

GEOC Meeting April 3, 2009

In Attendance: Katharina von Hammerstein, Bill Lott, Niloy Dutta, Jane Goldman, Robert Cromley, John Troyer, Anke Finger, Peter Gogarten, Xae Alicia Reyes, Morty Ortega, Murphy Sewall, Michael Young, Tom Roby, Doug Cooper (Online Taskforce Co-Chair), Desmond McCaffrey (Online Taskforce Co-Chair), and Anabel Perez.
Not Present: Cora Lynn Deibler, Felicia Pratto, Elizabeth Jockusch, Dan Civco, and Tom Deans.

Meeting called to order at 12:03pm .

1. Minutes of the last meeting were presented.

Motion to approve minutes as written. Motion passed with one abstention.

2. Announcements.

- *Dodd Center Recognition.* Arnie Dashefsky, GEOC member until June 30, 2008, was honored as Doris and Simon Konover Chair of Judaic Studies.
- *End of Semester Party.* Katharina von Hammerstein will host a party at her home on May 1, 2009. Invitation with directions to follow.
- *Second Language Letter to CT Legislature's Education Committee.* At the recommendation of the Dean of the NEAG School of Education, GEOC's strongly worded letter to the CT Education Committee in favor of instituting a high school second language graduation requirement was toned down. The revised letter, signed by President Mike Hogan, has been sent to the Education Committee chairs.
- *Orientation Leaders.* Katharina von Hammerstein and Kim Chambers led a workshop with undergraduate Orientation leaders. The students at the workshop expressed support for general education and were knowledgeable about its importance in higher education. These students will be able to share this enthusiasm for the general education curriculum with incoming students.
- *General Education Enrollment Totals.* OIR's Kathryn Hayden, Eric Soulsby, Registrar's Office's Kim Page, Katharina von Hammerstein, and Anabel Perez met on April 2nd to discuss how best to reconcile the difference in enrollment numbers that are reported to us by Eric Soulsby and OIR. The difference in numbers is the result of "effective dating" of when courses become gen eds. This year, both OIR and Eric Soulsby will use the same reporting methods (effective dating in PeopleSoft) to, hopefully, arrive at the same totals.
- *W Meeting with English Department.* Tom Deans, Jane Goldman, Doug Kaufman, Katharina von Hammerstein and ENGL department representatives Hap Fairbanks, and Kate Capshaw Smith met on March 20th to discuss differences of opinions on student revisions and template language in ENGL proposal's W justification. W subcommittee chairs will report on the results of this meeting when they present their report later in this meeting.
- *Greetings to new GEOC member.* Michael (Mike) Young, EPSY, accepted his nomination to GEOC. Today's meeting is his first GEOC meeting.

3. Online Taskforce.

Co-chairs, Desmond McCaffrey and Doug Cooper in attendance.

GEOC has expressed the following concerns in regard to online courses:

- CA and Comp criteria must be fulfilled by online courses.
- Some concern over the possibility of cheating (though this is not an online course problem, solely).
- When changes in pedagogy to a gen ed courses are made, GEOC usually requires new approval; however, GEOC does not want to automatically request an additional review of online courses until such time as clearer guidelines are in place for online courses.

- In terms of net gain in seats or funds, it is the impression of some GEOC members that a good online course costs as much to teach as one traditionally taught, with no increase in seats, or possibly a decrease.

Discussion with the Online Taskforce Co-Chairs:

