

GEOC Meeting April 24, 2008

In Attendance: Katharina von Hammerstein, Marie Cantino, John Troyer, Arnie Dashefsky, John Bennett, Anke Finger, Felicia Pratto, Xae Alicia Reyes, Murphy Sewall, Bill Lott, Jane Goldman, Janice Clark, Hedley Freake, Peter Gogarten, Anabel Perez. Missing: Dean Hanink, Cora Lynn Deibler, Dan Civco, Mike Darre, Tom Roby, Niloy Dutta, Rosa Helena Chinchilla.

Meeting called to order at 11:05am.

1. Minutes from the April 7, 2008 meeting will be edited as follows:

- Page 4: correction of 2 typos.

Motion to approve minutes as edited. Motion approved.

Correction to November 15, 2007 GEOC report to Senate C&CC:

- AH/OSH 3272W should be changed to AH/OSH 4221W. This course proposal came to GEOC with the 3272W number in error. It was approved by Senate C&CC and by the Senate with the 4221W number.

Correction to December 3, 2007 GEOC minutes and January 2008 GEOC report to Senate C&CC:

- COGS 296W [3520W] should be changed to COGS 296W [4596W]. The 3520W number is an error. Senate C&CC has corrected this in their April report to the Senate.

2. Announcements

- *Thank you.* Katharina von Hammerstein thanked GEOC members for the work they have done over the course of the past academic year.
- *Summary of GEOC Activities.* Katharina von Hammerstein drafted a summary of those items on which GEOC has worked during the 2007-2008 academic year. A summary of actions is an addendum to this document.
- *Provost's Competition Ceremony.* Scheduled for Tuesday, April 29, 2008 from 4-6pm in the North Reading Room, Wilbur Cross Building. Vice Provost Makowsky and Provost Nicholls will give remarks.
- *New England Institution Summer Institute, Keene State College.* Institute planned as an Assessment exchange between New England institutions. Hedley Freake will be attending to represent UConn. John Bennett will contact Eric Soulsby about his possible attendance as well.
- *GEOC Membership.*
 - Information Literacy. Letitia Naigles has accepted her nomination to GEOC and will serve as chair.
 - CA3 Science and Technology. David Wagner has declined his nomination to GEOC. The Senate Nominating committee has recommended the following people in his stead, in the following order:
 - Elizabeth Jockush (EEB)
 - Tim Byrne (GEOL)
 - Jean Crespi (EEB)
- *End of Semester Gathering.* Katharina von Hammerstein's home, May 2, 3:30pm-6pm. Please RSVP to von.hammerstein@uconn.edu.
- *Final GEOC Meeting.* We will keep the May 5, 2008 meeting date tentative and meet only if pressing issues arise.

3. Recertification

Summary of discussion to date:

- Reason to discuss recertification: GEOC is charged to oversee the Gen Ed program.
- Discussion is in its early stages to determine how conversation will evolve.
 - Match course as approved with current teaching of course.
 - Link recertification with some elements of assessment.

- Draft Recertification document: remove the statistical questions GEOC can get from the Registrar and OIR and focus on the more substantive questions, with one part specific to the content area/competency and another for the general goals of gen ed.
- Include a cover letter to this recertification document to introduce the topic to faculty.
- Open questions: Two-tiered system? Rotation system of recertification? Every how many years?
 - The Q subcommittee would prefer to receive final exams for all Q courses at one time, not in a rotation system.

Recertification Questions from “to ponder” document:

We have addressed questions 1, 2, 3. Discussion points captured in April 7, 2008 GEOC Meeting minutes.

1. What are our goals in reviewing courses?
2. Which information is valuable for assessment and for statistics, which is superfluous?
3. What kind of data collecting is realistic and doable for departments/programs?

Summary 1: congruence of design and delivery

Summary 2: link recertification and assessment. Statistics from OIR/ Registrar, not faculty.

Summary 3: possibility: in-depth review of a cross-section of courses, with a brief review of others.

