

Faculty Senate Minutes
April 4, 2006

The meeting was called to order at 4:07 p.m. All departments were in attendance except Nursing and Physics.

I. Reports of the UCPRC and the GCPRC

UCPRC

First Reading

(1) NEW UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

AS CHEM with a Pre-Pharmacy option. Proposal to introduce a degree option for students continuing into a pharmacy program after two years.

(2) CHANGE IN COURSE/CURRICULUM

CHEM 232: Organic Chemistry II. Proposal to change the pre-requisites to specify a grade of C- or better in CHEM 231.

(3) CHANGE IN COURSE/CURRICULUM

BUAD Management option. Proposal to change BUAD 357: International Management from elective to required and reduce elective credits from 9 to 6.

A Blazer/Igyor motion to waive the two-meeting rule for consideration of the BUAD curriculum proposal was passed without dissent. The proposal to change BUAD 357: International Management from elective to required and reduce elective credits from 9 to 6 for the BUAD Management option was approved without dissent.

(4) NEW UNDERGRADUATE COURSE

CSCI 475: 3D Game Programming and Computer Animation, 4 credits.

GCPRC

(1) CHANGE IN COURSE/CURRICULUM

SPED Post-Baccalaureate Certification. Proposal to substitute requirement for Industrial Arts OR Art OR Music for Special Education with EDUC 561: Second Language Acquisition: Theory, Programs & Assessment.

Senator Mowrey distributed a proposed change to the Graduate Academic Policy regarding requests for transfer credits. The language has been modified to specifically include courses completed in a distance-learning format.

II. Proposed Courses and Programs

Second Reading

(1) CHANGE IN COURSE/CURRICULUM

Changes to the ECON minor. Proposal to change requirement from taking either ECON 231, 215 or 318 to taking either ECON 318 or 319 was approved without dissent.

III. Report of the Administrative Officers

Provost Prabhu

Provost Prabhu expressed his appreciation for the discussion of General Education as a way to keep our program current. He also thanked GERC for their hard work and for providing opportunities for campus discussion about Gen Ed. He reminded everyone that the goal is to have the best possible program for our students. He also noted that review will continue to happen every 3-5 years to meet accreditation demands. He encouraged development of a Gen Ed program that can be adjusted whenever required by these reviews. Dr. Prabhu further stressed that assessment is critical to ensure that we are meeting faculty goals for Gen Ed and that the Administration is committed to supporting the goals of the Faculty for Gen Ed. He also emphasized that there is no intention of losing faculty positions due to Gen Ed restructuring.

IV. General Education Review Committee

Dr. Foster-Clark first reviewed the previously distributed GERC document outlining the proposed revisions to the Gen Ed curriculum. He noted that there was strong support among faculty for maintaining flexibility and options for students. He noted that a major component of the revision is reduction of the G block requirements to open up credits to be used for exploratory electives.

Discussion began on Issue 1, starting with whether all freshman seminar formats should count towards Gen Ed credits. A major issue is how UNIV 179 courses currently in pilot testing would fit into Gen Ed. The question was raised of what the goal was for freshman seminars and whether courses in specific majors met the goals of Gen Ed. It was noted that since there are not other 1- or 2-credit courses that could be taken along with 1- or 2-credit majors seminar courses, this would not reduce the number of courses students would need to take. One response to this was that departments would hopefully develop 3-credit freshman seminar courses that would be comparable to the UNIV 179 courses for undecided students. Earth Science expressed an intent to convert their 2-credit course to a 3-credit version that could move into a Gen Ed block. It was noted that these seminar courses should cover both content and skills-based learning. Reservations were expressed regarding why these courses within a major would count towards Gen Ed. In response, it was noted that skills-type courses meet Gen Ed goals in that they emphasize the need for critical thinking. It was recommended that these courses would need to go through an

approval process to ensure that they meet Gen Ed goals. It would be necessary for departments to modify their courses to fit the current model for these freshman seminars.

A Ward/Schaffer motion to extend discussion of Issue 1 for 5 minutes was approved without dissent.

The need for an Elective block in Gen Ed where UNIV 179 courses would count was expressed. A request was made for clarification about whether required-related courses within majors would count in such an Elective block. It was then specifically asked whether the Proposal Element on the grid specifying that “any non-major course may count” referred to only those with G designations. The response was that this in fact meant any course other than in the major field. The concern expressed was that we would be narrowing Gen Ed by filling those credits with courses currently required within the major program. It was pointed out that one Characteristic of Gen Ed is coherence with the majors. However, concerns were voiced that instead of truly exploring other fields, students would fill these credits with extra major-related courses or remedial courses.

A Bookmiller/Luek motion to extend discussion of Issue 1 for 5 minutes was approved without dissent.

Support was given for needing some sort of designation, perhaps simply current G courses, to ensure that elective Gen Ed credits were appropriate. A concern expressed was that Gen Ed has been shaved down over time from 5-5-5 and further reductions mean that Gen Ed goals are not adequately met. It was asked whether it might be beneficial for more courses across the curriculum to be given the G designation so students have more options. Another idea given to expand Gen Ed options was to remove G designations so that any courses outside the major block could be taken.

A Schaffer/Bookmiller motion to extend discussion of Issue 1 for 5 minutes was approved without dissent.

A concern was raised regarding whether cutting back Gen Ed requirements shortchanges the liberal arts education espoused by MU. However, it was noted that departments gain more room with a 3-3-3 plan. It was pointed out that it is important to have more freedom for students to take courses and also for faculty to develop courses. The creation of an Elective block creates flexibility for trying out new ideas. It was asked whether the designated Explore block is actually more of an Elective block.

