Summary Notes
General Education Review Working Group
October 22, 2010
2:00 – 3:10
Attending: Jess Aki, Frank Fenlon, Ross Egloria, Jerry Saviano, Carol Hiraoka, Joy Nagaue, Guy Shibayama, Craig Ohta, Steven Chu, Mike Barros, Cynthia Smith
Guest: Chancellor Rota

Chancellor’s comments

Chancellor Rota provided background as to reasons for current review, underlining the urgency of this need. He linked current efforts to findings of the Underprepared Students task force as well as need to meet Accreditation standard criteria. He indicted the need to have changes in place in time to include in the 2011 published catalog for students enrolling in the Fall. The goal is to have these new General Education requirements in place to include in the 2012 self-study assessment of the College.

It was discussed that there might be the possibility of extending the CPC deadline to enable completion of needed changes proposed by the committee and reviewed by the College in time for catalog publication.

One proposed way to enable meeting this timeline was to have general description in the published catalog stating general education objectives and indicting new categories. Catalog would include general statements about important of general education learning outcomes and categories in which students must take classes for A.S, A.A.S degrees and certificates. Then, can take additional time to determine specific courses which fall within these categories – then indicated to students on specific advising sheets for programs (Program Advising Sheet) allowing for more time to determine which courses do meet the hallmarks or intended outcomes for these categories. There is even the possibility of the need to create new classes to meet specific program general education needs.

Review of needed changes and concerns

It was reiterated that in addition to the bare minimum of 15 credits, CTE programs might have additional requirements they want to add to the degree, thus increasing number of credits. They might also need to narrow the choices for Gen Ed courses to ensure program student learning needs are met. The degree to which programs will be prescriptive in telling students what courses (out of the choices in each category) are suggested or even required will differ between CTE programs as they reevaluate their gen ed requirements based on these changes.

The goal is to have a minimal threshold of courses to be taken which ensure students achieve learning outcomes indicated in Accreditation standards.

It was reiterated that it is important that the distinction be made – general education courses fulfilling degree requirements need to be College level and ensure students gain necessary learning outcomes, they do not necessarily need to be transfer-level courses. However, to apply to the degree, general education courses need to be doing college level work. For those programs where students might seek to transfer to further professional degrees, articulation demands require programs address the need for
transfer level courses in their program Gen Ed requirements. CTE programs with articulation relationships need to be sure to address these in rethinking their Gen Ed requirements.

It was also reiterated that on the part of some program faculty, there remains the very real fear that increasing expectations for General Education outcomes will lead to decline in numbers. Discussion ensued. Some committee members from CTE programs spoke in favor of increasing (where needed) requirements and expectations of learning outcomes to better prepare students, and noted that when their program increased requirements, there was not a drop in enrollment numbers. Specifically, AMT raised standards to ensure students have necessary communication skills needed in industry. It was also noted that with constant and rapid changes in workforce needs and expectations, programs have to be ready to change standards and prepare program students to meet hiring expectations. The ultimate goal is that students are *prepared* for global economy and ongoing changes in the workplace.

It was also noted that in recent surveys of CTE graduates (those surveyed at graduation ceremonies), a majority noted that liberal arts requirements were not challenging.

The point was made that these discussions of how to better prepare students have taken place a number of times in past years, for example in the preparation of the A.S. Task Force report in 1990’s; as well as SCANS goals in 2000. The background on understating articulation and transfer issues was CCCM policy which specifically defines transfer level.

Recategorizing General Education Requirements

The group discussed that one clear need is to change existing category of ‘Communication’ to indicate specifically *Writing* requirement.

Ross presented proposed new categories for General Education courses based on preliminary word done by a sub-group of Jerry, Frank, Cynthia, Carol and Ross. These would collapse existing 6 categories into 5, and the new categories would directly reflect the listing of Gen Ed competencies stated by ACCJC-WASC: Writing; Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning; Humanities and Fine Arts; Social Sciences; and Natural Sciences. These also are in closer alignment with stated categories for Liberal Arts program requirements.

Under each category, there is a preliminary list of learning outcomes (hallmarks). These were put out to committee members for review and further revision. Once these are set, then determining which courses meet these gen ed learning outcomes can be determined based on looking at course slos.

A long discussion ensued of what to do regarding Computer Science (ICS). It was noted that this is always a tricky issue since it is not a science like other natural sciences, yet is not teaching humanist or social science content as is required in the other categories, nor does it impart writing or quantiative skills. The question is whether to add a new category for computer skills – ‘Computer Literacy’ – since this is also an explicitly stated ACCJC learning outcome criteria. However, this would be adding 3 credits to gen ed minimum credits, and not all programs require this. The point was made that some
programs do critically need students to acquire advanced computer skills, however, not necessarily all at the same level. Also, some programs teach the computer skills needed in their field already as part of program classes. One possibility is to not have ICS as part of Gen Ed requirement but rather, programs add on directly relevant ICS course(s) as specific program requirements. This issue will have to be dealt with (issue was tabled for the time being) but the consensus was that trying to squeeze ICS into one of the gen ed skills and content learning categories is not a good idea.

Programs accountable to other accrediting bodies (e.g. NATEF) will need to ensure that any changes in HCC General Education requirements and courses eligible to fulfill those requirements do not conflict with program needs to meet certification requirements.

Action Steps to be taken (before next meeting)

All committee members need to look over the draft ‘General Education SLOs (Hallmarks) for CTE Degrees that Ross presented and provide any feedback asap.

Draft language needs to be drawn up for the catalog regarding general education outcomes as an important part of CTE degrees.

Need to investigate how the issue of requiring computer science classes is incorporated into general education degrees is being handled at other campuses.

Need to consult with counselors regarding implications of changes made in the catalog for students (e.g. impacting financial aid etc.)

Next meeting

December 3; 2:00 place tba