

GENERAL EDUCATION COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, February 21, 2 p.m.
MINUTES

GEC Members in Attendance: Byron Brown, John Gaston, Brian Gerber, Sheri Gravett, Jane Kinney, James LaPlant, Kent Moore

Core Matters Steering Committee Members in Attendance: Deb Briihl, Michelle Gilbert Dykes, Tim Henkel, Kathe Lowney, Louis Schmier, Ellen Stevens, Chere Tillman

Invited Guest: Julie Halter

Core Matters Steering Committee Members

AREA A: Math and English composition: Pat Bezona, Jeannie Lugo, Roy Pace

AREA B: representatives appointed by PERS Advisory Board (2 members): Larry Hilgert, Kathe Lowney, Chere Tillman

AREA C: representatives from the COA and COAS: Fleming Bell, Christine James, David Nelson

AREA D: representatives from two different departments: Michelle Gilbert Dykes, Ligia Focsan, and Tim Henkel

AREA E: representatives from LCOBA, COE, and COAS: Deb Briihl, Carl Hand, Steve Nawara, Louis Schmier, Ellen Stevens

After introductions, the group discussed the history of the Core Matters Conference, a faculty-led conference that has been held on VSU's campus twice: Spring 2010 and Fall 2011. Links to the websites for those two conferences are available <http://www.valdosta.edu/english/CoreMatters.shtml> (2010) and <http://mypages.valdosta.edu/jvwandyke/HomePage.html> (2011).

The group also discussed available resources

- The General Education Council: The GEC has been supportive of this conference and wishes to continue to assist the faculty in whatever ways it can.
- Funding: Over the past two conferences, the Core Matters Conference has raised approximately \$5200, which is available in a Foundation account. Additional funding may be raised by registration fees and by donations.
- Continuing Education: Julie Halter also discussed the services that Continuing Education could provide to the next Core Matters Conference. For between \$5-\$15 per person (which could be embedded in the registration fee), Continuing Education could conduct pre-registration, on-site check in, arrangements for facilities and catering, etc. Further, since her department arranges the annual Online Lifeline Conference, they have experience in arranging and conducting conferences.

The group then began to brainstorm some issues that need to be determined for the next conference:

- **Size and scope:** Should the conference be local, regional, national?

A local conference could prove beneficial to share ideas among the VSU faculty, but it could of limited attractiveness to faculty who are seeking presentation opportunities at larger conferences.

A *regional conference* would allow a sharing of ideas among colleagues from a number of USG institutions who share similar issues in their core classes.

A *national conference* could provide wider exposure to the campus and to the national trends in core teaching.

Past conferences have averaged between 40-70 attendees (we need better data to confirm).

- **Facilities:** Which VSU facilities might be most appropriate?

The University Center: Magnolia Room, Cypress Room, Rose Room, Dogwood Room (the site of the 2010 conference)

Advantages: centrally located, close available parking, with food service available in the building

Disadvantages: away from main campus

The University Union: Ballrooms A, B, and C; Meeting Rooms 1A, 1B, and 2 (the site of the 2011 conference)

Advantages: centrally located with food service available in the building

Disadvantages: nearby parking, inability to reserve the space far enough in advance

The Continuing Education Building: Auditorium and classrooms

Advantages: parking available

Disadvantages: a more remote location

- **Dates:** Which dates would be best suited for the conference?

Friday-Saturday: In the past, the conference has been held on a Friday and Saturday, which assures that more facilities might be available but may also be discouraging to those who wish to have the weekend free.

Thursday-Friday: Some suggest that this type of schedule might encourage more VSU faculty to drop in.

For either arrangement, some outside scheduling issues need to be considered: VSU and Valdosta High School football games, symphony and performing arts schedules, other regional conferences.

Fall/Spring: In the past, the conference has been held in both the spring and the fall. In either semester, both face challenges; however, VSU already hosts the Online Lifeline Conference each February and the Undergraduate Research Symposium in April.

- **Types of presentations:** panels, individual presentations, workshops, keynotes, plenary sessions? The types of sessions will help determine the type of facilities needed.

- **Types of events:** What social events will be most attractive to potential conference-goers, providing an opportunity for social interaction?
 - Banquet?
 - Wine-tasting?
 - Reception, poster, vendor session?
 - Breakfast?
 - Lunch?

- **Invited speakers:** What type of speakers should be invited? What types of speakers would most interest and attract faculty members? What type of speakers would be affordable and available?
 - Representatives from the system office?
 - Experts on assessment?
 - Experts on brain-based neuroscience?

- **Types of organization for sessions:** Organize by different tracks?
 - Administrative:* issues in planning and administering different programs or aspects of the core
 - Assessment:* issues in assessing core classes
 - Applications:* specific classroom approaches and techniques

After the brainstorming session, the group began to discuss the next meeting time. The group agreed that it wanted to meet the week before Spring Break (March 5-9). Since the group would like to discuss further options with Continuing Education and Julie Halter will only be available to meet on Wednesday or Thursday afternoon (March 7-8), Sheri Gravett agreed to set up a Doodle Poll to determine the best time options.

Link to the Doodle Poll: <http://www.doodle.com/yn8r9wv5yrvf98f2>

In the meantime, the group tentatively agreed to look at three possible Thursday-Saturday scenarios:

October 25-27
November 1-3
November 8-10

Julie Halter will check availability of facilities during those three weekends. Group members also agreed to think further about potential keynote speakers.

Finally, the group also needs to consider its organizational structure. What would the best configuration be for organizing and administering the conference?

The meeting adjourned at 3 p.m.