

## GEOC Meeting March 20, 2009

*In Attendance: Katharina von Hammerstein, Anke Finger, Murphy Sewall, Bill Lott, Elizabeth Jockusch, Peter Gogarten, Robert Cromley, Tom Deans, Tom Roby, Mike Darre, Niloy Dutta, Felicia Pratto, Anabel Perez, and Ernie Zirakzadeh (for portion of meeting).*

*Not Present: Cora Lynn Deibler, John Troyer, Morty Ortega, Dan Civco, Xae Alicia Reyes, Jane Goldman.*

Meeting called to order at 12:03pm.

### 1. Minutes of the last meeting:

**Motion to approve minutes are presented. Motion passed with one abstention.**

### 2. Announcements:

- *2000+level CA2s at Regionals.* Ernie Zirakzadeh will be joining GEOC at 1:30p to discuss substitutions at Regionals.
- *Second Language Letter to Board of Education.* At last report, the letter had been given to President Hogan and, with minor revisions arising from NEAG concerns, was going to be signed and sent out.
- *WebCAR Form.* Mike Darre, chair of CANR C&CC, has volunteered CANR to be the first school to attempt to modify our new CAR to their school's needs. The ultimate goal is to give this option to other schools, should they wish to be included in this seamless course proposal review.
  - Mike Darre reports: CANR has already discussed their C&CC needs and are ready to meet with UITS to discuss modifications and cost.
    - Upon inviting the programmers Anabel Perez and Tammy Gifford worked with to develop the new Senate CAR, Mike Darre was informed that UITS supervisors must approve of their involvement in this, or any new, project.
      - As soon as UITS approval is granted, CANR C&CC will meet with the programmers.
  - Once CANR gets an estimate of the cost of modifying the webCAR for CANR use, we will have a better sense of 1, the scope of technical modifications needed, and 2, the cost of those modifications. This will provide useful information for contacting other schools/colleges.
- *2009 Provost's Office Gen Ed Course Enhancement Grant Competition.* As of noon today, Anabel Perez reports that we have 8 proposals submitted and 2 more on the way.
  - Review Committee: Robert Cromley, Tom Roby, Keith Barker, Marny Lawton, Carol Lewis, Sebastian Wogenstein.
    - Winners will be announced in mid-April.
- *W discussion at the Department Heads meeting.* Tom Deans and Katharina von Hammerstein presented information about various alternative approaches to the traditional 3-credit W.
- W subcommittee chairs and Katharina von Hammerstein will be meeting with representatives of the ENGL department this afternoon to discuss other W concerns.
- *AACU, February 26-28, 2009 Baltimore, MD.* Hedley Freake and Katharina von Hammerstein presented the CA3 assessment project at the AACU conference. While not at the very forefront, UConn is one of few schools actively moving forward on science and technology assessment. Their presentation was well-received and attended by over 40 conference participants.
- *CLAS Approved Gen Ed Study Abroad Substitutions.* Katharina von Hammerstein spoke to Katrina Higgins, Director of the CLAS Academic Services Center. Katrina Higgins stated that she began this list prior to gaining more detailed knowledge about the scope and purpose of general education at UConn and shared it with the Study Abroad office. She will make revisions to this list that incorporate GEOC concerns, including making the courses on the list much more targeted.

- *Gen Ed Course Enrollment Meeting.* Each Spring, in preparing Annual Report data, GEOC is presented with enrollment numbers from OIR and from Eric Soulsby. Each year, these numbers did not align. Katharina von Hammerstein and Anabel Perez will be meeting with Eric Soulsby, Kathryn Haydn (OIR), and Kim Page (Registrar) on April 2<sup>nd</sup> to discuss ways to make the numbers more accurate.
- *University Online Courses Committee.* Katharina von Hammerstein met with UOCC co-chairs, Doug Cooper and Desmond McCaffrey to share GEOC's concerns about online courses. She stated, however, that at this time GEOC did not wish to institute a separate approval process for these offerings.
  - The Online Committee is at the beginning stages of its charge and the co-chairs are looking for input from various academic committees, GEOC included. They will be joining our April 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting to discuss online offerings.
- *Renumbering and Gen Ed Guidelines.* The Gen Ed Guidelines have not been revised to conform to the new 4-digit scheme. Over the coming summer, Anabel Perez and Katharina von Hammerstein will work on revising the course numbers mentioned in the guidelines to be presented to the Senate C&CC in Fall 2009. Mike Darre has volunteered to serve as proofreader.

