

## Academic Council

Friday, January 24, 2014, 2 PM, MacFeat Conference Room B

Christopher Aubrie	CSL Student Representative
Adolphus Belk*	Arts and Sciences
Judy Britt	Education
Janice Chism	Arts and Sciences
Tomoko Deguchi	Visual & Performing Arts
Marguerite Doman	Business Administration
Laura Glasscock*	Arts and Sciences
Lisa Harris	Education
Jennifer Jordan	Education
Jo Koster, Chair	Arts and Sciences
Trent Kull	Arts and Sciences
Willis Lewis	Business Administration
Marge Moody	Visual & Performing Arts
Ron Parks	Visual & Performing Arts
Spiro Shetuni*	Dacus Library
Will Thacker	Business Administration
Brad Tripp	Arts and Sciences
Ginger Williams	Arts and Sciences
Gina Jones, Secretary	Registrar

\*absent

Guests: Stephanie Milling, John Bird, Tim Drueke, Caroline Everington, Jonatha Vare, Marilyn Sarow, Frank Pullano, Beth Costner, and Lisa Johnson

## **I. Welcome**

**Jo Koster**

Dr. Koster indicated that a task force was working on definition of S/U. A report from the Academic Integrity group will be in the April meeting. She reminded the council that March 4 is a tentative meeting thrown in for curriculum. There are only two more meetings scheduled for this semester and we have a lot of work to do.

## **II. Approval of Nov. 15,2013, Minutes (circulated and approved by e-mail)**

## **III. Interim Report from the General Education Review Task Force**

**John Bird**

Dr. Bird is filling in for Dean Gloria Jones.

This Task Force Started at end of last year and has met several times. This presentation is a snapshot of where we've been and where we are.

### **Problems:**

1. Need an updated definition of general education.
2. Need to make sure the current general education program maps to the ULCs.
3. Perceived major creep; majors and programs specifying particular courses, which limits flexibility for students.
4. The limited number of hours transfer students can apply to Winthrop degree programs given the prescriptive nature of General Education within certain degree programs.
5. The difficulty some students face when changing their majors within or across colleges.
6. The number of hours required in our General Education program is too great.

Dr. Bird asked if there was any discussion.

Dr. Parks commented that he wanted to understand major creep. Dr. Bird gave an example of a department creating their own course to satisfy a GE requirement.

Dr. Pullano stated these are all related. There are no restrictions as there is. He likes it in general, but there were no rules or controls placed on it and as a result, we are seeing these problems.

Dr. Deguchi asked if there was a limit for a program to specify course to meet major and GE?

Dr. Bird replied no, and that is the problem we are seeing.

Dr. Koster said it wasn't malevolent, but it's also been attrition. In some cases, it's inadvertent creep.

Mr. Drueke remarked that we have the restriction of no overlap in the major and minor but no restriction for GE.

Dr. Chism stated that in the attempt to reduce hours in some programs a few years ago, it drove programs to look at GE.

Mr. Aubrie commented that what he had heard from other students is that it's taking them 5 years to graduate. He felt all his GE courses have been beneficial.

Dr. Sarow stated that one issue is our GE program has more courses than other GE college programs.

Dr. Bird offered the following solutions from the GE Taskforce:

**A. Draft a definition**

The committee members wrote their own definition and sent it to Dr. Gloria Jones, who then wove them together to come up with the following: "General Education builds a broad knowledge base, develops critical thinking skills, fosters innovation, and prepares students to become responsible, informed, and effective citizens in a changing and complex world."

Mr. Aubrie asked if all programs have the same number of GE hours. Dr. Bird replied that no, the requirements are the same but hours may vary.

**B. Mapping ULC's to GE program.**

This showed we are on track with this.

**C. GE Principles (Under development)**

1. Majors should only specify specific courses in general education categories if they are bound by accreditation or an outside agency.
2. Majors may recommend a specific course for discipline or pedagogical reasons, but they must accept other courses that qualify if students take them (or have previously taken them).
3. If a student changes majors, he or she may use previously-taken courses to satisfy general education requirements, except in the case of accreditation issues.
4. Majors are encouraged to fulfill the writing intensive and oral requirements within the major.
5. There should be limits on how much of general education can be met within the major; departments should be asked to make changes in their programs to avoid exceeding that limit.
6. Overall, to fulfill general education requirements, we should try to focus on competencies rather than specific courses as much as possible.
7. Majors should not be so rigid in the way they interface with general education that students can't complete the major within four years if they do not start in the major from the first semester.

Dr. Deguchi indicated that the writing intensive in the major would be difficult for students changing majors.

