

WCSU Committee on General Education
Minutes of the Inaugural Session
September 1, 2005

Members present: V. Kenausis (Chair), L. Vaden-Goad, A. Zink, D. Brown, R. Flanagan (Recording), W. Petkanas, P. Secondo

Guests: D. Barrett (Psychology), A. Skar (World Languages and Literature).

Meeting called to order at 8:10 a.m.

- I. Housekeeping
 - a. Annie Wong resigned from this committee for personal reasons. V. Kenausis has emailed Senate president and Dean of Ancell to get a new representative from Ancell.
 - b. V. Kenausis proposed meeting at 8:15 am instead of 8:00 am and this was accepted by the committee by general agreement.
 - c. The committee agreed to continue the plan proposed last meeting, of meeting every first and second Thursday of each month.
 - d. V. Kenausis announced that the website was available and she may link it to the ERES page.
- II. Approval of May 23, 2005 meeting minutes.
 - a. A motion was made to accept the minutes (A. Zink, D. Brown) and this was passed unanimously.
- III. Old Business
 - a. Gen Ed course approval form
 - i. Subcommittee has not designed this yet. Some concern that a course approval form is premature before proposing changes to gen ed.
 - ii. Discussion about whether to design a form for courses to be approved as meeting gen ed requirements now, or to wait until we've accomplished a major redesign before implementing review process.
 - iii. L. Vaden-Goad proposed that we create a clear form reflecting current criteria and begin to apply it to the proposal process of new courses only. This proposal was accepted by general acclaim.

- iv. V. Kenausis and W. Petkanas will prepare a preliminary form for this purpose by next meeting.
- v. The committee agreed to "grandfather" in existing courses until the gen ed criteria have changed so substantially that the designation is no longer appropriate.

IV. New Business

- a. A. Zink presented information on the "Building Bridges" initiative, begun a few years ago in an attempt to eventually decrease the enrollment in Math 098 and English 098 courses. She reported that this is currently a really good collaboration. They have learned from Danbury and Bethel High School teachers that "four dimensions of reading" currently drive the curriculum in Connecticut and that we should take this into account when developing our own gen ed requirements. High school teachers are willing to come to discuss their curriculum, and they are interested in sitting in on first year classes here. They have also invited WestConn faculty to spend a day shadowing a high school teacher to see first hand what the high school experience is like. A. Zink suggested that we need to work to make the transition more successful from both ends, including changing some of the language we use so that it's more clear to the students how their college courses relate to what they did in high school.
- b. P. Secondo asked A. Zink to describe some of the important differences she had found between the high school and college expectations.
 - i. Traditional composition stops in 10th grade for those not in AP courses.
 - ii. No experience doing papers as frequently (one every 2-3 weeks) as we expect them to here.
 - iii. Lots of hand-holding in high school. For example, homework assignments must be posted on their website at least one week ahead of time so that parents can see it. They are not used to working and managing time on their own.
- c. A. Zink concluded by suggesting that these disparities should be taken into account in

planning for the first year or two here at WestConn.

V. Goals for the future

- a. V. Kenausis asked the committee to consider focusing on just two or three major projects this semester. She suggested creating the form and process for getting a new course designated as a gen ed course as one project. A discussion followed about what the second and/or third projects should be. Concerns were raised about beginning with a project that had a good chance for adoption by the university community. The committee tentatively agreed, however, to focus on the fairly controversial recommendation to restructure the current general education areas into educational objectives (along the lines of the example used in Recommendation #5 of the Gen Ed Task Force final report). Are we crazy????

The meeting adjourned at 9:54 am.