**FHSU Liberal Education Committee**

**Minutes**

Meeting Called by

Shala Mills, Chair

Date: Tuesday 11/8/2016

Time: 3:00-4:00

Location: Rarick 312

Members

Douglas Drabkin (AHSS)

Bradley Will (AHSS)

Dmitry Gimon (BE)

Jessica Heronemus (BE)

Kevin Splichal (Ed)

Teresa Woods (Ed)

Glen McNeil (HBS)

Tanya Smith (HBS)

William Weber (STM)

Tom Schafer (STM)

Robyn Hartman (Lib)

Helen Miles (Senate)

Megan Garcia (SGA)

Cody Scheck (SGA)

Cheryl Duffy (Goss Engl)

Kenton Russell (Provost)

Chapman Rackaway (Grad Sch)

3:04 (5 minutes) Meeting began. All members present except for Heronemus, Splichal, Smith, Schafer, Garcia, and Scheck. Hartman was serving as a proxy for Heronemus. Established that a quorum was met. Chair announced that five more copies of both (1) Paul Handstedt, *General Education Essentials: A Guide for College Faculty* (Jossey-Bass, 2012) and (2) Mary J. Allen, *Assessing General Education Programs* (Jossey-Bass, 2006) will be ordered for the committee’s use.

3:09 (60 minutes) Chair drew the committee’s attention to a set of PowerPoint slides accessible through the committee’s BlackBoard site: go to “Supporting Documents,” then to the “Program Models” folder, then “Understanding Program Models” file. The theme of these slides could be summed up as: options for integrating a general education program*.* She began with the observation that one serious flaw of the current FHSU General Education Program is that, both for students and for faculty, it fails to hang together as a memorable, meaningful whole. She observed that its founding principle, the four character traits of a liberally educated person, “knowledgeable,” “civic,” “reflective,” and “holistic” – ([look it up](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cdmdrabkin%5CDownloads%5CGened%20Advising%20Handbook%20%281%29.pdf) if it’s been a while) plays virtually no role in how people think about the program. So how can we do better? How can we produce a more meaningfully unified program? This led to a consideration of three options, distinct but not mutually exclusive: (1) The first option would take as the principle of integration the growing experience of the student. This student-centered approach would focus on a set of skills that are developed over the course of the student’s participation in the program. (2) The second option would take as the principle of integration understanding and appreciating alternative modes of inquiry (e.g., thinking like a social scientist, like a natural scientist, like a philosopher, like an historian, like a mathematician, etc.). (3) The third option would take as the principle of integration the unifying content of individual courses or clusters of courses. The idea here would be to have individual courses (like our current general education’s upper-level integratives) or sets of courses grouped together around a common theme (e.g., “biotechnology and society” or “food”) provide occasions for students to draw together things that might otherwise be treated separately in an unrelated way in a focused, related way. In the middle of considering these options, Drabkin presented a 19-minute sketch of a program that would combine options (1) and (2). The idea would be to make writing and critical thinking central to a three-tiered sequence of skill-building that would be carried out across an array of modes of inquiry.

4:09 (3 minutes) Will urged the committee not to rush the choices we are contemplating at this stage; we should keep looking until we find the program that truly works for us, all things considered. Woods asked if it might not be time to see if we can’t get someone from Portland State to share their program with us via webinar. As the meeting drew to a close, Chair charged the committee (1) to prepare to discuss the questions *Given the options before us, what do we like? And why?* and (2) to try to think of approaches beyond those taken up in this meeting. Committee members are encouraged to sketch out ideas to bring to the table for consideration, either for an entire program model, or for a particular section of a program, and to forward them to her for inclusion in the next meeting’s agenda.

4:12 Meeting ended. The next scheduled meeting is for 3:00 PM on Thursday, November 17.

**Submitted by D. Drabkin, Recording Secretary**