Sciences	0	0	0	0
Total approved	2	1	1	4 approved
<i>Declined</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2 Humanities</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2 declined</i>

Respectfully submitted by Andrea J. Alveshere, CGE Chair, August 27, 2020.