**FHSU General Education Committee**

**Minutes**

Meeting Called by

Bradley Will, Chair

Date: Monday November 6, 2017

Time: 3:30-4:30

Location: Rarick 205

Members

Douglas Drabkin (AHSS)

Marcella Marez (AHSS)

Jessica Heronemus (BE)

David Schmidt (BE)

Kevin Splichal (Ed)

Teresa Woods (Ed)

Trey Hill (HBS)

Glen McNeil (HBS)

William Weber (STM)

Tom Schafer (STM)

Robyn Hartman (Lib)

Helen Miles (Senate)

Adam Schibi (SGA)

Cheryl Duffy (Goss Engl)

Kenton Russell (FYE)

Tanya Smith (Grad Sch)

3:32 (1 minute) All members were present with the exception of Hill, Marez, and Smith. Paul Lucas returned as an observer.

3:33 (1 minute) Chair made a request: committee members who plan to be absent, but want to give their vote to a proxy, should communicate this to their chosen proxy sometime before the meeting.

3:34 (5 minutes) Chair reported that he has been contacted by the university’s [Experiential Learning Committee](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cdmdrabkin%5CDownloads%5Cexperiential%20learning%20cmt%20bylaws.pdf) about the possibility of requiring an experiential learning component in the new general education program. (“Experiential learning” includes things like internships, study abroad, and service learning.) They will be invited to share their thoughts at one of our upcoming meetings.

3:39 (5 minutes) Chair announced that the organization that oversees our AQIP accreditation, the Higher Learning Commission, will be holding a two-day workshop in Kansas City on a topic closely related to our ongoing work: [“Assessing General Education.”](http://mailchi.mp/hlcommission/assessing-general-education-workshop-early-registration-offer-522689?e=0234569736) The dates are Thursday and Friday February 22-23, 2018. Woods vouched for the value of these sorts of workshops, and noted that general education assessment is something we really ought to try to get good at. Committee members interested in participating should contact Chair by email.

3:44 (20 minutes) Subgroups are currently at work drafting measurable learning outcomes for the new program’s objectives. After refining these outcomes in committee, they are to be sent out to the extended sub-groups (the “stakeholders” we’ve recently identified) for feedback. The question arose how we ought to get feedback from these stakeholders. Woods suggested that there are three options: (1) anonymously, (2) confidentially, or (3) openly (“publically-named”). With anonymous feedback, we wouldn’t know who said what. With confidential feedback, we would know their identities, but these would not make it into the minutes or be allowed outside of closed-door discussions. With publically-named feedback, everything would be up front and out in the open. Pros and cons were discussed. Some thought anonymous feedback would be more honest, the idea being that a person might feel more confident speaking their mind if no one knew whose mind was doing the speaking. Others thought, on the other hand, that anonymity would invite, or at least allow for, a kind of self-serving venting of irresponsible negativity that we can do without. The point was also made that there is no way to contact an anonymous source for clarification about what they are thinking, so anonymous comments could end up being less valuable than more open comments. Chair recommended transparency. McNeil concurred, observing that if a person is not willing to sign their name to something, then they’re not willing to own it; and if they’re not willing to own it, then we can do without it. Option (3) was put to a vote – that all written feedback be identified by the person’s name and department for it to be considered by the committee. This passed: 9 in favor, 2 against, one abstaining.

4:04 (28 minutes) Conversation turned next to the pros and cons of our extended-sub-group approach to developing measurable learning outcomes. In using sub-groups instead of the faculty-as-a-whole, do we not risk antagonizing those of our colleagues who are not being directly consulted? This is a very real risk. It’s not the committee’s intention to leave anyone out of the process, but we’re trying to get a lot done in a reasonable amount of time. Chair said that he would speak with Tim Crowley, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, about our options for achieving greater transparency, for getting people involved who really want to be involved, and for winning the trust of our colleagues. Options include (1) sending out an email providing an update on where we are in the process and how people can help us in our work, and (2) totally revamping, continually updating, and actively promoting our website so that it adequately communicates what’s going on and why.

4:32 Meeting ended. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday November 13 at 3:30 PM in Rarick 205. Topics will include (1) the measurable learning outcomes for the historical mode of inquiry, and (2) the survey instrument for gathering feedback from stakeholders.

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

