

Minutes of Essential Studies Committee December 4, 2015

- I. A meeting of the Essential Studies Committee was held on December 4, 2015 in Carnegie Hall, Rm 102. Lori Robison presided.
In attendance: Elizabeth Bjerke, April Bradley, Jeff Carmichael, Christina Fargo, Erich Jauch, Krista Lynn Minnotte, Karyn Plumm, Lori Robison, Donovan Widmer, Dave Yearwood, and Ryan Zerr.
Absent: Karen Peterson, Sukhvarsh Jerath, Tanis Walch, Melissa Gjellstad, Kenneth Flanagan, Jacob Geritz, Darryl Joy

- II. The committee considered three course validation requests:
 - **CLAS 185: Introduction to Classical Mythology**
 - Breadth of Knowledge: Humanities
 - Goal: Thinking and Reasoning

A motion was made to approve this request for Humanities status. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.
 - **ChE 413: Plant Design II: Preliminary Process Project Engineering**
 - Goal: Oral Communication

A motion was made to approve this request pending receipt of a memo from the department or instructor of the course indicating how they plan to obtain student input for the purposes of indirect assessment of ES goal achievement. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously. ChE submitted memo, department was notified by the ES office that course was validated.
 - **BIOL 489: Senior Honors Thesis**
 - Capstone
 - Goal: Communication

A motion was made to table this request, which was voted upon and approved unanimously. Concerns raised included the lack of a syllabus with the validation request, the absence of a second goal being mentioned for the course to address, and a lack of clarity regarding whether the course was intended to be an advanced communication course. Jeff Carmichael will contact the Biology department to clarify these issues and bring information back to the ESC for reconsideration of this validation request.

The Goals Subcommittee (Carmichael, Hawthorne, Gjellstad, Plumm, Robison, Widmer, and Zerr) reported on its recent work, which has included four meetings over the past 5-6 weeks. A document summarizing the group's recommendations was distributed, and included the following information:

Recommendations to the ESC:

1. Develop:
 - a. ES Program mission statement
 - b. Statement of aspirations for a UND liberal education, with examples of opportunities for students that can come through their ES program of study

- c. Slightly altered set of ES “learning outcomes” (currently referred to as “goals”)
 - i. Critical Inquiry and Analysis
 - ii. Written Communication
 - iii. Oral Communication
 - iv. Quantitative Reasoning
 - v. Information Literacy
 - vi. Intercultural Knowledge and Skills
 - d. Rubric for Critical Inquiry and Analysis that is certain to include creative thinking
 - e. Framing language for each learning outcome’s brief descriptor (from above list)
2. Allow ES courses to validate for more than one goal
 3. Create an ES Program expectation in which every student, upon completion of the ES Program, has taken courses addressing all program goals

Discussion about the recommendations included the following comments:

- It seems best to call the six items (Critical Inquiry and Analysis, Written Communication, Oral Communication, Quantitative Reasoning, Information Literacy, and Intercultural Knowledge and Skills) “goals” rather than “learning outcomes” or “intellectual skills.”
- There was a question about whether we need the Information Literacy goal, although most seemed to favor keeping it.
- There was a question about whether “Intercultural Knowledge and Skills” isn’t moving backwards from “Diversity.” In other words, won’t “diversity” be more general, and thus preferable, to the suggested change? The resulting discussion illustrated how difficult it is to find a good and succinct way to describe what we intend here.
- There was initial concern about creating an expectation that every student “get” every goal – won’t this add one more layer of check boxes to the program? We discussed how, if courses are allowed to validate for more than one goal, we would likely see all goals covered by all (or at least most) students. There was discussion about how, if we made this change, that it would make sense to wait a few years to see if the data indicate this is happening.

There was ES Committee consensus that this proposal, notwithstanding the above input and comments, was good and should be further developed by drafting language to add substance to each of the recommended areas, and that this continued work should take into account the input received from the full ES Committee. The subgroup will continue its work and bring a final recommendation back to the ESC in the spring semester.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.