Discussion:

- John Bennett suggested testing out the draft form with a cross-section of instructors.
- Jane Goldman noted that maybe there should be different forms for Content Areas vs. Competencies courses. W subcommittee would like to review the departmental W plan, which is not relevant to Content Areas.
 - Katharina von Hammerstein suggested having the same form for instructors and a separate form for department/program heads to get a departmental overview.
 - Bill Lott recommended that we look at the ratio of W major courses to total majors to see if they are able to meet their major needs
- Murphy Sewall voiced support for a succinct form and suggested GEOC start from what we want to know and then formulate the questions. He argued that what we want to know is if instructors and departments are doing what they said they would do when we approved the course. He also noted that recertification is not the only method we are using to assess UConn’s gen ed program
- Felicia Pratto argued that assessment does not have to be comprehensive, but recertification does and that we need to rearticulate the goals of recertification given the new voices in the GEOC.
- Marie Cantino stated that current instructors should get the original CAR, then be asked if they are still doing the things that fulfill the gen ed reqs; if not, they should articulate how the course still fulfills the necessary criteria.
- Bill Lott suggested implementing a “Sunset Law” where, if no recertification request for a particular course is received by a certain time, then the course automatically gets removed from the gen ed system.
- Murphy Sewall raised the issue of non-response. What would be the consequence for departments or instructors?
- Murphy Sewall also noted that multiple instructors sometimes teach the same course – how should these situations be handled? Do we get a recertification document from each instructor? Per course? Who is responsible for this collection, the department or GEOC?
- Katharina von Hammerstein stated that we have to ask certain questions about learning outcomes, assessment methods, etc. which could be instructor-specific.
- Felicia Pratto pointed to two levels of questions:
 - GEOC review of the course as if being reviewed for the first time (course level).
 - GEOC review of how the system is working, how things are being taught, and how the broad goals of general education are being met.

- Hedley Freake argued that one thing we want to do is remind instructors that a course is a gen ed course as, often times, courses are taught without this awareness. The main purpose of recertification is to improve teaching and making instructors aware that they are teaching a general education course is a key part of this attempt.
- John Bennett recommended hiring EPSY (Educational Psychology) Ph.D. students to gather and make some sense of the data we collect and to do some surveying of sample classes.
 - Hedley Freake pointed to the fact that CA3 is using an EPSY graduate student funded by the Vice Provost's office. We can go back to Provost's Office to get funding for more graduate student support if we determine the need.
- Felicia Pratto raised the issue of pedagogical questions for which OIR does not have information. While we may not need the data for recertification, would it be useful to have for future analyses?
 - Hedley Freake argued that while the data would prove interesting, it is a different kind of question than the recertification questions.
 - Jane Goldman pointed, though, to the fact that regional campuses teach courses differently because of decreased student numbers.
 - John Bennett noted that asking pedagogic questions now is an opportunity to gather more information about gen ed at UConn. This data, if not collected in a cumbersome manner, can be used in future assessment reports of the gen ed curriculum.

Proposal: Katharina von Hammerstein and Felicia Pratto will work on another draft for the general portion of the recertification document. Subcommittees may start working on their specific recertification portions of the form. Katharina von Hammerstein will also work on a document to explain recertification procedures to faculty.

- Marie suggested that before subcommittees are charged with any task, GEOC needs to be clear about what they want to do.
- Anke Finger argued that more discussion in GEOC is needed before the subcommittees can begin their work.
- John Bennett noted that it may be a good idea to ask the Assessment subcommittee if they want any particular questions included in this form.

Discussion will continue in GEOC in the Fall and include the voices of new GEOC members.

4. Subcommittee Reports

Writing Competency

The W subcommittee recommends approval of the following courses:

ENGL 3117W	Romantic British Literature
ENGL 3118W	Victorian British Literature

Motion to approve the W report. Motion carried.

The following courses are in the process of review by the W subcommittee:

NRME 3345W [233W]	Wildfire Management Techniques
HORT 2560W	Written Communication in Horticulture

W recommends that GEOC provisionally approve the above courses, provided that the subcommittee approves the courses by the end of the Spring semester. [NOTE: W subcommittee reported approval of HORT 2560W at their last meeting of the Spring semester. One change was recommended for NRME 3345W- once this change is made to the proposal, the course is considered approved without need to resubmit to either the W subcommittee or to GEOC. With the change in NRME 3345W noted in the W subcommittee report, the courses will be reported to Senate C&CC for review at their September meeting.]

Motion to provisionally approve the above courses if courses approved by the W subcommittee by the end of the Spring semester. Motion carried.

