



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Friday, October 7, 2022

Present: Jonathan Acosta, Derek Babb, Melissa Berke, Denise Devney, Huai-Mei Furman, Neal Grandgenett, Carolina Hotchandani, Cara Ortega, Tammi Owens, April Paschall, Janice Rech, Ben Smith, Lori Simonsen, Harvey Siy, Matt Tracy

Guest: Dr. Deb Smith-Howell, Senior Advisor to the Chancellor

Deb first came to UNO because of Gen Ed – to teach Public Speaking as part of the “new Gen Ed” and chaired the revamp of Gen Ed that started in 2008. The main focus in the 2008 revamp was to make Gen Ed portable, make it standard (i.e. a particular course counted for Humanities for ALL majors), and to give faculty/departments/advisors more say. Assessment was added later. Overall hours weren’t really addressed at that time. We haven’t made major changes to our Gen Ed in 12 years and the world around us has changed so it’s time.

Our Gen Ed is broad, but the list of Gen Eds our students actually take (and what advisors recommend for first-year students to be successful) is actually much smaller.

Suggestions – start with the data – top-enrolled classes, for example.

1. Look at Gen Ed Curriculum – relevance & coherence; reduce overall credits; gateway courses into major – not what Gen Ed is for; LESS courses are better because it’s too overwhelming
2. Balance curriculum – don’t just replace any credits we reduce in Gen Ed and pile those into the major – have to leave room for flexibility
3. First-Year Scheduling Committee – Academic advising, core – Math/English/Speech, & predictive enrollment course demand

Jonathan reminded us we need to keep our Exploring students in mind with our Gen Ed revamp because they need credit hours for their exploration – reducing too much will add time to their degree and would make them need to declare a major sooner.

The membership of this committee is meant to have conversations and bring back perspectives – need to create a sense of urgency – the committee members who have voting rights are the voice for their College.

It’s useful to differentiate between what should be Gen Ed and what should be decided by the departments as a degree requirement. Example: Writing-in-the Discipline.

Courses for Review:

CFAM 1000 Introduction to the Arts: Why the Arts Matter (Humanities & Fine Arts)

- This course is being deactivated

HONR 1130 Honors Humanities (Humanities & Fine Arts)

- Outcome: Approved

LLS 2810/MUS 2810 Music in Latin American Culture (Humanities & Fine Arts; Global Diversity)

- Outcome: Approved

Next Meeting:

October 21, 2022 (Focus Group) 2 – 4 PM