

# GEOC Meeting October 2, 2009

*In Attendance: Katharina von Hammerstein, Anabel Perez, John Ayers, Cora Lynn Deibler, Anke Finger, Jane Goldman, Bill Lott, Eric Schultz, Murphy Sewall, Kate Capshaw Smith, Sarah Winter, and Michael Young. Not Present: Rosa Helena Chinchilla, Robert Cromley, Tom Deans, Niloy Dutta, Doug Kaufman, Xae Alicia Reyes, Tom Roby, and Brenna Kelleher.*

Meeting called to order at 9:03am.

**1. Minutes** of the September 21, 2009 meeting were edited as follows:

- Edit of Jane Goldman's points via email on page 3.
- Edit of Eric Schultz's comment on page 3.

**Motion to approve minutes as corrected. Motion carried with two abstentions.**

## **2. Announcements**

- *Columbus Day.* Our next GEOC meeting is on Columbus Day, a federally recognized holiday. Cora Lynn Deibler will be in attendance and will take the minutes of this meeting.

## **3. Subcommittee reports**

### Arts and Humanities

The CA1 subcommittee recommended **approval** of the following course for inclusion in CA1:

MUSI 100X Popular Music and Diversity in American Society: Race, Gender, Class, and Resistance

**Motion to approve the above course for CA1 inclusion. Motion carried.**

The CA1 subcommittee is in the process of **reviewing** the following courses at this time:

MAST 1200 Introduction to Maritime Studies

The CA1 subcommittee has determined a need for more information regarding assessment of CA1 student learning outcomes. Kate Capshaw Smith will contact the proposer of this course about the submission of this information.

CLCS 2XXX Intercultural Competency for Global Perspectives

The CA1 subcommittee is in the process of e-voting on this course.

### Diversity and Multiculturalism

CA4 recommended **revision** of a previously recommended approval to PRLS/SPAN 1009 Latino Literature, Culture and Society.

On the 9-17-09 CA4 report to GEOC presented at the 9-21-09 meeting, CA4 recommended that PRLS/SPAN 1009 be approved for CA4 international. However, in re-reviewing the proposal they discovered that the proposers sought inclusion in CA4 non-international.

The subcommittee, therefore, recommended to change the previous recommendation and **approve PRLS/SPAN 1009 for CA4 NON-International.**

**Motion to change the recommended approval and include PRLS/SPAN 1009 in CA4 NON-International. Motion carried.**

## **4. Reports and Discussion**

### Subcommittee membership

The following updates to GEOC subcommittee membership were reported:

- Information Literacy
  - Susanna Cowan, University Libraries, was added to the subcommittee.
- Assessment
  - Helen Rogers, EPSY, was added to the subcommittee.

- CA2 Social Science
  - Charles Venator, POLS, was added to the subcommittee.

### Cross-Content Area Gen Ed Courses

Katharina von Hammerstein offered a summary of the CCAGE discussion to date.

- GEOC agrees that the idea of CCAGE courses is a good idea in principle.
- GEOC struggles with how to solve the challenges that are posed by the mechanics of CCAGE implementation.
- GEOC agrees with the following points:
  - Any CA or CCAGE course must fulfill, in full, criteria for each CA for which it is included.
  - GEOC does not want to differentiate between single CA and multiple-CA courses as they fulfill the 6-7 course credit requirements for each CA.
  - The six subject area rule is in place and will remain and will ensure a certain amount of breadth in each student's gen ed curriculum.
  - Students must take at least two courses in each CA, be they single or multiple content area courses.
  - Student must take at least 7 courses across the four CAs. This language, however, will need to be expressed in credits to account for single-credit CA1 courses.
- Katharina von Hammerstein noted that some on GEOC have expressed concern about students being able to take advantage of multiple-CA courses and use two of these courses to fulfill two CAs. The possibility of "lopsidedness" exists wherein a student can take the majority of gen ed contact hours in one CA.
  - Two suggestions that address this concern are on the floor for GEOC to discuss:
    - Students should be limited to a maximum of 4 CCAGE credits (1 course); or, if one of the courses is a CA4 course, 8 credits (2 courses).
    - Cap the number of multiple-content area courses a student may take. A student would be able to take no more than 3 (or possibly 2) of the 7 courses that count for his/her gen ed CA requirement in one CA. This would need to be expressed in credits rather than courses.