- Online Taskforce: the charge of the taskforce is as follows: "...to research and report on the status, method and potential of online education as it relates to the recently approved academic plan" (from the handout distributed by the Online Taskforce Co-Chairs.
 - For the first time, online courses have been given as much gravity by the Provost as traditional face-to-face courses.
 - Gen ed courses play a large role in the future of online courses.
 - Issues relevant to GEOC (from handout): "Online education at the University of Connecticut has the potential to:
 - Provide sections of 'hard to get' classes to ensure students are able to achieve the goal of graduation in four years
 - Offer alternative to large lectures classes by providing a smaller class feeling'
 - Expand the availability and reduce scheduling conflicts for campus general education courses
 - Increase intersession and summer offerings to capture students who are taking courses at other institutions during these time periods
 - Address physical space issues (limits on seats in classrooms; classrooms in building) at the university"
- GEOC: Transfer Admissions has a list of courses that can transfer in from other institutions as a direct substitution. Some of those are taught in online format. It would be better, if UConn offered the same course online.
- Online Taskforce: Ensuring quality in online courses is of utmost important. Instructional design is key in producing a quality course.
- Online Taskforce: Scholarly standards for online courses are used when creating new online offerings. These standards are a combination of Maryland Online Quality Matters AND Distance Learning Education. There is a rubric that gives a baseline for a quality course.
 - GEOC: Are there scholarly standards for face-to-face instruction? No special GEOC approval is needed for many things: change from small to large courses, transfer credit, etc. GEOC needs to decide what we need to review, what we don't, and then go from there.
 - GEOC: Since we don't have documented standards for face-to-face instruction, does it make sense to demand a higher set of standards for online courses? When does this higher standard kick-in -- when reviewing blended courses?
- GEOC and Online Taskforce: It is important that new online courses bring in IDD's expertise as development of a good online course is about much more than transference of data to an online setting.
- Online Taskforce: Across the university online courses are springing up. The Online Taskforce is trying to get ahead of these courses to make sure they are designed in a way that ensures quality of instruction and trying to set up a platform from which to "grow" quality online courses.
 - Currently, courses that are exclusively online number between 50-60, including Continuing Studies and the Masters in Accounting program.
- GEOC: Does everyone that proposes an online course have to go through IDD?
 - Online Taskforce: Not currently. Rather than require that proposers go to IDD, the Taskforce is trying to make using IDD's services more attractive.
 - GEOC: For gen ed courses it is important to have IDD involved. However, requiring that gen ed courses go through IDD may exhaust IDD's capacity.

- GEOC: Online Taskforce needs to examine the implications for the idea of a university “community.”
 - Online Taskforce: this concern was not one that many faculty members shared when completing an online courses survey implemented earlier.
- Online Taskforce: Wholly online undergraduate degree programs at UConn are at least a decade away.
- GEOC: What is the Online Taskforce seeking from GEOC:
 - Online Taskforce: A sense of the kinds of things GEOC believes the Taskforce should take into account. There may be a high demand for online gen ed courses.
- GEOC: How will GEOC provide a careful oversight role for online courses? GEOC needs to know how pedagogy is broken down (online, lecture, etc.). In some ways, there is more “bang-for-buck” with blended courses than wholly online courses.
- GEOC: Different CAs and Competencies have different goals and criteria that have to be met. GEOC should review how a course changes when offered online to see if these criteria are still met.
 - Potential for Diversity and Multiculturalism courses: the use of Second Life technology.
- GEOC: Will online courses be an additional resource or a substitution of resources? For example, an instructor who teaches an online course is an instructor who is not teaching a face-to-face course. In this example, there would be no net gain in seats, and possibly a decrease. Online courses will solve the time conflict problems but not the seat limitations problem.
 - Online Taskforce: The Taskforce agrees with this assessment. Summer offerings are seen as a better way of increasing seat capacity.
 - Online Taskforce: Intellectual Property issues (who - faculty or university- owns designed online courses) is currently being debated, with AAUP involved in the discussions. Most online courses are designed with the instructor’s personality and skills incorporated into the course. The Taskforce is not moving in direction of allowing others to teach an already-designed course.
- GEOC: It would be good to know where UConn students are taking the courses they transfer in. An in-depth analysis is needed to identify what courses/areas are in demand.
- GEOC: Proctoring: of exams. To what extent would this be built in to online courses?
- Online Taskforce: Most online courses are text-based. As technology improves and becomes less expensive, technological innovations lend themselves to online teaching. (Video capture, etc.) If a course soundly designed, the technology, as it evolves, can be incorporated to support the course.

GEOC would like to see the standards the Online Taskforce creates after doing their research. Once GEOC has this information, a decision will be made on how GEOC will move forward with respect to the review of online courses.

The Online Taskforce Co-Chairs departed at the conclusion of this discussion.

