

General Education Assessment Committee
Meeting #13 - May 12, 2004
Room 1030 – Fetzer Center

Present: Roberta Allen (Business Information Systems), Linda Delene (Planning and Assessment, Provost's Office), Margaret Dupuis (English), Bassam Harik (Economics), Gina Garza-Kling (Mathematics), Elaine Anderson Jayne (University Libraries), Lisa Paulius, (Physics), Fred Sitkins (Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering), Matthew Steel (Music), and Carol Weideman (HPER). Absent: Raja Aravamuthan (Paper Science and Printing/COGE), Craig Tollini (GSAC), and Heidi Vogley (Speech Pathology and Audiology).

The 13th and final meeting of the year for the General Education Assessment Committee began at 10:00 AM with the approval of the 04/02/04 summary note of the Committee. Since Aravamuthan was not yet present, the report on COGE's deliberations about the suggested revision to its charge was not possible. Delene then advised the Committee about the installation of TracDat, which would help track the assessment of General Education as well as monitoring of the departmental assessment plans. Currently many colleagues, especially from the College of Education, are working hard to learn how to use and then to format TracDat in preparation for the 2006 NCATE review. Additionally, Delene advised the Committee that the Higher Learning Commission's (North Central) focused visit has been scheduled for Nov. 7th and 8th in 2005. A small campus committee, with flexible membership, will be constituted to formally prepare materials and an itinerary for this mandated visit. Suggestions made about the membership for such a committee included the need for some strong faculty representatives who are well versed in the general education program, some department chairs, possibly the Chair of COGE, and with the suggestion that the chair of UASC might possibly chair this campus committee.

There was brief discussion of the materials that had been distributed regarding the assessment of general education. While some articles were interesting, none reflected the complexity of the program found at WMU and this again provoked discussion about the possible revision of General Education at WMU. Delene opined that this would await the call of the provost, and most likely not occur until fall of 2005. Members of the committee expressed an interest in having some outside speakers visit WMU, especially ones who are knowledgeable about the use of portfolios and the appropriate use of assessment information in making changes in programs. Some colleagues indicated that some faculty remain concerned that "non-glowing" assessment information could be used punitively although there is no intent nor evidence of that at WMU. In fact, Delene noted that many schools post their information on the respective institution's web site, in the context of the information being a baseline for ongoing improvement.

A review of COGE's April minutes indicated that at least one person on COGE had questions about the suitability of assessment findings being placed within the purview of that Committee. In the absence of other information, this Committee decided to continue its existence during the next academic year, retaining its charge and to see the preliminary general education assessment cycle through its two-year time frame. Delene indicated that the California Critical Skills test was being ordered for fall 2004 and that classes would soon be determined for its administration. With the Committee's decision to continue given the reluctance of COGE and the need for the task to be accomplished, Delene asked if someone would chair the Committee and Roberta Allen was elected by acclamation. Subsequently, all members (who were present at the meeting) agreed to continue to serve during the next year and that the new chair, Allen, would determine a meeting schedule and call for the Committee's first 2004-2005 meeting in October 2005.

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned for luncheon with Delene's heartfelt thanks to the Committee for its stewardship of the assessment for the General Education program at WMU.

[NEXT MEETING: Call of the new chair, Roberta Allen]