

# GEOC Meeting September 21, 2009

*In Attendance: Katharina von Hammerstein, Anabel Perez, John Ayers, Rosa Helena Chinchilla, Robert Cromley, Tom Deans, Anke Finger, Tom Roby, Eric Schultz, Kate Capshaw Smith, Mike Young, Brenna Kelleher, and Bill Lott.*

*Not Present: Cora Lynn Deibler, Jane Goldman, Doug Kaufman, Murphy Sewall, Xae Alicia Reyes, Niloy Dutta, Sarah Winter.*

Meeting called to order at 12:03pm.

**1. Minutes** of the September 14, 2009 meeting.

**Motion to approve minutes as written. Motion carried with no objections or abstentions.**

## **2. Announcements**

- *Daily Campus* article. The Daily Campus ran an editorial piece arguing that the general education curriculum does not benefit students and should be eliminated. Several students and others commented on the article via the Daily Campus website in support of general education, pointing to the importance of producing graduates who are well-rounded and informed about disciplines outside of their majors.
- *New GEOC Member*. The Graduate Student Senate has appointed Brenna Kelleher, a Ph.D. student in the POLS department, as their representative on the GEOC.

## **3. Subcommittee Reports**

### CA2 Social Sciences

The CA2 subcommittee recommended **approval** of the following course for inclusion in the Social Sciences content area:

WS 3XXX                      Gender Representation in US Popular Culture  
(This course has already been approved for W. There will be W and non-W versions of this course.)

**Motion to approve the above course for inclusion in CA2. Motion carried with no objections or abstentions.**

### CA4 Diversity and Multiculturalism

The CA4 subcommittee recommended **approval** of the following courses for inclusion in the Diversity and Multiculturalism content area:

*International*  
CLCS 2XXX                      Intercultural Competence for Global Perspectives  
(not yet approved by CLAS C&CC)  
PRLS/SPAN 1009                Latino Literature, Culture and Society  
(already approved for CA1)

**Motion to provisionally approve CLCS 2XXX PROVIDED CLAS C&CC approves the course. This course will NOT be deemed approved by GEOC until CLAS C&CC approval is official. Motion carried with one abstention.**

**Motion to approve PRLS/SPAN 1009 for inclusion in CA4 International. Motion carried with one abstention.**

The CA4 subcommittee recommended **revision** of the following proposal:

MUSI 100X                      Popular Music and Diversity in American Society  
(Revision of proposal to reflect specific information on assessment, including one of the CA4 criteria.)

CA4 subcommittee chair Anke Finger noted that CA4 concerns about the course proposal mirror those expressed by CA1 at the September 14, 2009 GEOC meeting.

### Writing Competency

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



- If a cross-content area course has to fulfill all of the criteria for each of the content areas involved, why should a distinction be made between single-content area vs. multiple-content area courses in terms of counting toward students' Gen Ed courses?
- This raises questions about breadth. Should a student play the system, he or she would be able to take the majority of their gen ed content area courses in one out of CA 1, 2, 3, with two multiple-content areas courses fulfilling requirements in two CAs.

#### Discussion:

- Via email: Jane Goldman suggested adding a requirement that students take a minimum of 4 courses in any combination of CA1 and CA2, CA1 and CA3, and CA2 and CA3.
  - Katharina von Hammerstein pointed out that this would make things very complicated.
  - One GEOC member added that this rule would be applied to any combination of two out of CA 1, 2, 3, or 4.
- Via email: Jane Goldman expressed concern that the new CCAGE plan would allow students to fulfill their gen ed requirements with half as many gen ed contact hours in one combination of CA1 and CA2, CA1 and CA3, or CA2 and CA3. She stated:
  - "Given the plan we were discussing (the one articulated by Bill), here is a possible situation. Student X takes two courses that are both cross listed as CA1 and CA2 (which I see as very possible, not one of the unusual events Murph was referring to), say one is ABC 1000/XYZ1000 and the second is ABC2000/XYZ2000. \*\* The 1000-level course also is a diversity course. Then in CA3 the student takes classes in 3 different areas, and the student takes another diversity course making this his/her sixth area (discipline). This student will have had a total of 84 contact hours in classes in CA1 and CA2 combined. As you see, with the new system, as proposed, a student will be able to complete requirements across two content areas with half the amount of class time - 84 hours of class time as compared to 168 in our current system."
    - Rosa Helena Chinchilla noted that Jane Goldman's point about contact hours is a strong argument against the CCAGE proposal.
  - Mike Young argued that colleagues in the NEAG School of Education advocate that seat time is not a good indicator of the value of a course. He asked:
    - What would be the credit hours implications for faculty?
    - Would there be resistance from faculty if faculty seat time decreased?
- Eric Schultz stated that he believed Jane Goldman was uneasy with the notion that multiple-content area courses are truly satisfying criteria of each content area. Two ways of looking at Jane argument about contact hours are:
  - 1- GEOC is a rigorous filter and in order to be approved for multiple content areas the proposals will need to demonstrate that criteria for each content area are met.
  - 2- While the GEOC filter may be strong, it is not completely rigorous and there may be some dilution of learning objectives in the content areas involved in a multiple-content area course.
- Bill Lott noted that those students taking multiple-content area courses would effectively increase the amount of gen ed they take because they would still need to meet the 7 course rule.
- Katharina von Hammerstein reminded everyone that there is already a mechanism for approving courses for more than one CA: CAs 1-3 with CA4 and with the competencies. She also reiterated that there will probably not be very many course proposals that can be approved as satisfying all criteria of CAs 1+2, 1+3, or 2+3.
  - Robert Cromley argued that overlap between CAs 1-3 and CA4 and W/Q is different than overlap between CAs 1-3. He pointed out that most overlap is likely to happen between CA1-2, and to a lesser extent, CA2-3. CA2 is caught in the middle and is likely to get shut out.
- Eric Schultz stated that it is not productive for GEOC to speculate on the (im)probability of multiple-content area courses. As soon as the possibility of multiple-content area courses will be raised, there is going to be a strong interest in developing courses that would appeal to students looking to cross off two gen eds at one time. There will be significant skepticism of the CCAGE courses proposal in the Senate, if there is any reference to the possible dilution of CA criteria.
- Bill Lott agreed that innovative faculty would be keen to take the opportunity to develop CCAGE courses.
- Katharina von Hammerstein argued that the 6-subject area rule forces students to go outside their comfort areas and guarantees some breadth in their gen eds.
- Anke Finger asked, if there perhaps should be an implied reward system for students taking cross-content area courses. Two options might be to, 1- limit enrollment to cross-content courses to sophomores or higher, and 2, limit cross-content area courses to 2000+ level.