Dr. Costner asked in regard to the writing and oral requirements, is the thought that these would be met through several courses rather than a single course? Dr. Bird said it was. The focus is on competencies.

Dr. Everington commented that College of Education students are required to take PRXIS content tests which means certain courses are needed to pass the test. They must have an 80% pass rate. She asked if this comes under #1 or 2?

Dr. Parks stated that “one size fits all” may cause more problems than it fixes. Flexibility is important.

Dr. Pullano reminded everyone that the proposal is to shrink GE. In some ways this is an accounting issue.

Dr. Bird remarked that flexibility is something we are aware of--for students and programs. We do need some rules.

Dr. Tripp asked if Intensive and Oral were included in #'s 4 and 5? Dr. Bird replied no.

Dr. Sarow assured everyone we weren't trying to get rid of any programs. Some course may be relegated to the major

**Recommendations:**

**#1**

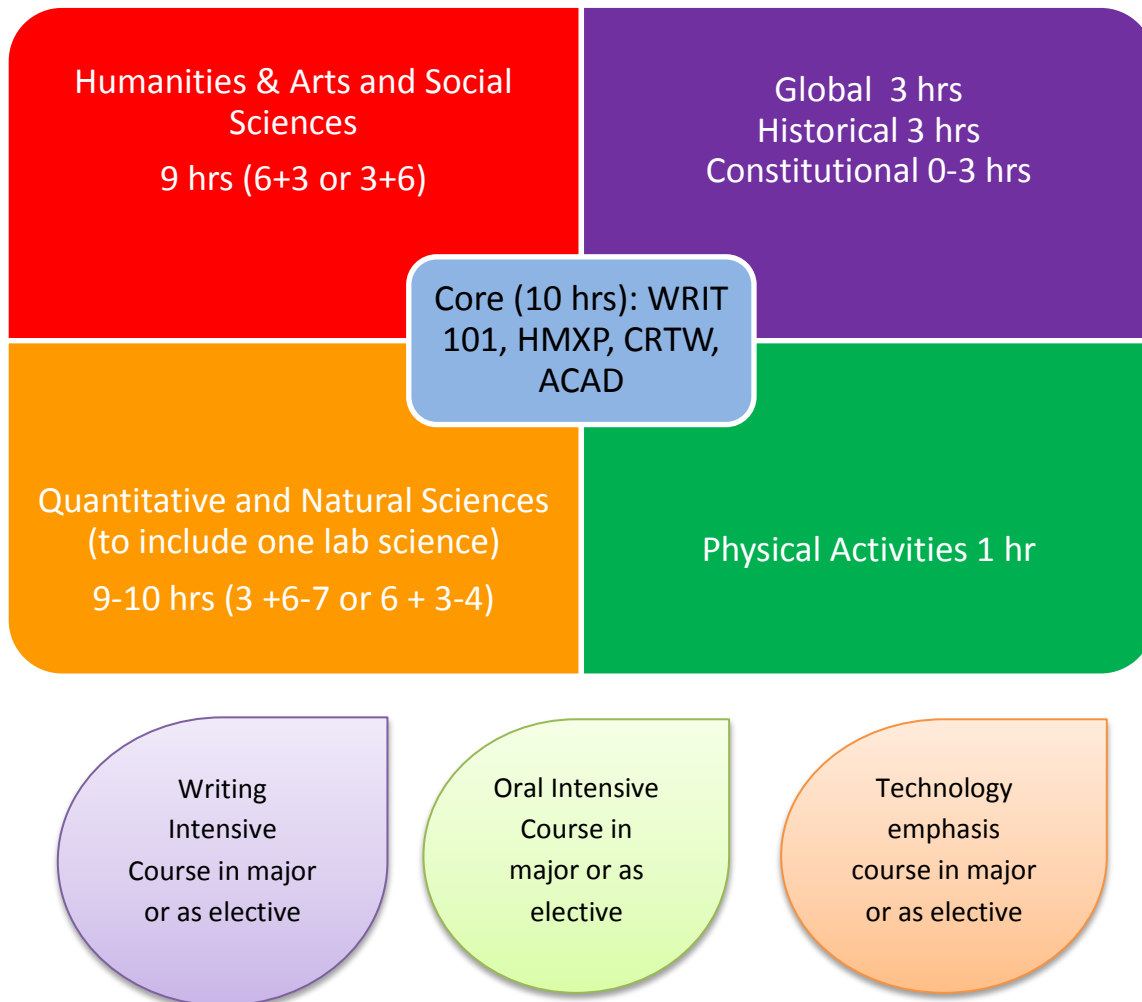
- Majors and programs should examine their programs of study in relationship to general education
- Majors and programs should follow the general education principles to make changes in requirements
- We must all work together to provide our students a clear and workable plan

**#2**

- The number of hours in general education should be reduced
- SACS requires a minimum of 30 hours of general education
- We currently have a program that requires 46-59 hours

**Possible Models for Winthrop GNED: 35-36 hours,  
not counting Writing Intensive, Oral Intensive, or Technology (total: 35-45)**

**Based on 11/2013 and 1/2014 Discussions**



Dr. Thacker commented that we use flexibility a lot. He asked, "Who needs to be more flexible?" It appears that majors need to be more flexible for student transfer/change of majors.

