

GEOC Meeting September 13, 2016

Members in **BOLD** were in attendance:

Eric Schultz – Chair, (Karen Piantek – Admin), Joseph Abramo, Michael Bradford, Michael Darre (Ex-Officio), **Ana Maria Diaz-Marcos, Arthur Engler, Bernard Goffinet, David Gross, Thomas Meyer, Olivier Morand, Michael Morrell, Gustavo Nanclares**, Fatma Selampinar, **Kathleen Tonry (Ex-Officio)**, **Eduardo Urios-Aparisi**, Manuela Wagner, Michael Young, Steve Zinn

Guests: **Maria Ana O'Donoghue, Jean Main**

Meeting was called to order at 12:32pm.

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

- A. Members of the group introduced themselves, and the committee welcomed new member Michael Morrell to CA2.

2. **The minutes from April 27, 2016 were accepted unanimously with an edit to the attendance.**

- M. Morrell noted that he was at the meeting but was not listed in boldface type as other attending members. K. Piantek made adjustments to the minutes from 4/27/16 to reflect M. Morrell's attendance.

3. **Announcements**

- A. E. Schultz reviewed the charge to the GEOC from the website.
- B. E. Schultz noted that the GEOC will use a new procedure, wherein it will review an incoming course proposal for clear consideration of guidelines for all General Education courses, before the proposal is referred to the appropriate subcommittee. This is part of the chair's efforts towards broader University-wide engagement with General Education.

4. **Guest Presenter – Ana Maria O'Donoghue and Jean Main**

- A. CA4 Transfer Credit
 - Ana Maria O'Donoghue introduced herself and Jean Main to the committee and spoke about awarding generic transfer credit.
 - M.A. O'Donoghue discussed some documents she provided to the committee. For one, she noted that UConn never awards credit at the 4000-level, and it is very careful about awarding 2000- and 3000-level. Internships and practicals also do not transfer in because of the potential for extreme variability across schools.
 - D. Gross asked whether CA1 credits were assigned specific CLAS areas. M.A. O'Donoghue noted that credit comes in only as general CA1 for generic transfers, not divided into the CLAS areas. When courses come in as UConn equivalencies, the courses automatically adopt the specific CLAS associations. Regarding the former case, she noted that transfer admissions will often work with faculty liaisons in departments to determine CLAS areas manually, but they are not automatic.
 - E. Schultz expressed the feeling that, despite due diligence, transfer admissions cannot possibly review courses as closely as GEOC does, so on a fundamental level he is not necessarily comfortable with this process as a whole. D. Gross argued that at some point these courses are

- reviewed in-depth by some faculty member; the course is only approved automatically after this initial review, although there is probably the need for some kind of sunset clause.
- M. A. O'Donoghue noted that discontinuing this practice would mean the individual review of 1300+ courses a year.
 - M. Morrell expressed concern about a 1000-level Bible course that comes in as CA1 credit according to one of the documents provided. He didn't think UConn had a 1000-level Bible course, let alone one that was Gen Ed, and he was concerned about the specificity and potential religiosity of the content. O'Donoghue confirmed that UConn would not approve a course that included proselytizing content.
 - It was noted that W courses are never awarded transfer credit.
 - K. Tonry asked how many students this request would affect. M. A. O'Donoghue noted that it was hard to say, as the numbers vary, but between 100-150 students a semester could be affected.
 - D. Gross asked how many faculty are responsible for reviewing these non-automatic transfers. The answer was one per department, so approving the request would also help alleviate the workloads of multiple faculty.
 - M. A. O'Donoghue and J. Main thanked the GEOC for their time and left the committee to discuss considerations.
 - **M. Morrell moved to approve the courses listed in the request as generic subject categories under Content Areas One, Three or Four. D. Gross seconded the motion.**

Discussion

- G. Nanclare agreed that the courses could not possibly be subjected to the level of examination in which GEOC engages, but he felt that this was a valuable service to students – a “lesser evil,” if an evil at all – and he noted that he would be inclined to approved the process.
- K. Tonry noted that other administrative moves to restrict transfer credit are making the pool of students this would affect smaller, and she felt that less obstruction was better in this case.
- **E. Schultz called for a vote and the motion was approved unanimously.**

5. Old Business

A. Gen Ed Task Force updates

- E. Schultz briefly recapped the progress of the Task Force from last year for the committee. He noted that the Senate C&C has not officially reviewed the Task Force's report, so it will review the report for discussion at its next meeting.

B. Digital Information Literacy competency

- E. Schultz noted that this will potentially be a topic of discussion this year, pending Task Force recommendations.

C. Next steps on the proposal regarding First Year Writing waivers

- This will also be a topic of discussion, although there are dimensions of it (e.g. budgets) that are beyond GEOC control.

6. New Curricular Action Requests

A. ARE 1110 Population, Food, and the Environment (Revision; description change; currently CA2)

- E. Schultz noted that in looking at the “General Education Goals” box, it appears the proposer mainly copied and pasted language from the guidelines, which is a persistent problem across proposals.

- T. Meyer noted that he pre-emptively spoke to the proposer, and he will have updated language for the proposal by the end of the day.
- The GEOC agreed that this course will be sent on to subcommittee once updates have been received.

7. New Business

A. Provost's Course Development Competition

- *This item was moved up to earlier in the meeting agenda due to its time-sensitive nature.*
- E. Schultz explained that the competition was not run last year, but he felt it should be run this year.
- He noted that he spoke to Mansour Ndiaye in the Academic Services Center, who felt that there was a dearth of courses for CA1, particularly in CLAS areas A and D.
- The other items listed in the competition areas of preference were borrowed from previous competitions.
- In discussing the call for W courses, D. Gross indicated that he felt students should have to take writing courses outside the major. He didn't necessarily think, for example, that Math students would be best served by taking writing courses from non-Math faculty.
- D. Gross also had a question about who could apply. He was concerned that proposals that did not have department backing would be submitted. K. Piantek assured him that department head approval was required in order to submit a proposal, and E. Schultz cited the section in the competition announcement where it states that the department is required to offer the course at least every other year if selected.
- The committee made some wordsmithing changes to the "Approvals" section of the announcement to take out confusing language that suggested courses other than Gen Eds might be included in the competition.
- T. Meyer expressed concern that the highlighted areas of preference make the announcement's assertion that all proposals are welcome seem disingenuous. He wanted to see some wording that made it clear that "no priority will be given" to these areas.
- M. Morrell spoke in favor of keeping the list on the grounds that it might be encouraging to some proposers who might not otherwise have applied, which is the point.
- Overall the committee felt that the list should be kept, but "no priority" language was added to the announcement.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
 Karen Piantek
 GEOC Program Assistant