FHSU General Education Committee

Minutes

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)

3:30   (3 minute) Three committee were absent at the start of the meeting, but before long all were present, a rare and wonderful thing. Paul Lucas again joined us as an observer. Brief introductions all around for the benefit of Schibi, who is representing the Student Government Association on the committee, and who was with us for the first time.

3:33   (44 minutes) Drabkin proposed what he described as a "three-part regrouping and tightening up" of the general education program model that had been agreed upon at the April 27 meeting last semester. He argued that a three-part structuring of the program into

1. Reasoning, Writing, and Speaking Sequence
2. Modes of Inquiry Courses
3. Practical Applications

is clearer and better represents the spirit of last fall's program goals of

1. Core Skills ("trunk")
2. Broad and Integrative Knowledge ("branches")
3. Practical Applications ("fruit")

than is the five-part structuring we came up with at the end of last semester:

1. Gateway Courses
2. Reasoning and Communication Sequence
3. Modes of Inquiry
4. Civic Perspectives: Local, National, and Global

5. Integration and Creative Problem Solving.

He noted that what we have been calling the Critical Thinking "gateway course" should be properly thought of as an element in the Reasoning, Writing, and Speaking Sequence, more specifically as a co-requisite for Composition II, as a prerequisite of Intermediate Reasoning and Writing in the Major, and as a general introduction to the Modes of Inquiry Courses. On the other hand, the courses meeting the learning outcomes for Objective 3.1: Personal and Professional Efficacy are not likely to have a similarly sequential relationship with other courses in the program; they are, in other words, not best seen as prerequisites, essential courses for a students to take in their first year of study, but more as courses belonging to the Practical Applications goal, to be taken whenever it is most convenient. Drabkin suggested that the committee might do well to focus first on identifying the measurable learning outcomes for the Reasoning, Writing, and Speaking Sequence and for the Modes of Inquiry Courses, and then to turn to the more challenging Practical Applications section after these more straightforward tasks are accomplished. Discussion of the regrouping proposal was many-sided and hard to summarize. Heronemus saw nothing wrong with tackling measurable learning outcomes in no particular order – we need not focus our efforts on one set of learning outcomes and ignore the others. It may in fact be more efficient for different faculty to work on different outcomes at the same time. Woods recommended setting aside talk about program models altogether and returning to the list of program goals and objectives – let us focus on identifying measurable learning outcomes for the program's twelve objectives, and things will fall into place. Drabkin noted that one of these twelve objectives, 2.1: Knowledge of the Liberal Arts, is no simple objective to achieve, and so it makes sense to keep at least one aspect of the model, the modes of inquiry, clearly before our attention as we tackle the outcomes for Objective 2.1. Hill indicated that he has begun work convening colleagues to formulate measurable learning outcomes for the Social Scientific Mode of Inquiry. Chair encouraged others on the committee to do the same for other elements of the program. Discussion ended when Drabkin withdrew his regrouping proposal, perhaps to reintroduce it at a later time. (See Appendix below for relevant documents.)

4:17   (15 minutes) Chair guided the committee through an exercise designed to build on last week's topic: identifying good measurable learning outcomes. He reminded the committee of the importance of choosing the right action verbs, and warned us not to fall into thinking that upper-division courses ought to have outcomes with verbs from the upper levels of Bloom's taxonomy and lower-division courses outcomes with verbs from the lower levels of Bloom's taxonomy. He coached us through critiquing a set of problematic learning outcomes, which we were invited to revise for the better. Skill at doing this sort of thing will be necessary to complete our work this year.

4:32   (3 minutes) Talk turned to our next meeting, which will feature an informational presentation by McNeil and Miles on certain details having to do with the staffing of HHP 200: Personal Wellness, a course currently required of all FHSU students completing the General Education Program.

4:35   Meeting ended. The next meeting will be on Monday October 2 at 3:30 PM in Rarick 338.

