

**General Education Committee
Meeting Minutes for September 7, 2018**

Committee members attending: Virginia Hemby, Justin Gardner, Mike Boyle, Karen Reed, Dovie Kimmins, Aliou Li, Terry Davis, Steve Severn, Zaf Khan, Theresa McBreen, Geeta Maharaj

Ex-officio members attending: Susan Myers-Shirk, Peter Cunningham, Dawn McCormick

- ***Call to order.*** Virginia Hemby called the meeting to order, and began by asking everyone to introduce themselves. Virginia is serving as chair of the committee this year.
- ***Election of officers for 2018-2019.*** Karen Reed self-nominated as Secretary and was unanimously accepted. Aliou Li self-nominated as Vice-Chair and was unanimously accepted.
- ***Approval of minutes from April 6th.*** Mike Boyle moved to approve and Teresa McBreen seconded. The minutes were accepted unanimously.
- ***Curriculog.*** Susan Myers-Shirk reminded everyone of the manner by which to access Curriculog (<https://mtsu.curriculog.com>). She pointed out that on the website's landing page -- before logging in -- there is a schedule of training times; she recommended attending a training session if needed. Currently there are no new proposals on the horizon, but should a new one come in we'll see it via Curriculog. You log into Curriculog using your FSA credentials.
- ***Upcoming calendar events, including competency assessments.*** Susan Myers-Shirk stated that in the past, the committee has done two types of assessments: competency assessments (for example, ENGL 1010/1020, the California Critical Thinking Skills test, MATH 1710, COMM 2200), as well as course assessments (for courses added to the General Education curriculum). Every course, over a five-year period, would undergo assessment. In July 2018, Susan went to a SACSCOC Institute to learn about General Education assessment. There she learned that SACS is moving toward program assessment and away from individual course assessment. Another timely factor for the committee to consider is that we are moving to a redesign of the General Education curriculum. Therefore, the manner in which we assess courses going forward will depend upon how we redesign the General Education curriculum.

In regard to our assessment responsibilities for this academic year, Susan spoke with Faye Johnson and Peter Cunningham. As a result of this discussion, it was decided to put course assessment on hiatus. In the spring we would have been reviewing course assessments, so this is off our agenda now. We will continue, however, to do competency assessments. To that end, we will have three of the reports on our agenda this fall: Andrew Dix from Communication (Oct. 5), and Rebecca Callahan (November), and then Susan will do the California Assessment at some point. English will be shifting their assessment from 1020 to 1010, therefore they can only assess students in the fall as that is when the majority of students take ENGL 1010.

Susan distributed a handout showing new SACS guidelines pertaining to General Education (see Appendix A). The new emphasis in these guidelines, with regard to assessment of competencies, is that we will have to show how we are addressing improvement of student learning. For example,

under Section 8, item 2B of the SACS Principles of Accreditation specifically addresses General Education. With regard to Section 9, Susan stated that our program currently exceeds those standards.

Susan stated that at the five-year SACSCOC accreditation review, Dual Enrollment and Distance Learning classes will be evaluated, and pointed out the large number of these classes that fall under General Education. This will therefore require a big mind shift for our programs because SACS sees those classes as the department's responsibility to assess.

Susan stated that because course assessment is on hiatus, the committee will shift its attention to the redesign of the General Education program. She distributed a handout (see Appendix B) and discussed meetings with different stakeholders on campus regarding their opinions on a General Education redesign. The idea of changing the name of the program, for example to "University Core", might make the program more meaningful to students. The committee discussed the goals listed on the handout and the idea that these redesign changes should be faculty-driven. The committee would like everyone on campus to understand the value of the General Education program and for the program to ultimately become something that attracts students to MTSU. The group discussed the tentative timeline printed on the handout. Susan stated noted two upcoming conferences, the AAC&U General Education Conference in February 2019 and the AAC&U General Education Redesign Institute in May 2019. She asked that committee members should consider whether they would like to attend. She concluded by noting that 2024-2025 is our next year of review and that if we follow the proposed timeline, we will have enough assessment data from the redesigned program to meet the requirements for that review.

Finally, Susan stated that today was the last day to apply for the FLC on General Education redesign.