4. Subcommittee Reports.

CA3 Science and Technology

The CA3 subcommittee recommends **approval** of the following course for teaching in the **intensive session**:

Non-Lab

NRE 1000 Environmental Science

This course has been taught successfully in the intensive session prior to becoming a gen ed.

Motion to approve the CA3 report. Motion passed.

CA4 Diversity and Multiculturalism

The CA4 subcommittee recommends **approval** of the following course for teaching in the **intensive session**:

International

POLS 1402 Introduction to International Relations

Motion to approve the recommendation to offer POLS 1402 in the intensive session. Motion passed.

(This course is also a CA2 course for which approval has not yet been received. The course may not be offered until CA2 approval is granted.)

The CA4 subcommittee recommends **approval** of the following courses for inclusion in CA4:

Non-International

SOCI 2XXX Sociology of Intolerance and Injustice

(This course is also being proposed for CA2 and for W/non-W offering. The CA2 subcommittee has not reported a recommendation about this course; the W subcommittee has requested revisions of the proposal. The course will move forward to Senate C&CC as approved for CA4 Non-International ONLY.)

Motion to approve the recommendation to include SOCI 2XXX in CA4. Motion passed with one abstention.

The CA4 subcommittee request that the proposers of the following course be contacted for **additional information**:

SPAN 1010 Contemporary Spanish Culture and Society through Film

(How perspectives from within the diverse groups in Spanish culture and society are to be taught and how awareness of them is to be assessed.)

Writing Competency

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

ECE 4099W Independent Study in Electrical and Computer Engineering

Motion approve the report. Motion passed with one abstention.

ENGL/W meeting:

Issue: defining “revisions” as they apply to the W requirement and the use of template language for W proposal justification.

Compromise solution: The ENGL department and W subcommittee found a compromise regarding student revisions which may take place in a “dialogic” fashion throughout the W course – as opposed to a rigid sequence such as draft 1 – meeting with instructor -- student revisions – draft 2/final paper. The ENGL department has furthermore agreed to take out the wording about “voluntary” revisions in their W justifications. The department may use some template language, as approved by the chairs of the W subcommittee, as part of the larger W justification for their W proposals. However, each ENGL W proposal will need to offer justification for the given course. Template language may be used for a portion of that justification.

Second Language Competency

The Second Language Competency subcommittee presented a report on the second language requirements of the top 20+ public institutions. UConn's second language requirements are similar to those of its peers and aspirants.

5. Reports and Discussion.

GEOC Membership

- All of the GEOC members who were eligible for being reappointed, with the exception of Dan Civco, have agreed to continue serving on GEOC.
- Two members have completed their second two-year term and must rotate off of the GEOC: Felicia Pratto and John Troyer.
- Current member, Jane Goldman, will move off of the W subcommittee and will co-chair the CA2 subcommittee starting in the Fall.
- Peter Gogarten will be on sabbatical Fall 2009. Tom Roby will be asked if he can chair alone for the Fall semester.
- New GEOC members to co-chair the following subcommittees are needed: W, Information Literacy, and CA1. Several suggestions for new members were made.

Optional Thematic Pathways

Opposing Views on GEOC:

- Pro: providing optional pathways may allow students to create some coherence in their gen ed selections.
- Con: we should encourage students to take gen eds from outside the areas for which they have already expressed interest.

Discussion:

- How will this option be presented to students?
 - GEOC website link to list of possible pathways.
 - State clearly and unequivocally that pathways are optional.
 - In the ECON department, the undergraduate handbook lists career objectives and corresponding courses for preparation. Something similar could be created for gen eds.
- Why is GEOC in the position to suggest these pathways?
 - Attempt to make gen ed more appealing to students.
 - Support for students to get oriented in the maze of hundreds of Gen Ed courses.
- Guide for Advisors:
 - The list should be geared toward advisors to help them guide students.
 - GEOC should seek feedback from advisors and departments about additions, subtractions, new pathways, etc.

It was decided that there was enough support on the committee for optional thematic Gen Ed pathways to warrant pursuing the questions of how best to first assemble such categories and then publicize them.

Meeting adjourned at 2:03pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anabel Perez
GEOC Administrator