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15 Update: GERC Notes from Campus Consultation Visits through 1-25-19

University of Northern Iowa. General Education Re-envisioning Committee.

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SUMMARY NOTES from the Gen Ed Revision Committee for FALL 2018 and January 2019 CONSULTATIONS on PROCESS and DRAFT LEARNING OUTCOMES & MISSION STATEMENT

Secondary Teacher Education Senate

11/1/18

Overarching questions/concerns:

- More transparency about the implications of the new program
 - Meaning, what are the implications for faculty hires? And term/adjunct hires?
 - Amy Peterson was present and asked how the United Faculty and/or University Faculty Senate could assist?
 - Gen Ed representatives asked how we can target these people to gather specific feedback from them.
 - Suggestion: Anonymous survey sent just to term/adjuncts to flesh out these concerns
 - GERC might be wise to take the initiative in addressing the HR realities/vulnerabilities (above) rather than waiting and reacting to the inevitable outcry from faculty. No clarity from the senate regarding when & how this would be done.
- Decreasing number of hours in the program means jobs could get cut
- The importance of the shared experience of gen ed is sometimes at odds with the rhetoric encountered in the Professional Sequence, which can be interpreted as “Find out what you are good at and drop the rest.”
- Some concern (not pressing in the meeting, but it was mentioned) that they may lose students in their major because they rely on students going through gen ed to scoop up majors (Example: earth science. A student gets excited about earth science because of LAC course, and then they switch to an earth science major).

Positive Comments:

- Secondary Ed Senate is looking to us and how our process goes because they are looking to do a similar process with their educator prep program.
- Hopeful that reducing hours of program would allow for more hours to devote to minors

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Nov 7, 2018 College of Business Senate Meeting

Ken McCormick, Susan Roberts Dobie, Steve O’Kane, Angie Cox represented the committee

This meeting was very positive.

Support was given for an outcomes-based model.

Support was given for breadth of curriculum.

Concern was indicated about basic literacy and numeracy levels of students and that basic levels must be achieved before issues like critical thinking can be considered.

Many questions about assessment were asked.

Questions regarding time line were asked.

No specific concerns were given.

A suggestion was made that we look at providing students with some pre-programmed modules for remediation to bring people up to the level needed when they are behind.

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University Faculty Senate - November 12, 2018

Brenda Bass, Steve O’Kane, and Jeff Morgan represented the committee

Talking points

1. Discussion with representative bodies

- a. Secondary Senate - November 1
- b. CBA Senate - November 7
- c. CHAS Senate - today
- d. UCC - November 14
- e. COE Senate - November 26
- f. CSBS Senate - Dec 3
- g. Also reached out to Elementary Education Senate, LAC Committee, Library, NISG, Advising Network

2. The learning areas and outcome statements are not a structure. Structure is to be considered in the spring semester, after establishment of agreed upon learning areas and outcomes.

3. Survey update.

- a. 5-point Likert scale. Used ‘priority’ language to encourage wider rankings. All learning areas were 3.34 and above.
- b. Committee is reading all comments; in 3 subcommittees, trying to create a condensed number of learning areas and fewer, more succinct learning outcomes.

<u>AREA</u>	<u>N</u>
College of Business	8
College of Education	33
College of Humanities, Arts, and Sciences	96
Library	10
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences	45
Student Affairs	21
Other	20
Blank	5
Total	238

Notes on Discussion

- A senator raised the question about efficiency vs. quality, a discussion that also occurred at the Secondary Education Senate. We assured the Senate that the committee is committed to quality of the general education program we are attempting to create, and that “efficiency” has not been discussed (aside from a possible reduction in the number of required courses).
- A senator raised concern about advance time on any votes - will the Senate see the proposed mission statement, learning areas, and outcomes prior to a vote? (Some of this concern is due to lack of advance notice on previous votes.) We assured the Senate that it is our intent to give the Senate sufficient advance notice prior to any future votes - at least 2 weeks.
- The Senate had envisioned a vote on December 10 on the mission statement and learning areas; we stated that this was not likely, given the current status of our work and need for advance notice of any proposals. Chair Petersen asked if representatives of the Gen Ed Committee could update the Senate on December 10. We indicated that we would be happy to do so.
- A senator stated that he turns to the provost’s website for updates on the process, but there have not been any updates since October 10. Could the committee update the description of their process and work?
 - On a related question, Provost Wohlpart asked if we had considered posting the survey report (with comments) on the website. We might consider this point as a Gen Ed Committee - would this be a wise step?
- A question was raised regarding the winnowing process, given lack of separation on the survey feedback. We stated that we are working in subcommittees to propose structures of reduced numbers of learning areas and outcomes, and that much of the reduction in learning areas is coming from combining
- A representative from the College of Education expressed concern that education programs rely on the current LAC requirements to fulfill several content needs of their programs, and asked whether we are considering this point. We expressed that this seems to be a question of structure, which is not where we are at in the process, but when we get there, we will be considering these issues.
- A question was raised about structure: is our committee going to work to develop the structure? We responded that we believe this is part of our charge, though we may not be the committee that works to *populate* the new Gen Ed program with courses.