- ***Discussion of the mission and importance of General Education at MTSU.*** Virginia Hemby led a discussion on this topic. She stated that we need to consider General Education from the perspective of employers: they are looking for the ability to think broader than their particular academic focus, and this ties directly into General Education. Mike Boyle stated the importance of demonstrating the value of General Education; he said that many Tennessee politicians are eager to bring new workers online, and believe that General Education just slows down the production of these workers - nor do they believe that the education provides any value to employers. Justin Gardner agreed and stated that the university's ability to provide strong skills among its graduates is not demonstrated very well. Dawn McCormick pointed out the question to be answered through the redesign, that of "What does it mean to be an educated person?" Virginia answered this question stating that we need a more educated society to understand how to research and solve problems. Dawn agreed and added that creativity and the ability to think outside of the box are valuable skills. Mike stated that we all agree on the purpose of General Education, but we just have to figure out how to sell it. Steve Severn stated that the committee must be careful to not focus so much on selling the program, because that infers we are coming from a deficit model. He stated that the group should also demonstrate the ethicality of General Education. Zaf Khan discussed two aspects that should be considered in the discussion: velocity (of knowledge which is increasing over time, and how to manage this volume of knowledge) and variety (the ability to choose and self-select). Zaf also discussed the importance of learning by doing, stating that perhaps we get bogged down in content, and forget that application has its merits. Finally Zaf reminded the group of the importance of differentiation, to move away from a "one size fits all" and be able to provide a

differentiated curriculum. Steve agreed and added that the core should emphasize breadth, but then a major should emphasize specialization.

- ***Subcommittee responsibilities.*** Virginia stated that due to the hiatus of course assessments, we will not have subcommittees this year, but rather the General Education committee as a whole will decide on issues.
- ***Committee charge.*** Peter Cunningham had to arrive late to the meeting as he was obligated to attend a different, overlapping meeting. He gave the committee its charge (see Appendix C).
- ***New business.*** There was no new business. Susan stated that she would keep the committee in the loop regarding the progress within the FLCs.

Meeting adjourned at 2:53 PM

Principles of Accreditation: Foundations of Quality Enhancement

<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2018PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf>

Section 8: Student Achievement

Student learning and student success are at the core of the mission of all institutions of higher learning. Effective institutions focus on the design and improvement of educational experiences to enhance student learning and support student learning outcomes for its educational programs. To meet the goals of educational programs, an institution provides appropriate academic and student services to support student success.

1. The institution identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution's mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution uses multiple measures to document student success. *(Student achievement)* [CR]
2. The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:
 - a. student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs. *(Student outcomes: educational programs)*
 - b. student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs. *(Student outcomes: general education)*
 - c. academic and student services that support student success.

Section 9: Educational Program Structure and Content

Collegiate-level educational programs emphasize both breadth and depth of student learning. The structure and content of a program challenges students to integrate knowledge and develop skills of analysis and inquiry.

General education is an integral component of an undergraduate degree program through which students encounter the basic content and methodology of the principle areas of knowledge.

Undergraduate and graduate degrees develop advanced expertise in an integrated understanding of one or more academic disciplines or concentrations.

The institution is responsible for the delivery of an appropriate portion of the academic experiences applicable to the degrees or credentials awarded.

1. Educational programs (a) embody a coherent course of study, (b) are compatible with the stated mission and goals of the institution, and (c) are based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education. *(Program content)* [CR]
2. The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-

baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. The institution provides an explanation of equivalencies when using units other than semester credit hours. The institution provides an appropriate justification for all degree programs and combined degree programs that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit. (*Program Length*) [CR]

3. The institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the undergraduate level that:

- (a) is based on a coherent rationale.
 - (b) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree program. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent.
 - (c) ensures breadth of knowledge. These credit hours include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics. These courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession.
- (*General education requirements*) [CR]

4. At least 25 percent of the credit hours required for an undergraduate degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree.
(*Institutional credits for an undergraduate degree*)

5. At least one-third of the credit hours required for a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree.
(*Institutional credits for a graduate/professional degree*)

6. Post-baccalaureate professional degree programs and graduate degree programs are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs, and are structured (a) to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (b) to ensure engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training.
(*Post-baccalaureate rigor and curriculum*)

7. The institution publishes requirements for its undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate professional programs, as applicable. The requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs.
(*Program requirements*)

(Appendix B: General Education redesign information)

General Education Redesign: Building a University Core

CONTACT INFO

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WHAT WE NEED FROM THE GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE:

- Support in encouraging a university-wide conversation about general education redesign during AY 2018-2019.
- FLC members will be running a series of focus groups with students, faculty, and administrators: ****Please support and prioritize participation.****

KEY GUIDING QUESTIONS

What should a university-educated student know and be able to do? What are the key components of a university core?

GOALS OF REDESIGN

- a coherent, integrated program with academic integrity, one that is grounded in the humanities, arts, sciences, and social sciences, forms the core of a university education, and creates intellectual excitement
- a program that offers both content and skills (digital, professional, & academic) and prepares students for upper division work and for their lives as university-educated scholars and citizens in a diverse world where critical thinking, reading, and writing are essential skills.
- a program that is driven by the needs and desires of students and faculty rather than programs or administrative requirements
- a program that students, faculty, parents, and employers see as valuable

WHY REDESIGN?

