

GEOC Meeting October 13, 2008

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

Meeting called to order at 12:11pm. Mike Darre served as temporary chair until 12:30pm.

1. Minutes of the last meeting were edited as follows:

- Item 5: Paragraph beginning, “A total of 127 writing samples...”
 - Remove the phrase: “the graded sample [...] specific rubrics).”
 - Add the phrase, “the final grade,” following “the non-graded sample.”
 - Edit the following sentence as shown: “After department faculty coordinators **were** identified, they recruited **at least** three readers from their department- faculty or graduate students.”

Motion to approve minutes as corrected. Motion approved.

2. Announcements.

- *Cross-Content Area General Education Courses.* Katharina von Hammerstein presented the GEOC proposals for CCAGE courses to Senate C&CC. Senate C&CC approved the proposal’s concept and are now looking at the language of the proposal to make it more palatable to the community at large. Senate C&CC will vote on the matter at its next meeting.
- *Q and W Center Directors.* Senate C&CC supports the General Education Guidelines change we have been discussing in GEOC. The general change is: if W and Q Center Directors are subcommittee chairs, they should be able to vote. If they do not have chairmanship, they should not have voting rights. W and Q Center membership in GEOC will be opened to **either** the Director OR Associate Director of the respective Center.
- *Graduate Student Representation.* GEOC welcomes EPSY graduate student, Kristina Paul, to GEOC.
- *Learning Resources Center.* Katharina von Hammerstein received an email from a faculty member requesting the inclusion of an LRC representative on GEOC on an ex officio basis, much like the Q and W Centers have GEOC representation. Katharina von Hammerstein declined this request, arguing that, 1, LRC does not have a disciplinary focus like the Q and W Centers; 2, Q and W Center representatives serve a specific function on GEOC in that GEOC approves Q and W courses, and; 3, the Q and W Centers directly support General Education requirements, unlike LRC. GEOC members supported this response.
- *Monday Nov 10th.* Morty Ortega and Katharina von Hammerstein are planning to attend a conference on Monday, November 10th, a GEOC meeting day. Katharina von Hammerstein asked that GEOC consider rescheduling the GEOC meeting to either Wednesday, Nov. 12th 130-330 or Monday Nov. 17th 12-2. The GEOC meeting has been changed to Wednesday November 12, 2008 130-330.

3. Subcommittee Reports.

HIST/PRLS/LAMS 1570 Honors Core: Migrant Workers in Connecticut. CA1 and CA4 Update.

This course was provisionally approved by GEOC at its last meeting so long as a revision to the catalog copy and/or title was made to include the ethnicities of the migrant workers in question. The instructor agreed to make a change to the catalog copy. However, due to this change, the course proposal will once again need to be reviewed by CLAS C&CC. CLAS C&CC will not review the course earlier than their October 28th meeting. The course instructor wishes to offer the course in the coming semester and would therefore like for the course to appear in the P/S schedule of classes by the start of Spring 09 registration. The CLAS C&CC proposed review date will not allow for this to take place. As a result, GEOC has suggested to the instructor the following options for teaching the course in the Spring:

- Submit the course to Senate C&CC now as a non-gen ed course and simultaneously submit a revised version of the catalog copy to CLAS C&CC.
- Offer the course as an experimental course in one of the offering departments.

The instructor has decided to pursue teaching the course as an experimental, non-gen ed course. If the course is approved prior to the start of the Spring 2009 semester, the experimental course may be “switched” for the approved general education version of the course.

Q Subcommittee

The Q subcommittee recommends **approval** of the following **revision in catalog copy**:

Current Title and Catalog Copy:

MATH 1030Q. Elementary Discrete Mathematics

(103Q) Either semester. Three credits. Recommended preparation: MATH 1010, 1011 or the equivalent. Not open for credit to students who have passed any mathematics course other than MATH 1010, 1011, 1020, 1040, 1050, 1060 or 1070.

Problem solving strategies, solutions of simultaneous linear equations, sequences, counting and probability, graph theory, deductive reasoning, the axiomatic method and finite geometries, number systems.

Revised Title and Catalog Copy:

Math 1030Q. Elementary Discrete Mathematics

(103Q) Either semester. Three credits. Recommended preparation: MATH 1010, 1011Q or the equivalent. Not open for credit to students who have passed any mathematics course other than MATH 1010, 1011, 1020, 1040, 1050, 1060 or 1070.

Topics chosen from discrete mathematics. May include counting and probability, sequences, graph theory, deductive reasoning, the axiomatic method and finite geometries, number systems, voting methods, apportionment methods, mathematics of finance, number theory.

Motion to approve the Q Subcommittee report. Motion approved.

Subcommittee Member Recruitment

The most recent subcommittee membership list was distributed. The following changes were made:

Computer Technology

- New: Katherina Sorrentino.

