

# GEOC Meeting October 1, 2008

*In Attendance: Katharina von Hammerstein, Anke Finger, Xae Alicia Reyes, Elizabeth Jockusch, Bill Lot, Murphy Sewall, Morty Ortega, Jane Goldman, Tom Deans, Niloy Dutta, Letitia Naigles, Mike Darre, Peter Gogarten, Anabel Perez.*  
*Not Present: Robert Cromley, John Troyer, Cora Lynn Deibler, Felicia Pratto.*

Meeting called to order at 1:35pm.

1. **Minutes** from the September 22, 2008 meeting. The minutes will be edited as follows:

- Removal of GEOC member attribution to CA3 Assessment Coordinator discussion points.
- Removal of list of potential CA3 Assessment Coordinator candidates.

Morty Ortega moved to approve the minutes as revised. Letitia Naigles seconded the motion.

**Motion to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2008 meeting passed with one abstention.**

## 2. Announcements

- *New Senate C&CC and GEOC Curricular Action Request Form.* As of mid September, the new CAR form is live on the Senate and GEOC websites. To accommodate those proposals currently in the pipeline of approval, proposals using the old form will be accepted until November 24th.
- *GEOC Call for Nominations to Subcommittees.* A new list of nominations was distributed to GEOC. Katharina von Hammerstein has asked subcommittee chairs to contact interested parties if they (the chairs) determine the need for more representation on their subcommittee. Once each subcommittee has finalized membership, a report of all subcommittee members will be presented to GEOC for official approval. (See 3. Subcommittee Reports for more detail.)

## 3. Subcommittee Reports

There are no subcommittee reports at this time.

### Subcommittee Recruitment

Subcommittee chairs had the following membership information to report and/or discuss:

- CA4 Diversity and Multiculturalism
  - New. The following faculty members have consented to join the subcommittee:
    - Mary Ellen Junda, MUSI
    - Donna Lee Van Cott, POLS
- Writing Competency
  - New. The following faculty members and student have consented to join the subcommittee:
    - Sarah Shepherd, undergraduate student
    - Mark Brand, PLSC
    - Doug Kaufman, EDCI
- Quantitative Competency
  - New. Subcommittee chairs will invite the following faculty member to join the subcommittee:
    - Bernard Grela, COMM
  - Needs. Subcommittee chairs identified the following membership needs:
    - A CHEM representative
  - No longer on subcommittee. The following faculty member will be removed from the subcommittee roster.
    - Mekonnen Gebremichael, CEE
- CA3 Science and Technology
  - Recommendations. Subcommittee chairs asked for feedback regarding several faculty/staff members who have volunteered to serve on this subcommittee. Although they do not see a pressing need to increase membership of the subcommittee, they would welcome faculty/staff with particular interest/experience in this content area. They will discuss this in the subcommittee to identify any new potential members.

- Second Language
  - Possible new members. The Subcommittee chair will contact the following parties to invite them to join the subcommittee:
    - David Lowe, University Libraries
    - Brian Boecherer, Early College Experience
- Information Literacy
  - Needs. The Subcommittee chair has determined that no new members are needed at this time.

Katharina von Hammerstein has asked that subcommittees finalize membership by the next GEOC meeting, October 13, 2008.

Peter Gogarten moved to approve the membership changes noted above. Elizabeth Jockusch seconded the motion.

**The motion to approve the membership changes noted in this section passed.**

*Title Change: HIST/LAMS/PRLS 1570 Migrant Workers*

At the last GEOC meeting, CA1 and CA4 recommended a title change to HIST/LAMS/PRLS 1570 Honors Core: Migrant Workers that would reflect the contemporary nature of the course and the ethnicities of the workers. When contacted by GEOC regarding this recommendation, the instructor consented to make a change to Latino American Migrant Workers. However, CLAS C&CC chair, Jack Manning, expressed an unwillingness to approve such a title. He suggested the following title: Migrant Workers in Connecticut. The instructor, department and CLAS C&CC agreed to accept this revised title. CA1 and CA4 Subcommittee Chairs were asked to review this new proposed title.

