

FHSU General Education Committee

Minutes

Meeting Called by

Bradley Will, Chair

Date: Thursday September 26, 2019

Time: 3:30-5:00

Location: Rarick Hall 113

Members

Douglas Drabkin (AHSS)

Marcella Marez (AHSS)

Jessica Heronemus (BE)

David Schmidt (BE)

Sarah Broman (Ed)

Phillip Olt (Ed)

Trey Hill (HBS)

Glen McNeil (HBS)

Joe Chretien (STM)

Lanee Young (STM)

Robyn Hartman (Lib)

Helen Miles (Senate)

Michael Musgrove (SGA)

Cheryl Duffy (Goss Engl)

Tanya Smith (Grad Sch)

3:28 (1 minute) All members were present with the exception of Chretien. Determined that a quorum was met.

3:29 (77 minutes) The meeting was concerned with discussing a complex proposal to amend the FHSU CORE policies and procedures presently before the attention of the academic affairs committee of faculty senate. One version of this amended document, the version reproduced below (see Appendix), was put to a vote and rejected in an unusually close vote (6 in favor, 7 against, one abstaining). The item highlighted in green was approved at last week's meeting. The items highlighted in yellow were proposed to address concerns coming from the academic affairs committee. Changes include (1) removing the list of courses identified for inclusion in the CORE program prior to their going through the course approval process (Fundamentals of Oral Communication, Introduction to Computer Information Systems, Critical Thinking, Personal Wellness, etc.), (2) correctly identifying the name of the "Transfer Agreement and Articulation Guide General Education Program," (3) clarifying that the proposed changes to the course approval process add to but do not supplant the existing course approval process, (4) changing the name of the "Faculty Review Panels" to the less threatening "Faculty Advisory Panels," and (5) indicating that the policies and procedures and the common learning outcomes will be reviewed on alternate years. The only really controversial item was (1). It appears to be the view of the academic affairs committee that there is no reason in principle why other courses shouldn't be able to satisfy outcome sets for objectives 1.1B, 1.3, etc. just as well if not better than these courses, and they don't want to close the door to development of these alternative courses. This seems to be the intention of the pre-selected list -- closing that door. Members of the general education committee who are concerned about opening that door note that some of the outcome sets are very vaguely articulated and could be satisfied in a shabby way in courses not carefully designed to

satisfy them. Perhaps the best example of this are the three outcomes for 1.1B (present orally an original message that effectively addresses an assigned purpose, present orally an original message that effectively addresses a specified audience, and demonstrate effective critical listening). It's not hard to imagine a course tacking these on as a side project, whereas the general education committee intend this to be the work of an entire semester. Concern was also expressed that the CORE program as designed requires reasoning-and-writing "across the curriculum," beginning in the student's first year, with courses such as Composition I, Critical Thinking, and Composition II, and then continuing on into the student's major, with completion at the senior level. Some prescription here appears to benefit the student, launching a project at the start of the student's time with us that will bear fruit later. Members of the general education committee who voted in favor of the proposed amendments note that there are opportunities for mediocrity (and worse) throughout the entirety of the CORE program, but that we should trust ourselves and our colleagues and perhaps especially the expertise of those serving on the faculty advisory panels to interpret the program's outcomes thoughtfully with the best interests of the students in mind, and to make corrections as needed.

4:46 (18 minutes) The remainder of the meeting was taken up with the question "What next?" It was agreed that the academic affairs committee and the general education committee need to work together on this, and that good communication (written and oral) rooted in critical thinking (giving and criticizing arguments) will be key. Chair encouraged as many members as can make it to attend the academic affairs meeting next week -- time and place to be announced.

5:04 Meeting came to an end. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday October 3 at 3:30 in Rarick 113.

Submitted by D. Drabkin, Recording Secretary



Appendix:

FHSU CORE Program Policies and Procedures ***with proposed amendments 9/26/19*** ***not yet approved by Faculty Senate***

DEFINITIONS:

- **COMMON LEARNING OUTCOMES:** a term used by the Higher Learning Commission, FHSU's accrediting body, to identify the measurable general-education achievements attained by graduates of an institution
- **GOAL:** an achievement attained by meeting objectives
- **OBJECTIVE:** a benchmark all students are expected to achieve

- OUTCOME SET: a group of common learning outcomes organized under an objective, typically fulfilled by a specific course.
- RUBRIC: a document identifying the standards for proficiency used in assessing the level of student achievement of particular outcomes
- MODE OF INQUIRY COURSE: an FHSU CORE course that fulfills the outcome-set for one of the six Modes of Inquiry identified under objective 2.1
- GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE: the Provost's committee that oversees FHSU general-education programs and makes recommendations to the Academic Affairs Committee

GENERAL POLICIES:

