

General Education Committee
Report to the Faculty Senate
September 3, 2021
Submitted by Barbara Ladner

Membership for 2020-2021: Joshua Martin, Michael Pennington, Sharon Molnar, Upali Karunathilake, Lindsey Good, Jay Canterbury, Kellie Toledo, Sonya Armstrong, Deborah Williams, Rachel Sumner (student), Aaron Settle (*ex officio*) (I failed to keep records of attendance at our Zoom meetings.) Attendance in email discussion: Barbara Ladner, Lindsey Good, Jay Canterbury, Upali Karunathilake, Kellie Toledo Michael Pennington, Deborah Williams, Sonya Armstrong ('excused': Sharon Molnar, Josh Martin, Rachel Sumner, Aaron Settle); guest: Anne McConnell

Activities for 2020-2021

For an HEPC Diversity Grant, Dr. Michael Fultz proposed using a book about a successful collaboration across races and genders and in the face of racism and discrimination, portrayed in the autobiography of Vivien Thomas, *Partners of the Heart*. Through working together, Thomas and Dr. Alfred Blalock greatly improved trauma medicine in the 1940s and later, with Dr. Helen Taussig, they created the field of heart surgery in their work to find a treatment for "blue baby syndrome." The committee had discussed other proposals but determined that this one posed the fewest logistical challenges ITC (in time of COVID). Copies of the book were purchased (along with DVDs – one per section - of the HBO film based on the same story). Numbers of books were based on projected enrollment (which turned out to be at least a third too high, compared to actual numbers). The books were distributed by section and discussed, with each instructor determining what assignments would be linked to the text. Some sections made fairly extensive use of the book and/or HBO film, while others did little or nothing with the books, due to COVID challenges (poor attendance, going virtual, etc.) At the end of each semester, the books were collected, so that they can be used in the future, if desired. The HEPC grant reporting was completed August 14, 2021.

Course approval: A 300-level English course named "Topics in World Literature" was approved for General Education international perspectives credit at the October meeting. It's outcomes with respect to international cultural awareness are very similar to the other world literature courses already approved for that component of the General Education curriculum.

The committee sent out to department chairs questionnaires attempting to ascertain where and to what extent diversity content/outcomes shows up in the major programs. The idea was to determine need for additional diversity content in the overall WVSU curriculum and/or specifically in the GE curriculum. This effort did not yield much, probably because faculty were on campus so little, due to COVID. We may renew this effort this year, but reinvigorating the Race, Gender, and Human Identity course is under discussion.

The committee reviewed the assessment data collected from Fall 2020, concluding that, as far as we can tell from the data, the courses assessed seem to be achieving an appropriate 'entry-level' mastery of the GE content in the courses. However, the current rubric-based assessment is often cumbersome, to the extent that it is difficult for chairs to press adjuncts to do it. The committee discussed this issue, reporting that departments would welcome something easier to administer. I discussed this with Provost Cook, who endorsed the permissibility of pre-tests and post-tests in GE courses. Then, ideally, programs will determine how their PLOs align with/represent graduation competencies. (For example, a paper or presentation for a senior seminar demonstrates the extent to which a student has mastered GE communication skills.) Initial inquiries were sent to chairs, asking them to 'align' their PLOs with GE graduation competencies, but (again) there was little response. Efforts to coordinate program and GE assessment will be renewed this year.