

General Education Committee Meeting Minutes for September 8, 2017

Committee members attending: Karen Reed, Deana Raffo, Dovie Kimmins, Teresa Davis, Virginia Hemby, Zaf Khan, Kate Pantelides, Mike Boyle, Charles Chusuei, Amy Sayward

Ex-officio members attending: Susan Myers-Shirk, Peter Cunningham, Chris Brewer, Karen Petersen

Guests attending: Mary Hoffschwelle, MT Engage

Business:

- **Committee Charge.** Following a welcome from Amy Sayward (the committee's chair) and introductions, Peter Cunningham stated the charge for the General Education Committee as follows: "Review the University's general education mission; all general education courses, syllabi, learning outcomes; data related to the achievement of the goals; and provide University-wide leadership for the ongoing evaluation and improvement of the general education program."
- **Election of Officers.** Virginia Hemby was unanimously approved to serve as Vice Chair. Karen Reed was unanimously approved to serve as Secretary.
- **Approval of Minutes.** The minutes of the April 21, 2017, meeting were approved—moved by Kate Pantelides, seconded by Charles Chusuei, and approved unanimously.
- **Introduction to Curriculog.** Susan Myers-Shirk, Director, General Education, explained that due to adoption of Curriculog that our approved process for new course proposal submission would need to be modified. These changes are only procedural in nature. The process itself remains as approved last year by this Committee. Discussion ensued regarding the date for submission to the General Education Committee of any new course. Previously, the Committee had adopted September 15. The Committee changed the deadline to January 15 to allow sufficient time for proposals to move through the respective curriculum committees in the colleges and clear all the processes required for the creation and approval of a new course before the course comes to the General Education Committee. Director Myers-Shirk will tweak the language in the procedures to make this information clearer and will send the corrected document to members. Karen Reed asked for clarification regarding the statement in number 6 of the procedures that states in part, ". . . which must receive a simple majority vote . . ." Chair Sayward pointed to number 7 in that same document as providing the definition of simple majority as "a two-thirds majority of the entire voting membership." Chair Sayward reminded the committee to sign up for the training sessions on Curriculog as reviewing curriculum is part of our responsibility.
- **MT Engage Report.** Mary Hoffschwelle provided an overview of MT Engage and discussed the results of Year One, 2016-2017. In addition, Dr. Hoffschwelle explained that the number of participants/courses has grown dramatically so that

in Year Two, 2017-2018, 184 sections of MT Engage classes are now being offered, and 75 of those classes are General Education courses. She also reported that four departments are running Professional Learning Communities. Dr. Hoffschwelle stated that General Education courses are essential to helping students make connections among their courses at MTSU. She would like to try to reach into more of the General Education program and have more of these courses be part of MT Engage. Dr. Hoffschwelle explained that the MT Engage rubric is now part of D2L and can simply be attached to the reflective assignment students complete for a course. Upper division courses have joined the MT Engage movement but she really wants to see more involvement from General Education. Dr. Hoffschwelle provided her contact information and that of the MT Engage Office: Dr. Hoffschwelle's office is Peck 268; MT Engage Office is JUB 306. Email is mtengage@mtsu.edu.

- ***Mission and Importance of General Education at MTSU.*** Chair Sayward began the discussion by mentioning the change in higher education in Tennessee with the focus on community college and the governor's effort to get students into a two-year program. Because of this focus, she stated that we now have to think about the question of why a parent would opt to send a child to MTSU rather than community college for those first two years. This Committee must consider the role and importance of General Education, and we must have additional conversations about the general education process. Chair Sayward reminded the committee that the last general education overhaul occurred 11 years ago.
- ***Future of General Education at MTSU.*** Director Myers-Shirk explained that she will be putting together a Professional Learning Community to brainstorm ways to modify General Education and ways those changes would work. She would like to involve people from across the university; however, the number of members would be difficult to manage since we have 37 departments. Therefore, Director Myers-Shirk will determine the number of members for this working group. She invited members of this committee to volunteer, should they desire to do so, to serve on the Professional Learning Community (PLC). She stated that serving on the PLC would be in addition to any duties and responsibilities we have as members of the General Education Committee. The PLC would operate from October through March and would perhaps extend into the following academic year. Her goal for the PLC is to think aloud to find ideas to rebrand our General Education courses/core to make them appealing to students so that they enroll at MTSU rather than choosing to attend the community college.
- ***Description of Subcommittee Responsibilities/Assignments.*** Chair Sayward explained that the General Education Committee has two subcommittees (with corresponding assignments): Course Assessment and General Education Teaching Award Selection. New members of the General Education Committee can let her know a preference for subcommittee membership. However, second year members of the committee will be assigned to the subcommittee that they did not serve on during the past academic year. Director Myers-Shirk added that she would have the Competency Reports to the Committee by September 22. At the next General Education Committee meeting on October 6, 2017, individuals

involved in the preparation of the Competency Reports will be invited to present them.

- ***New Business.*** None
- Mike Boyle moved to adjourn the meeting. The committee adjourned at the conclusion of its business.