- As part of the University's commitment to academic excellence, the General Education Committee will review (1) its administrative policies and procedures and (2) the common learning outcomes on alternate years. These reviews will engage faculty, administrators, students, and other stakeholders. The results of the reviews and any recommendations for change will be approved by Faculty Senate.
- Candidates for bachelor's degrees are required to fulfill all FHSU CORE common learning outcomes, unless they qualify for the Transfer Agreement and Articulation Guide General Education Program, the Bachelor of General Studies General Education Program, or the International Partnerships General Education Program.
- FHSU CORE common learning outcomes are fulfilled by successful completion of approved courses.
- Outcome 2.1-D.3 (Natural Scientific Mode of Inquiry) must be satisfied by a lab or field course of at least 1 credit hour in addition to and separate from the course that satisfies outcomes 1 and 2 of Objective 2.1-D.
- Outcomes for Objective 1.4, Information Literacy, are to be fulfilled by a sophomore or junior level course—ideally, but not necessarily, from the student's major program of study.
- Outcomes for Objective 1.1-A and outcome 3 for Objective 1.5 (discipline-specific criticism of the student's own reasoning) are to be fulfilled by an upper-division course—ideally, but not necessarily, at the senior level from the student's major program of study.
- Courses proposed to fulfill outcome set 1.1-A must have ENG 101 English Composition I and ENG 102 English Composition II as prerequisites.

POLICIES FOR ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Because the Higher Learning Commission—the accrediting body for Fort Hays State University—requires the University to report student achievement of Common Learning Outcomes, student achievement for each FHSU CORE learning outcome must be assessed and reported to the office of Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Improvement.
- Each course designated as satisfying FHSU CORE outcomes must have specified the assignment whereby students will demonstrate their proficiency with the outcomes satisfied by the course. Additionally, each course must have specified a rubric whereby faculty can measure student achievement on each relevant outcome.
- All faculty teaching courses that fulfill FHSU CORE Outcomes will use the FHSU CORE Assessment Rubric associated with their course to measure the outcome achievement of each student completing the course with a passing grade.

- Faculty will be able to enter assessment data at any point in the semester. The deadline for faculty to report FHSU CORE Assessment Data will be 48 hours after the deadline to report final grades for the semester.
- Two courses—ENG 101 English Composition I and ENG 102 English Composition 2—contribute to, but do not ultimately fulfill FHSU CORE Learning Outcomes. Assessment for these courses will continue to use the established biennial pre- and post-test writing assessment and Paired T-Test statistical analysis to measure student progress toward the relevant outcomes.

TENTATIVE PROCEDURE FOR ASSESSMENT OF FHSU CORE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- *Currently, FHSU is reviewing assessment-reporting systems. That review will directly determine the procedure for reporting assessment data. Until the review is complete, this plan can only be considered tentative.*
- *Lacking a standard assessment-reporting system, a tentative procedure utilizing the Tiger Central system is in development.*

POLICIES FOR COURSE APPROVAL:

NOTE: These Course Approval Policies address only the portion of the University Course Approval Procedure that applies to submissions to the General Education Committee for courses to be included in the General Education Program. These policies have no impact on other stages of the Course Approval Process.

- FHSU CORE course proposals must include the specific assignment used to measure student achievement of each learning outcome within the FHSU CORE outcome set. Proposals must also include the rubric used to assess student achievement on the applicable CORE outcomes.
- A department is limited to offering courses that satisfy outcomes sets from no more than 2 Modes of Inquiry. **Exceptions to this policy can be granted to departments that are conjoined, multidisciplinary units.**
- A course can fulfill more than one outcome set. However, no course will be certified to fulfill the outcome sets for more than one Mode of Inquiry.
- Courses that satisfy requirements for the FHSU CORE can also satisfy degree-program requirements.
- **Proposals for courses fulfilling outcome sets will be reviewed by Faculty Advisory Panels. Panels will advise the General Education Committee as to whether proposed assignments demonstrate students' fulfillment of outcomes. Like other stages in the FHSU Course Approval Process, the Faculty Advisory Panel will submit a review letter to the General Education Committee. Where necessary, review letters should specify revisions that would improve the course proposal.**
- **Faculty Advisory Panels will be made up of no fewer than three faculty members, appointed by and reporting to the General Education Committee. Faculty Advisory Panel members will be nominated by FHSU Deans of divisions relevant to the particular outcome set.**
- Faculty **Advisory** Panels will be available to work with faculty and departments on the development of assignments and rubrics, and to give clarification and guidance for revision and development of FHSU CORE course proposals.

PROCEDURE FOR COURSE PROPOSAL:

- When a department seeks approval for a course to fulfill a CORE outcome set, the department initiates a Workday Course Event process, either as “Edit Course” or as “Create Course.” The Course Event process include the assignments and rubric described in the Policies for Course Approval.
- The Director of General Education will direct the proposal to the appropriate Faculty Review Panel.
- The Faculty Review Panel can advise the department on revisions or improvements and will generate a review letter to be submitted to the General Education Committee.
- The General Education Committee will review the proposal and generate a review letter for the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee.
- A department can revise its proposal for reconsideration by the General Education Committee.