

**General Education Council Meeting Minutes**  
**October 11, 2021**  
**3:30 p.m., Microsoft Teams**

**Attendees:** Cavitt (Chair), Timmerman, Hanks, Supancic, Blunk, Showalter, Shah, Delaney, Ahrens (for Hamilton), Houser, Rodda, Domsch, Wang, Kelemen, Wilson, White, Stern, Tschirhart, Chrans, Guzman, Green, Haider

**Absent:** Hamilton

**Guests:** Sriraman, Bolch, Olson, Gutierrez

**Cavitt welcomed attendees** and introduced guests.

**The minutes from September 13, 2021** were approved unanimously.

**Bolch discussed Senate Bill 25** (from the 86<sup>th</sup> legislature) regarding measures to facilitate transfer, academic progress, and timely graduation for students in public higher education. The legislation requires that institutions report on transferability of course-work and that Texas Common Course Numbers (TCCNs) be placed side-by-side in the course catalog to facilitate transfer. Institutions are required to develop at least one recommended course sequence for each undergraduate certificate or degree program offered by the institution. Bolch also reported that the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee (TTAC) will build a required database of recommended course sequences for a future software program titled, Map My Path, which will help facilitate transfer.

**Delaney asked to have the Texas Transfer Framework emailed** to GEC and Supancic commented on the difficulty of changing course prefixes.

**Sriraman reported on affordable learning materials.** Sriramen explained the purpose of the Managing Textbook Costs Committee (MTCC) and discussed accomplishments in its first two years. During the first year, the committee focused on creating awareness and soliciting the support of two key groups at the university (faculty senate and student government). The second year focused on more tangible outcomes that directly impacted GEC. Five of our faculty applied for year-long THECB grants. To apply, courses needed to be part of the core-curriculum and taught online. Grants were awarded to courses from English, History, Psychology, and Biology. The Office of Distance and Extended Learning provided instructional design assistance as a match for these grants and also launched an internal grant to incentivize faculty. A lower tier grant of \$5000 was created for the adoption of existing OER materials in Gen Ed courses, and a second tier at \$10,000 to develop new materials. The grant will continue this year and will be opened up to all sorts of affordable learning materials. Last year alone, the total savings to Texas State students was 1.6 million dollars through use of affordable learning materials.

This year, the committee is creating a faculty awareness program by creating a survey for faculty and students to learn more about affordable learning materials, and launching a dashboard to be transparent with our progress. The committee also seeks to identify a no-cost or low-cost pathway through the core-curriculum. At minimum they hope to find at least one section of every

course that can be billed as a course that is using affordable learning materials. Ideally, all sections of all courses will adopt affordable learning materials of some form.

MTCC asked and GEC passed a resolution last year supporting the work to identify a no-cost/low-cost path to core-curriculum learning materials. GEC also supported the formation of a sub-committee of the MTCC to include two members of GEC, Nancy Wilson and Alex White, who will work with two members of MTCC, Lindsay Kipp from HHP and Barry Underhill from FCS, as well as Valerie Fleming who will be an organizing principal and who will provide leadership.

HB1027 requires we are transparent about all costs for attending a course (e.g., textbooks, other learning materials, use of technology, etc.). By fall 2022, institutions are required to have created a system whereby a student who is registering can find out if the course for which they are registering is adopting affordable learning materials.

**Wilson** reported that she and White have met with the sub-committee twice. Some issues relevant to GEC are costs associated in specifying that course plans use affordable learning materials.

**Supancic** clarified that labeling a course as using affordable learning materials would require adding a question to the course proposal form. This would mean opening a scope of work, which is costly and may be dependent upon Course Leaf's schedule and whether or not our project is a priority to their business model.

**Wilson** said the subcommittee also discussed including affordable learning materials in the strategic plan as part of the social justice and inequity component.

**Wilson** suggested that the best work for the subcommittee may be learning how many sections are using affordable learning materials. There is a way to use attributes when creating a course that define affordable learning materials, online education resource (OER), and digital direct access courses. Wilson suggested ensuring administrative assistants know how to identify courses using these attributes when entering courses into CLSS. This might be a way to provide a more accurate number of courses using affordable learning materials.

**Supancic** asked if the CLSS system has the attribute on it and Wilson and White confirmed that yes, the attributes are available but not currently being used in CLSS.

**Supancic suggested** that the University Curriculum Committee would need to approve the use of the attributes being designated in the schedule of classes system.

**Sriramen confirmed** it would be a broad university wide representation that defines the process to use the attributes in the schedule of classes system. Multiple voices will need to weigh in.

**Wilson reported** that the MTCC subcommittee questioned whether or not the assessment subcommittee could make affordable learning materials an outcome for Gen Ed courses. GEC audits those reports.

**White explained** that the variable prices that students are charged for textbooks assigned by the Math Department depend upon who is negotiating the deal (e.g., Bookstore mark-ups).

**Domsch informed** GEC of an issue with access to online books through the library. Access to books at the library depends on what type of license is purchased. If a student is accessing a resource through multiple devices (cell phone, laptop, desktop), it's considered three different users, and access to the resource could run out. The more access to the book equals a greater expense.

**Houser shared** that COMM 1310 has been a big topic in her department with 3000 books used per semester.

**Wilson and Chrans reported** on the assessment subcommittee's progress on audits and holistic assessments. Chrans said that she was surprised at how well we were doing with so many courses being online. More than half (56%) met or exceeded expectations in their target outcomes. However, less than half (44%) did not improve from the previous year. Several departments said they had challenges with switching to online courses. Wilson said that Hamilton reported that all her assigned courses met their targeted goal area (as did Wilson's). Noteworthy in Hamilton's course assessment were Honors course assessments that actively use the results of the outcomes assessment and provide the data to instructors. Chrans added that we could do a better job in some areas with our action plans. We do well with setting our targets and talking about meeting or exceeding those, but sometimes we don't compare outcomes to the previous years.

**Cavitt discussed** the upcoming meetings in November and the three new courses to be reviewed: GS 2310: Life Science Concepts, PHYS 1345: General Physics II for Life Science Majors, and PHYS 1365: Physics for Educators.

**Cavitt said two courses will be deleted** from their department and from the core-curriculum: PHYS 1360 & PHYS 1370.

**Cavitt and Gutierrez will review other minor edits** to see if they need to also be reviewed by GEC. One we know of is COMM 1310: Fundamentals of Human Communication. It is currently designated in the 090 area. They would like to be considered in the 010 area (Communication).

**Cavitt asked the Council** to begin reviewing the new course proposals and reminded the Council that the AVPAS website has guidance on How to Propose a General Education Course as well as Examples of Successful Course Proposals. New course examples include ANTH 2301 and ENG 2371.

**Supancic asked** Gutierrez to confirm if the three new courses have gone through their college curriculum committee. **Gutierrez confirmed** that they had.

**Houser proposed** a review of the history of GEC. **Stern** added that it occurred in two different stages and we want to take a look at both of the stages.

Meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.