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Faculty Senate

2-17-2009

General Education Subcommittee Minutes, February 17, 2009

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GENERAL EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
February 17, 2009 - 8:30 a.m.
Champ Hall Conference Room #136

Present: Richard Mueller (Chair), Larry Smith, Wendy Holliday, Brock Dethier, Vince Lafferty, Nancy Mesner, Gary Straquadine, Jeremy Jennings (for Grady Brimley), Craig Petersen, Dan Coster, Ryan Dupont, Rhonda Miller, Cathy Hartman, Brian McCuskey, Don Cooley, Deborah Reece (for Stephanie Hamblin), Mary Leavitt, John Mortensen

Absent: Wynn Walker, Shelley Lindauer, Tom Peterson, Christie Fox

I. Approval of Minutes
Ryan Dupont motioned that the minutes of January 20, 2009, be approved as submitted. The motion was seconded by Brock Dethier and was unanimously approved.

II. Course Approval
a. PEP 4100 (CI) – Approved
b. THEA 3230 (CI) – Approved
c. NFS 5410 (CI) – Pending revisions
d. PRP 4100 (CI) – Approved
e. APEC 5020 (CI) – Under review
f. APEC 5950 (CI) – Pending complete submittal information
g. COMD 3100 (DSC) – Pending revisions
h. PRP 3050 (QI) – Under review
i. APEC 3310 (QI) – Under review
j. APEC 5010 (QI) – Approved
k. APEC 5015 – Needs to be reviewed as CI, not QI
l. JCOM 3010 (QI) – Denied
m. USU 1320 (BHU) – Approved
n. Honors 1320 (BHU) – Approved
o. APEC 3010 (DSS) – Under review
p. APEC 3012 (DSS) – Under review
q. APEC 3020 (DSS) – Under review
r. USU 1340 (BSS) – Under review
s. ANTH 2330 (BSS) – Under review
t. ANTH 3360 (DSS) – Under review
u. ANTH 3370 (DSS) – Under review

III. Syllabus Approval
a. USU 1330: David Sidwell, Creative Arts - Pending revisions
b. USU 1330: Victoria Berry and Elaine Thatcher, Creative Arts – Withdrawn by HASS

IV. Other Business
a. **CIL Exam**. Provost Coward asked the Gen Ed Subcommittee to address the curricular issues raised by the resolution submitted by the ASUSU Academic Senate to eliminate the CIL exam. He asked the subcommittee to take a strong look at whether the test should be eliminated or changed. The CIL designation subcommittee can be a resource for data, but the Gen Ed Subcommittee should be the one to make a recommendation to

President Albrecht. He suggested meeting with students and those that oversee the test to hear their concerns. When the exam was implemented more than ten years ago, there was a requirement that it must be taken within the first year to help ensure they have the skills necessary to maximize their college experience, but it has never been enforced. Don Cooley asked for a thorough list of all data that is needed so his subcommittee could work on it. Please submit your requests to Tammy by February 25 and she will compile them. She will also send everyone a copy of the resolution and CIL data that Rob Barton compiled. Dick asked all committee members to review the CIL website (http://cil.usu.edu/) before our next meeting. The Provost offered to attend future meetings if needed and asked that he be invited back to hear and discuss the subcommittee's recommendation before it is presented to President Albrecht.

b. **Subcommittee Input on Integrating Information Literacy into Breadth Courses**. It was proposed that the information literacy requirement be changed for the breadth courses in all disciplinary areas. Cathy Hartman and Wendy Holliday proposed that the language be changed to say:

> Students will develop their information literacy skills **by exploring** the nature, organization, and methods of access and evaluation of both electronic and traditional resources in the subject area.

We will vote on the proposed language change at our next meeting. It was motioned that example syllabi and other resources be posted on the Gen Ed website. All were in favor.

c. **BLS Exception for Computer Science Majors in the Bioinformatics Emphasis**. Ryan Dupont requested that Computer Science majors be allowed to substitute Biology 1610 and Biology 3060 for the General Education BLS requirement for Bioinformatics majors in the Computer Science Department. The subcommittee agreed.

d. **Place for Interdisciplinary Courses in General Education**. Dick Mueller stated that the Sustainability Council will work independently on the issues related to the President's Climate Commitment. He would like the committee to begin a discussion of the role and potential of interdisciplinary courses within the existing General Education frame work.

e. **AAC&U LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes and USU Citizen Scholar Objectives**. Everyone agreed that our Citizen Scholar Objectives are congruent with the Board of Regents LEAP Objectives, but that the following two elements could be a little more specific:

3. recognize different ways of thinking, creating, expressing, and communicating through a variety of media **including: written, oral, visual, musical, and kinesthetic communication**;

5. **ethical reasoning including the ability to** work effectively **and responsively**, both collaboratively and individually, **in all facets of their lives**.

Discussion of possible modifications of these objective and course criteria will continue at future meetings.

V. **Next Meeting – March 17, 2009**

UtahState University

Dear Colleagues,

   During fall semester 2008 the ASUSU Academic Senate passed a resolution (Attached ASR 09-03) which addressed concerns students have with the Computer and Information Literacy general education requirement. This regrettable avenue to airing student concerns seemed perfect at the time when it was felt we needed additional clout before our concerns would be heard or acted upon. In retrospect, the document and my efforts, while raising some valid concerns was misconstrued and understood in an aggressive and offensive tone. For this I personally apologize and request you separate the issue at hand from my own tactical mistakes. The intent is sincere and I believe the need is real to reevaluate the exams in light of their original purpose a decade after inception. My specific thanks go to the Provost who this morning so eloquently worded the concerns of students in a non hostile manner. I would also like to extend my thanks to the general education subcommittee for taking a serious look into this requirement.