A discussion ensued regarding 1., the appropriateness of the new title, and 2., what GEOC's role should be in making these determinations. The following points were raised:

- CA4 recommended a title change to one that would identify the contemporary nature of the course and the ethnicities of the groups the course focused on rather than a title that encompassed all migrant workers. The course is limited to discussion of migrant workers from Latin America, Mexico, and the Caribbean. The new proposed title, Migrant Workers in Connecticut, alludes to the contemporary nature of the course but does not address the second concern.
- Tom Roby noted that there are many other Gen Ed courses that are far less specific than the original proposed title, "Migrant Workers" and questioned the need to make any change to the original title.
- Several members raised concerns about "tying" faculty's hands when seeking to make future changes to the course. Revising the title to specify the ethnicities of the workers would not allow faculty to include other groups in the future should a new wave of migration occur.
  - However, the proposed course's focus is on Latin America, Mexican, and Caribbean migrant workers in Connecticut, as evidenced by their proposal. Several members pointed out that, should the course be changed to encompass other groups or to a more global migration, the course itself would need to be reviewed once again by GEOC as this would constitute a substantive change.
- The proposed catalog copy of the course also does not reflect the ethnicities of the workers or the contemporary nature of the course. Students looking at this course would have no way of knowing the limited focus of the course, either in ethnicity or era. While the cross-listing with LAMS and PRLS gives a clue, oftentimes cross-listed courses are offered under only one department/program designation. For example, this course could be listed simply as HIST 1570 Migrant Workers, (or, if the proposed new title is approved, as HIST 1570 Migrant Workers in Connecticut). This gives no indication of the ethnicities of the workers, although the latter alludes to the era to be studied.
- Morty Ortega voiced concern over whether GEOC or another body should interfere with an instructor's title decision.
- Tom Roby noted that the proposed new title, with the "in CT" addition, is much more appealing.
  - Murphy Sewall argued that the "in CT" title is actually less appealing if the student has an interest in larger global issues.

- Murphy Sewall suggested that the catalog copy should change, rather than the title. A change in the catalog copy to include the ethnicities of the workers would at least allow students to make a more informed decision when choosing to take this course.
- Elizabeth Jockusch pointed out that the more general catalog description which does not specify the ethnicity of the migrant workers is appropriate because, if a student knows anything about context and considers the service learning component of the course, they should understand the limitations in era and ethnicity.
  - This assumes a certain amount of knowledge about the context that many students may not possess.
- Jane Goldman supported the idea of a change in catalog copy rather than a change to the original title.
- Peter Gogarten argued that courses- in titles and descriptions- should provide truth in advertising and should therefore be specific about their focus.
- Mike Darre pointed out that CLAS C&CC reviews courses in detail and they already approved the original title as appropriate.

Katharina von Hammerstein asked GEOC to determine the most appropriate solution:

1. Approve the “in CT” title as okay and leave the catalog copy as is.
2. Approve the “in CT” title as okay but require a change in the catalog description to specify the ethnicities of the workers.
3. Send it back to the department for more reworking.

Peter Gogarten moved to request that either the catalog copy or title be changed to include the ethnic groups of the migrant workers.

**The motion to request that either the catalog copy or title be changed to include the ethnicities of the migrant workers passed with 1 opposed and 3 abstentions.**

There is a degree of urgency in getting this course through the approval process as the instructor wishes to offer it in Spring 2009. A further change in title, or a change in catalog copy, would require that the course be once again reviewed by CLAS C&CC. This will lengthen the amount of time it will take in order to get the course in the online catalog and in P/S. If the instructor does not want to change the title and/or catalog copy, the course can be taught as non-gen ed to get into the online catalog in time for Spring 2009 registration. Alternately, he may wish to explore the option of teaching the course as an experimental course. If the course is offered as HIST/LAMS/PRLS 1570 Honors Core: Migrant Workers in Connecticut (non gen ed), a revised proposal of the course which includes the revisions required by GEOC can be submitted. If the revised course gets approved for gen ed and gets approved by the Senate in late Fall 2008 or Spring 2009, students registered for the course in Spring 2009 will get the gen ed credit.

Anabel Perez will contact the instructor and departmental C&CC contact to inform them of the above.