Dr. Bird indicated that the point is this should be as flexible for *students* as possible.

Dr. Lewis stated that agreed with the aim, but he is concerned that programs would not voluntarily want to cut courses.

Dr. Koster noted that she created a spreadsheet with GE requirements. Department chairs were asked why certain courses were required and some were not sure. The point is that things have changed.

Dr. Thacker looked at computer science and noted accreditation standards have changed but the GE hasn't changed with it.

Dr. Costner commented that one of the science departments indicates that lab science requirement for everyone is difficult due to scheduling.

Mr. Aubrie asked if all that writing is necessary. Many council members answered yes!

Dr. Bird indicated that the taskforce took the writing requirements off the table because research has shown that strong writing skills are what is wanted by business.

Dr. Bradner asked for clarification on the lab science requirement. Maybe problem is not the lab, but rather a certain class which may be stressing the system.

Dr. Costner stated she was not targeting one class, but there is a scheduling problem. Scientific literacy may be better than taking a lab class.

Dr. Bradner expressed her worry that the labs are investigative and this approach allows students to understand scientific method, so before we decide the labs are too burdensome that we understand the learning that goes in these courses.

Dr. Pullano asked about the physical activity course for athletes. His experience is that this is waived.

Dr. Koster stated that the taskforce discussed a waiver for disabled students.

Dr. Bird indicated that the committee discussed a foreign language requirement but backed off on this.

Dr. Milling asked about dance classes meeting an activity requirement as well as humanities and arts.

Dr. Bird replied that we haven't gotten that far.

Dr. Bradner said she had read research recently that students who take liberal arts make more money than applied arts over lifetime. It is ironic that our version which supports this we are now backing off from.

Dr. Pullano reminded everyone of the problems we were having and why we are doing this.

Dr. Koster stated that opening up hours allows students with no electives to have a chance that allows that choice.

Dr. Parks commented that from a practical standpoint, BME students take 5 years unless they go in summers. A reduction of 10 hours would be a welcome relief to these students.

Dr. Bird said the committee is just setting up guidelines and leaving it to the programs to come up with their solutions. The idea of lowering GE hours seems to be received well.

Dr. Lewis indicated that he has a hard time seeing majors cutting major courses as this could reduce course offerings and faculty.

Dr. Koster reminded everyone that this task force was put together because of problems with hours increasing. 124 hours is institutional, not state mandated. In many states, 120 is the minimum. One of

the pressures is do we need all those hours? What was the purpose for those hours? If the answer was to meet GE, then it would be good to lower hours. She then clarified Dr. Lewis's concern: "what you're asking is if the university says we're going to this new GE, let departments decide how it balances out?"

Mr. Drueke commented that part of what Dr. Lewis is getting at is the potential loss of faculty.

Dr. Koster stated that Dr. Boyd said there would be no pressure for programs to reduce hours to 120. Dr. Deguchi remarked that the whole point is flexibility with majors, giving students choice.

Dr. Bird said he gets a general sense that how we're proceeding is reasonable.

Mr. Aubrie asked, "When do you envision this being implemented?"

Dr. Boyd is optimistic and thought this could be done by the next school year. However, Dr. Koster indicated that she didn't think this would be one vote in Faculty Conference, not to mention all the curriculum changes that will be involved. She encouraged everyone to go back to their colleges and departments and talk about what they've heard. Dr. Koster will forward everyone the PP.

Mr. Drueke clarified with Mr. Aubrie s that this would only affect new students coming in.

Dr. Thacker reminded everyone that students can elect a newer catalog.

Dr. Bird also clarified that this is not a proposal, this is a discussion.

Dr. Koster thanked Dr. Bird for the task force's work. She asked for approval of this report. It was unanimously approved.

Dr. Koster encouraged members to begin discussion with their colleges about these issues.

Dr. Koster noted that the next regular meeting is Feb. 28, 2 PM (agenda items due by Friday, Feb. 21).

S/U vote was delayed at last faculty conference. So next meeting will need to involve discussion on this.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gina M Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gina Jones, Secretary