### 3. Subcommittee Reports

#### CA2 Social Science

The CA2 subcommittee recommends **approval** of the following course for teaching in the intensive session:

HRTS/POLS 1007 Introduction to Human Rights

**Motion to approve HRTS/POLS 1007 for teaching in the intensive session. Motion passed.**

#### CA2 Substitutions

Robert Cromley reported that he has been in contact with Nancy Steenburg at AVPT to get an idea of the scope and scale of the problem: what is the problem, what they are asking of GEOC, and what should GEOC do about it. Robert Cromley circulated a new report about CA2 substitutions at the Regionals.

Problem: Transfer and BGS students are coming in to UConn with many lower division credits. When they arrive at UConn, they are looking for upper-division Gen Ed courses to meet upper division requirements. However, because there are few CA2 2000+level courses offered at the Regionals, these students' progress is stalled by needing to take lower division courses to meet their general education requirements. Per Nancy Steenburg, the Regionals are trying to limit their gen ed substitutions to GEOC's previous recommendations (2006). This seems to be only a CA2 problem.

Asking of GEOC: They are asking for GEOC approval of 2000+ level "CA2-like" (non-gen ed courses that COULD be gen ed courses but which the departments choose not to propose for gen ed credit due enrollment concerns; they reserve these courses for their majors) courses these students could use to meet both their gen ed and upper division requirements for BGS and their majors.

What should GEOC do: With Nancy Steenburg's help, the following "CA2-like" courses have been identified as being offered regularly at the Regionals:

HDFS 2100  
 HDFS 2200  
 SOCI 2301  
 SOCI 3651

Discussion:

- Shadow CA2 courses. One “simple” solution would be to make the above courses shadow CA2 courses only for students at the Regionals.
  - Shadow list may be a good solution for both the Regionals and GEOC because it would increase the likelihood that mostly those courses GEOC has approved as shadow CA2 courses would be substituted.
- Alternate numbers for Storrs/Regionals courses, with only Regionals courses approved for gen ed credit.
  - Problem: Students go back and forth between campuses, sometimes in the same semester.
  - Exclusions would need to be created to ensure credit won’t be given for the same course at Storrs and Regionals.
- Equity among Storrs and Regionals students. Both a shadow list of gen ed courses and the creation of alternate courses taught at Regionals would lead to students at Regionals and Storrs campuses having, in effect, different gen eds.
- 2000-level transfer credit. In some cases, students come in with relevant 2000-level transfer credit for courses that would suit CA2, but they are transferred in without gen ed credit because there is not direct substitution (some departments do not offer 2000+level gen eds).

This discussion will be postponed until Ernie Zirakzadeh arrives.

Writing Competency

W subcommittee recommends **approval** of the following course for inclusion in W competency **pending** minor revisions:

WS 3XXXW Gender Representations in US Popular Culture  
(correction of an inconsistency in the proposal)

**Motion to recommend approval pending alignment of proposal and syllabus. Motion approved.**

Anabel Perez will release the proposal back to the department.

Discussion about the second part of the W report concerning continuing discussion with the ENGL department regarding two previous W proposal will be postponed until the following GEOC meeting. The W subcommittee chairs, along with Katharina von Hammerstein, will be meeting with representatives of the ENGL department this afternoon.

GEOC membership:

The following people will be completing their second two-year term and are ineligible to continue on GEOC:

Felicia Pratto  
John Troyer

The following people are eligible for reappointment and have agreed to stay on GEOC for another two-year term:

Jane Goldman (with a change in subcommittee “chairpersonship”)  
Niloy Dutta (one-year term)

Anke Finger  
Murphy Sewall

Katharina von Hammerstein asked GEOC members to brainstorm possible new members. Several names were raised as possibilities. Additional suggestions should be sent to Katharina von Hammerstein via email.