Submitted by D. Drabkin, Recording Secretary

OUR GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM PROPOSAL:
A THREE-PART REGROUPING AND TIGHTENING-UP OF THE MODEL

Reasoning, Writing, and Speaking Sequence (6 courses, 18 hours):
- **Critical Thinking** – identification and analysis of arguments, modes of inquiry introduced
- **English Composition I** – expository writing
- **English Composition II** – evaluative writing (prerequisites: English Composition I; corequisite: Critical Thinking)
- **Public Speaking**
- **Intermediate Reasoning and Writing in the Major** – evaluative writing with discipline-specific argumentation (prerequisites: Critical Thinking and English Composition II)
- **Capstone and Presenting in the Major** (prerequisites: Public Speaking and Intermediate Reasoning and Writing in the Major)

Modes of Inquiry Courses (7 courses, 21 hours):
- **Aesthetic** – imaginative approach to subjective experience
- **Philosophical** – dialectical approach to non-empirical questions
- **Mathematical** – logical approach to necessary truths
- **Natural Scientific** – empirical approach to non-human data
- **Social Scientific** – empirical approach to human data
- **Historical** – narrative approach to human data
- **Technological** – instrumental approach to practical problems

Practical Applications (3 or 4 courses, 9 or 12 hours, with some possibly being met through co-curricular activities):
- **Personal and Professional Efficacy** ("Objective 3.1 – Students will understand the consequences of choices in their personal and professional lives and possess knowledge necessary for the management of health, time, money, natural resources, and human relationships." One or two courses or co-curriculars depending upon the measurable learning outcomes decided upon.)
- **Cross-Cultural Engagement** ("Objective 3.2 – Students will understand their own and others' cultures and possess skills necessary to engage constructively with people across a range of races, ethnicities, genders, identities, abilities, histories, religions, traditions, and languages." Depending on the measurable learning outcomes decided upon, courses and co-curricular activities might include: foreign languages, certain practicums or internships, and study abroad.)
- **Wicked Problems** (These courses would aim to bring advanced undergraduates from different major programs together to share their variously developed expertise in taking up tough problems affecting many people that lack clear solutions in part because they involve conflicting values. Ideally, each course would be team-taught by professors representing two or more of the modes of inquiry. Prerequisites: completion of all seven modes of inquiry courses.)

GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: CORE SKILLS *("the trunk")*

> ***Objective 1.1: Written and oral communication***
> Students will effectively develop, express, and exchange ideas in the English language, both in writing and speaking, with clarity and coherence.

> ***Objective 1.2: Quantitative literacy***
> Students will recognize quantitative relationships, use multiple approaches to analyze these relationships, and apply knowledge of these relationships to solve practical problems.

> ***Objective 1.3: Technology literacy***
> Students will effectively and responsibly use appropriate technology for communication, scholarship, and problem-solving.

> ***Objective 1.4: Information literacy***
> Students will effectively and responsibly gather, evaluate, and use information for scholarship and problem-solving.

> ***Objective 1.5: Critical thinking***
> Students will explore issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. Students will recognize, analyze, criticize, evaluate, and formulate arguments in ways characterized by intellectual courage.

Goal 2: BROAD AND INTEGRATIVE KNOWLEDGE *("the branches")*

> ***Objective 2.1: Knowledge of the liberal arts***
> Students will possess a broad understanding of the world, having studied the humanities, mathematics, the natural sciences, and the social and behavioral sciences, and the ways of knowing characteristic of these disciplines

> ***Objective 2.2: Integrative and cross-disciplinary thinking***
> Students will make connections among ideas and experiences, synthesizing and transferring learning from different disciplines.

> ***Objective 2.3: Synthesis with the major***
> Students will make connections between the specialized knowledge and skills of their major and other fields of study.

Goal 3: PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS *("the fruit")*

> ***Objective 3.1: Personal and professional efficacy***
> Students will understand the consequences of choices in their personal and professional lives and possess knowledge necessary for the management of health, time, money, natural resources, and human relationships.

> ***Objective 3.2: Intercultural competence***
> Students will understand their own and others' cultures and possess skills necessary to engage constructively with people across a range of races, ethnicities, genders, identities, abilities, histories, religions, traditions, and languages.

> ***Objective 3.3: Ethical judgment***
> Students will recognize situations where reasonable, well-informed people disagree about what the right thing to do is; explain the underlying values that are in apparent tension, bringing to bear relevant ethical principles and approaches; and make intelligent decisions as a result.

> ***Objective 3.4: Engaged global citizen leaders***
> Students will appreciate the world's complexity; the interdependence of natural, social, economic, and political factors; and the deep challenges that can arise both on a local and global scale. Students will possess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to engage civically and work in cooperation with others toward creative responses to these challenges.

