

Notes from the Special Meeting of the AP&P COMMITTEE
with the GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE
October 25, 2006

The Academic Policies & Procedures Committee met with representatives from the General Education Task Force on Wednesday, October 25, 2006 in the William C. Strickland Conference Room of I.G. Greer Hall beginning at 3:00 p.m.

Dr. Jeff Butts noted that we have a quorum for this special meeting, but he also pointed out that AP&P is not conducting business at this meeting. This is a time for exchange between AP&P and the General Education Task Force.

Dr. Butts introduced himself, and asked everyone else to do the same. Those attending today's meeting were: Dr. Jeff Butts, Dr. Sue Keefe, Ms. Jeni Wyatt, Dr. Laurie Semmes, Ms. Carter Hammett-McGarry, Dr. Dan Friedman, Dr. Paulette Marty, Dr. Dinesh Dave, Dr. Jon Beebe, Mr. John Boyd, Mr. Todd Powell, Dr. Dan Hurley, Ms. Eleanor Cook, Dr. Alexandra Hellenbrand, Dr. Rodney Duke, Ms. Beth Todd, Dr. Kay Taylor, Mr. Mark Malloy, Dr. Ron Marden, Dr. Mike Mayfield, Dr. Bill Harbinson, Dr. Jay Jackson, Dr. Dave Haney, Ms. Lesa Felker, Mr. Jordan Flair, Ms. Joy Clawson, Ms. Martha Stephenson, Dr. Edelma Huntley, Ms. Jenny Ware, Dr. Charles Duke, Dr. Heather Hulburt, Dr. Bob Lyman, Dr. Nina-Jo Moore, Dr. Rainer Goetz, and Dr. Jim Barnes.

Dr. Butts turned the meeting over to Dr. Sue Keefe, Chair of the General Education Task Force. She voiced her appreciation to everyone for attending this extra meeting, and she recognized her hard-working team members of the General Education Task Force (GETF).

Dr. Keefe's introductory remarks included the following:

The current core curriculum is at least 40 years old, with only minor changes made the last time it was revised.

Important items: staffing, administration and assessment.

The GETF started at ground zero - looked at what knowledges, skills, and perspectives went into the make-up of an educated person.

The President of the AAC&U visited our campus last spring and conducted a workshop that resulted in the four goals and resultant learning outcomes.

We've gathered a great deal of information, and worked in specific focus groups, while providing a number of opportunities for campus input.

The quality of general education depends on the enthusiasm and buy-in of our faculty; this is not just something that the Task Force will produce.

Dr. Keefe talked about the "General Education Goals and Learning Outcomes" document and embedding general education throughout the student's academic career rather than completing general education in the first two years.

Learning skills and modes of inquiry should be transferable from one situation to another. In addition to the traditional classroom, the Task Force has paid attention to every aspect of the campus, including having the co-curriculum play a significant role in the students'

education.

The process will consist of the following steps:

1. The development of educational goals and learning outcomes - a guide. There is one common misconception: not every course will have to meet every goal. This process is nearly complete.
2. Develop a model for the general education curriculum. Dr. Keefe noted that another public forum will be held on Monday, October 30 from 3-5 p.m. in the Linville Falls Room of the Student Union. She noted that all of the committee's work has been in phases, clarifying that nothing is final at this point. It's all a work in progress, and the model that will be presented on October 30 is just the first pass at what the final model might look like. There will be another open forum on November 17. The GETF plans to have a preliminary version of the model by December, and the anticipated date to bring anything to AP&P is late Spring of 2007.
3. Create an administrative structure, stressing the importance of assessment for each course, and each program as a whole.
4. The last phase would be the implementation, which could possibly begin as early as the 2007-2008 academic year.

Dr. Keefe also noted that there will be Summer Faculty Grants for General Education Curriculum Development. The Provost has provided money for this initiative, and she encouraged faculty to apply for one of these grants. Faculty will need to get started even before the model is finalized. This initiative will provide 20 faculty members with \$2,000 grants each to design a new course, or to re-design an existing course that will provide models of the kinds of things to think about for the new curriculum.