Non-binding straw votes were taken on several subtopics related to Issue 1. Regarding whether all forms of Freshman Seminars should count towards Gen Ed, there were 10 in favor and 15 against. Regarding whether there should be some Elective block or courses, there were 20 in favor, 4 against and 2 abstaining. Regarding whether we should move to a 3-3-3 G-Block arrangement with Math as a Foundations course, there were 16 in favor, 6 against and 2 abstaining.

Discussion was then directed towards Issue 2, whether capstone courses should count in place of perspective (P) courses. It was clarified that this would include Honors theses, senior seminar courses and major capstone courses. It was commented that the expectation for P courses is that they be a cross-disciplinary or broadening experience while major-related courses tend to be a deepening experience. It was noted that currently the Honors thesis substitutes for the advanced writing course and that there is no clarity yet on how this might work. Another question raised was whether P courses would still be offered. The response was that P courses would still be available but that a Gen Ed Capstone course could be developed. It was pointed out that student teaching capstone experiences are clearly not the same type of course as a P course. The need for an approval process to review whether these capstones actually meet Gen Ed P goals was emphasized. The purpose of capstones was indicated to be a place to incorporate speaking and writing as well as a way to assess Gen Ed.

A non-binding straw vote was taken on Issue 2. Regarding whether capstone courses should count in place of perspective courses, there were 3 in favor, 23 against and 1 abstaining.

Discussion moved to Issue 3, whether Gen Ed credits should be reduced from 51 to 48. It was noted that the reduction in credits was intended as a way to accommodate the 120/126 credit limits on majors. However the intention was to make this possible by counting capstones as P courses, making this issue somewhat redundant with the previous discussion. It was pointed out that without knowing where these credits would come from, it is difficult to evaluate this issue. It was stated that it is still possible to consider other curriculum options without specifically addressing credit numbers. Clarification was given regarding the fact that 48 credits is the minimum allowed given the specification that at least 40% of the 120 credits must be Gen Ed. It was suggested that if the capstone for P option is not approved, the credit reduction would allow departments to choose how to utilize the credits within their programs.

A non-binding straw vote was taken on Issue 3. Regarding whether Gen Ed credits should be reduced from 51 to 48, there were 13 in favor, 12 against and 2 abstaining.

Discussion then turned to Issue 4, whether Wellness should be required for all students. The GERC proposal recommends that wellness courses can be elected but the requirement for all students to take WELL 175 would be dropped. GERC also clarified that 1-credit sports courses mentioned in their proposal do not exist currently but could be counted if offered in the future. Before opening the topic to the floor, Dr. Julie Lombardi spoke on behalf of the Wellness and Sport Sciences Department. She reviewed a document distributed by the department outlining the importance of health awareness and education in our society. She expressed the WSSD belief that Wellness should remain a required component of Gen Ed to meet the goal of a holistic education of our students. In response, a comment was made that freshman need guidance about these important issues. A student commented that the topics covered in the course raised a new level of awareness for her, and she encouraged retention of the Wellness requirement. A question was raised regarding how many of the students enrolled in WELL 175 are freshmen

versus older students going back to meet the requirement. The answer given was that about 90% are freshmen. Another question raised was how the decision was made to retain Speech as a foundational course over Wellness since both were addressed on the survey conducted by GERC. It was noted that other courses across the curriculum have speaking components while wellness issues are not addressed anywhere else. Special Education commented that their students need to take a wellness course, and Psychology also expressed support for retaining Wellness. Another student commented that new connections were made between physical, emotional and mental health when he took the WELL 175 course. Some faculty mentioned that their advisees communicate a lack of respect and appreciation for the course. Concern was expressed about how seriously many students were taking the course. The suggestion was made that the wellness requirement could be expanded to include other types of wellness courses. Dr. Lombardi noted that other courses have been phased out over time since the WELL 175 course includes an activity component. It was pointed out that speech is not covered in high school while health or wellness is, so COMM 100 trains students to assemble thoughts and communicate them to an audience. It was clarified that the educational component of WELL 175 is more relevant to Gen Ed than a simple activity course. A suggestion was made about moving away from specifying the required credit hours of particular topics and instead focusing on ensuring that students have broad exposure. Appreciation was expressed for the WSSD presentation for helping inform faculty about the WELL 175 course.

A Skinner/Bookmiller motion to extend discussion of Issue 4 for 5 minutes was approved by a 12 to 8 vote.

A comment was made about the fact that wellness issues are relevant throughout life, and yet, many public schools are dropping enrichment courses so that students are not getting this training. Concern was expressed about whether issues of specific courses fits into the Explore concept. It was questioned whether it is really possible to adjust Gen Ed credit requirements to meet all the educational goals we would like to include.

A non-binding straw vote was taken on Issue 4. Regarding whether Wellness should be required for all students, there were 16 in favor, 4 against and 4 abstaining.

V. Other/New Business

None

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aimee L. Miller
Faculty Senate Secretary

Action Summary:

A Blazer/Igyor motion to waive the two-meeting rule for consideration of the BUAD curriculum proposal was passed without dissent.

A Ward/Schaffer motion to extend discussion of Issue 1 for 5 minutes was approved without dissent.

A Bookmiller/Luek motion to extend discussion of Issue 1 for 5 minutes was approved without dissent.

A Schaffer/Bookmiller motion to extend discussion of Issue 1 for 5 minutes was approved without dissent.

A Skinner/Bookmiller motion to extend discussion of Issue 4 for 5 minutes was approved by a 12 to 8 vote.