### Problems:

- Murphy Sewall argued that simplicity trumps complexity. He proposes GEOC move forward with the CCAGE proposal without looking at the "uber-geek" possibilities and then, after implementation address any issues that might have arisen.
  - Eric Schultz suggested that possible issues be addressed now because they will likely come up when the proposal is made to the Senate.
  - Jane Goldman concurred with this assessment and believes GEOC needs to start small and expand later in order to build support for the proposal.
  - Katharina expressed a personal preference for the cap proposal that allows for more possibility of interdisciplinarity. However, if that proposal is likely to get shut down and then nothing is passed, it may be that the more limited proposal is the best approach.
  - Bill's point? (I'm NOT CLEAR what this was)
- Murphy Sewall offered the following proposal for consideration by GEOC: to leave the logistical challenges as they are and then deal with them once the proposal is implemented.
  - Murphy Sewall further noted that the proposal is likely to draw many questions in the Senate and senators might have some proposals for how to address the challenges GEOC has been discussing.
- Eric Schultz noted that, if GEOC proposes something open-ended without placing realistic limitations on that proposal, the proposal is going to be sent back to the committee. He argued that there is already suspicion about where gen ed at UConn is going, and people who are tied to traditional education think that there are Divisions that are accumulating power and influence with the blessing of the Provost and that innovation is resulting in a shift of resources away from traditional academic departments.
  - Jane Goldman stated that people are not so much driven by fear but by a "don't tread on me" attitude; they not only do not want to lose power, but, more importantly, believe in their right to that power.
- Anke Finger suggested finding several model programs that are not too radical but which are more innovative than UConn would help make the proposal more palatable. Cora Lynn Deibler agreed with this suggestion.
  - Katharina von Hammerstein pointed out that research into this would not be completed in time for the coming GEOC meeting.

Katharina von Hammerstein summarized the three options on the floor:

- Push ahead: forward the proposal without any limitations or restrictions.

- Take a slow approach: allow students to take no more than one multiple-CA courses to allow people to become accustomed to the idea of multiple-CA courses.
- Down the middle: propose a cap on multiple-CA courses, of 2 or 3 per CA, to count toward the 7-course CA requirement.

Continued discussion:

- Murphy Sewall noted that the “slow” approach is overly restrictive as to make interdisciplinary courses not possible.
- Katharina von Hammerstein pointed out that GEOC might want to push ahead with the ideal- the “push ahead” option- and then go with more restrictive plans B or C, as needed.
  - Cora Lynne Deibler, Kate Capshaw Smith, and Murphy Sewall expressed support for this plan.
- Mike Young suggested being clear to Senate C&CC and the Senate that GEOC has discussed other options.
  - Murphy Sewall argued that we should make this clear once questions about the proposal are raised.
- Jane Goldman proposed presenting a minority report in the way the US Supreme Court publishes minority report.
  - Katharina von Hammerstein responded, noting that GEOC should have one voice based on the vote and that minority voices would create confusion.
  - Eric Schultz indicated that he would present to Senate C&CC the motion approved by GEOC and would note to Senate C&CC members that that minutes of the discussion are available on the GEOC website.
- Michael Young stated that there should be a preamble to the GEOC motion that the GEOC agrees on and that includes justification for the way the motion has been crafted.
- Michael Young also questioned the premise that only instructors in silo departments can teach these disciplines.
  - Sarah Winter concurred and noted that the enrichment possibilities of the proposal are greater than the negative ones.
  - Jane Goldman responded that the argument against the unrestricted proposal is because of the percentage of time students would be spending in CAX and CAY courses during their time at UConn. It is a matter of exposure, not about the quality of the courses.

Katharina von Hammerstein asked that the GEOC find a way to make a decision about where the committee is relative to the options on the floor. Murphy Sewall recommended using the motion that GEOC approved- with none of the limitations or restrictions- to call the matter to a vote. A hard copy of the motion endorsed by both GEOC and Senate C&CC was circulated.

The circulated CCAGE proposal called for editing some portions of Part A (Part A.1 Content Areas) of the current General Education Guidelines. The proposal was further edited by the GEOC as follows:

- deleted current point e.
- deleted current point g.
- deleted current point h. Replaced current point h with, “Students must take **[complete?]** at least 21 content area credits.”
- deleted current point f. Replaced current point f with, “For all Groups, there can be multiple designations. An individual course can be approved and counted for one Group, two Groups, or three Groups, if one of the three is Group 4.”

Jane Goldman recommended that a straw vote be taken with the three options and then a vote taken again on the two remaining options.

Straw vote:

- Option 1: “Push ahead” with the CCAGE proposal limitations that did not include restrictions.
  - in favor: 7 of 9 voting members present.

The majority voted in favor of the “Push ahead” option.

