

GERTF Meeting

March 17, 2006

Members Present: John Ambrose, Sarah Ash, Jo-Ann Cohen, Allen Dupont, Ken Esbenshade, Karen Helm, Lois Hunt, Chris Kessler, March Krotee, Jacqueline Hawkins-Morton, Dan Robison, Laura Severin

Dr. John Ambrose opened the meeting at 8:10 a.m. The task force received copies of the minutes. Dr. Ambrose moved to approve the minutes of March 3, 2006. Motion was approved.

Current copies of each proposal were passed out to members as well as a copy of the text regarding the “Comprehensive Articulation Agreement between the University of North Carolina and the North Carolina Community College System.”

Karen Helm also passed out a document called “Building Blocks of General Education Program at NC State” for the meeting.

The task force opened up morning discussion on the idea of having a “freshman experience,” including a freshman seminar and capstone course. The discussion focused on how these experiences would be defined and coordinated with the context of a general education program. The group also mentioned that several of the current proposals include a “freshman experience” course, but the group needed to discuss more on what they want included in such a course. The following questions or points were made during the discussion:

- Could the concept of large section FYI courses be expanded to fit into a seminar idea?
- How a working list of objectives could be defined for a seminar course (freshman or senior) and how this would depend on the overall structure of the Gen Ed Program.
- Is it better to define one or two objectives for a broad course, like a freshman seminar, to show students how to “excite their minds” and promote learning instead of trying to cover too many objectives with one course?
- There was a brief discussion on “what gets students excited” about learning and how to interact and energize topics that students can get behind.
- Objectives:
 - A freshman experience needs to be interdisciplinary
 - Needs to provide critical thinking skills
 - Excite and engage
 - Connect faculty and students; Get together faculty who can “cross lines” and can work together as a team.
 - Help students find “a niche” in a smaller community under the umbrella of the whole community so they can learn to connect.
 - Provide a uniform experience?
- Should a freshman experience be related to a Village or other community?
- Could a subset of GER courses open to freshman only be linked to a course such as ENG 101?
- How do you deliver and structure a GER message that promotes engaging learning in communities, service, global issues, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary perspectives?

- It is important to remember to provide a way for students to document their experiences and credentials, be it in a concentration, themes, minor or certificates. (This is in relation to helping students understand why they are taking GER courses and being involved in their GER learning).

The committee agreed that their discussions definitely looked at having a freshman experience as part of the GER program.

The discussion then focused on identifying common elements in the current proposals. Several proposals mention “themes” or “minors.” Should the program develop a general freshman experience that introduces the ideas of general education and interdisciplinary perspectives? Then once a student has taken the freshman experience and understands the “why” of general education, they can select their “theme,” and structure the theme to meet the GER. This will provide a path for the students to follow throughout their career and allow them choice in what courses they take to meet the GER.

The task force agreed there are several givens that should be incorporated into any GE program such as: a PE requirement; distributed requirements; reduction in hours; and transferability.

For next time:

The task force will attempt to discuss how many hours the program should be, what a freshman course might look like, what a capstone course might look like, and how the program might fill out from beginning to end.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Melissa McConnell.