Dr. Keefe opened the floor for question or comments.

Dr. Bob Lyman: The Arts and Sciences Council is supportive of the four competencies, but there are two issues that A&S faculty want to see considered more. 1) In Goal III, local to global connections look not only at the cultural and geographic context but also include a historical context. He acknowledged that history could be embedded in other areas such as philosophy, music, art, etc. and, 2) Goal II - critical thinking where the scientific method is addressed - the science faculty feel that the competency should involve a hands-on classroom experience/lab. Could be broader than that. Experiential scientific context identified as a modality but not limited to a lab as it currently exists - fieldwork, etc. are appropriate.

Dr. Sue Keefe: These are the kinds of things that we can deal with in developing the model.

Dr. Dave Haney: The educational goals have been amended somewhat already to address those concerns. Dialog with the sciences is going on now and will continue.

Dr. Haney noted that the AP&P members might think about at what point the AP&P Committee should be involved, before the actual vote/approval.

Dr. Jeff Butts: He questioned the authentication of the process and the final product. What group will ultimately accept or reject the final model? Faculty? AP&P? Provost? Who will authorize?

Dr. Sue Keefe: She responded that there will be a number of stages. The Task Force anticipates the model coming to AP&P in the late spring, and then to the Provost.

Dr. Dave Haney: This will follow the formal structure already in place for academic governance. He reminded everyone that this Task Force was appointed by the Provost, therefore the Task Force will make their recommendation to the Provost. The Provost's office will make sure the process is followed.

Dr. Sue Keefe: She stressed that faculty buy-in is so important. It is the job of the Task Force to move the campus in this direction - Provost mandate. All of the forums held thus far have been helpful.

Mr. Todd Powell: What notable concerns are out there? What should we be looking for?

Dr. Sue Keefe: She did not want to focus on the concerns, but more on the positive progress they have made; however she noted the concern about knowledge content base.

Dr. Dave Haney: Some other concerns that have come up:
The relationship between general education curriculum and major curriculum.
Student credit hour production.
Effect on the number of faculty lines in departments.
How is the preparation of our majors going to be different?

Dr. Sue Keefe: The last time changes were made to our core curriculum, the special designators were added.

Dr. Rodney Duke: He discussed the hierarchy of skills, and the learning outcomes in a hierarchical/progressive thinking type of curriculum. We need to be able to see what students will be doing by the time they are seniors. Integration in the vertical model must be evident.

Dr. Sue Keefe: She encouraged everyone to attend the October 30 forum. They will show an example of this type of progression. The commitment is to demonstrate what goals are being addressed, what particular outcomes could be assessed and how to build an appropriate assessment process for that type of class.

Dr. Paulette Marty: Freshman level critical thinking skills, etc., will be assessed.

We will build faculty development into this.

Dr. Rodney Duke: Faculty training will be extremely important. Faculty will need different kinds of pedagogical exercises.

Dr. Bob Lyman: Hierarchical competencies are important. Students come in at so many different levels. Complex considerations.

Dr. Dave Haney: The need for real benchmarks for learning. College seniors must meet certain competency levels. We expect that the faculty will design courses in the major that take into account the goals of general education and contribute to the students' abilities to synthesize and critique their world.

Dr. Sue Keefe: Competency testing will be used, however, Dr. Haney noted that standardized testing will not necessarily be used.

Dr. Charles Duke: His question is focused on assessment and his concern for those of us in professional fields. Consistent assessment. The report indicates that 50% of the student credit hours in general education are taught by part-time faculty. What extent is the University as a whole committed to addressing that issue?

Dr. Sue Keefe: Our vision of having small classes, in that demands a lot of faculty to teach those small classes. Seminar-size.

Dr. Dave Haney: There are all types of non-tenure track faculty including the part-time person who is teaching here while also teaching at several other places. We want this to be more of an institutional program, with faculty (non-tenure track and tenure track) dedicated to this institution's goals.