Computer Technology Competency

Only 1/3rd of students have completed the Computer Technology (CT) competency questionnaires/tests on HuskyCT. Because it is not a formal graduation requirement, few students actually complete these CT questionnaires/tests.

Discussion:

- How many students know they should take it?
 - They are informed about this in First Year Orientation.
 - Steve Park and Kim Chambers have gone through extraordinary measures to inform students about this expectation.
- Either it becomes a formal requirement or we will have to get used to these results.
- Is this an issue for instructors, i.e. students not having basic computer understanding? Or is it a non-issue?

Recommendations:

- Making completion of the CT competency questionnaires/tests on HuskyCT a registration requirement for the second semester of freshman year.
 - Do you just have to take the test or do you have to demonstrate proficiency?
 - Registration: what happens to those students that don't "pass" the test? Can they still register?
- Is it possible to have an advisor bar that can be lifted if they cannot pass it first semester but have another bar in the second semester (for registration to second year courses) if they still have not passed it?
 - A lot of departments don't use advising blocks so this may not work.
- Require it as part of a required first year course.
 - 87% of students take an FYE course in their first semester.
 - As it stands, the test is very self-explanatory. Embedding the test in a course like FYE will increase the likelihood of students completing it.
- Data: how many students access the site vs. how many complete it?
 - Is it that they access it and it's too long and tedious? Do they not access it at all?

Proposal: Katharina von Hammerstein will meet with David Ouimette to see if embedding the competency questionnaires/tests in FYE courses is an option. Bill Lott will ask Kim Chambers to contact Anabel Perez to get GEOC access to the CT competency questionnaires/tests.

Diversity and Multiculturalism

CA4 Assessment document revision based on last GEOC meeting discussion on the subject. Changes include:

- Previously, "demonstrate understanding of," for the learning objectives.
 - The word "understanding" has been replaced with other measurable verbs.

Discussion:

- The verb "recognize" can be assessed with a checklist.
 - Is this what we want?

Katharina von Hammerstein recommended sending this document as revised to the Assessment subcommittee. The document will be forwarded.

5. Intersession

Two general education courses which were not given GEOC approval to be taught in an intensive session have been scheduled for the coming May Term in error. Students have already registered for these courses. Anabel Perez contacted the instructors to inform them that registration for these courses will need to be put on hold until intensive session teaching approval is achieved. We are currently awaiting receipt of the Intensive Session Curricular Action Requests. Katharina von Hammerstein asked if the relevant subcommittees would be willing to review these two course proposals, if received promptly, by email. The chairs of the subcommittees agreed. The courses will be reviewed by email as they come in. To expedite the process, GEOC will approve the courses provided that the relevant subcommittees give their approval by May 5, 2008.

Motion to approve the following two courses for intersession teaching provided the subcommittees approve the courses for their particular content areas:

CA 1 Arts and Humanities

HIST/ SCI 2206 History of Science

CA2 Social Sciences

ECON 1201 Principles of Microeconomics

Motion approved.

Intersession Evaluations

Currently, provisionally approved intersession course instructors must submit an intersession evaluation form after each teaching of the course in an intensive session. If an evaluation form is not received from the instructor(s) teaching the course, the course may not be taught in a following intensive session.

Katharina von Hammerstein asked if requiring an evaluation from each instructor makes sense, or if we should be asking, instead, for an evaluation -per course- from the department. Requiring an evaluation from each instructor poses implications for teaching across the different campuses as different sections of the same course are offered at different campuses, or even on the same campus. Currently, if a course is taught on Campus A by Instructor B, and this Instructor B does not submit an evaluation, the course may not be taught in a following intensive session on Campus C by Instructor D. Along these same lines, if a course is taught on Campus A by Instructor B and Instructor B does not submit an evaluation, Instructor C cannot offer the course on Campus A.

Discussion:

- Jane Goldman voiced support for requiring an evaluation from each section and instructor.
- Hedley Freake argued that it is legitimate to have greater demand for evaluation of intersession courses. He also noted that pedagogy is instructor-specific so requiring information from each instructor is justified.

GEOC will continue to require Intersession Evaluations be submitted by each instructor teaching the course in an intensive session before the course can be offered in a subsequent intensive session.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anabel Perez
Administrator