

MINUTES
UNC PEMBROKE GENERAL EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
University Center - Room 200
February 23, 2006

Call to Order: Jane Huffman, chair, called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

Members Present: Carl Danis, Kim Gunter, Jane Huffman, Beverly King, Tom Leach, Robert Poage

Members Absent: None.

Guests: Charles Harrington, Provost and Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs; Elizabeth Normandy, Director of the UNCP Teaching and Learning Center; Dennis Sigmon, Chair of the Department of English, Theater, and Languages; Liliana Wendorff, Department of English, Theater, and Languages; Janita Byars, Chair of the Department of Music

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the February 8, 2006 special meeting of the subcommittee accepted as presented.

Approval of Agenda: Agenda for today's meeting approved.

Agenda Item: Curriculum Proposals

Foreign Language Proficiency Proposal: Dennis Sigmon and Liliana Wendorff from the Department of English, Theater, and Languages (ETL) were present to answer questions related to a proposal to add a general education foreign language proficiency requirement. Dr. Sigmon explained the origination and authoring of this proposal. The ETL faculty feel that a foreign language requirement will serve UNCP's students well as they go out into careers in today's world. They also realize that this is not a simple suggestion and will involve complex issues such as how to staff additional foreign language sections. Dr. Wendorff stated that a small number of students would test out of this requirement and the ETL department is currently at work developing a computer-scored proficiency test for Spanish. Similar ones could be developed for other languages. These tests would be similar to the ones used for placement in Math or English, but would not be mandatory. Students from non-English speaking countries would be assumed to have proficiency in a foreign language.

Dr. Sigmon distributed a handout that resulted from a brainstorming session by the ETL department on ideas related to staffing issues. Huffman reiterated that the proposal for a foreign language proficiency requirement was presented to the general education subcommittee at this meeting for conversation rather than action. Committee members then discussed the history of a foreign language requirement at UNCP. According to Leach, there was a foreign language requirement in place prior to 1973. In that year, both the requirement and the foreign language department were eliminated. Since that time, there have been discussions about reinstating the foreign language requirement but no major effort has been taken to do so. In 1984, a proposal to reinstate the foreign language requirement was defeated.

In response to Leach's question about how foreign language sections would be handled in the fall of 2007 if the foreign language requirement were implemented, Dr. Sigmon responded that information could be obtained to work out a plan for the number of sections needed. According to Dr. Wendorff, the number of sections offered of each foreign language probably would be based on the current population of students taking foreign languages. The ETL department has been dealing with staffing issues for some time in terms of how to expand foreign language options for students.

Music: Proposals from the music department were presented to (a) replace MUS 295 with MUS 294 and (b) replace MUS 296 with MUS 293.

Dr. Janita Byars, chair of the music department, explained the desired changes in the music curriculum. Currently, MUS 295 and MUS 296 are titled “Music History and Literature I” and “Music History and Literature II,” respectively. In the new proposal, the numbers and titles of these courses would be changed. MUS 295 will be replaced with MUS 294 and titled “The World of Music: Antiquity to the Baroque Era” and MUS 296 will be replaced with MUS 293 and titled “The World of Music: Classical to the Contemporary Era.” Following a brief discussion, Leach moved to accept the proposed changes; Danis seconded the motion. The motion carried with no opposition and no abstentions.

Agenda Item: Conversation with Provost Harrington

Dr. Harrington began by thanking the subcommittee for inviting him to the meeting. He emphasized the importance of the General Education Subcommittee to the university. He then presented several observations as follows:

- (1) The proposal for a foreign language proficiency requirement is an excellent proposal whose time is long past due; however, he has a couple of reservations about implementing the requirement at this time.
- (2) More general education decisions need to be based on data. He presented slides showing the failure rate (D’s and F’s) of freshmen at UNCP from 2002-2003 to 2004-2005 in a variety of general education courses. Failure rates for most of the classes were around 25% but some were up to 50% or above.
- (3) One rumor that should be dispelled is that general education course credit hours translate to faculty hours; they do not.
- (4) The general education curriculum suffers from curriculum bloat. He would like to see a course taken out of the general education curriculum every time one is approved for addition.
- (5) Terms for members of the General Education Subcommittee should be changed. Currently, members are rotating off this committee every year. For consistency, terms of several years are needed.
- (6) By the time of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) visit, an assessment plan for general education needs to be in place and results from that assessment plan should have been used to make changes in the curriculum. General Education curriculum reform might be a good candidate for the SACS Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).

The conversation with Dr. Harrington ended with a discussion of placing a moratorium on new general education course proposals for a limited period of time while the subcommittee is dealing with revising aspects of the general education curriculum (e.g., goals and objectives). In response to a question from Huffman, Dr. Harrington stated that the decision to impose a moratorium such as this would be solely in the hands of the general education subcommittee. However, Dr. Normandy suggested putting together a formal proposal to send to the UNCP Academic Senate, and Leach suggested that, when formulating this proposal, we should present the larger picture (i.e., how this proposal ties into general education reform, the SACS review, etc.).

Agenda Item: Review of Revised General Education Goals

Huffman distributed a copy of the results of the subcommittee members’ work on some of the revised general education goals still under construction. There is still some uncertainty about whether to separate Health and Wellness in the goal statements; some input is needed from the PE department.

Dr. Normandy presented information concerning the time frame within which general education changes and assessment need to take place. UNCP will need to turn in its compliance certification (containing an outline of what is being done in terms of assessment of general education) in August or September of 2009. This document will be reviewed in Atlanta sometime in November of 2009 and the SACS visit will take place in March or April of 2010. Between now and the spring or summer of 2009, a general education assessment plan needs to be devised and implemented. The results will need to be analyzed and changes made in the curriculum based on that analysis.

Dr. Normandy also explained the SACS QEP. This is another document of approximately 100 pages in which the university proposes to do something that will enhance student learning. Multiple activities could be included; whatever activities are included in the plan have to be assessed as well.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Announcements:

Huffman stated that the next tasks for the subcommittee are to: (1) come to consensus on the new general education goals; (2) look at revisions in the general education objectives; and (3) decide how to assess each of these. There will be a special meeting of the subcommittee on Wednesday, March 1 at 10 a.m. in EDUC 109. At this meeting, members will come to some consensus on the goals and assignments will be made for members to work on revising the objectives. The revised goals and objectives are then to be presented to the Senate by the end of spring semester.

Discussion of a temporary moratorium on new general education course proposals will be added to the agenda for the next regular meeting of the subcommittee which will be on Thursday, March 23.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beverly R. King, Secretary