**MINUTES**

**General Education Council**

**Tuesday, November 29, 2011**

**11 am**

**Nevins Hall 1060C**

**Members in Attendance:** Byron Brown, John Gaston, Sheri Gravett, Jane Kinney, James LaPlant, Kent Moore, Gayle Taylor

**Updates**

1. Minutes from November 1, 2011 meeting posted at <http://www.valdosta.edu/gec/GECMinutes.shtml>
2. Core Assessment Results from Spring 2009-Spring 2011 available from SRA: The spreadsheet provided by SRA contains the results from the pilot project. Some of these results will need to be updated; members of the GEC also discussed the need to include the action steps resulting from the analysis of this data.
3. Core Matters: Members of the GEC will seek suggestions from the Deans’ Council for faculty members to serve as part of the Core Matters Executive Committee.
4. FACULTY FAQs : The GEC will share the revised FAQs with the Deans Council before posting.
5. Core Curriculum Marketing: Students in Mass Media classes during Spring 2012 will be working on short videos to introduce the core curriculum to students. These videos should be ready for orientation this summer.

**Discussion**

1. Core Assessment Plans Evaluation and Approval: All currently submitted plans are posted in BlazeVIEW under Institution: General Education Council. All GEC members are currently enrolled in the section. GEC members reviewed the submitted materials and discussed general feedback to provide to all programs (see attachment 1). Department heads and faculty involved with the General Education assessment will also be enrolled in the BlazeVIEW section.

**Upcoming Meetings**

1. Spring Dates for GEC: Members will participate in a Doodle poll to determine the best meeting dates for spring.

**ATTACHMENT ONE**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

**TO:** Department Heads

**FROM:** Sheri Gravett, On Behalf of the General Education Council

**SUBJECT:** Updates on Core Curriculum Assessment Reports

**DATE:** December 12, 2011

Members of the General Education Council (GEC) deeply appreciate the work of faculty and department heads to develop assessments for their core curriculum classes.    Many departments have already submitted worksheets detailing their assessment plans for one or more of their core classes, and they will begin data collection for a number of these assessments in Spring 2012.

The GEC has begun its review of these worksheets.  To make this review easier, we have established a BlazeVIEW site, and we have enrolled all the department heads whose departments offer core classes as well as those faculty members who have submitted worksheets.  In this way, all those involved in core assessment will be able to learn from each other.  If we need to enroll additional members, please submit those names to me and I will do so.

In its initial review, the GEC has several questions that we wanted to share with the entire group, but we will also be glad to follow up individually as needed.  We hope these questions will help as we all work to continue to refine the assessment process.  If departments wish to update their worksheets, just send a revised copy to me, and I will upload it to the site:

1. **Is your sample size large enough?**

During the pilot stage of this project, departments assessed relatively few sections of students.  To ensure the validity of the findings we will report to SACS from this point forward, assessments must have a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. (For example, if approximately 500 students enroll in a given class during a term, then 217 must be assessed.)

A calculator to determine the sample size required for your core courses is available at <http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>.  The document to request a statistical sample is available at the GEC website at <http://www.valdosta.edu/gec/>.

1. **Is your sampling method truly random?**

Departments must also demonstrate that student samples have been chosen through a mathematically random process.  Excel can easily generate a random sample of course sections.  (See, for example, <http://www.techrepublic.com/blog/msoffice/use-excel-to-obtain-a-random-sample-of-customers-for-market-analysis/347>.). Another option is that the CRN for each section of a course can be entered into SPSS. SPSS has a pull down menu for “Data” and you can randomly sample cases under the “select cases” function.

1. **Have you included core classes taught at Kings Bay or offered online by your department in your sampling process?**

While Kings Bay sections are typically small, courses taught on that campus must be represented in departments’ assessment sample. The same holds true for any online core classes offered by your department.

1. **Have you included Honors sections in your sampling process?**

Honors sections must also be included in your assessment sample. You may want to list any data collected separately for use by the Honors College.

1. **Do you ask enough questions to assess the knowledge and skills you have targeted?**

In the assessment worksheets for many courses, Section D identifies an extensive list of things that students are expected to know and to be able to do while Section E lists a relatively small number of assessment questions.  Can all the knowledge and skills you identify be addressed through 5-10 questions?  If not, consider cutting limiting the skills and knowledge targeted in Section D to those that directly pertain to the learning outcome for the core area.

1. **Do multiple choice questions truly address the knowledge and skills your department has identified?**

Multiple choice questions may be appropriate to measure certain levels of knowledge and skill, but do they fit all situations equally? If not, you may want to consider some other methods or approaches (see the next question).

1. **Do you need to assess different skills and knowledge in different years?**

If your Core Curriculum Outcome requires you to assess multiple skills and kinds of knowledge, then using a two-year or perhaps even a three-year rotation to assess different skills and knowledge in different years is an acceptable option.

1. **Do you have a bank of test questions so that students will not be asked to answer the same questions every time?**

Departments may want to develop banks of questions that can be randomly generated each term.  In this way, we can try to circumvent any possible dishonesty.

1. **Do you have clear, uncontestable definitions of what it means to exceed, meet, and fail to meet your department’s expectations?**

For example, if a test contains 5 embedded questions, and a student is only able to answer 2 of the 5 questions, is 40% enough to meet expectations?

1. **Are you presenting your findings in the consistent format needed for our reporting?**

If departments are using standard test questions, they might be interested in keeping data on performance on each question or on certain types of question. However, for the GEC’s reporting purposes, we only need percentages in the three categories (exceeds, meets, and fails).

1. **Does your department have a clear process for disseminating results and making changes?**

*How* we use our findings is at least as important as *what* we find.  Explaining how we will use our findings to improve our curriculum and pedagogy (Section H) is the linchpin of this assessment process. Be sure that you have submitted a process that will demonstrate the department’s continuing review of your core classes.

Assessment is an ongoing process, and we continue to work to refine it so that we can gather information that will assist us as we prepare to meet the needs of our students.

If your department has yet to submit a worksheet for one of your departmental classes, please do so as soon as possible.  For those of you with multiple core classes, please work on having a second assessment developed by March 1, 2012.

Again, the GEC appreciates all the time you have devoted to helping us meet this important task.  We will be glad to work with you individually to address any questions.