

2016 General Education Council Meeting
March 31, 2016
11:00-3:00
102A | OCHE | 2500 Broadway Helena, MT

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Molly Maxwell of FVCC (representing Jessica Hopkins), Leanne Frost of GFC- MSU, Mike Havens of MSUB, Garth Sleight of MCC, Scott Mickelsen of DCC (representing Holly Dersham-Bruce), Bill Janus of UM-Western, Ron Larson of MSU Bozeman, Robin Kiesling of Helena College, Kim Reiser of UM Missoula, Elizabeth Ternes (Chair) and Lindsey Trenary of OCHE.

Absent: Norton Pease of MSUN, Carrie Vath of MT Tech, Carmen Taylor of Aaniih Nakoda (tribal college representative)

Overview and History of the Council

BOR Policy 303.10 outlines the roles and responsibilities of the general education council. The MUS Core was developed in late 80s. It is a primary responsibility of the council to manage and maintain the courses that make up the MUS Core. In the past, courses had been added to the MUS core rather informally. Campuses would report changes to their general education programs and new additions would be added to the MUS Core.

There are many changes happening across the system right now in relation to general education. The Council feels they should play a more prominent role than they have recently. The Council agrees they should be more involved in formally determining courses that make up the MUS Core. The Council reiterated that they did not play a role in determining general education on individual campuses as these are local decisions.

MUS Course Database Update

A new database was recently created to house and maintain the system course database (<https://ccn.mus.edu/search/>). Elizabeth provided an update on the new system noting that the previously separate general education course database has been integrated into the main database. The general education designators are located at the top of the page and can be selected to view the courses within each Core area.

Courses with green mortarboard icons have campus outcomes. If a course title is linked (blue) it has FLOC (Faculty Learning Outcome Committee) outcomes. Those with a blue mortarboard icon and no FLOC outcomes do not have outcomes available. The Council noted the importance of having outcomes for all courses. This is something the CCN liaisons are currently working on. Ideally all courses would have FLOC outcomes, however, the FLOCs are no longer in existence and with no more funding for CCN it is difficult to create new FLOCs. If Council members have

access to course outcomes that they would like uploaded, they can work with their campus CCN liaison (http://mus.edu/Qtools/CCN/ccn_liaison.asp) to share those outcomes with Elizabeth who can help upload them to the database.

Review of Policy 301.10

The question was posed if this transfer policy applies to the integrated two-year campuses. UM noted that because Missoula College students are not considered transfer students when they enroll at the main university this policy may not apply. This effects their ability to utilize the MUS Core. MSU Billings and MSU Bozeman did not note that they have not faced a similar issue in relation to their integrated colleges. At present the issue seems to be campus specific and one that needs to be addressed at UM, keeping in mind the purpose of the MUS Core is to benefit students.

Operational rule #2 of the MUS Core was reviewed to ensure compliance with PLA. The Council felt the rule was still an accurate statement and allowed for PLA to be included.

Discussion took place around the requirements for faculty teaching General Education courses. Those teaching courses for transfer must meet the requirements outlined in section A of BOR policy 730 – Minimum Qualifications for Faculty in Two-Year Degree Programs. Courses included in the MUS Core are considered courses for transfer and therefore must meet the more stringent requirements.

MUS Core Review

Currently, there are almost 900 courses in the MUS core. When reviewing the list of courses that make up the MUS Core there was some shock about certain courses that were included and how they were designated. The Council noted that a proliferation of courses designated as Core has taken place which may not adequately reflect a course's content at all the campuses. It was also noticed that upper division courses had made their way into the MUS Core. The MUS Core is strictly lower division, thus, Elizabeth will remove the upper division courses from the Core as soon as possible. There was general agreement amongst the Council that the Core should be a more defined set of courses and a formal review/approval process should take place before a new course is added to the MUS Core.

To address the potential inaccuracies of courses in the Core at present and begin the process of narrowing courses included in the Core, the Council representative from each campus will take inventory of their courses to determine what should remain in the Core and what should be removed. It was agreed and reiterated that related instruction courses should not be included in the Core. Elizabeth will share a list of all the courses and their designation with each Council member who will then work with faculty on their campus to come up with three campus specific lists: 1) those courses that should remain in the Core; 2) those courses that should not remain in the Core (these would be courses that are not considered Gen Ed on an individual campus); and 3) those courses that should be added to the Core.

The Council will introduce the review of Core courses to faculty this Spring in hopes of completing the review in the Fall. Once this review has been completed the Council will review the determinations and where there is agreement the changes will be implemented. Areas of disagreement will be reviewed and discussed by the Council to make a decision.

Certificate of General Studies Discussion

Elizabeth noted that Great Falls College and most recently Miles City College have had a Certificate of General Studies approved by the Board of Regents. She asked the group what the main deterrent was for offering this award on other campuses.

- It was brought to the attention of the group that Gallatin College has been offering this certificate since 2012.
- Helena College had made previous attempts at this certificate, but ran into difficulties receiving approval by the US Dep. of Ed. as they did not have gainful employment data to provide. The group acknowledged this concern, as the certificate would do little for students entering the work force with only the Certificate of General Studies. The main benefit of this would serve as a completion point for students. It would also serve as formal recognition of completing the MUS Core prior to transfer.
- Leanne will share with the group Great Falls College's experience with receiving approval from the DOE as they recently completed the process.
- The Council noted that a definition of the certificate should be added to BOR policy 303.1 where other awards (ex. CTS, CAS) are defined.

Course Submissions and Process Discussion

Council members who had served on the Council in years past noted that there had not existed a formal review/approval process for adding courses to the MUS Core. This was determined to be a detriment by the Council as this is what likely led to the proliferation of courses and inaccurate designations we see in the Core today. Moving forward, a review process leading to approval will be implemented for proposed course additions, changes, and removals. The process will follow a similar format as the review process currently used by CCN and look as follows:

- The proposing campus will send a course proposal to remove, add, or reclassify a course in the MUS Core to the Council chair with the required information (what is being requested and course syllabus). The chair will share the request with the Council members who will share with faculty on their campus to help reach a decision. If everyone is in agreement, the proposal will be approved. If disagreement occurs, the Council will work through the issue to come to a decision. All campuses offering the course will have to be in agreement in order for the proposal to be approved.

This process will not begin until after the initial review has taken place. Once implemented the process can occur on a rolling basis. This will not only ensure accuracy across the system, but it will also elevate knowledge of new Gen Ed courses on each of the campuses. It will also allow for the tracking (via email) of changes and additions that occur. It was reaffirmed that courses not added to the MUS Core may still be part of a campus specific General Education program.

Campus Proposals

No campus specific proposals were received at this time as they will be received all together once the review is complete, however, two courses had been determined pressing and required the group to make a decision.

- **M 120 Mathematics with Health Care Applications** The Council agreed unanimously that M 120 should not be a part of the MUS Core as it was not determined to be a General Education course.
- **M 114 Extended Technical Mathematics** FVCC raised concern over including this course in the MUS Core. Those present for the meeting agreed that M 114 was a related instruction course and should not be included in the MUS Core. Elizabeth will follow up with those campuses not represented at the meeting who offer the course to ensure they are also in agreement. Barring any disagreement the course will be removed from the MUS Core.

Future Meetings

The council agrees that it needs to meet at least once a year and that the next meeting should come after review of the current MUS Core which will be completed in the Fall. Conference calls can be scheduled as needed.