

University Committee on Curriculum Planning
April 6, 2001, 7:00am
Library Conference Room

Members Present: Maxine Stolk, Mike Richards, Suzanne Larson, Kim Craft, John Ault, Steve Evans, Terry Lewis, Verlinda Angell, Diana Graff, Secretary Sheri Butler

Excused presenting paper: Fred Lohrengel

The five meetings with the faculty in each of the colleges to present the draft GE Document were reviewed:

College of Education: A definition of focus groups and how they will be used is needed. PE might be interested in offering a class for 2 credits. A Physical Education GE activity course was eliminated at the last GE revision and during the semester conversion the Fitness for Life course was eliminated due to lack of resources.

P& VA: Focused more on the distribution. Presented a justification for arts to continue with 6 credits not 3 credits. Other than the distribution of the GE, they felt okay about what was going on. One faculty member submitted a letter suggesting SUU should not have a specific diversity course as most programs across campus offer some diversity. PVA stated that the computer literacy course be remedial rather than required.

PVA and the Provost have some concern as to why the communications class is in the core since it is not a Regents' requirement. This was discussed in other colleges as well. It is required in Northwest. Across the country communications seems to be a core, however, in Utah, SUU seems to be the only one that is requiring it. Part of this is based on the fact that employers are requiring more communication skills from their employees. There is research on this and studies show the value for having communication skills for team building, interpersonal skills, and public speaking skills. The reason the question came up in PVA was for the issue of transferability. A lot of campuses probably did not have the support to get it into the core, but at SUU there has been a lot of support. If the student obtains the AS degree of GE+ 20 hrs, the communication credits should be able to transfer anywhere.

H& SS Faculty expressed concern about the quality of testing thought that multiple-choice tests were inadequate. GE is asking for a lot of tangible things which shoddy tests do not measure. With the high number of students that are going to be in GE classes, there needs to be some sort of realistic evaluation to make sure that courses are being taught effectively. SUU needs to discuss the infrastructure to foster faculty support. Some of the titles in the Skill areas, such as Valuing, and Communication, were questioned.

Business: Generally they liked the document overall. They got hung up on some details. This college wants greater flexibility, fewer hours than 39, and suggested that we follow U of U GE. They did not want to have computer literacy as a required course for GE but thought it should be remedial. They felt that Business Communications could also fill the communication core requirement.

Science: Faculty discussed the rationale and adopted a motion to approve pages 1-6 ½. They want to combine life and physical science into one category for 9 hours. They thought there should be more hours in arts and fewer hours in HSS. Overall, the document was well received.

What is the impact if this document is adopted? How do departments/faculty get information to the UCCP? Is the UCCP really a decision-making committee? The Dean's council is the decision-making committee, but the recommendations from the UCCP will more than likely influence the decision from the dean's council.

The U of U's statement on computer literacy was discussed. The committee needs to address distribution and page 13 because they appear to be common concerns among the faculty.

What term should we use for valuing? Faculty in the colleges desire consistency, such as calling this area - the valuing process. There was some discussion on valuing and diversity.

Why are there so many hours in GE? This is based on past funding models where the sole funding factor was for growth. That funding changed this year. The committee may be able to diffuse some of the tension created over this issue of funding growth. One reason for wanting GE courses is to make contact with students to recruit students into the major.

M. Richards distributed a paper presenting the following options for GE:

Option 1: Present system at SUU

Option 2: More Knowledge area requirements

Option 3: Utah State model - 42 hours core plus 6 areas and 3 depth areas

Option 4: U of U model 4 literacy areas and 8 three-hour classes. (Well liked by science and business.)

The committee needs to make sure that faculty understand that the Regents have mandated the cap of 39 required hours. There is a warming toward the computer literacy requirement, but the Regents have not adopted this requirement yet.

Before the next meeting, M. Richards will take some revisions that were suggested and integrate them into the document. What do we really want to accomplish so that students are not having miserable experiences during this transition. The quantitative methods must be addressed.

What is the GE dream if there were no politics involved? What do we have to do to accomplish it considering the politics? Can the same skills be taught in other courses and give more variety to the students? Should we do distribution categories first so that we can then determine what courses fit in the categories? We will have to remember to address goals and learning outcomes. Politics and economics are going to become a great factor in the determination of this document. We need to make sure that the outcomes are what we really want students to achieve.

We have to challenge the traditional model using science and math. All students learn in different models. We need art students who understand how a scientist thinks and we need science students who understand how artists think.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 11 at 7:00am in the library conference room.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25am.