Minutes
General Education Requirements Committee
Tuesday, 22 October 2019
Academic Affairs Conference Room AA 102, Zoom
2:30-4:30 p.m.

Attendance: Jennifer Attebery, Jim Skidmore, Neil Tocher, Shu-Yuan Lin, Spencer Jardine, Leonid Hanin, Matt Wilson, Tayo Omotowa, Paul Cady
Ex-officio: Joanne Tokle, Ann Hackert, Chris Hunt (for Sarah Mead), Susanne Forrest, Mark Cooper (ITRC), Geoffrey Bennett (UCC), Catherine Read
Excused: none
Guest: Daniel McInerney (NILOA coach from Utah State University)

1. Announcements -- none

2. Minutes – October 8, 2019 -- deferred

3. NILOA Coach – Daniel McInerney

McInerney is one of 15 faculty members nationally that serve as volunteers for the National Institute of Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) which began at Utah State University and has expanded across the U.S. and into other countries. Their focus is to help faculty understand how to approach assessment from a practical, meaningful, concrete standpoint. What do students need to learn from each class, from each program? What is the purpose of general education, what does it contribute to students, and what is so valuable about it that all students are required to take it? As faculty learn how to articulate the answers to these questions, they can better structure their assignments and courses to help students learn what they need to know. Assessment is a tool to help measure the quality and effectiveness of courses and programs in attaining the desired outcomes. It is not simply a matter of data collection and analysis -- there should be a story, a logic behind how and why courses, curriculum, and programs are structured the way they are.

In today’s world, students will be changing jobs and even careers multiple times in their lives. They need skills that will help them make those transitions. A common theme from employers is they have a lot of specialists, but not enough employees who can communicate technical information to lay audiences, who can lead teams of people with diverse expertise and abilities, and who have the ability to assimilate information from diverse sources into a coherent, rational, and understandable whole. It is fine to make evidence-based arguments, but how do you frame the conversation in meaningful ways? General education is the foundation for training students in the soft skills that will carry them through and be successful in all their future endeavors and challenges.

Discussion ensued about the challenges faculty face in channeling their passion and enthusiasm for teaching and helping students become the best they can be, while dealing with mandated assessment processes and outcomes that do not match the desired goals of general education and programs in preparing students for life beyond the university. Suggestions included finding ways of engaging with employers, K-12 faculty, and alumni to identify what is needed and how to achieve it. Ensure that experienced faculty are teaching general education courses so they can impart their knowledge and life experience to students, not just dry subject matter of the course. In conducting assessment, do not expect every faculty member to participate, just get meaningful, representative samples. Begin where people are, not where you want them to be. Recognize those who are passionate about ensuring student success and engage them in the process.

McInerney expressed his appreciation and admiration for the engagement and passion demonstrated by the faculty at ISU in all his workshops and presentations today.
. Upcoming GERC due dates:
   a. **October 1, 2019** – send reminder to department chairs that Objectives 5 and 6 are due for 5-Year Review this January
   b. **November 1, 2019** – annual Gen Ed Course Assessment Reports – one report per Gen Ed course
   c. **January 17, 2020** – 5-Year Reports for Objective 5 and Objective 6 courses
   d. **January 14, 2020** – appoint GERC members to chair the Objective Review Committees for Obj 5 & 6
   e. **April 1, 2020** – Objective Review Committee (ORC) Reports

5. SBOE/IRSA initiatives – updates
   SBOE approved several policy changes during October 17, 2019 meeting:
   • Board Policy III.F: Program Prioritization
   • Board Policy III.L: Continuing Education – credit for Prior Learning & Experiential Learning
   • Board Policy III.N: General Education
   • Board Policy III.S: Remedial Education
   • Board Policy III.U: Textbook Affordability – Open Educational Resources (OER)

6. GERC Subcommittee: Faculty Survey re: gen ed program and assessment – no update
   Members: Jennifer Attebery, Tayo Omotowa, Spencer Jardine, Susanne Forrest

7. Assessment Plans still missing: Physics (all) and MATH 1143 & 1147

8. Other Business –
   • disparity of dual credit instructor qualifications across colleges is an ongoing concern…

9. Adjourn: 4:37 p.m.

Approved by GERC: April 28, 2020  
Accepted by UCC: April 29, 2020 via email vote  
Accepted by Faculty Senate: May 6, 2020 via email vote  
Accepted by Academic Affairs: May 6, 2020