**Spring 2013**

June 7, 2013

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The spring 2013 semester was largely devoted to moving forward with the proposed Gen Ed assessment plan, with the goal of collecting data on the Written and Oral Communication and Historical Perspective categories in the fall semester.

With learning objectives defined for all fourteen categories that make up the GECCO and the AGEC (see Fall 2012 Gen Ed Committee Report,) faculty who teach in the AAS programs were asked to update their curriculum maps to designate courses within each program in which assessment data can be collected for the ten GECCO categories. (AAS programs are not required to include AGEC categories which are only applicable to transfer degrees and classes.)

Though this project wasn't’t completed in the spring 2013 semester, a good start was made with roughly half the AAS program curriculum maps completely updated. Nearly all the rest were started and by the end of the semester, all but three programs had assessment courses identified for Written and Oral Communication. This work will be continued into the next academic year.

As usual, there was little curriculum up for review by the Gen Ed committee in the spring semester. In reality, there should be almost none, as all changes to gen ed classes must be approved before the deadline for the next year’s catalog, which is the end of the fall semester each year. However, a few proposals do seem to sneak in just past the deadlines, so there were some courses that were reviewed and passed on to the Curriculum Committee. The examination of these courses led to a wider discussion of what defines a "general education course." The committee's conclusion, also forwarded to the Curriculum Committee, is that general education courses must be general. In other words, their primary purpose and focus of any gen ed class must be, regardless of its topic, to introduce students to the fundamental concepts and activities of the liberal arts. This is why widely disparate courses can be a part of the same AGEC category, because they are essentially interchangeable when it comes to providing our students with an academic foundation for their studies. A student should and must be able to encounter the general foundations of the social sciences, the humanities, scientific inquiry, etc., in whatever gen ed courses is taken, and then be able to apply that insight to whatever degree he or she pursues.

Thus the General Education committee strongly urged the Curriculum Committee against approving general education classes designed for a particular degree, discipline or population. If a course is so specialized that it only speaks to a particular group of students, it is not and should not be considered a general education class. Conversely, if a course is constructed to be a broad introduction to an aspect of the liberal arts, then it should not be designated as belonging to a particular degree or program. The Gen Ed committee, therefore, also argued against the idea of requiring specific gen ed courses for specific degrees. Gen Ed courses should give students general skills that can be widely applied, and should not be expected to primarily convey ideas or skills that are limited to a particular field of study. Programs should refrain from specifying specific gen ed courses for the Gen Ed block of a degree unless a course is a stated prerequisite for a core course within the degree sequence.

Also in March the General Education Committee was represented by its Chair in meetings with the visiting HLC accreditation team. The results of that visit were very positive, with a full endorsement from the accreditors of the Gen Ed assessment plans now in the works.

Finally, the development of the Banner system to collect Gen Ed assessment data was started. At the end of the spring semester, the General Education Coordinator met with representatives from IT and the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment committee, as well as Stacey Hilton, Dean of Instructional Support and Improvement, to lay out plans and expectation for how collection will take place. IT will work on this over the summer, with the goal of having a working prototype to introduce to the faculty in the fall.

The fall semester will bring an exciting new chapter to the project of assessing General Education at Yavapai College, as we watch our plans be played out in reality. By the end of the 2013, we will have our first concrete assessment data and will be able to see what works and what work still need to be done.