

FHSU General Education Committee

Minutes

Meeting Called by

Bradley Will, Chair

Date: Thursday May 14, 2020

Time: 3:30-5:00

Location: cyberspace

Members

Douglas Drabkin (AHSS)

Marcella Marez (AHSS)

Jessica Heronemus (BE)

David Schmidt (BE)

Sarah Miller (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)

3:30 (1 minute) All members were present with the exception of Heronemus, Hill, and Musgrove. Miller served as proxy for Heronemus. Determined that a quorum was met. Christina Glenn (Economics, Finance, and Accounting), Pam Greenleaf (Health and Human Performance), Jessica Johnson (Health and Human Performance), and Steve Sedbrook (Health and Human Performance) were also in attendance.

3:31 (2 minutes) It was noted that Heronemus will be leaving the committee after years of service (*Fare thee well, Jessica*). The open Business and Entrepreneurship seat will go to Christina Glenn.

3:33 (2 minutes) The committee was asked by Tim Crowley, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, to review the following proposed policy change:

Effective Spring 2021, all on-campus and online students that do not meet the established minima for placement into introductory mathematics courses must complete a Math placement examination prior to enrollment in either MATH 101 Contemporary Mathematics, MATH 105 College Algebra with Review, MATH 110 College Algebra, or MATH 130 Pre-Calculus. Initial course placement will be made according to criteria set by the department. Requests for exceptions to placement results may be made to the Mathematics department chair. Students may appeal decisions made by the department chair in writing to the Dean of Science, Technology, and Mathematics. The Dean of Science, Technology, and Mathematics will be the final authority for Math placement appeals.

The proposal made sense to the committee and was approved unanimously.

3:35 (3 minutes) The committee reviewed a revised assignment in the proposal for FIN 205: Personal Finance to satisfy outcome 3.1B.3 ("the student will formulate a plan for the management of their financial health"), a set of personal finance questions based on a case study. The revision was approved unanimously. With this, the proposal for FIN 205 moves on to Academic Affairs.

3:38 (25 minutes) The committee reviewed a revision of the proposal for PHYS 102: Physical Science to satisfy the first two of the scientific mode of inquiry outcomes, 2.1D.1-2. Drabkin argued, regarding outcome 2.1D.1, that an exam exclusively requiring students to solve physics equations and to correctly understand the meaning of physics terms is, however valuable, something other than to "identify essential characteristics of natural science questions (questions of empirical study and applications of scientific methodologies)," and so fails as an assessment of the outcome; and regarding outcome 2.1D.2, that writing a research paper based on scientific research is something other than to "evaluate the merits of examples of natural scientific research at the level of an informed citizen." Part of the disagreement regarding 2.1D.2 turned on what it means to "evaluate" something, Drabkin claiming that it involves judging that something is good or bad in one or another respect, and Kent Rohleder (Physics), the author of the proposal, claiming that scientific research is neither "good" nor "bad," but "appropriate" or "inappropriate." Duffy and others agreed with Rohleder, regarding 2.1D.2, that incorporating valid and credible research-based sources in their papers would require students to reject research that is not valid and credible, and that this would therefore demonstrate their ability to evaluate the merits of examples of natural scientific research at the level of an informed citizen. The point about 2.1D.1 wasn't further addressed. The committee voted to approve the course: 11 in favor, 1 opposed. PHYS 102 moves on to Academic Affairs.

4:03 (4 minutes) The committee turned next to a revision of the proposal for PHYS 103: Physical Science Laboratory to satisfy the third of the scientific mode of inquiry outcomes, 2.1D.3. The proposal was approved unanimously. With this, the proposal for PHYS 103 moves on to Academic Affairs.

4:07 (38 minutes) The committee turned next to a revision of the proposal for HHP 230: Principles of Nutrition to satisfy the first two of the scientific mode of inquiry outcomes, 2.1D.1-2. Unlike PHYS 102, there were no objections to the assignments and rubrics being proposed to meet these outcomes. Attention turned instead to an argument against approval coming from the natural science mode of inquiry faculty advisory panel (see *Appendix*) that may be formulated as follows:

1. Even though the schedule of the proposed course includes many topics that seem aligned with natural science, and so, appear to make this a suitable course for the FHSU CORE program under the natural scientific mode of inquiry, HHP 230 is also a transferrable course in the Kansas system of colleges and universities.
2. As a system-wide transferrable course, it must satisfy the following six outcomes for the category HSC1010 NUTRITION:
 - (1) Identify the six classes of nutrients and their sources.
 - (2) Demonstrate an understanding of the processes of digestion, absorption, and metabolism of nutrients.
 - (3) Employ available resources to make sound nutritional choices.
 - (4) Explain energy balance and weight control as it relates to nutrition and wellness.
 - (5) Describe nutritional needs throughout the lifespan.
 - (6) Recognize global food safety, security, and sustainability issues.
3. We define "natural science" as "the systematized knowledge of nature and the physical world, built around concepts of biology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, and earth sciences."

4. Only two of these six system-wide outcomes, (1) and (2), are natural science outcomes according to this definition.
5. So HHP 230 will only *partly* be a natural science course; it will to a large extent be something else.
6. [No course that is not a dedicated natural science course is suitable for satisfying the natural science mode of inquiry outcomes in the FHSU CORE program.]
7. Therefore, HHP 230 is should not be approved for satisfying outcomes 2.1D.1-2.