#### **4. General Reports and Discussion**

##### *Voting of Co-Chairs and Directors of Q and W Centers*

Tom Roby and Tom Deans sought clarification about Q and W Center Directors’ voting rights on GEOC. They argued that, while the representation of these centers on GEOC makes perfect sense, membership of W and Q Center **Directors** should not be required but, rather, should be open also to Associate Directors.

A discussion followed:

- Several members asked why it should be required that the director the Centers be a GEOC member rather than, when designated, associate directors.
- Should, whoever represents the Centers, have voting power if they are also subcommittee chairs?
  - Why does being a co-chair of a subcommittee matter in whether Q and W Center Directors can vote?
    - Equity among co-chairs of all GEOC subcommittees.
    - Voting on courses their subcommittees discussed.

- Several members expressed the importance of having Q and W voices on the committee, but also noted that it should not always have to be the director and that the director should not always have to be a subcommittee chair.
- If GEOC allows associate directors of the Centers serve on GEOC, does it matter if they are tenured?
  - Several members pointed out that GEOC service is not necessarily appropriate for tenure-track positions.
  - Bill Lott argued, however, that the word “tenured” should not be part of any new motion GEOC recommends for changes to the bylaws. If an associate director is not tenured, they should still be able to serve, so long as they determine they have the experience and availability.

A motion was presented to make the following two changes to the *Gen Ed Guidelines*:

Original wording (relevant passage in **boldface**):

“General Education Requirements will be overseen by a General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC), a faculty group appointed by the Senate and representative of the Schools and Colleges. The Committee also will have an undergraduate and graduate student representative. The GEOC shall be a subcommittee of the Senate Curricula and Courses Committee whose chair will serve as a non-voting member of GEOC. **The Directors of the University W and Q Centers will also be given non-voting appointments to GEOC.** The GEOC will monitor the General Education curriculum. The creation of a Senate-appointed committee recognizes the policy control of the Senate in matters relating to undergraduate education. This Committee will work in association with the Office of Undergraduate Education and Instruction because this office has University-wide responsibility for the health of undergraduate education and the fiscal resources to address emerging issues. Financial support for the activity of the GEOC will come from the Office of the Provost.”

Proposed new wording (changes and additions are in **boldface**):

“General Education Requirements will be overseen by a General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC), a faculty group appointed by the Senate and representative of the Schools and Colleges. The Committee also will have an undergraduate and graduate student representative. The GEOC shall be a subcommittee of the Senate Curricula and Courses Committee whose chair will serve as a non-voting member of GEOC. **Representatives, either the Director or the Associate Director, of each of the W and Q Centers, will also be given non-voting appointments to GEOC. When Q or W Center Directors or Associate Directors are GEOC subcommittee chairs, they shall retain voting rights in the GEOC.** The GEOC will monitor the General Education curriculum. The creation of a Senate-appointed committee recognizes the policy control of the Senate in matters relating to undergraduate education. This Committee will work in association with the Office of Undergraduate Education and Instruction because this office has University-wide responsibility for the health of undergraduate education and the fiscal resources to address emerging issues. Financial support for the activity of the GEOC will come from the Office of the Provost.”

**Motion to approve the above change to guidelines passed.**

#### Q Center Budget:

Budget is to be decided next week. Discussion was postponed until next meeting.

#### 2000+-Level Gen Ed Offerings at the Regional Campuses

Katharina von Hammerstein met with Ernie Zirakzadeh and Nancy Steenburg about 2000+-level gen ed courses currently available at the regional campuses. Review of what is offered at these campuses showed that there is a real lack of upper division gen ed courses, with some content areas/competencies represented even less than others.

Primarily, this is an issue with the Bachelor of General Studies program. The challenge for these students is they come in with many 1000-level courses; they need the 2000+-level courses to complete their degree. There are many 2000+-level courses that could be gen eds but departments choose not to propose them as such.

For many departments, teaching specialized (often 2000+-level) gen ed courses at the regional campuses is not an option. Further, regional campus instructors are often not tenured or non-tenure track and need departmental approval to submit gen ed courses. All of this puts the BGS program in a bind.

Ernie Zirakzadeh has agreed to encourage PHIL, HIST, SOCI to develop new gen ed courses that can be taught at the regional campuses. This would open up more options for this student population .