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CHAS Senate, Nov 12

Doug and Jeremy visited the CHAS Senate, and it went very well. The overall sense of the room was that the prospect of a new general education program based on outcomes "sounds exciting." There were, nevertheless, a lot of questions and concerns, most of which pointed toward the "structure" conversation on the horizon. Specifically, they were in favor of

transforming general education at UNI so that students no longer (or more seldom) view it as something to "get out of the way."

- Questions about time: What are next steps?
 - (Presenting outcomes and mission to the University Faculty Senate, likely in the early Spring.)
- How does the timeline overlap with HLC visit.
 - (We won't be finished but will likely be seen to have made progress and will have a follow-up visit.)
- Clarification on the CHAS Senate's role in the process, i.e., are votes at this level binding?
 - (No, the college senate's are meant for consultation; our committee's job will be to synthesize and/or reconcile feedback from all parties.)
- Which of the two mission statements was preferred?
 - (The longer one, which we're now focusing on.)
- A concern that the focus on outcomes might end up with a completely skills-based curriculum.
 - (There is a balanced mix of skills, knowledge, and dispositions in the outcomes.)
- An encouragement to consider value-added elements like a certificate as way to help with recruitment.
- A comment that this new model has the potential to open up more classes in departments that currently only have one way to "fit" into the LAC.
- A concern expressed over how to propose new classes and have them move efficiently through the curriculum approval process.
 - (A consideration of some temporary expedited process.)

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University Curriculum Committee - November 14, 2018

Steve O'Kane and Jeff Morgan represented the committee

Talking points: below is a brief outline of information shared with the UCC; *largely same as Faculty Senate from Monday*

1. **Reasons for Revision**
 - a. Academic Master Plan
 - b. HLC Concerns
2. **Committee Charge**
3. **Process**
 - a. Spring 2018 - create process; approved by faculty senate

- b. Fall 2018 - mission statement, learning areas, and outcomes
- c. Spring 2019 - structure (though learning areas and outcomes)
- 4. **Discussion with representative bodies**
 - a. Secondary Senate - November 1
 - b. CBA Senate - November 7
 - c. CHAS Senate - November 12
 - d. Library - November 14
 - e. UCC - today
 - f. COE Senate - November 26
 - g. CSBS Senate - Dec 3
 - h. Also reached out to Elementary Education Senate, LAC Committee, NISG, Advising Network
- 5. **The learning areas and outcome statements are not a structure.** Structure is to be considered in the spring semester, after establishment of agreed upon learning areas and outcomes.
- 6. **Survey update.**
 - a. 5-point Likert scale. Used 'priority' language to encourage wider rankings. All learning areas were 3.34 and above.
 - b. Committee is reading all comments; in 3 subcommittees, trying to create a condensed number of learning areas and fewer, more succinct learning outcomes.

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Notes on Discussion

- With an outcomes-based structure, might the General Education program look very different for different majors? It might, but we are not at the point of structure.
- Steve mentioned the understanding our committee has of a suggested length of 36 hours (or fewer.) Some conversation about double-counting proceeded.
- Patrick Pease pointed out that a shortened General Education program might trigger programs to add more hours in required majors, which has UCC implications. Second, if some currently double-counted courses are removed from the new structure, this might cause some problems with current majors - UCC will need to be proactive in encouraging programs to examine their majors with a new general education structure. Riehl pointed out that the faculty senate is the one with the power, and must make the charge to the UCC.

