

# General Education Committee Meeting

Minutes of November 20, 2015 Meeting

In Attendance:

Absent:

## 1. Discussion of the pilot for assessing ethical responsibility and oral communication.

This pilot (e.g., collecting writing samples from the Freshmen Seminar course, Edhe 105) for assessing ethical reasoning seems to be successful, especially the tactic of using prompts involving the Creed and the Common Reading text for student writing on ethical reasoning. A rubric will be further developed to score the writings.

The pilot for assessing oral communication in the Speech 102/105 sections also shows promise. The speech instructors developed a common rubric and visited each other's classes to assess oral communication. There is an issue of compensation, if we continue this program.

## 2. Update on the Plan to Enhance Teaching of Oral Communication (DWR Plan)

The committee discussed this plan and the goal of providing sufficient Speech 102/105 sections, supplemented by the proposed one-hour communications course, to enroll half or more of the first time freshmen in a given year. Right now, only 12% of native UM students take one of our Speech courses.

The strategy for expanding Speech sections also includes offering an online version of Speech 102, which is being done this Fall 2015 and Spring 2016.

A search is planned for a Director of Oral Communications (as a tenure track position), who will then be expected to help lead the above efforts, which should include increasing the number of face-to-face sections of Speech 102/105 through hiring of additional instructors.

Action Item:

- **A subgroup of the General Education Committee will meet with the Provost to discuss funding needs.**

## 3. Consider prompting UG programs to identify (in their SLO reports) those courses within their majors that address (teach, assess?) the General Education learning outcomes, in particular critical thinking, oral and written communication, and ethical reasoning.

Kate distributed a mapping (attached) undergraduate degree programs currently assess a learning outcome that aligns with oral or written communication, mathematical reasoning, critical thinking, or

ethical reasoning. The coverage of these General Education learning outcomes is relatively good at this point.

Outcome	# of UG Programs Including a Gen Ed SLO
Mathematical Reasoning	18
Writing Skills	29
Oral Communication	21
Analytical reasoning/critical thinking	42
Ethical Reasoning	8

Kate will apply pressure to get induce additional degree programs to include general education related learning outcomes and to identify the specific courses within the majors where these Gen Ed SLOs are taught and assessed (in particular, oral and written communication, critical thinking, and ethical reasoning).

These linkages should involve some type of course-Gen Ed SLO matrix.

Action Items:

- **IREP with support from the Provost’s office will help programs develop matrixes in Spring 2015-16**
  - **IREP will work with Dean’s offices to develop similar matrixes for GenEd requirements in the schools.**
  - **IREP will work with Student Life to identify co-curricular experiences and opportunities for assessment that link with GenEd requirements.**
4. Review of the General Education summary prepared by the College of Liberal Arts in 2008.
- In preparing for the 2009 self-study, we required majors to identify and assess outcomes related to Oral Communication and Critical Thinking.
  - Since that time, we have developed additional assessment mechanisms cross the majors and more consistently linked SLO’s in the majors to GenEd outcomes.
  - **Action:**
    - **See actions for #2 above**
5. Consider adding information literacy and/or modifying ethical reasoning/responsibility
- Ethical reasoning/responsibility was modified during the last GenEd meeting to “ethical reasoning”

- The committee discussed the difference between “enabling skills” (e.g., information literacy, technological skills) and life-long learning skills (e.g., our current GenEd outcomes). The committee generally agreed that our current GenEd focus on life-long learning skills is appropriate and that our self-report might include a discussion of the distinction between these types of skills.