General Education Advisory Task Force Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, November 18, 2009

Attending: Cindy Pemberton, Wayne Vaught, Lynda Plamann, Laura Gayle Green, Paul Cuddy, Deb O’Bannon, Tim Timmons, Linda Garavalia, Cheryl Grossman, Jolene Lynn, Mary Allen

Absent:   Kim Bray, Julie Cheslik

I. Convene meeting - Cindy Pemberton  

Updates

a. General Education Advisory Task Force Membership Roster on Provost’s web site

II. Reports

a. College of Arts and Sciences and their work with respect to general education – Wayne Vaught (follow up from last meeting)

Wayne Vaught continued his report on the numerous efforts of the College (CAS) in revising their General Education requirements. Previous efforts in the College to formulate general education requirements stalled at various points in the process. The most recent proposal is the result of work done over the past couple of years and has been productive, with departments participating in the conversation. This work has resulted in a better sense of the goals and purposes of general education. With the focus now on a campus-wide effort to develop a general education program, further work on the College’s plan has been suspended.

Some of the lessons learned from the current, as well as previous attempts at general education revision in the College include keeping the faculty heavily involved and encouraging their ownership in order to have a successful plan. There needs to be clear goals and mission, maintaining an open and transparent process. The committee membership asked about the issue of portability of degree to degree, and Wayne Vaught explained that this was not covered to any great extent by CAS, as it was not pertinent at the time.

We cannot ignore that as part of this institution’s history, there has been no cohesive vision as a campus. This cannot be ignored as the work of this committee goes forward. Cindy Pemberton stated that the committee needs to set the framework as work moves forward, and we need to consider student learning outcomes and how it fits with the mission of UMKC.

ACTION ITEM:

It was asked of Wayne Vaught whether students participated in the general education revision work in CAS. He responded that they did participate in the last revision attempt via survey feedback, and he will bring copies of the survey for the committee to review.

b. Reports on Content and Process/General Education from various institutions (includes aspirational peers) (List of presentations may be updated prior to meeting)

- Portland State University (Oregon) – Cheryl Grossman

Cheryl Grossman reported on Portland State University’s general education program and provided a handout to the membership
The following reports will be made at the December meeting:

- University of Buffalo/SUNY – Deb O’Bannon, Linda Garavalia
- University of Cincinnati – Laura Gayle Green
- University of Pittsburgh – Wayne Vaught

III. Discussion

a. Discussion of A Guide for Curricular Change - Revising General Education – And Avoiding the Potholes, by Paul L. Gaston and Jerry G. Gaff

The committee membership discussed the booklet, and the following comments were made:

- We are more innovative than we give ourselves credit for being.

- Spend time thinking about student learning outcomes. What is general education, and does it fit our mission?

- Get faculty in general involved in the conversation and figure out how to have an open, meaningful conversation with all engaged. It will be up to this group to work on figuring out how to approach this.

- Avoid language that places general education as something to “get out of the way”. Whether intention or unintentional, it’s the signal that is currently sent to our students.

- Help students understand why we value written and oral communication, whether they are students studying dance, engineering, etc. We need to tell students why this links to what they’re doing.

- Campus Learning Objectives: Think of the uniqueness of UMKC and what students should walk away with - we presently are not taking advantage of what unique qualities this institution has, and we need to take advantage of that.

- Place the strategic plan in the framework of the discussion. We do not want to change the mission, but fulfill the mission.

- Do not limit the debate. Students, along with external constituents with formal and information connection to the university may be beneficial to the process, and should be kept in mind.

- Meet the needs of the workforce, keeping in mind that what those needs are today won’t be the same ten years from now. Further focus on the rationale for general education and why it is important.

- Need for continuous quality assessment. Need support systems in place, i.e. faculty development and what we need to do to help faculty be successful as we implement this plan and support faculty in doing so.

- We will need a transition plan in implementing general education.

- How widely known is this initiative? This group could draft key points, succinct issues to address with proposed timeframe to share with faculty as the process unfolds.
• Have students engaged. For instance, don’t just study diversity in a book, but help students to make the connection in the community.


The link to this article was sent to the membership prior to today’s meeting. One of the authors of the article, expressed her willingness to assist the task force as a resource with respect to general education revision.

IV. Other Business

In conclusion, Cindy Pemberton reminded the membership to provide Mary Allen with their selection of the school on the list sent previously. Members of the committee will be asked to select a school that remains on the list and make a report at subsequent meetings. At the December 16 meeting, the committee will spend time on programs.

For January meetings, the committee will focus on developing a campus wide strategy to begin discussion about general education revision.

V. Adjourn

The next meeting of the General Education Task Force Advisory Committee will take place on Wednesday, December 16 from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. in the Gillham Park Room, Administrative Center.