- If a variety of courses are allowed to meet the learning outcomes, it might make majors have more distinct programs and make it more difficult to switch between majors.
- If courses are allowed to “apply” for consideration to meet outcomes, courses will have to agree to provide artifacts. What counts? Who assesses?
- Some courses might need to move to common syllabi.
- One committee member expressed concerns about moving to an outcomes structure as the end point; in his view, just having outcomes does not create a general education program.
- One committee member expressed the view that students are currently not given a large amount of choice, and would encourage a new structure to encourage more choice.
- One committee member asked why a wider variety of courses didn’t count in our current structure - for example, other calculus courses in place of Calculus I?
- Should we perhaps not require any double-counting? (This doesn’t funnel certain majors into certain courses like it does in present structure.)
- Question about ‘Learning Areas’ - sounds like structure. Is it?
- Question about input outside of the faculty. Steve mentioned that we have student members. Suggestion that we might consider asking alumni?
 - Follow up: alumni and student opinions matter, but they only know what they were exposed to, and often lack breadth of view
- The articulation agreements with community colleges is important - view that the process needs administration support re: rigor of counting courses for any new structure.
 - Some members expressed the opinion that we need to have a rigorous process for considering which courses can be counted
- Pease asked about the role of the UCC; I stated that it’s our understanding that any proposals will be brought to bodies (including the UCC) in advance of any senate vote
 - UCC sees issues of double counting, efficiency, length of major, etc. that are not always seen by individual programs, faculty senate, etc.
- Departments can’t make decisions in isolation; this needs to be a campus-wide conversation
- Question about hours: Is 36 enough of a cut? What about 30? (one year; ¼ of the major)
- Please keep UCC in the loop as the process moves forward

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Library Senate, November 14, 2018

Doug, Steve, and Angie attended.

Comments:

Communication and critical thinking are “very german” to the work of the library.

While the library can significantly contribute to information literacy as a learning outcome, there isn’t enough manpower in the library to shoulder that on their own. Other colleges would also need to teach information literacy.

Questions:

Will a draft be ready for spring HLC conference?

Is there some concern from other colleges about certain disciplines not being reflected in the learning outcomes? If students don't enroll in certain disciplines/courses, departments may suffer as a result.

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Elementary Teacher Education Senate

Mary Donegan-Ritter and CJ Aldape and Angie Cox represented the committee
11/15/18

Overarching questions/concerns:

1. What about content?
2. Can you give us some examples of outcomes? What do you mean by outcomes?
3. How much shorter is the hope (how many credits)?
 - a. "Not much less"
4. Assessment
 - a. How are we going to be assessed?
 - i. Who desires to assess?
5. Was some revision done recently to LAC?
6. Student feedback?
7. What about transfer students?

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College of Education Senate - November 26, 2018

Angie Cox, Mary Donegan-Ritter, and Jeff Morgan represented the committee

Talking points (Angie led discussion):

1. **Why? Reasons for Revision**
 - a. Academic Master Plan
 - b. HLC Concerns
2. **Process:** we had a process approved by faculty senate. We're at the step of developing learning outcomes; structure comes next.
3. **The learning areas and outcome statements are not a structure.** Structure is to be considered in the spring semester, after establishment of agreed upon learning areas and outcomes.
4. **Survey update.** Sent out a survey in early November.
 - a. 5-point Likert scale. Used 'priority' language to encourage wider rankings. All learning areas were 3.34 and above.
 - b. Committee is reading all comments; in 3 subcommittees, trying to create a condensed number of learning areas and fewer, more succinct learning outcomes.

Notes on Discussion

- Question: Does the process allow different majors to have different competencies?
 - Perhaps this is a question of structure.

- It is also our understanding that all outcomes will apply to all students in the general education program; individual programs still have outcomes appropriate to their specific majors, minors, etc.
- We also stated that any set of learning areas and outcomes proposed to the faculty senate will be given sufficient circulation/discussion time with the campus community, even though the only vote comes at the faculty senate.

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Ana Kogl and Jeremy Schraffenberger meet with faculty in the **Dept. of Philosophy and World Religions, 11/28/18:**

- On Wednesday 11/28, we met with eight faculty members in Philosophy & World Religions 4:30-5:15 pm.
- One faculty member said that moving from a discipline-centric to an outcomes-based GEP was refreshing because the majors in this department are "found." Therefore, more of their classes have the potential to be included in the GEP. There was also some concern about a program in which *every* class would conceivably fit.
- There was concern by one faculty member that her answers to the survey might have been skewed based on a misconception about outcomes vs. disciplines.
- There was strong agreement among all present that the data from the recent survey should be shared with the campus community through the Provost's website. There was a follow-up question asking if we might be able to summarize the results for them and/or point to trends we noticed.
- There were questions and concerns about our timeline, specifically worry that the outcomes would be voted on by the Faculty Senate too quickly. It was proposed that the upcoming outcomes we're currently working on be sent back out to faculty for more feedback. In general, everyone in the room was advocating for a maintaining a slow and deliberate pace.
- There were questions we weren't able to answer specifically about next steps regarding structure and how classes will be chosen to populate this structure.
- There was conversation about the need to establish and agree upon a shared common lexicon concerning outcomes and outcomes assessment. Jeremy suggested that the provost should video his outcomes assessment workshop and make it available to everyone on campus.
- There was some grumbling about the listening sessions. Some said it was "like kindergarten," and another said it was "frankly insulting."

