

GECC Meeting Minutes
August 27, 2021
2:00-3:30pm

Present:

Voting members:

Jonathan Moore, Julianne Guillard, Angela Reynolds, Gregory Triplett, Ross Collin, Rohan Kalyan, Allison Ryals, Alena Hampton, Dan Salandro, Adam Ewing, Ann Marie Gardinier Halstead, James Keck, Vicki Pallo

Non-voting members:

Whitney Lovelady, Constance Relihan, LaToya Robinson, Madeline Goldman, Ginni Totaro, Ryan Cales

Guests: Tim Bajkiewicz & Carolina Yaber, GEAC; Provost Sotiropoulos

Absent/vacant:

Student rep from SGA [vacant]

UUCG rep [vacant]

Life Sciences rep [vacant]

School of Arts rep [vacant]

Meeting notes

Note: Minutes for last meeting (8/20/21) approved by a vote of 14-0.

- 1) Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Provost Sotiropoulos. Introductions provided by all present.
- 2) Provost remarks:
 - Expressed gratitude/appreciation for work that has been done, and the time/effort/commitment demonstrated.
 - Noted that the need for us to rethink how we educate students was present before Covid; the pandemic just made the need more pressing. It's time to step back; we have learned that we can change quickly if needed, but now it's time to take a hard look at what we offer students even more closely. He asked us to consider adding other literacies (in addition to racial literacy; things like computer literacy, social entrepreneurship as a literacy, etc.). We want to have an innovative curriculum that crosses disciplines, but we need to do it in a thoughtful way, take time to think it through.
 - Also discussed the importance of academic assessment: he emphasized its role in accreditation, and noted that we need a mechanism to assess that students are learning what they are supposed to be learning. But another reason to think

about assessment is to be competitive in a future with demographic decline. We need to be able to demonstrate the educational value of the “product” we offer our students, to show them we offer lifelong learning for their future.

- 3) Chair provided recap of current projects:
 - Racial literacy report: need to develop a criteria for a racial literacy requirement and determine how to address credit distribution concerns.
 - Now that the new GenEd program is underway, we need a process for determining how well it is working.

- 4) GenEd Assessment Co-Chairs presented their committee’s work and updates (see their presentation slides on the Other Resources page of the GECC resource site for more details). Discussion/questions followed the presentation. Key ideas:
 - We need to build a “culture of assessment” here at VCU; need more faculty buy-in/dedicated faculty to participate.
 - They’re assessing the *program*, not the *courses*.
 - Their goal was to create a dynamic assessment process that provides a representative sample of students and allows for diversity of assignments. The benefit of VCU’s GenEd assessment approach is that the “signature assignment” is open to the course instructor.
 - They hope to avoid potential bias through random sampling and anonymizing of samples.
 - Having representatives from across the university allows for input from units with experience doing assessment in their own programs, as well as communicating concerns/goals to various units.

- 5) The Provost indicated that he will do his best to communicate the importance of assessment and GenEd across VCU. He departed at 3:05.

- 6) Chair returned to the topic of racial literacy taskforce report recommendations and overall process:
 - Discussion of how to populate the RL ad hoc committee tasked with developing RL requirement criteria. Emphasized that the goal of the committee is not to design course objectives, but the category for the GenEd program. They will be asked to make a determination about what the broad “checkboxes” would be for any course proposal.
 - Proposed the idea of submitting the modified structure of the GenEd program (to include the RL course in Foundations) to the UGCC before trying to populate the category with a particular course. Discussion followed. Key ideas:
 - i) Need to resolve concerns about credit distribution.
 - ii) Need to avoid over-representation of one unit on the RL sub-committee so that it doesn’t appear that the requirements are being tailored specifically to fit one course.

- iii) The goal in adjusting the structure and defining criteria is to provide options for other courses that could fit the category in the future.
 - o Chair shared a proposed timeline: sub-committee (yet to be formed) develops requirements, provides recommendations to GECC. They will submit a proposal on the revised structure to the GECC by Nov. 5 so we can review it for our Nov. 12th meeting. GECC will then submit a formal proposal to UUCC by Dec 2 in time for their final meeting of Fall 2021 (Dec. 16th).
- 7) The Chair then introduced the discussion of 3 vs. 4 AOIs, to allow room for an added course in the Foundations. After discussion, a movement was made to vote on the proposal, and was seconded. The Chair will send out an electronic ballot that addresses both the AOI question and the development of the RL subcommittee.
- 8) Meeting concluded at 3:35pm.