Quantitative

- Bernard Grela
- Note: Chairs are still trying to recruit CHEM person but this has proved unsuccessful thus far.

Science and Technology

- No new members are needed at this time.

Information Technology

- No new members are needed at this time.

Motion to approve the new membership list, with the above additions. Motion approved.

Anabel Perez will contact those faculty and staff who responded to the GEOC Call for Nominations to inform them of the final membership decisions.

Morty Ortega expressed interest in having more student representatives on GEOC subcommittees. Jane Goldman suggested that subcommittees recruit outside of USG appointees.

4. General Reports and Discussion

CA3 Science and Technology and Laboratory Requirement

Douglas Hamilton emailed Katharina von Hammerstein to ask if there was a specific general education requirement that stated the lab portion of a CA3 course must be passed in order to meet the CA3 Lab requirement? Is there any requirement that the lab be passed with a minimum C grade?

There is nothing in the General Education Guidelines regarding passing the lab portion of CA3 course. The view of the current CA3 subcommittee is that new requirements for the content area should not be added. All the General Education Guidelines state is that a student must pass two CA3 courses one of which must be a lab course. No stipulation, other than passing, is listed. CA3 Chair Niloy Dutta stated that some departments teaching general education labs have separate lab requirements that are very strict, and where passing the lab portion of a course is necessary to pass the course. Katharina von Hammerstein asked GEOC: does GEOC want to leave it up to the instructor or department to determine what “passing” means? GEOC is in consensus that the instructor should make this determination.

A second question about CA3 is whether there are any lab courses where a student can pass the course without passing the lab portion of the course. This is at the core of Doug Hamilton’s concern. General opinion on GEOC is that asking how the lab portion of a CA3 course is graded (viz. passing the course) is appropriate for Recertification. Jane Goldman points out that all CA3 lab courses are from CLAS departments.

Some GEOC members suggested that there should be consistency in W and CA3 lab requirements, i.e. students must pass the lab/W portion of the course to pass the course. Jane Goldman pointed out that the original committee which reviewed the CA3 requirement made a distinction between “competency” and “content area,” with the idea that a W can be added to any course whereas a lab cannot be.

Connecticut High School Second Language Graduation Requirements

Anke Finger brought this matter to GEOC because it will have ramifications for UConn’s general education entry requirements. Note: of all entering students, roughly 80% come with their second language exit requirement already met.

Anke Finger: The president of Connecticut Council of Language Teachers (CT COLT) has sent a notice to all members informing them of a CT Board of Education secondary school reform proposal that would vote against establishing a two-year second language requirement. The organization is seeking to reinstate the requirement in K-12 education.

Currently, the CT Board of Ed does not require two years of second language instruction. As a result, some high schools have this requirement, while others do not. Thus, some CT students graduate from high school unable to attend UConn due to not meeting the two-year second language entrance requirement. The state board of education had planned to make this a requirement, but decided to remove it from the plan.

There is currently no indication of this proposed change on the CT Board of Education website. Anke Finger found out from Tom Murphy, Board of Education spokesman, the timetable for proposed action on this plan: the proposal will be reviewed by the General Assembly and governor in February/March and public hearings will be held thereafter. At the moment, this proposal has not been ratified. The persons in government to whom statements about the proposal should be sent are Thomas Gaffey and Andrew Fleischman.

Nationally, this initiative is going in the wrong direction, with many state Boards of Education *adding* second language instruction requirements. Internationally, European schools take a *multi*-lingual approach. Anke Finger pointed out that this initiative, if ratified, will have a trickledown effect, sending a message statewide that world languages/culture are not important. In an era of increased need for global experience (second language, study abroad, cultural learning), this CT initiative is an ill-fated one.

The initiative also has repercussions in matters of equity. If second language instruction is not required by the CT Board of Education, school districts with few funds may feel encouraged to cut second languages from their

curriculum; districts with more funding will still be able to provide second language options. As a state entity, UConn is obliged to provide equal access to education.

According to the Board of Education proposal, the rationale for dropping the second language requirement includes:

- Differences in language instruction lead to wide gaps in learning across the state.
- A shortage of second language teachers makes the requirement possible.
- High school second language instruction and thus acquisition without a pre-high school second language background would not be effective.

Anke Finger noted that these arguments are unfounded.

Bill Lott suggested that GEOC should make a statement in a letter to the chairman of the appropriate CT Higher Education committees stating that UConn will not relax its entrance expectations requiring two years of second language. The following people will be involved in this letter writing effort: Bill Lott, Anke Finger, Xae Alicia Reyes, Felicia Pratto, Katharina von Hammerstein. Xae Alicia Reyes, as Chair of the Second Language subcommittee will take the lead on this effort. Anke Finger noted that Barbara Lindsey, a former president of CT COLT and currently Director of UConn's Multimedia Language Center, is currently writing such a letter and will present it to Xae Alicia Reyes and the rest of the Second Language subcommittee.