- “The single most direct and effective approach to improving the educational experience for all students is the redesign of general education....” Paul L. Gaston, *General Education Transformed: How We Can, Why We Must*
- Gaston argues that a well-designed general education program can and should contribute to retention, graduation, and even employability, as well as the quality of learning.
- Redesign is a nationwide movement; universities across the nation are redesigning their general education to provide learning that is integrative, outcome driven, “digitally rich, proficiency based, and question centered.” To be competitive in the 21st century, MTSU needs to be a part of that movement.
- Some of our students and their parents—and some of our faculty and administrators—don’t see the value of general education and instead see general education courses as “something to get out of the way.” A redesigned general education will address that question of value.

Rev. September 07, 2018

TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

2017-2018 Brainstorming the Future of General Education; read Cathy Davidson, *The New Education* (completed)

2018-2019

1. *****Starting the conversation: Two Faculty Learning Communities focused on intensive/extensive information gathering*****
2. Creation of a core design team and a redesign advisory board
3. Core design team attendance at the AAC&U Institute in Summer 2019 on General Education Redesign (example: <https://www.aacu.org/summerinstitutes/igea/2018>) to generate a proposed program design for discussion and implementation—including program goals for assessment
4. Development of a website, blog, & Facebook presence for redesign

2019-2020

1. Public forums discussing program design
2. Course mapping
3. Articulation of outcomes for the transfer path and for the program
4. Design and approval of pilot courses

2020-2021*

1. Creation of a Core Implementation Team
2. Course design and approval
3. Pilot first round of new courses and add them to the schedule for Fall 2021
4. Implement any necessary changes in Banner
5. Plan for roll out, including marketing at summer Freshman Customs

2021-2022

1. First round of university core courses offered
2. Teach out of current general education program

AY 2022-2023, AY 2023-2024, AY 2024-2025** should provide three years of assessment data for SACSCOC ten-year review.

*Year of record for SACSCOC Five-Year Review

**Year of record for SACSCOC Ten-Year Review

General Education

- a. Committee Classification: Administrative.
- b. Charge: Review the University's general education mission; all general education courses, syllabi, learning outcomes; data related to the achievement of the goals; and provide University-wide leadership for the ongoing evaluation and improvement of the general education program.
- c. Report Recipients: Provost; standard summary reporting.
- d. Nomination: By college.
- e. Membership: Three (3) faculty members from each college, with no more than one (1) member from a department, and two (2) students. Faculty will serve non-renewable three (3)-year terms; students serve one (1)-year terms, which may be renewed for a second term.
- f. Special Information:
 - (1) The committee will meet in the summer, when necessary.
 - (2) The committee may review faculty evaluation process for faculty assigned to teach general education courses and the relationships among all program components.
 - (3) The committee, at the request of the Director of General Education, may initiate a process for changes in the general education program. Additionally, proposals for change may come from the special task forces, commissions, and other groups or members of the University community.
 - (4) Any proposal for change must be approved by a simple majority vote of the entire voting membership of the committee to go forward. If approved by a majority vote, a proposal for change must then be submitted for discussion to all interested University constituencies. All interested groups and individuals will be given sufficient time to discuss fully each proposal and to provide comments to the committee. Approval from each of these groups, however, is not required. After comment on a proposal for change is complete, the proposal will again be placed before the committee. If the proposal is then approved by a two-thirds majority of the entire voting membership, the committee will present it as a recommendation to the Director of General Education. If approved by the Director, the recommendation will be sent to the University Provost or designate for final approval. Changes approved by the University Provost, particularly those that will impact faculty staffing, will be implemented at a time he/she so designates.
 - (5) The Director of General Education, the Vice Provost for Academic Programs, and the Assistant Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness will be ex-officio members of the committee. A Dean, recommended by the Deans' Council, will be an ex-officio member of the committee. A Department Chair, recommended by the Chairs' Council, will be an ex-officio member of the committee. Ex-officio terms are one (1)-year terms and are renewable.

(6) The committee will annually select a vice chairperson and a secretary. The vice chairperson will automatically become chairperson for the next year. All committee appointments will be for a three (3) year term except for the student representatives whose term will be for one (1) year. Individuals (other than the student representatives) may not be reappointed to the committee until they have been off the committee for at least one (1) year after their last term expired. All ex-officio members will be appointed to one (1) year renewable terms. There will be no limit on the number of times an ex-officio member may be renewed.

(7) The committee functions as the General Education Curriculum Committee. New general education courses and other changes in the general education program do not require approval of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. Any course removed from the general education program, which did not have prior approval by the University Curriculum Committee, must be submitted to and approved by the University Curriculum Committee to remain in the University's curriculum.

g. Review and Revise date: 2022 and every five (5) years subsequent.