

GEOC Meeting December 3, 2008

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

Meeting called to order at 1:33pm.

1. Minutes of the last meeting edited as follows:

- On page 3, sentence changed to read: “Allegedly, nationally only 3 states have a high school graduation foreign language requirements”

Motion to approve the minutes as revised. Motion approved with two abstentions.

2. Announcements

- *Spring GEOC meetings.* Requests for availability have gone out to GEOC members to plan the Spring meeting schedule.
- *CA3 Assessment Coordinator.* Hedley Freake and Katharina von Hammerstein met with the new CA3 Assessment Coordinator, Annelie Skoog. Skoog is now up to date on what has taken place in the previous academic year. The first goal will be to look at the imbedded learning goals in existing course assignments. Second will be the use of the self-efficacy survey. Third is dissemination of the CA3 assessment work done to date.
- *CA4 Assessment Coordinator.* David Moss has consented to serve as CA4 Assessment Coordinator and will work with Helen Marx, a NEAG adjunct faculty member. The initial goal is to align student outcomes, asking the following questions:
 - Are courses taught in a way that addresses learning goals?
 - Are courses taught in a way that assesses outcomes?Development and application of a student self efficacy tool is planned for the Spring assessment effort.
- *Freshman English Writing Assessment.* Scott Campbell, ENGL department faculty member, and Becky Caouette, an ENGL GA, are working on Freshman English Assessment. Their work will be connected to the W assessment work that has already taken place. A discussion has begun between the Assessment Subcommittee and Scott Campbell and Becky Caouette about the possibility of collecting the writing samples electronically in order to create an archive for writing samples to be available for future assessment projects. This is, however, secondary to the Freshman English assessment. Scott Campbell considers electronic collection less reliable than paper collection from instructors.
- *Honors Expansion.* Lynne Goodstein has contacted the recipients of Provost’s Gen Ed Course Development Competition awards to invite them to teach their Gen Ed courses as small Honors Core courses. Katharina von Hammerstein has asked Lynne Goodstein that close attention be paid to ensure the courses remain Gen Ed. It is also important to ensure that courses remain open to non-Honors students and/or that Honors sections be added. The following questions were raised:
 - Will Honors be able to fund the additional Honors sections? Who would teach them? For how many times? Can departments afford to spare the faculty?
 - If these Gen Ed courses will be offered as Honors courses, they will not be available to the general student population as originally intended -- and funded.
- *Second Language.* Katharina von Hammerstein asked Veronica Makowsky if the upper administration would be willing to sign the letter that the SL subcommittee is proposing regarding the rejection of SL as a high school graduation requirement in CT as discussed at the previous

GEOC meeting. Veronica Makowsky has agreed to ask either the Provost or President to review the letter and possibly sign it, or possibly sign it herself.

