

## GE Committee Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2008

Present: Jonnine Deloatch, Jack Feldman, Peter Griswold, Jean Levitan, Kathy Malanga, John Peterman, Aaron Tesfaye, Ron Verdicchio, Nancy Weiner, Hilary Wilder, He Zhang  
Guests: Christine Reustle, Steve Hahn

Meeting was convened at 12:35pm

I. **Approval of Minutes:** minutes from February 14, 2008 meeting were approved

II. **Plans for Forum- March 13th:**

J. Levitan sent a flyer for the March 13<sup>th</sup> forum out via email to all faculty and professional staff. The forum will also be advertised via WPU Announcements and email to discussion groups. Committee members are encouraged to also circulate the flyer to colleagues.

A draft agenda was presented by K. Malanga. Posters from the previous forum, as well as a few new posters will be shown during lunch from 12:00-12:35. This will be followed by a set of short presentations from faculty and staff to get the conversation started between 12:35-1:00. Participants will then be broken into small groups (based on their online discussion group) for discussions centered around three guiding questions. A suggestion was made to circulate the questions ahead of time via the discussion groups to get people interested and thinking about them. Groups will then report back to the full forum between 1:30-1:45.

There will be a shuttle bus from the Main Campus to Valley Road, leaving at 12:15.

Again, the purpose of the forum is to develop “an educated electorate” who will fully understand the GE decision and processes.

III. **Discussion Groups update**

The Discussion Sub-Committee has not met since the last committee meeting, however P. Griswold reported that there had been a few people who have been asked to be taken off the listserv they were assigned to. One suggested approach to this request is to send a reply giving them an option of consolidating the listserv emails into a single periodic digest so that their email box is not clogged. The sub-committee is working on a draft of an email to be sent by the Provost to further encourage participation in the email discussion groups.

P. Griswold is working on getting a list of adjunct faculty members so that they can also be included in the discussion groups. At this time, the best option seems to be to feed them into existing groups rather than create a separate adjunct-only discussion group.

All committee members are encouraged to continue to send out prompts, etc. to their respective groups.

IV. **Report on Boston meeting on GE and Assessment:**

J. Peterman reported on the AACU meeting on “Integrative Designs for General Education and Assessment”. Some of the big buzzwords at the meeting included “rubrics”, “intentional learning” (students should be more conscious of the structured learning experience they are going through – e.g. the “Understanding Higher Education” seminar at Queens College), and “assessment loop” (the process of using assessment data for considered change and revision, not just collecting for external accreditation).

There are many colleges and universities who are currently going through or have just gone through a GE revision process. The average time is 3-4 years. Most GE programs are in the 40-45 credits range however there are others with 60 credits, even after having gone through a recent revision process (i.e. the revision didn't always result in a smaller GE program). Many are trying to move away from the disciplinary schmorgasbord to a more holistic program which engages the student throughout the four years, and may include a strong writing component.

Assessment of GE programs is still a problem. Some institutions pay students to take a 15 minute test to assess what they've learned. Portfolios with rubrics to evaluate them have also been suggested.

Many other GE programs have three similar access points: during freshman year (freshman seminar or first year experience), progression from variety to an in-depth, self-selected course(s) in the sophomore/junior years, and a senior capstone course which is outside of the major (e.g. a 'big problems' course). Some programs also use a theme (e.g. "What is a good society?"- using a specially created 'common reader' anthology) during the freshman year and then reconnect with this theme in the senior capstone.

Other GE programs are integrating the rest of student life into the program – using dorms to encourage freshman seminar discussions (putting students from the same dorm into the same class section). Service learning components are used at places such as Georgia Tech which has a close relationship with the city of Atlanta – this prompted a discussion of whether WPU would develop a local 'identity' with Wayne or Paterson. Other places have developed international relationships and conduct interactive courses with students in other countries and capstone courses to develop and implement (in-person) solutions to problems in those countries.

The question of expense and resources was discussed. Portland has a well-known program which includes a senior capstone with extensive community involvement however this requires a staff to manage the contacts, etc. with the various community organizations. The resources that WPU has will obviously impact what can be implemented.

The need for faculty development to carry out a revised GE program was discussed. We may need a new sub-committee to focus specifically on this and keep track of faculty professional development requirements as well as other resources, funding, etc. that will be necessary for successful implementation.

V. **Report on Webinar—"Seven Drivers of Change":**

J. Levitan presented notes she made from the webinar held on Mar. 6<sup>th</sup>. The presentation was unfortunately hampered by technology problems (visuals were out of synch with audio). Erik Peterson (<http://gsi.csis.org>) explained the 'revolution areas' that will affect our students in the future.

VI. **Plans for April Forum- possible change in date:**

The April 17 forum may be re-scheduled due to conflicts with college meetings. Currently the goal of this forum is to collect ideas and proposals for components that would go into a GE program, however it may still be too early for this and more examples, etc. may still be needed by most. A suggestion was made to use the May 15<sup>th</sup> forum (from 11:00-2:00 during exam week) to collect ideas but to run this as an open GE meeting rather than a formal forum, given grading, etc. requirements that week. Another option is to break this meeting into two – one to give closure (for the summer) for the GE committee and then to open it up to the university community for proposals.

VII. **Report on visits with Academic Departments:**

J. Peterman has visited three departments in the College of Education. A concern was raised over the conflict between student teaching and a senior experience requirement, as well as the need to keep the number of GE credits from getting too big, given the extra education credits students take. The possibility of a specialized GE tailored to education majors was discussed in addition to the skills that future teachers need to be successful in a K-12 classroom (writing, critical thinking, organizational). It was noted that most of the education programs use a writing assessment as an entry requirement into the program.

VIII. **Other:**

- Ways to get student input were discussed. A single, big forum for all students may not be as effective as meeting with individual student groups separately. K. Malanga and N. Weiner will trial a small group meeting with an athlete-student study group that meets in the library each

week; asking them about the skills, etc. they think they will need. This will provide a model for further meetings with other student groups and committees.

- Suggestions for gathering alumni input are welcomed. This might include asking them to look at their own WPU education and to comment on how it should be different now, based on their current work/life situation and experience. J. Zeff may be able to include this in an alumni survey.
- K. Malanga reported that she and N. Weiner, representing the Research Sub-Committee, have met with J. Zeff to get a variety of data reports that will help inform the process. An email will be sent out asking for ideas of reports to ask for.
- A GE folder has been set up on the K drive by K. Malanga which all faculty and professional staff can access. All forum presentations, etc. will be stored there.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Hilary Wilder