I thank you for the time you have already invested in this issue and the time you will inevitably continue to spend in your thorough consideration,

Jeremy Jennings, Academic Senate President

Date: November 17th 2008
Committee: Academic Senate
Action: Passed

ASR 09-03 Elimination of Computer & Information Literacy Exams (CIL)

History:

In 1998 Utah State University converted from quarters to semesters. In this transition there was a total overhaul of the general education requirements. Many of the discussions regarding general education were agreed upon throughout the state schools to facilitate transfer students. At this time there was a misunderstanding regarding Computer and Information Literacy exams and Utah State adopted the tests under the guise of it being a state mandate and that other schools were doing the same. Other schools did not adopt the tests, it never became a state mandate, and at present the University of Utah, Snow College, and Utah Valley University do not include CIL in their general education requirements.

This unique requirement has created a double standard for Utah State University Students. When in-state students transfer to our school with an associate's degree we cannot require them to take the CIL tests because of our in-state agreements to honor the completion of general education requirements, whereas, out of state transfer students and all new students are required to take the exams.

In addition to the above stated double standard further issues have been raised in regard to the CIL exams:

-Are students getting anything from their $30 fee and investment of time?

In 2004 a previous CIL director conducted a study measuring the skills students came to Utah State possessing. Of 250 recent high school graduates taking the test cold: 84% passed Information Resources, 84% passed Document Processing, 74% passed Email, 75% passed Operating Systems, 62% passed Spreadsheets, and 44% passed Ethics.

-Students are not taking the exams early in their education as was the intent of test designers.

In response to a rising problem of students delaying the CIL exams until late in their education, as the 08-09 school year began, a great deal of advertising was carried out alerting students to a new late fee to be imposed if CIL exams were not completed by a prescribed date.

Many students accepted the advertised request and completed the exams to avoid the associated late fee that was threatened. Several students however raised concern over the change of practice and insisted on knowing who had approved the change in policy. Upon investigation it was found that from 1998-2002 there existed a policy that stated students had to complete the exams before reaching 37 credits or a $15 dollar fee would be imposed. In 2002 this policy was intentionally changed to be reconciled with existing practices and the language was revised to remove a credit time frame and any potential late fee, instead the language reads to this day "It is *strongly suggested* that students complete the CIL

requirement during their freshman year." It became clear that proper steps had not been followed in adjusting the late fee or clarifying to students that a deadline existed. Accordingly the late fee has not been enforced to date.

-Content:

The existing tests lack utility for students. Due to the many dramatically different majors offered at Utah State there are only a few core items that are shared across disciplines.

Two questions that highlight the plight of what we should be testing are as follows: Is it right to test on brand/most recent version specific content? Is it our role to educate on consumer choices?

-Method of Payment:

Since the inception of the tests various problems have arisen in the charging of the $30 fee. At present all new students pay a blanket charge of $30 upon registration for their first semester on campus.

1- This policy forces students who for any reason do not need the exam (completed the requirement prior) to file for a refund. This practice is legally questionable.

2- This policy is problematic for students who do not intend to complete a degree at Utah State University. These students should not be expensed a fee that will not benefit them.

It is for the above cited reasons that the ASUSU Academic Senate would support the immediate removal of the CIL exams from the General Education Requirements at Utah State University.

Date: November 17th 2008
Committee: Academic Senate
Action: Passed

ASR 09-03 Elimination of Computer & Information Literacy Exams (CIL)

Policy:
WHEREAS Utah State University requires all students to complete the Computer and

Information Literacy Exams as part of their general education.

WHEREAS this requirement is unique to Utah State University's general education

requirements when compared to other Utah schools.

WHEREAS this unique requirement has created a double standard for the students of

Utah State University when adhering to agreed upon in-state transfer guidelines.

WHEREAS the computer and information literacy skills of incoming students have

increased dramatically since the inception of this requirement.

WHEREAS students have had to demonstrate proficiency in computer and information

literacy to arrive at Utah State University. (i.e. high school courses, online application,

online course registration, online financial aid forms)

WHEREAS courses exist that teach beyond CIL expectation for students that might not

have a sufficient background to be successful in college.

WHEREAS the University and its students find themselves in challenging economic

times and any expense that is not adding value to the students' education should be called

in to question.

WHEREAS the test is non-representative of what skills are needed to be successful in

college.

WHEREAS the exams have shown to have low utility for students, witnessed by the current problem of students delaying taking the tests until graduation, and in spite of this delay still being successful students.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that ASUSU supports removing the Computer and Information Literacy exams from the general education requirements at Utah State University.

BE IT THEREFORE FURTHER RESOLVED that ASUSU supports making this change effective immediately, that students who have already paid for the exam have the option to complete the exam but that no one will be henceforth charged the exam fee unless they specifically request to take the exam to fulfill a college or course requirement.

Sponsor: Jeremy Jennings, Academic Senate President

Co-sponsor: Grady Brimley, Student Body President