- *Deans Meeting in February 2009.* Katharina von Hammerstein will meet with academic deans in February to discuss the following items: W courses, CCAGE courses, Regional campus issues, and to point out that CLAS has additional general education requirements beyond the university-wide Gen Ed requirements. Any other topics GEOC members would like to see discussed should be sent directly to Katharina von Hammerstein.
- *CLAS Deans.* Doug Hamilton has expressed complaints about GEOC's proposed CCAGE courses. His main complaint is not curricular, but focused on the confusion factor for advisors and PeopleSoft. The concerns have come primarily from their Advising Center.
 - CLAS C&CC has asked Senate C&CC to hold off recommending any action on GEOC's CCAGE courses proposal until CLAS C&CC has had a chance to discuss the matter. They would like to provide feedback to Senate C&CC that is content based, with "pure science" concerns in particular.
 - Katharina von Hammerstein reminded GEOC that GEOC discussed this issue at length, particularly the science portion of general education, and came to agreeable terms.
 - While done with respect, GEOC must be clear that CLAS C&CC does not have veto power over university innovations. The Senate makes the decisions on Gen Ed requirements.
 - One GEOC member asked that Doug Hamilton's letter be read as an invitation to revise the CCAGE courses proposal to make it clearer.
 - Several members noted that CLAS has wide representation on university committees, including GEOC, Senate C&CC, and Senate.
 - For the Senate vote on this matter, Katharina von Hammerstein asked that GEOC members on the Senate who are in support of this proposal and are in the sciences be present to speak to the "pure science" concerns.
 - Tom Roby suggests a summarization of the GEOC discussion on the subject be sent to CLAS C&CC to address their concerns and assure them that GEOC, at length, considered the issue.
 - Senate C&CC offered the following revision to the CCAGE courses proposal: students should be able to choose what content area a particular CCAGE course will count for when they submit their final plan of study at the end of their university career, rather than at the time they register, as GEOC originally proposed.
 - Implementation of CCAGE courses would affect the P/S degree progress report. However, there could be some technical innovation in P/S wherein a "mini gen ed plan of study" could be developed to better guide students and advisors.
 - This may mean an advantage in making choosing courses more intentional.
- *Provisionally Approved Intensive Session General Education Courses.* May and Summer courses are starting to be scheduled. The following issue was raised:
 - Some courses that departments want to schedule for May or Summer teaching are also scheduled for Wintersession offering.
 - Current GEOC policy is that before a course can be scheduled for intensive session teaching, all evaluation forms for previous intensive sessions offerings of the course must be submitted.
 - This limits departments' ability to plan early for May/Summer gen ed offerings.
 - **The following was agreed: Courses can be scheduled for future intensive sessions so long as by the opening date for student enrollment of that intensive session,**

evaluations of previous offerings have been submitted. If they are not submitted by this time, the courses will be pulled from the schedule.

3. Subcommittee Reports

Information Literacy Competency

Letitia Naigles distributed an Executive Summary of the Fall 2007 SAILS (Student Assessment of Information Literacy Skills) Administration and reported on the results.

The SAILS instrument is supposed to assess the five ACRL standards:

- Standard I: The information literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed.
- Standard II: The information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently.
- Standard III: The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his/her knowledge base and value system.
- Standard IV: The information literate student, individually or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.
- Standard V: The information literate student understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally.

The SAILS Instrument is designed to assess standards 1,2, 3 and 5. It is a computer and internet based assessment, with 9-25 questions per standard.

Of note:

- A student's major is not an interesting variable for comparison of Information Literacy skills as the numbers are too small to be meaningful.
- No significant changes in pre- and post- test (pre- and post-Freshman English) scores.
- Grading is determined by "item response theory," based on data difficulty and student performance which, in turn, is determined by all students who have taken the test (not only UConn students). Subsequently, there is no good sense about what a "perfect" score would be. Only generalisms can be made.
- Caveat: there is no control group against which to compare the freshman.

SAILS Results:

- First Set of findings:
 - For each skill set, SAILS produced a UConn score. UConn students are doing better on one skill set and at mean for the other three.
- Second analysis:
 - Included converting the skill sets to individual ACRL standards. UConn students performed significantly above mean on the second standard (searching for information effectively and efficiently). On the other three, UConn students scored at mean.
- In depth analysis: (GEOC opted to pay for an in-depth analysis of UConn's institutional results)
 - Included the percentage of UConn students who answered correctly on each of the 100 test questions.
 - Letitia Naigles organized a list of items which fewer than 50% of UConn students answered correctly in the Fall 2007 administration.

This report will be given to library liaisons to better inform their library teaching instruction. Letitia Naigles will organize the above mentioned list of items that elicited weak responses in a way that can serve as a recommendation for instructors as to the kinds of items they should focus on more in the future.

The IL subcommittee recommended administering SAILS again in 2010, when those freshmen participating in the Fall 2007 administration will be seniors. The hope is to ultimately administer the test three times- once before a student starts at UConn (summer), freshman year following Freshman English course, and then again senior year.

Questions and comments from GEOC:

- Is there a way to get a comparison with our peer and/or aspirant institutions?
- Would freshman scores matter? Scores would be more meaningful if tested in senior year.
- Senior piece:
 - Tom Deans, in his W assessment (the more detailed aspect of his assessment work), included six Info Lit outcomes. He will share this data with GEOC and the Info Lit subcommittee.