CSBS Senate - December 3, 2018

Ana Kogl, Jeremy Schraffenberger, and Jeff Morgan represented the committee. Brenda Bass was also present.

Talking Points (Ana led discussion)

- Gen Ed Committee was charged by Faculty Senate with revision: generate new mission statement, learning outcomes, and structure. Additionally, determine a new name (if warranted.)
- Learning outcomes are separate from the structure; we have not yet taken on structure considerations.
- Current structure is a “distribution” model. We are working on an outcomes-based model: What do we want students to know? What skills do we want them to develop?
- All current courses are set aside; they may fit back into the structure.
- Charge was also to shorten the length, but this has not been mandated.
- Why? The Academic Master Plan calls for a more intentional coherence. Additionally, the HLC has repeatedly expressed concern about the LAC, including a lack of assessable outcomes.
- Process was developed by a subcommittee and previously approved by the Faculty Senate. Visiting with various bodies, including college senates, is part of this process.
- We came up with a relatively long list of goal areas, asking faculty about mission statement drafts and learning area lists in listening sessions and via a campus-wide survey. Currently, we are working in subcommittees on draft models of learning areas and outcomes. To inform this work, we are reading comments from the survey.
- Next stage is to present the Faculty Senate with a list of goals and outcomes. We will consult with the Senate next Monday, 12/10, but a vote will likely not take place until early in the spring semester, although there has been discussion about soliciting an additional round of feedback from the campus community.
- The committee is willing to meet with departments who have concerns or questions.
- Once structure is approved, we would move to having faculty apply to have courses included in the new structure.

Discussion/Question (committee comments indented)

- Is the thinking that the assessments will be of areas in the Gen Ed, or specific courses?
We are being asked to provide course-level learning outcomes starting next semester.
 - The new program will revolve around the learning outcomes. Courses that apply to be part of the new program will detail how the learning outcome(s) associated with the course will be collected for assessment. Outcomes for the Gen Ed program that are included would likely be a small minority of overall course outcomes.
- Once the current LAC is demolished, the coordinating structure is also demolished. How do we go about working on interdisciplinary courses?
 - This will need to become part of the conversation about structure.
- Who makes sure these outcomes are addressed?
- When you offer the learning areas and outcomes, are you also going to be presenting the assessment instrument alongside of the outcome?

- The assessment plan will be similar to what has been pushed by the provost's efforts in the current assessment efforts. The learning outcomes will likely be more stable, whereas rubrics may change/evolve over time.
 - We have been charged with coming up with assessable outcomes, not necessarily the *mechanics* of the assessment.
- Provide us with at least a rationale that the particular outcome is assessable.
 - Part of the structure will involve a coherence examination.
 - What we are coming up with must be somewhat general. Perhaps rubrics come from the persons who will be teaching in a particular learning area.
- The committee must consider assessment and structure at this stage (historian perspective) - things may sound good at this stage, but be impractical to actually pull off.
- Different methods and standards will be used in an honors section with a few students vs. a large lecture section with introductory students.
- Who is responsible if the outcomes of the assessments deviate from the expectations?
- We are thinking about goals and outcomes - what we want every college graduate to come out with - but it will be content specific.
 - Individual courses will have very specific content-related outcomes that can't be in the LAC. Perhaps there can be a more general LAC class that addresses multiple outcomes. A distribution model starts with numbers and categories.
- Have you looked at Florida Gulf Coast? Their model has some categories with large numbers of options.
 - This concern has been voiced with other bodies.
 - It is part of this committee's charge to determine whether we can have 6,000 course lists for particular outcomes.
 - Legitimate concern - you can take a critical thinking course from someone who doesn't have a liberal arts background.
- Skills and content are not divisible.
 - Absolutely agree.
- Does this have to be a liberal arts core? Can we move to a skills and competencies model?
 - There seems to still be a mix within the current list of outcomes.
- What about students who see the LAC as a barrier - how can we make it so they see it as needed?
- There are many things not seen clearly at 18 that are seen clearly at 40.
 - There is some level of challenge and fun in teaching initially resistant students.
 - We can have a longer conversation about what a student thinks when they view the core or think about "liberal arts."
- "General education" is a term used elsewhere; possibly less off-putting to teenagers.
 - Leading with outcomes might help to fight this battle - here's what you are able to do after completing this class.
- There is some conversation about shifting the focus of this institute towards job skills and away from traditionally academic skills.
 - Employers want writing, communication skills. This can also be good job preparation.

