

General Education Subcommittee

Minutes 6 April 2009

Present: Anderson, Bagwell, Hodges, Lawson, Marquardt, Neff, Price, Williams

Agenda

1. Should we eliminate or retain the modes of inquiry (e.g., fields of study) courses from our present curriculum?
 2. If the latter, should they modified or unchanged?
 3. If the former, what modifications should be made? Should “ethical inquiry” (à la Duke) be added, for example? Should the present fields of study be expanded (FSSR into “Analyzing arguments, reasons and values” à la Willamette or Carnegie Mellon), combined or reconfigured?
 4. Should the COM2 and/or COM1 requirements be eliminated, modified or retained?
 5. What courses or activities constitute “intercultural effectiveness,” “problem solving,” “oral effectiveness,” “life-long learning”?
- Richmond Promise: Principle I
 - ▶ Integrated Academic Enterprise
 - ▶ Seeks to ensure students appreciate different modes of inquiry
 - ▶ Engage in lifelong learning
 - ▶ Communicate effectively both orally and in writing
 - ▶ Develop skills in:
 - Critical thinking
 - Problem solving
 - Leadership
 - Intercultural effectiveness
 - Ethical decision-making.
 - The subcommittee on the First-Year Experience presented the following list of working goals to Academic Council last Tuesday:
 - ▶ Enhance students’ ability to think, write and read critically
 - ▶ Enhance students’ ability to communicate effectively
 - ▶ Develop the fundamentals of information literacy and library research skills
 - ▶ Provide the opportunity to work closely with a faculty mentor
 - ▶ Provide an academic experience that expands students’ understanding of the world.

Discussion

1. The second language requirement (COM2) should remain but an alternative model might include courses other than language courses for its fulfillment. At our next meeting we will consider some of these alternate possibilities. What is the goal of second language

instruction? If it's fluency, is the goal is not being met by the present requirement? If it's an instruction to a foreign culture, might other courses might serve as well or better? The second language requirement might also include a study abroad component. The justification for foreign language instruction is stated in the present UR catalog: "A second language has become more and more important as the world for which students are preparing themselves has placed increasing demands upon them to understand the natural and cultural perspectives of other language groups. The knowledge of a second language is critical for achieving such understanding as well as for exposing the learner to other cultures in ancient and contemporary guise, that he or she may encounter after graduation. For these reasons, the faculty expects all students to demonstrate functional ability in listening, speaking, reading and writing a modern second language or in reading and writing in a classical language."

2. Fields-of-study (i.e., modes of inquiry) courses should probably stay in their present or slightly altered form. An ethics FOS might be added.
3. There seemed to be consensus for more writing courses beyond the FYE
4. An increased emphasis on public speaking should probably be reflected in the new distribution requirements.
5. The Duke model or a variation thereof might be worth considering.
6. Our goals should supplement those of the FYI subcommittee.