Jane Goldman suggested contacting local representatives Denise Merrill and Don Williams to facilitate this campaign.

Budget Implication for GAs and Large General Education Lecture Courses

Due to the current budget cuts at UConn, many departments are unable to fund GAs to support large lecture courses. One possible instructor reaction to lack of support is to limit class seats. This would have a significant impact on general education seats and lead to a huge shortage overall.

Katharina von Hammerstein asked GEOC members: Do you know about large lecture courses that are lowering enrollment? How are departments handling the budget cuts vis-à-vis course teaching?

- Cora Lynn Deibler stated that cutting seats has not yet been a "solution" for ARTH.
- Robert Cromley noted that the directive for rescission did not allow for reduced enrollment. For GEOG, GAs will be funded this academic year, but next year will be a problem. Also, teaching methods will change to a more standardized method of assessment to ease the burden on instructors. Additionally, there will be a decrease in how many assignments students are given in order to decrease the amount of student work needing to be assessed.
- Bill Lott pointed to at least one ECON course for which discussion sections have been removed. He further stated that large courses could become "clicker courses," where assessment is automatic and does not allow time for reflection. Also, some courses will move to classic lecture instruction only.
- John Troyer also noted that some courses will be "guttled," with a lot of innovative pedagogy and student learning opportunities removed.
- Like Robert Cromley, Jane Goldman noted that GAs will be funded in HDFS this year, but there will be a problem next year with GAs and W courses.
- Relative to lab courses, Niloy Dutta stated that the budget cuts will result in fewer, thus larger, lab sections. Also, instructors will be forced to use bubble sheets or "yes/no" format for testing.
- Tom Deans said that, across the board, ENGL department seats have changed from 35 to 40 students. He is unsure if this increase in seats per course will be sustainable with further cuts or with as much writing.

The CLAS Dean's Office is asking faculty to cut assignments and decrease "teaching" in order to function without GA support. Several GEOC members stated that there is little integrity in this stance because it does not match faculty with student needs. Enrollment has increased while funding has not matched the pace in growth. Also noted is that fact that the budget cuts pose a conflict between asking faculty to spend more time in teaching and assessing

(without GA support) on one hand and asking them to publish more on the other. Concerns were voiced that the quality of education at UConn in general, and of general education in particular, will decrease.

Graduate vs. Undergraduate Education: There is a pervasive attitude among UConn administrators that graduate students cost money and that undergraduates bring money in. It is fundamentally unfair to pretend that UConn is a small liberal arts college, i.e. faculty /student ratios, etc. Because of this focus on Undergraduate Education, Graduate Education may suffer. Kristina Paul noted that there is talk that tuition remission is on the line for new PhD students which would have a significant impact on attracting high quality graduate students. Also, there is a new directive- not yet implemented- wherein half GAships would not be allowed in order to save on the fringe costs of employment.

A letter to Veronica Makowsky will be drafted noting the concerns outlined above, GEOC consensus that reductions to Graduate Education will have immediate repercussions to General Education, and that GEOC would mourn the loss of the improvements UConn has made over the past few years.

5. Monitoring and Assessment

W Workshop

The GEOC Assessment subcommittee will meet with Freshman English W Assessment committee in November.

CA3 Assessment coordinator

Hedley Freake offered the position to GEOC's top candidate. She suggested to look for a person who may be better qualified for the position. Hedley Freake approached a second person who has not yet decided, if s/he will accept. Others have also been identified should the primary candidate decline.

CA4 Assessment

The CA4 Assessment document has been approved by the GEOC Assessment subcommittee and has been sent to CA4 for final review. The subcommittee will take one last look and then forward the document to Anabel Perez for online posting.

Members of the CA4 and Assessment subcommittees met on October 6th to discuss CA4 Assessment in the coming year. The CA4 subcommittee is concerned that the responsibilities outlined for the CA4 Assessment Coordinator would be too much for one person and that, as a result, they would be unable to recruit someone for the post. The Assessment subcommittee asked CA4 to prioritize those things that they would most like to know about CA4 learning and teaching at this time. The subcommittee will also discuss possible candidates. Unlike other subcommittees which have begun assessment, the CA4 subcommittee would like to be involved in shaping the CA4 assessment effort.

Note: As in the assessment of CA3 and W, assessment of CA4, too, will not include all courses of this content area, but will focus on a small subset. The questions to be investigated will be of importance to CA4 and to the university at large.

Recertification will be focus of future meetings. At the end of this academic year, GEOC must have a plan in place to move forward with the Recertification effort.

Meeting called to a close at 155pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anabel Perez
GEOC Administrator