University-wide General Education Committee (UWGEC)
Meeting Minutes, January 15, 2020

**Voting Members Present:** Kate Alexander, Chair Joan Curry, Adam Daly, Kyle DiRoberto, Amy Fountain, Robert Groves, Kim Jones, Steve Kortenkamp, Jessica Maerz, Aimee Mapes, Maha Nassar, Matt Ostermeyer, Tanya Quist, Jennifer Ravia

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** Abbie Sorg

**Guests:** Susan Miller-Cochran

**Voting Members Absent:** Bennett Adamson, Joseph Agosttini, Bayo Ijagbemi, Ted Laetsch, Jeremiah Paschke-Wood, Mark Stegeman

Chair Joan Curry called the meeting to order at 3:16 PM with a quorum of 13 voting members. Two additional members arrived after approval of the minutes. Jennifer Ravia voted as proxy for Ted Laetsch.

I. **Approval of Meeting Minutes from December 18**

Jessica Maerz moved to approve the minutes for December 18th as submitted. The motion was seconded by Kim Jones, and passed with 11 votes in favor and 2 abstentions.

II. **UWGEC Course Approval Procedures**

A small group met to brainstorm ways the UWGEC could shorten the average time it takes to grant approval for course requests. Two options were generated by this group: option A would involve the committee meeting twice monthly instead of once monthly. This would effectively halve the time most courses would take to receive approval, but would require committee members to attend more meetings each month. Option B would involve committee members doing triage work on course requests as soon as they are received, prior to the monthly meeting. Committee members would work with the submitting faculty member to address obvious issues with course mechanics or designation, so that by the time the monthly meeting takes place, the syllabus has already been updated and the committee can grant approval more easily. This would allow time for more valuable discussion about course content to take place during the meeting as well as reducing the number of courses that are tabled or conditionally approved at each meeting.

Committee members agreed that option B seemed like the best option, as most delays in approval take place because of syllabi that need to be revised for mechanical issues. The committee agreed that while it will be beneficial to speed up the approval process, it should not be sped up to the point that thoughtful discussions don’t take place for each course in the regular meetings. The committee will pilot a new process during the Spring semester where incoming course requests are distributed to small groups of committee members each week; those small groups will spend the next week reviewing the syllabus and sending any necessary feedback to the submitting faculty member, in order to receive an updated syllabus prior to the meeting where the course can be discussed by the full committee. This pre-review will be explicitly focused on course mechanics, unless there are very serious issues with the course designation that the small group agrees should be addressed prior to the UWGEC meeting. This process can be re-evaluated and adjusted as the committee sees necessary once it has been put into practice, if improvements can be made.
III. General Education Advisory Task Force status report – Susan Miller-Cochran

The General Education Advisory Task Force met for the first time on January 14 and began reviewing data sets and reports from the past few years, including data from faculty focus groups in Fall 2019, student surveys in Fall 2019, a task force report from 2018, and a report from the AAC&U meeting in 2018. The task force is working to identify points of connection between those data sources. The projected timeline will see a conceptual plan presented to the Provost by March, infrastructure planned by the end of Spring 2020, and a communication plan in place for students by the end of Summer 2020 in order for the new program to be launched to incoming students in Fall 2021. UWGEC committee members and other faculty are still welcome to join the task force to participate in any of the pieces (curriculum, infrastructure, and communication) that they’re interested in.

IV. Course Proposals

1) **ENGL 360, 21st Century British Literature** – new for Tier Two Humanities. No concerns were raised about course content or designation. The committee noted that the schedule on the syllabus doesn’t include specific due dates for assignments, and recommends that these be added for students’ convenience. Committee members also noted that the cost of textbooks might be high based on the number of required texts, and recommends that the instructor seek out ways to make the texts available through the library or Inclusive Access to make the total cost more manageable.

*Kim Jones made a motion to approve ENGL 360 for Tier Two Humanities. Kyle DiRoberto seconded this, and the motion unanimously passed with 14 votes in favor.*

2) **HIST 307, Perpetual Revolutions: The History of the Bicycle** – new for Tier Two Humanities and Diversity Emphasis. No concerns were raised about course content or designation. The committee noted that the updates made to the mechanics based on the previous review of the course bring the syllabus into compliance with General Education requirements.

*Matt Ostermeyer made a motion to approve HIST 307 for Tier Two Humanities and Diversity Emphasis. Amy Fountain seconded this, and the motion unanimously passed with 14 votes in favor.*

3) **NSC 170C1, Nutrition, Food and You** – modification to an existing Tier One Natural Sciences course to update the course description and course prerequisites. The committee noted that the syllabus needs to be updated to clarify that revision is a requirement rather than an opportunity, and recommends that the total points listed on the syllabus be updated so all parts of the syllabus are in agreement.

*Rob Groves made a motion to conditionally renew NSC 170C1 for Tier One Natural Sciences, pending updates to the syllabus as noted above. Adam Daly seconded this, and the motion unanimously passed with 14 votes in favor.*

4) **NSC 310, Principles of Human Nutrition in Health and Disease** – modification to an existing Tier Two Natural Sciences course to update the course prerequisites. The committee noted that the page/word count for each assignment needs to be included to confirm the total pages of writing for the course, and the syllabus needs to clarify that revision is a requirement rather than an opportunity. The total points listed on the syllabus need to be updated so all parts of the syllabus are in agreement.
Steve Kortenkamp made a motion to conditionally renew NSC 310 for Tier Two Natural Sciences, pending updates to the syllabus as noted above. Amy Fountain seconded this, and the motion unanimously passed with 14 votes in favor.

5) PTYS 206, Our Golden Age of Planetary Exploration—modification to an existing Tier Two Natural Sciences course to update the course title and course description. Committee members noted that the updates made to the mechanics based on the previous review of the course bring the syllabus into compliance with General Education requirements.

Kyle DiRoberto made a motion to renew PTYS 206 for Tier Two Natural Sciences. Matt Ostermeyer seconded this, and the motion unanimously passed with 13 votes in favor.

6) TAR 100, Acting for General College Students—modification to an existing Tier Two Arts course to update the course title and change component type from Studio to Workshop. Committee members noted that the total page/word count for writing assignments aren’t specified on the syllabus, and the revision process is not clearly described in the assignment descriptions (though alluded to in the assignment schedule), and that these need to be clarified in order for the course to be renewed. The committee also recommends updating the syllabus to show the new requested course title, and to specify ways that students can attend required performances for free in order to remove financial barriers to access.

Jessica Maerz made a motion to conditionally renew TAR 100 for Tier Two Arts, pending updates to the syllabus as noted above. Kate Alexander seconded this, and the motion passed with 13 votes in favor and one abstention.

Joan adjourned the meeting at 4:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Abbie Sorg, 1/30/20