In addition to the above changes to Part A.1 (Content Areas) of the Gen Ed Guidelines, a new paragraph to be included at the end of Part C (Criteria for Specific Content Areas and Competencies) was distributed in hard copy and edited by the GEOC to read:

“In the interest of securing student learning in each of the Content Areas and simultaneously providing models for connections across Content Areas, proposals for General Education courses may include components of more

than one Content Area. A course that fulfills the specific individual criteria of each Content Area, among CA1, CA2, CA3, or CA4, may be approved as a multiple-content area General Education course and will be listed under each Content Area. See criteria for individual Content Areas for further clarification. Those who propose Content Area General Education courses are encouraged to consult with the respective GEOC subcommittees.

Note: For rules about how students meet the General Education requirements in different Content Areas, see 'Content Area Operating Principles' in PART A."

Katharina will rewrite the final proposal as edited by the GEOC for one final review at the coming GEOC meeting. She will also draft preamble to accompany the proposal.

**Murphy Sewall moved that proposed changes to Parts A.1 and Part C of the General Education Guidelines be approved as revised by this committee.**

**The motion carried with 1 opposed and no abstentions.**

## **5. Monitoring and Assessment**

### Recertification

Katharina von Hammerstein stated that GEOC has a mandate to periodically recertify existing gen ed courses to ensure courses are still meeting the criteria for which they were approved and that the standards of the gen ed program are maintained. GEOC must try to get a recertification form ready this Fall 09, test it in Spring 2010, and then roll it out in full in Fall 2010.

She offered the following update to the previous recertification discussions:

- There will be no large scale recertification at this time. GEOC decided this is not the time to further burden already-overburdened faculty. Instead, GEOC suggested doing a pilot project, asking departments:
  - are there any gen ed courses the department no longer teaches.
  - are there any gen ed courses the department offers but would like to offer as non-gen ed?
  - Have you made any changes to an existing gen ed course?

Following this would be the recertification of small number of courses per semester. The manner in which this small number of courses will be selected is still to be determined.

Discussion:

- Bill Lott noted that the Provost has already established a formal full program review. He suggested timing GEOC review of gen ed courses in advance of program reviews so that programs can build on our review findings. According to the CLAS program review schedule he received as ECON department head, multiple programs will be reviewed in a given year.
  - Katharina von Hammerstein pointed out that postponing review of a program's gen ed courses to time our review with theirs would mean that some courses would not be recertified for many years. For example, a department with a scheduled program review in 2017 would not have its courses, even those approved in 2004, reviewed until 2016. Alternately, if GEOC approved one of this department's courses in 2015, the course would need to be recertified only a year after its initial approval.
- Sarah Winter argued that recertification could be problematic to the regional campuses. How should GEOC certify that courses offered at the regional campuses are taught as they are at Storrs?
- Katharina von Hammerstein asked the committee to consider how recertification could happen:
  - By department?
  - On a rotation depending on when courses were last reviewed by GEOC?
    - This is the process GEOC had previously expressed support for, with a department choosing courses to be reviewed from a list of gen ed courses approved in a particular academic year.
  - One GEOC member asked that the recertification process entailed for departments.
    - Katharina von Hammerstein responded that the details of recertification still need to be decided upon by the GEOC. However, in earlier discussions, GEOC had suggested approaching departments and having them select -on a basis determined by GEOC- those courses that would be reviewed. The basis could be:
      - One course per applicable Content Area or Competency
      - One Content Area or Competency course

- Course(s) with the largest enrollments
  - Murphy Sewall suggested recommending to departments that GEOC is most interested in recertifying those courses that have the largest number of seats.
  - Bill Lott argued in favor of timing GEOC recertification to the Provost's program assessment schedule because it would benefit programs in preparation for their program's review.
  - Jane Goldman offered a compromise suggestion. [what is this?]
  - Sarah Winter stated that full review of a department's gen ed offerings is logistically feasible if a department designates an assessment liaison or sets up a committee to prepare assessment materials.
    - Katharina von Hammerstein noted that while this may be feasible for departments, this does not solve the problem of overburdening of the GEOC subcommittees.
    - Jane Goldman suggested allowing departments a large scale review of their gen ed courses, if they are so inclined, but to limit the number of courses they may select to a reasonable number.
  - One GEOC member noted that all departments that offer gen eds should be involved in GEOC's recertification pilot.
  - Anabel Perez offered to provide the GEOC with the numbers of courses- by department, by year, and by year AND department- for further consideration.

Katharina von Hammerstein summarized the discussion and noted the GEOC is contemplating

- Allowing each department to select a certain number of courses to review
- Allowing departments the option of submitting a bulk of courses for review one year prior to their program's review.

Meeting adjourned 10:58.

Respectfully submitted,

Anabel Perez