**Spring 2015**

While curriculum reviews of specific classes and programs were light in the spring semester, the Gen Ed committee tackled a broader issue that influences the gen ed curriculum as a whole.

One of the few classes brought before the committee in the spring was PHE 154: Theory of Coaching/ASEP Certification Prep. The proposal was 1. Change the number from 154 to 254 to reflect the fact that it is the capstone course for the coaching certificate, and 2. Add the course to the AGEC critical thinking list. This prompted a larger discussion of the purpose and function of the critical thinking course category as a whole. The committee reviewed the history of the gen ed critical thinking category, noting that it was originally conceived as an entry-level requirement, a course that students could take without any English or math prerequisites, which would therefore give them a chance to start working on their AGEC or program gen ed requirements even if they didn’t place into the program’s required writing or math classes. As the category has grown, however, this purpose has been largely forgotten. Several of the current classes on the critical thinking AGEC list are 200-level courses, and the proposed PHE 254 would add another. It has become obvious that a clarification of the role and purpose of this category within the AGEC and GECCO categories is necessary.

One suggestion favored by the committee is to reemphasize the introductory nature of the critical thinking courses and perhaps to refocus them as gateway courses to various programs. This might allow the FYE course to be included as a critical thinking course as well.

Toward this end, the General Education coordinator attended the dean’s meeting in April to begin a discussion of what the dean’s would like to see the critical thinking classes do within the programs they each supervise. The Gen Ed coordinator will also attend a Faculty Senate meeting in the fall to broach this conversation with the faculty. In addition, the planned collection of critical thinking assessment data starting the fall of 2015 will provide further data as to how well the current critical thinking outcomes are being met in classes now listed on the critical thinking AGEC list, as well as the GECCO critical thinking benchmark courses. The Gen Ed committee will be the focal point for this discussion, leading to a better, clearer understanding among all faculty of the purpose of this Gen Ed category.

The following courses were reviewed and recommended to the Curriculum committee.

 HIS 131

 HIS 132

 HIS 201

 HIS 202

 HIS 205

The following course was reviewed and not recommended to the Curriculum committee.

PHE 154 – for the reason that it is a capstone course and therefore is not appropriate as a general introduction to critical thinking. By the time students take a capstone course in a program, they should already be applying critical thinking skills to their studies.

The following course was reviewed and tabled.

LAW 100 – While the course meets the college’s requirements for a critical thinking course, it can’t be included on the AGEC list unless it is accepted at all three state universities, which it currently is not. The course will be submitted for approval, and if it succeeds, will be taken up by the Gen Ed committee again.

The project to update degree programs with restricted Gen Ed requirements continues, but no program modifications have been completed yet.