Motion from the April 27, 2017 meeting, unanimously approved:

> *That the committee approve the simplified model (see attached [below]) as the general direction we would like to see for the new program, recognizing that some elements (such as the reasoning and communication sequence and the modes of inquiry section) are more fully developed than others (such as the Gateway and Civic Perspectives sections), and acknowledging that some necessary changes may be revealed and details will emerge as the committee seeks input from the university community, and as assessable learning outcomes are developed.*

PROGRAM PROPOSAL

*36-51 credit hour program

(*depending upon number of hours student uses to simultaneously complete both major and General Education requirements)

NOTE: Objectives listed are minimum objectives for each area. Additional objectives could be included.

GATEWAY COURSES (approximately 6 hours)

Note: Although the exact details of number of courses and credit hours per course remain undecided, the committee is generally supportive of the idea that students need some gateway courses that prepare them for success. The general idea is a set of courses that would address learning outcomes associated with:

Objective 1.5: Critical thinking
Students will explore issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. Students will recognize, analyze, criticize, evaluate, and formulate arguments in ways characterized by intellectual courage.

Objective 3.1: Personal and professional efficacy
Students will understand the consequences of choices in their personal and professional lives and possess knowledge necessary for the management of health, time, money, natural resources, and human relationships.
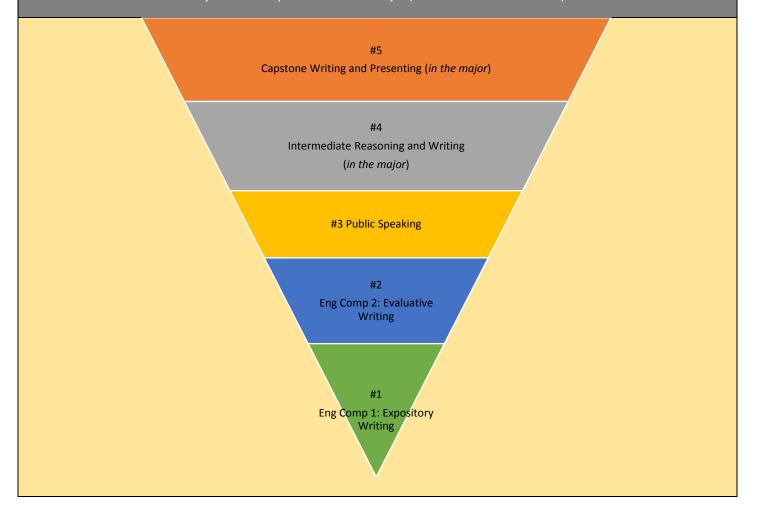
REASONING and COMMUNICATION SEQUENCE (15 hours)

Objective 1.1 Written and Oral Communication (written for all 5 levels, written and oral for levels #3, 4 and 5)
Objective 1.4: Information Literacy (all 5 levels)
Objective 1.5: Critical Thinking (all 5 levels)
Objective 2.3: Synthesis with the Major (at least for levels #4 and #5)

#5
Capstone Writing and Presenting (*in the major*)

#4
Intermediate Reasoning and Writing
(*in the major*)

#3 Public Speaking

#2
Eng Comp 2: Evaluative Writing

#1
Eng Comp 1: Expository Writing

MODES OF INQUIRY (21 hours)

1.2: Quantitative Literacy (for Mathematical)
1.3: Technology Literacy (for Technological)
2.1: Knowledge of the Liberal Arts (as appropriate for each Mode of Inquiry)

Aesthetic (Artistic)	Philosophical	Mathematical	Natural Scientific	Social Scientific	Historical	Technological
imaginative approach to subjective experience	*dialectical approach to non-empirical questions*	*logical approach to necessary truths*	*empirical approach to non-human data* *Note: "Non-human data" means not social or subjective data. Human Biology, for example, would be about non-human data.*	*empirical approach to human data*	*narrative approach to human data*	*instrumental approach to practical problems*

CIVIC PERSPECTIVES: LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND GLOBAL (approximately 6 hours)

Objective 3.1: Personal and Professional Efficacy
Objective 3.2: Intercultural Competence
Objective 3.4: Engaged Global Citizen Leaders

To meet FHSU's mission to educate engaged global citizen leaders.

INTEGRATION and CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING (3 hours)

Objective 1.5: Critical Thinking
Objective 2.2: Integrative and Cross-disciplinary Thinking
Objective 2.3: Synthesis with the Major
Objective 3.3: Ethical Judgment
Objective 3.4: Engaged Global Citizen Leaders

Junior/Senior Interdisciplinary Seminars

Students choose one course from a range of options: topics of the "wicked problems" type (involving difficult choices and conflicting values); classes draw students of different majors.