#### **4. Reports and Discussion**

##### Thematic Pathways

Note: identified themed pathways would be entirely optional for students. No decision has yet been made about providing this as an option.

There are currently two opposing views on GEOC:

- PRO: would help students make more intentional choices when selecting their gen eds.
- CON: gen eds are meant to take students outside of their traditional interests.

Senate C&CC. Mike Darre stated that, often, syllabi that come through with gen ed proposals do not relay anything about the “gen ed-ness” of the course and, in that way, the syllabi don’t match what the proposal necessarily states. It is the recommendation of the Senate C&CC that syllabi of gen ed courses include gen ed information.

Discussion:

- This is an infringement on faculty freedom.
- Should GEOC prescribe what faculty put on their syllabi as long as they teach their courses the way we have approved them?
- Suggestion made that GEOC website have “suggested syllabus language” for the different content areas/competencies for faculty to use.

CA2 Substitutions at the Regionals:

Ernie Zirakzadeh arrived at 1:10pm.

Robert Cromley recapped his earlier points regarding his correspondence with Nancy Steenburg about the substitutions issue. (See **3. Subcommittee Reports, CA2 Social Science.**)

Discussion:

- Substitutions are going to happen. As this is a given, GEOC wants to ensure they are “done” more fairly and rationally so as to maintain the integrity of the gen ed system.
- Regionals want substitutions because there are not many 2000+ level CA2 courses offered on those campuses. Transfer students are slowed down in their degree progress by having to take 1000+level gen eds.

Two options that have been floated are:

- A list of shadow gen ed courses.
- A recommended list of substitutions approved by GEOC.

Concerns have been expressed about the two options above:

- UConn is ONE university and there should not be different rules for those on its different campuses.
- Equity among students

Ernie Zirakzadeh stated the following:

- Equity issues. He considers this a non issue as Regional campus students, as a matter of course, cannot take the full menu of courses that are offered at the Storrs campus. He recommends rethinking how Regionals work.
- Regionals (gen ed) vs. Storrs (non gen-ed) offering of courses. Ernie agrees that is a problematic solution.
- New gen ed courses for Regionals. He recommends that new CA2 courses be created with topics similar to the respective Storrs-based non-Gen-Ed course, but with a new course number and geared toward “gen ed-ness.” This would necessitate the creation of a new course with a new course description.
- Making an existing non-gen ed course a gen ed. Many departments would object to this suggestion in order to better guard seats for their majors. (General Education Guidelines state that gen ed courses must be open to all students.)

Discussion:

Identification of non-gen ed courses that would be good gen ed and then work with departments to create a new course with a different number, with a different/similar focus, and catering to a more general audience.

- The different numbers would capture the same topic but offered in a more general way.
  - Would the new course be included for the major/minor requirements? If so, departments would have to change the courses lists for their majors/minors. The problem here is that the course may need to be incorporated into the major. If the courses are watered down, the departments may choose to not include them in the major. This could create a new problem for the Regionals.
- Creation of an new course is the intellectually honest solution to the problem.
- Full majors at the Regional campuses. At least 3 majors are offered at each Regional campus. Will the new course creations create a situation where a degree from Storrs campus is worth more than a Regionals degree? (Regionals “gen-ed” major.)
- Of courses that are regularly offered at the Regionals (identified in **Sec 3. Subcommittee Reports, CA2 Social Science**), HDFS is willing to create new courses. Ernie Zirakzadeh will also talk to SOCI to try to get them on board.

GEOC supports the new course creations (similar to existing courses) being included in the gen ed curriculum (with all the necessary approval still required) if this would solve the problem.

Katharina von Hammerstein suggested that both options be presented to Nancy Steenburg.

- Development of new CA2 courses;
- a short-list of non-gen eds GEOC considers appropriate for CA2 substitution.

Ernie Zirakzadeh will get in touch with Nancy Steenburg about this. He noted that it would be at least 1-1.5 years before the first proposals for these new courses for the Regionals came to GEOC. The substitution mechanism would work in the meantime.

Meeting adjourned at 2:03pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anabel Perez  
GEOC Administrator