A discussion followed:

- Tom Roby recommended Katharina von Hammerstein speak with Doug Hamilton or Harry Frank regarding the lack of CA3 courses at the regional campuses.
- Murphy Sewall argued that creating courses just for the regional campuses creates a different community - one regional, one Storrs- rather than one unified university.
- Elizabeth Jockusch cautions of inflation of course number levels without a similar change in course content.
- Jane Goldman noted that, when the new gen ed curriculum was first discussed, the goal was to make gen eds introductory in nature rather than more specialized. She states that, most likely, the BGS students can get gen ed credit for some introductory courses they may have taken at another institution and had transferred to UConn.
- Murphy Sewall pointed out that, if courses are transferring in, they should be reviewed to see if they can get gen ed credit.
- Mike Darre also noted that the BGS program can solve this problem through substitutions if the courses they have taken are appropriate substitutions for gen ed credit.

Katharina will pass along this discussion to Nancy Steenburg and Ernie Zirakzadeh. She will also recommend to Ernie Zirakzadeh to contact Doug Hamilton and Harry Frank about gen ed course development in CA3.

## **5. Next Steps in Monitoring and Assessment**

### *W Assessment:*

Tom Deans reported on the W assessment activity that took place over the summer. A more detailed reporting of the summer assessment project will be offered as a workshop open to the UConn community on October 9<sup>th</sup> from 12-1pm, CUE 318.

W assessment began with the GEOC Assessment subcommittee asking Tom Deans to come up with a W assessment plan. Deans recommended a direct assessment project with collection of written work from several departments across disciplines. Participating departments – ARTH, POLS, HDFS- volunteered to take part in this project. W assessment within a science discipline is due to begin this semester.

Each participating department was asked to identify a department assessment coordinator. The central question at this stage of assessment was to assess what students can do by the time they finish a W course in the major. This was outcomes-based assessment.

The department coordinators worked with their department colleagues to identify sections of courses to participate in this assessment, collect samples of student writing, develop discipline-specific rubrics for evaluating student writing in the given discipline, and then grade student work using the devised rubrics. A self-efficacy survey was also developed for students registered in the participating courses.

A total of 127 writing samples were collected as part of this assessment effort, with student writing samples from several course sections per department. The following was collected: the non-graded sample, the final grade, and the completed self-efficacy survey. This will be the foundation of a student writing archive.

After the department faculty coordinators were identified, they recruited at least three readers from their department- faculty or graduate students. This group of nine readers (3 per discipline) then did “practice readings”

of papers using the new rubrics before applying the rubric to the collected student writing samples from their department. Once they read their department's papers using their department rubric, they then also reviewed other department's samples. At the same time, readers and coordinators were asked to read about writing assessment in general.

The collected data- grades and surveys- was sent to Scott Brown for synthesis and analysis.

Once the initial readings were done and graded, a second subset of 6 department writing samples were identified. For these samples, readers "deep audited" the papers which included tracking down each source students used. This was a much more nuanced and qualitative analysis.

Another project the readers undertook was "Error per 100 words" where, per every 100 words, readers were to identify all errors. This aspect of the assessment plan did not work well. During the practice rounds prior for this part of the project, coordinators and readers could find no reliability in identifying errors.

Some of the findings include:

- Students are mainly doing okay, with 94% meet minimal proficiency.
  - how many of these student were minimally proficient before they took the W in the major?
    - This question will be looked at more this year.
- No articulation between Freshman English and W courses in the major, or between one W course and the W course in the major.
- For most part in these three disciplines, complex research-driven work was the final W product.
- Presence of holistic grade inflation: instructors' and assessment readers' grades were very different. Compared to samples rated using the rubric, the instructors' grades were deemed to be inflated.
  - Departmental rubrics were being created after papers were papers were graded. Most instructors did not teach towards these rubrics or used them when grading.
  - More instructors are now using the rubrics the departments created.
- Those faculty involved in W assessment were very excited about the project and have recommended that other departments go through the same process of creating rubrics and experience faculty development on W.

Other points:

- Assessment of writing in Freshmen English in AY 2008-09 will allow them to track W learning across a semester as they will look at several papers written by one student. It will also allow for comparison between FE writing performance and performance in W courses in the major.
- Definition of grammar was very difficult, even among faculty readers.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anabel Perez  
GEOC Administrator