Dr. Jeff Butts: He noted an article that he recently read in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. The journal had surveyed students enrolled in junior community colleges - the students being taught by the part-time faculty were delayed in their graduation. The 50% of student credit hours being taught by part-time faculty is a red flag.

Dr. Charles Duke: The strategic planning process is underway. This general education reform is an important part of that.

Dr. Rodney Duke: The strategic plan needs to develop alongside this General Education Task Force. He commented that President Erskine Bowles recently examined the mission statements of all of the campuses in the UNC system and his comments were that they all look the same. We have many strengths as an educational institution, for example, the freshmen learning communities program is highly recognized. Also, our International Programs are well ahead of the curve as compared to other campuses.

Dr. Dave Haney: The strategic planning process and the general education goals and learning outcomes feed right into each other, and this is already part of the conscious process.

Dr. Bob Lyman: He agreed with Dr. Haney on the time-table. These two goals/tasks are very much in sync with each other.

Dr. Dave Haney: We are trying to build on the learning communities model.

Dr. Jeff Butts: He expressed un-ease.

ASU is in this process of developing a plan for changing the way students will think in the future, while at the same time, there is a push from the state level for us to be more of a training facility (vocational education).

Dr. Dave Haney: He shares Dr. Butt's un-ease.

Flexibility, nimbleness.

There is a tension between our definition of nimbleness, according to which we produce students who can think "on their feet" and use transferable skills to see different perspectives and to solve problems without complete retooling of a knowledge base, and the legislator's definition of nimbleness: when the economy needs more nurses, they want us to immediately shift gears and produce more nurses.

Dr. Jeff Butts: That term causes trouble - nimbleness - bothers me.

The report tries very hard to define those terms as faculty-friendly.

Concern about the corporatization of education.

Ms. Eleanor Cook: She asked about the process for AP&P - what does AP&P do? For example, if a summer faculty grant allows faculty to design a new course, does AP&P approve that new course? (Dr. Haney explained that it would initially be offered as a selected topics course. And, he also responded that, yes, AP&P will eventually get an avalanche of new courses to consider for approval.)

Dr. Kay Taylor: How does technology fit into this? And, distance education? Will the human form of distance ed and technology trade off?

Dr. Sue Keefe: She responded that the funding will have to be obtained by applying for grants to re-do the general education curriculum especially with the needs for technology. We will be expected to do new things with what we already have.

Dr. Keefe predicts that faculty will be a lot happier and rejuvenated when we have a new general education in place.

Dr. Dave Haney: We need to use the technology that we already have more effectively. He gave the example of another university that requires all students to take an on-line course in their first semester.

Dr. Kay Taylor: She agreed that this will require a lot of faculty development.

Dr. Sue Keefe: We can build on what the Library is doing in the areas of faculty development.

Dr. Dan Hurley: He made a suggestion. Our current funding levels are like an inverted pyramid, and he commented on the last time the general education was changed. Verticalizing will logically lead to a redistribution of monetary and human resources. He stated that there are two kinds of value - priceless, and value that carries price tags. Change the pyramid so that we don't expect more out of the people at the bottom.

Dr. Dave Haney: The funding model also depends on departments being put in categories, and how many student credit hours are produced. In that sense, general education can be a high priority because it produces a lot of student credit hours.

Dr. Dan Hurley: Look at proposals that come to AP&P. The rationale for new courses and the courses descriptions sometimes say: "Students will.." That language demonstrates expectations for students.

Dr. Sue Keefe: That is the language of assessment – how students meet those goals feeds back into program development.

Dr. Dave Haney: Learning outcomes are the tip of the pyramid: they measure behavior that, we hope, indicates learning.
Goals - what we want to achieve.

Dr. Sue Keefe: Assessment is course specific, and assessment is program specific also. Look for each course in the general education to address some goals and outcomes so students will think critically and creatively.

Dr. Dave Haney: It's amazing what we do assess without using that language.

Dr. Jeff Butts: Are there any other questions or concerns?
There were no further comments, so he thanked everyone for attending today's meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.