

UWM Task Force on General Education  
June 10, 2009 Retreat – Hefter Conference Center  
9:00am – 4:00 pm  
Minutes

Present: William Bristow, Karen Brucks, Tina Current, Kathryn Dindia, Gesele Durham, Scott Emmons, Sue Falco, Lori Fitzenberger, Lee Ann Garrison, Gregory Jay, Jack Johnson, Robin Mello, Jeffrey Merrick, Renee Meyers, Janice Miller, Kim Pietsch, Errica Pollack, Julieanne Price, Nigel Rothfels, Charles Schuster, Connie Schroeder, Susan Stalewski, Jennifer Watson, Dev Venugopalan, Ruth Williams, Seth Zlotocha, Linda Anderson-Courtney.

The Retreat began with a short welcome and introduction by Dev Venugopalan (outlined in detail at: [http://www4.uwm.edu/acad\\_aff/gened\\_taskforce/retreat09/welcome.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/gened_taskforce/retreat09/welcome.pdf)).

Jeff Merrick then presented a general review of UWM's current General Education Program and outlined the recently adopted LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes (described in more detail at: [http://www4.uwm.edu/acad\\_aff/gened\\_taskforce/retreat09/review\\_genedprog.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/gened_taskforce/retreat09/review_genedprog.pdf)).

A powerpoint presentation on alternative models of General Education used nationwide and some of their distinctive features was given by Janice Miller. This powerpoint is available at [http://www4.uwm.edu/acad\\_aff/gened\\_taskforce/retreat09/alternativemodels.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/gened_taskforce/retreat09/alternativemodels.pdf).

After a short break, two alternative model of general education that are being used at campuses similar to UWM were presented. The first, presented by Dev Venugopalan, described the general education model used at IUPUI (Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis). This powerpoint can be viewed at [http://www4.uwm.edu/acad\\_aff/gened\\_taskforce/retreat09/alternativemodels.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/gened_taskforce/retreat09/alternativemodels.pdf). The second, presented by Kathryn Dindia, described the general education model used at Portland State University. This powerpoint can be viewed at [http://www4.uwm.edu/acad\\_aff/gened\\_taskforce/retreat09/psu.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/gened_taskforce/retreat09/psu.pdf).

A short discussion of the similarities and differences between the two systems is available at [http://www4.uwm.edu/acad\\_aff/gened\\_taskforce/retreat09/differences.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/gened_taskforce/retreat09/differences.pdf). This was developed by the group that attended a recent AAC&U Conference on General Education.

Provost Rita Cheng addressed the group after a luncheon break and thanked them for their work to date. She encouraged them to continue the process because such reform is aimed at achieving student learning outcomes, at incorporating high impact practices into the learning process at UWM, at intentionally linking general education to the major, and at making excellence inclusive. These reforms will help UWM student's achieve academic success and increased retention, make general education relevant, and close achievement gaps. Important issues such as institutional capacity and faculty development were also talked about during this luncheon discussion.

After lunch the group broke up into small groups for a brain-storming discussion on what the first year experience might look like for UWM students taking into account some of the best aspects of the IUPUI and PSU models. The comments were wide-ranging and included the following thoughts and/or ideas:

- Develop an inquiry/problem based curriculum. Syllabi must make ELOs transparent. Use the portfolio approach to reflect the ELOs, perhaps even an e-portfolio. Make the portfolio an evolving four-year process.
- Develop a series of gateway courses which reflect the ELOs (similar to IUPUI)
- Be sure freshmen transition courses are not just “grade 13 courses”; reflection should be build into each course
- Perhaps pilot transition courses using the team approach – team teaching including faculty and staff (advisors, mentors, etc.)
- Some general education courses should be situated in the major field to make them more relevant to students
- Perhaps writing should be taught in the sophomore year, not the freshman year, giving students a chance to experience college before not succeeding
- Adopt clusters/themes (such as at PSU) rather than just courses for general education; paths for completing ELOs would be good
- Students should be able to make choices based on learning outcomes developed for courses
- Be sure that High Impact Practices are well done
- Make faculty workloads more flexible to enable teaching teams to develop, exist, and assist in student learning
- Faculty should be asked to develop universal criteria for all first year courses.
- Courses should be overseen by faculty committee committed to engaging students at a university level?
- Experienced faculty should be engaged in this process to ensure non-tenured faculty have time to do required research.
- Core learning experiences are important as are interdisciplinary seminars, living-learning communities, and service learning activities

Queries:

- Are there enough small (45 person) classrooms on campus?
- There are costs in bringing this all together – how to overcome that obstacle?
- The question of how to deal with transfer students was brought up. Other schools have found that their “feeder” schools eventually respond to their general education formats and so the problem is not as difficult as presently perceived.
- What difficulties would be encountered in developing a new college structure, similar to the University College at IUPUI?
- What is a student fails a required first-year course (one that is necessary for he/she to continue)?

- There was a lengthy discussion of quantitative reasoning? What is it for each individual student and major? Who makes those decisions.

At the end of the day, four categories of “next steps” were presented and participants were asked to sign up for those sub-committees that they would be interested in participating in over the summer months. The four sub-committees are listed below, along with the names of persons who signed up (or in some cases were “signed up” by others) to participate and/or chair.

Several participants had left by the time this activity took place and an email was sent out giving them an opportunity to sign up and asking them to invite other non-Task Force members to join to expand the discussions within the specific sub-committees.

The convener (chair) has been asked to set up a meeting prior to the end of June to continue these discussions. The four sub-committees (and current participants – as of June 24, 2009) are:

#### WORKING ON THE FIRST YEAR

Dev Venugopalan

Jeff Merrick

Scott Emmons

Karen Brucks

Lee Ann Garrison (who is asking Josie Osborne and Raoul Deal to participate)

Sue Stalewski

Ericca Rolland (who was signed up by someone else)

Kyla Moore (who was signed up by someone else)

Connie Schroeder

Linda Anderson-Courtney (convener)

Tina Current

Lori Fitzenberger

Tony Ciccone

Dennis Lynch

Ruth Williams

Tom Walker

#### DEVOPING A NEW GENERAL EDUCATION MODEL

Kathryn Dindia (convener and chair)

Dev Venugopalan

Karen Brucks

Lee Ann Garrison

Gregory Jay

Kim Pietsch

Linda Anderson-Courtney

Jenny Watson

Nigel Rothfels

Connie Schroeder  
Jeff Merrick  
Tina Current  
Seth Zlotocha  
Dennis Lynch  
William Bristow

#### COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH ON ELOs

Lee Ann Garrison (convener)  
Dev Venugopalan  
Jack Johnson  
Jeff Merrick  
Linda Anderson-Courtney  
Sue Stalewski  
Janice Miller  
Gesele Durham

#### BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT (please note: this sub-committee will convened at a later date)

Dev Venugopalan  
Julianne Price  
Seth Zlotocha  
Connie Schroeder  
Jeff Merrick  
Robin Mello  
Tony Ciccone  
William Keith  
Ron Perez

It was also noted that a small sub-committee (Linda Anderson-Courtney, Kim Pietsch, Connie Schroder, and Seth Zlotocha) that is collecting syllabi of all GER course sections that have an enrollment of 200 or more. A report on that activity is also forthcoming this summer.