Katharina von Hammerstein and Letitia Naigles asked GEOC:

- Does SAILS give us relevant data?
- Should we use SAILS again?
- Should UConn develop something else?

Comments:

- It does not appear to be worth the expense as there is no data provided for comparison with relevant peer institutions.
 - no raw data
- The difference in scores between pre- and post- test would not be statistically reliable due to the small number of post-test students.

The Information Literacy subcommittee will discuss the SAILS instrument and its worth to GEOC's assessment efforts.

Writing Competency

The W subcommittee recommends **maintaining the W designation of the following courses following revisions to prerequisites, change in level, and/or catalog copy:**

ECON 2491W	Internship- Research Paper (Change in level from ECON 3491W.)
HIST 3101W	History through Fiction (Addition of "With a change in topic, may be repeated for credit" to catalog copy.)
GEOL 4050W	Geoscience and Society (Change in prerequisites.)

Motion to approve the W report. Motion passed.

ENGL 2411W and 2408W course proposals

The W subcommittee chairs report that the justification section of these two proposals use template language. The W subcommittee has contacted the department about this concern and there was resistance to stopping the use of boiler of plate language for their course proposals.

The W subcommittee does not approve of the justification section of the ENGL 2411W proposal because it uses template language. However, the individual syllabus for ENGL 2411W is satisfactory.

Therefore, the W subcommittee recommends **approval of the following course pending realignment of their proposal to the specific syllabus:**

ENGL 2411W Popular Literature

**Motion to provisionally approve ENGL 2411W pending realignment of the syllabus and proposal.
Motion approved.**

Other W issues brought forward:

- Definition of “revisions” as written in the W criteria.
 - The Gen Ed Guidelines on the subject, in particular points 1 and 2 of the W criteria, read:
“1. Require that students write a minimum of fifteen pages that have been revised for conceptual clarity and development of ideas, edited for expression, and proofread for grammatical and mechanical correctness;
2. Address writing in process, require revision, and provide substantial supervision of student writing. (The structure of revision and supervision may vary, including in-class writing workshops, individual consultation, substantial formative commentary on drafts, and so on.);”

Discussion of this matter was postponed until the next GEOC meeting in the Spring.

Computer Technology Competency

Subcommittee report deferred to next GEOC meeting.

4. General Reports and Discussion

Provost Competition

Katharina von Hammerstein reports that, in light of the current budget climate, we are not yet certain of the total funding we will have for the 2009 Competition.

Announcement draft, edits:

- Remove the \$120,000 amount from the announcement.
- Note the following in lieu of maximum individual grant amount: “Awards are expected to vary.”
- Focus of the 2009 Competition:
 - Stress funding for revision/improvement of existing courses, though new courses would still be considered.
 - Innovations for large lecture courses in all content areas and competencies, not necessarily for CA3 or Q as in the 2008 announcement.
 - Global learning.
 - Student centered courses taught in large formats.
 - Environmental sustainability.

A discussion ensued:

- One GEOC member suggested a moratorium on this competition while GEOC takes stock about UConn’s general education needs.

- This suggestion is in light of a recommendation from the Chair of the CLAS C&CC to the CLAS Dean to suspend approval of Provost's Competition courses. [Other issues were also addressed in this letter. GEOC will discuss these matters at its next meeting.]
 - CLAS C&CC Chair expressed concerns about "boutique" general education courses that enroll very few students.
 - It would be very difficult for some CLAS department heads to give departmental approval on any Provost's Competition proposals in light of this recommendation.
- This competition is designed to keep general education innovative. If we cut the competition, there is a real possibility that GEOC will permanently lose funding for the competition in future years.
- One suggestion is to alternate the focus of the annual competition, with one year for revision of existing courses and the next year for new courses.
- De-emphasize the focus on "new" courses implied by the current competition title- Provost's Office General Education Course Development Competition- by changing the title to Provost's Office General Education Course *Enhancement* Competition.
 - Proposal will be retuned to focus on courses that can be taught in large lecture format whether it is a replacement course OR a revision of an existing course.

Meeting called to a close at 3:30pm. This is the last meeting of the Fall 2008 semester.

Respectfully submitted,

Anabel Perez
GEOC Administrator