- There are issues in the future: who is grandfathered in? How will courses transfer? Big question: why this? How/why will this be sold to future students? And perhaps faculty (rather than the message that we're being forced to do this.)
 - Think in frame: What would I teach college freshmen if I had the opportunity?
- This message was not articulated to department: they have seen this as a "how does my course fit in?"
 - The best courses are taught by people who are passionate.
- The reason we are doctors teaching these courses is that we're in a better position to know what learners should learn; we must be wary of changing this to meet "consumer" demand.
 - What people want is the whole package to review and give feedback on, but we cannot do this. Be assured the committee is listening to all feedback, even as we talk about a highly unfinished product.
- One advantage to faculty conversations allows concerns to be raised that will appear down the road; ramifications in the future may be more serious if these are not considered at this point.

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Advising Network Meeting

12/5/18

Greenhouse Classroom 35

Committee Members Present: Mary Donegan-Ritter, Angie Cox, and Heather Asmus

- I. **Why? Reasons for Revision**
 - A. Academic Master Plan
 - B. HLC Concerns
 - C. Time to make a change
- II. **Process:** we had a process approved by faculty senate. We're at the step of developing learning outcomes; structure comes next.
- III. **The learning areas and outcome statements are not a structure.** Structure is to be considered in the spring semester, after establishment of agreed upon learning areas and outcomes.
- IV. **Listening Sessions** - were held in October
- V. **Survey update.** Sent out a survey in early November.
 - A. Committee is reviewing feedback and survey results.
 - B. Committee members are visiting each college senate, faculty senate, and other groups to hear feedback, thoughts, ideas and update on our progress.
- VI. **Questions / Comments:**
 - A. Supportive of making the GE shorter. Currently, it is too long for students who want to pursue double majors, minors, and certificates. Would like to see more flexibility for students.

- B. Why do we need 8 outcomes? 3 or 4 seem sufficient. Remember that outcomes have to be assessed, and the more we have the more work it will take to assess them. Take the top three from survey results.
- C. Support for having a GE that applies to all majors (that is one way UNI stands out from other Universities). Look to our GE to make UNI stand out.

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Student Input - NISG

Committee members CJ Aldape and Tristan Bernhard have spoken with the upper cabinet for NISG, and Brenda Bass and John Fritch have had further conversations with NISG President and Vice President

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Dec 14, 2018, Update to the Liberal Arts Core Committee (LACC)

GERC Members present:

Ryan M, Chuck H, John O, Deedee H, John F

Summary:

They seemed open to the direction we were going. They seemed receptive to the argument that we needed to revise our existing LAC, and in support of the outcomes approach.

Concerns expressed:

How specific do we plan to be with the learning outcomes and what artifacts have to be assessed? We communicated a desire to be specific enough that not every class or assignment could claim to fulfill every outcome, but flexible enough that assessment could be performed organically on student artifacts produced as part of relevant class assignments. One member argued for as few outcomes as possible (though he also identified being critical of outcomes/assessment as his job).

Under the current model, departments don't feel any ownership or really understand their department's role in the LAC.

"It would be a shame to segregate diversity into its own category"

Would we want to add "historical thinking" to the list? We discussed how the GERC probably imagined this type of outcome within The Human World, but that we would take the suggestion back to the group.

Questions they wanted answered:

What is the timeline for implementing the new LAC? We said we hope to implement it in Fall 2021.

Who populates the categories?

Will there be standard language around the outcomes?

Will there be assessment of each class each semester? How often would assessment of a class happen?

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January 25, 2019

Consultation with Writing Committee Representatives who attend Writing Enriched Curriculum Conference:

Three members of the University Writing Committee shared information from the Writing Enriched Curriculum Conference (Kim Baker, David Grant and Dale Cyphert). Members presented on Writing Enriched Curriculum (WEC) process developed by University of Minnesota, and the sessions they attended while at the conference. WEC's approach looks at writing in a broader sense and is a faculty-driven process of creating, implementing, and assessing undergraduate writing plans at the department level. At the University of Minnesota, it is optional, department based, and not in their general education requirements. The faculty were impressed with the WEC program from the conference, but pointed out it was also a very expensive model that Minnesota invested at least \$1 million. The faculty also discussed how communication overall is one of UNI's learning goals, and that it is intricately tied to the other two learning goals (content and critical thinking). It was also discussed how elements of the WEC curriculum might provide insights in how to integrate some pieces into UNI's curriculum. (Note: Handout provided to GERC on WEC process).