- Katharina von Hammerstein wondered about the justification for this differentiation between lower and upper division and pointed out that this would add yet another layer of logistic complexity to the proposal.

Katharina von Hammerstein noted during a pause in discussion that while most of GEOC is in support of the enrichment that CCAGE courses may provide, it is the mechanics of implementation without limiting gen ed impact on students that is causing the most concern.

Continuation of discussion:

- Brenna Kelleher asked how CCAGE courses would be taught. (e.g. team-taught, by one faculty, etc.)
  - Any combination of teaching is okay by GEOC so long as the course meets the criteria of each of the content areas for which it was proposed.
- Rosa Helena Chinchilla added that, anecdotally, several of her students have waited until the end of their careers to complete their gen ed courses. Some of these CCAGE courses would be more meaningful to them at the end of their career.
- Bill Lott, to address Jane Goldman's concern, proposed limiting the number of gen ed courses that could go toward meeting any one content area to 3 courses. (This would not prohibit the student from taking more than 3 courses in a particular CA but those additional courses would not count toward the 7 course gen ed requirement.
- Anke Finger raised the possibility of limiting the number of CCAGE courses a student could count toward the 7 course requirement across 6 different subject areas.
- Kate Capshaw Smith noted that courses fulfilling multiple-content areas are going to be very popular. She can envision departments opening large sections of these courses to meet the gen ed seats they need to offer (as determined by their school or college dean), then not offer as many other gen ed courses. Departments might view this as an opportunity to have senior faculty teach niche courses and not the gen eds.
  - Katharina von Hammerstein argued that in the new gen ed system gen ed and major courses are much more integrated; therefore faculty teach gen eds because the topics are less generic than they used to be.
- Tom Roby stated that the gen ed rules currently in place are very complicated. The CCAGE proposal, as before and as discussed today, does not engage students (potentially only 3 courses in 3 areas) because it limits student interaction with other disciplines.

Katharina von Hammerstein pointed to two threads in the discussion: one about the concept of CCAGE courses and another about the mechanics of its potential implementation. The two, unfortunately, cannot be separated.

Continuation of discussion:

- Tom Deans suggested not allowing substitutions of CCAGE courses.
  - However, as Katharina von Hammerstein noted, GEOC has no authority to limit substitutions approved by school or college deans.
- Eric Schultz suggested that a requirement be implemented wherein a student would have to take two courses in any two content areas and that students only be allowed to take a total of ONE CCAGE course, no matter what the combination. He argued that a slow approach is more likely to garner support for innovation in the Land of Steady Habits (<http://www.cslib.org/nicknamesCT.htm>).
  - He argued that limiting CCAGE courses to one course allows the notion of CCAGE to evolve. It recognizes concern about the effect CCAGE courses may have (in an unrestricted sense) on students' breadth in gen eds while still encouraging the development of the CCAGE idea.
- Bill Lott pointed out that limiting students to one CCAGE course would be detrimental for students very interested in interdisciplinarity. He reiterated his argument that capping to 3 courses per content area to count toward gen ed is the best answer. It may not guarantee the four course contact in CAs 1+2 that Jane Goldman proposed, but it increases likelihood of this situation occurring.
  - Robert Cromley asked why the total of courses in one CA should not be capped at 2 rather 3 per content area?
    - Bill Lott: 3 courses per content area does not force the rigidity of the existing system.
  - Katharina von Hammerstein stated that Bill Lott's proposal might be a workable solution to the problem. She asked, if anyone had any concerns about the proposal. No one expressed concerns.

Katharina von Hammerstein summarized key points in the discussion:

- The integrity of multiple content area courses must be preserved.

- Courses can count toward two or three content areas.
- Student must take two courses minimum per content area; 7 courses minimum (w/ at least 3 credits each) for the four CAs, across 6 different subject areas.
  - Robert Cromley asked: if a student takes 4 courses in CA3 across 4 departments, that student cannot use all of these toward the 7 course rule, but they CAN use them toward the 6 subject area rule. Is this the case?

Other points:

- Many other universities have gen ed curriculums geared toward identified principles and are not silo-driven.
- There is consensus that CCAGE courses could enrich the gen ed curriculum but the struggles are with the mechanics of the implementation.

Options under consideration:

- Cap the number of courses per content area to 3 (or 2?).
- Limit the number of CCAGE courses a student may take toward his or her gen ed requirement to 1 (to 2, if one of the content areas is CA4?).

Meeting adjourned at 1:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anabel Perez  
GEOC Administrator