Most of the discussion focused on the sixth point -- not explicitly formulated in the faculty advisory panel's report, but implicit in their argument. It is a matter of CORE program policy that no one course can satisfy the outcomes for more than one mode of inquiry, and the main reason for making this restriction was so that students receive in each of these mode of inquiry courses a focused and fairly deep encounter with one and only one of six more-or-less distinct ways of establishing the truth of claims, six ways of thinking that underlie the work that goes on here at the university and among learned people generally. Olt argued that, based on the topics sketched out in the course syllabus, HHP 230 is mostly -- perhaps 75% -- a course focusing on the natural scientific mode of inquiry. But it is partly something else: a course that focuses on the *choices* we make about what we voluntarily put in our mouths and swallow. And it would be taught by a department that does not focus exclusively on natural science content, and has not been recognized as a traditional natural sciences department (like Biology, Chemistry, Geosciences, and Physics). The vote in the end came down to this: would a course that is perhaps 75% a natural scientific mode of inquiry course, and taught in a department outside of the College of Science, Technology, and Mathematics, be accepted into the CORE program if it managed to do a good job satisfying 2.1D.1-2? The proposal was approved: 9 in favor, 4 opposed. A cleaned up copy of the proposal will be sent on to Academic Affairs.

4:45 (15 minutes) The Writing Across the Curriculum committee, which also serves as the faculty advisory panel for the two written communication outcomes (1.1A), met with the current chair and chair-to-be of Modern Languages last week about how the upper-division writing outcomes should be handled in a program that is all about getting people to speak and write in a language other than English. Objective 1.1A reads: "students will effectively develop, express, and exchange ideas in the English language, both in writing and speaking, with clarity and coherence." Four options were considered:

1. Simply make an exception for Modern Languages, allowing students to meet the writing-related outcomes using their language of study (currently Spanish).
2. Make an exception by allowing students to write in their target language -- but require that they write a bilingual abstract of their persuasive essay in both English and their target language, thus demonstrating their knowledge of the "conventions of grammar and mechanics" of English. The idea here would be that the spirit of the other outcomes does not hinge on a specific language but, rather, on larger universal considerations such as thesis, idea development, organization, research, and documentation.
3. Ask that students compose their persuasive essay in the target language of study and then translate it into English as a separate assignment.
4. Have students who are dual majors (often the case for Spanish majors) meet their writing-related outcomes in their non-Modern Languages major. Students for whom Modern Languages is their only major would meet their upper-division CORE writing outcomes in the UNIV upper-division writing course.

The committee decided to advise Modern Languages to propose what seems best to them, and we will deal with it when it comes to us.

5:00 (5 minutes) Chair announced that, in keeping with our recommendation, Academic Council had decided to drop the university's upper-division IDS graduation requirement. This policy change is to go into effect whenever the CORE program launches.

Submitted by D. Drabkin, Recording Secretary



Festina lente

Appendix:

Advisory Report: FHSU CORE Committee for the Natural Scientific Mode of Inquiry

Recommendation for the proposal of **HHP 230, Principles of Nutrition** (following revision)

In your advisory report, please answer the following questions:

1. Is the panel confident that the course proposed will enable students to achieve the specific FHSU CORE Outcome Set? If not, what changes would the panel recommend to make the course better meet students' needs?
 - No. The proposed course (Principles of Nutrition) does not fit within the realm of natural sciences.
 - Our definition of natural science is: "The systematized knowledge of nature and the physical world, built around concepts of biology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, and earth sciences."
 - Even though the *subject* of nutrition could fit within the scope of natural science, the proposed *course* does not. Only two of the six Kansas SystemWide CORE outcomes of the course sound like natural science (outcomes 1 and 2). These CORE outcomes are listed on page 11 of the proposal packet, as determined by the Kansas Core Outcomes Group (https://www.kansasregents.org/resources/PDF/Academic_Affairs/TAAC/FY_2015/2014-15_KCOG_Report.pdf). Only one FHSU Student Learning Outcome (also page 11) is related to natural science (outcome 4). Even though the schedule of the proposed course includes many topics that seem aligned with natural science, the Kansas SystemWide CORE outcomes and the ~~course~~-FHSU HHP 230 Student Learning outcomes indicate the course is not taught as natural science. We must assume that Nutrition classes are transferrable across Kansas institutions and are therefore equivalent across Kansas institutions. Consequently, we cannot consider the proposed course natural science.
2. Is the panel confident that the specified assignments are appropriate for measuring student achievement of the specified outcomes? If not, what changes would the panel recommend to make the assignments better suited to assessing the outcomes?
 - Because the class does not fall under the category of "natural science," specified assignments are not applicable.
3. Is the panel confident that the submitted rubric will be useful for faculty assessing the student work? If not, what changes would the panel recommend to make the rubric more useful?
 - Because the class does not fall under the category of "natural science," rubrics are not applicable.
4. Does the panel recommend approval of this course for fulfilling the specified Outcome Set? If not, what changes would the panel recommend?
 - No, we do not recommend approval of this course to fulfill the outcomes of the Natural Scientific Mode of Inquiry. The proposed course does not fit into the category of natural sciences.

FHSU CORE Committee for the Natural Scientific Mode of Inquiry

Brian Maricle, chair

Laura Wilson

Jack Maseberg