

General Education Council (GEC)
Minutes – Thursday, February 13, 2014

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Dr. Lucretia Scoufos, Dean of Instruction, at 3:30 p.m.

Members Present: Lucretia Scoufos (Chair), Susan Morrison, Wilma Shires, Glenn Melancon, Michael Reed, Steve Smith, John Von Bebber, Brandon Burnett, Mohamed Chehbouni, Kathleen Hardgrove, Robert Howard, Cody Bogard, Brad Ludrick, Aaron Williams

Absent and Excused: Jane Elder, Brett Elliott, Robert McFadden, Shelby Ragsdale

Dean Scoufos asked everyone to introduce themselves to council member Brad Ludrick who had not met everyone previously. After the introductions, Dean Scoufos turned the floor over to Dr. Glenn Melancon to explain the provided General Education table listing the general education requirements and their hours. Dr. Melancon stated the table was divided into two columns, the left side is the Regents General Education requirements with a 40 hour minimum and the right side is Southeastern's General Education requirements and how they match up with the Regents requirements. He stated the Regents last makeover of the General Education requirements was in 1995. Its goal was to provide internal transferability to students for majors and provide a transfer matrix for students who complete one to two years at Southeastern and then transfer to a different university taking their credit hours with them. This would allow students to graduate in a reasonable amount of time even when transferring between schools.

Some questions mentioned and answered were:

1. Is the 60 hour requirement for general education set in stone?
Dr. Melancon stated it is not set stone, however, the regents have a minimum of 41 or 44 hours. He stated the three-hour difference depends on a student's computer proficiency. If they have a high computer proficiency level they can test out of that course.
2. Can we change the general education classes and are we offering too many courses?
Dr. Melancon stated that theoretically the council could change the general education classes, however, in order to narrow the course field the council has to make sure the classes being kept encompass the entire time period from beginning date to present.
3. What is the rationale behind reducing the general education classes?
Dr. Melancon stated there are not as many faculty to teach the courses and there is concern of an overlap of courses. He further stated he thinks that instructors who have taught these classes continue to do so because they have done it for so long. He does not think it makes sense to continue offering a course that is no longer valuable.
4. Would the department not be the best judge on what courses needed to be taught and do we have the authority as a committee to delete a course if need be?
Dean Scoufos stated if a department cannot give adequate justification as to why there is a need for this many general education classes in one department then we, as a council, can say take that under consideration for striking such classes from the Gen Ed course requirements.
5. Are the same general education courses offered every semester?
No, some are on a rotation basis.
6. Would someone from the registrar's office be a good person to add to the council because they are the final say on if a student has received all the hours they need to graduate?
Dean Scoufos stated that the registrar's office is the final check/count to make sure the students have all their required Gen Ed hours to graduate, but faculty advisors are supposed to help

students with their general education courses, along with major and minor requirements to satisfy the needs to graduate. This sparked a conversation about who needed to be included on the GEC. Committee members suggested that Tim Boatman or one of his staff should be added to the council.

Dean Scoufos asked the council members, along with their department colleagues and chairs, to review the materials discussed today to determine if courses should be removed or added. She asked them to discuss the general education classes with their colleagues and get their feedback as well. She stated that today's meeting is a jumping off point and that no final decisions would be made today but asked the council for their initial thoughts on Southeastern's General Education choices. The council agreed that the English Composition classes were adequate along with Political Science, History and Communication. When looking over the Science classes, it was suggested that Southeastern offers too many science classes and that this is spreading the faculty too thin. The council agreed to look over the science classes in more detail and report back with their suggestions. The council also thought that the Humanities courses were sufficient but agreed to look into them further and make suggestions for different class options. The council determined that Mathematics is the most complex of the general education courses and decided to hold off on discussing them until Brett Elliott (representative from the Department of Mathematics) could be in attendance. The GEC excitedly responded to the Department of Accounting and Finance creating a Financial Literacy course for their majors with the indication to make it a Gen Ed class if possible. (Some of the council members raised their hands to enroll.)

At this juncture, Dean Scoufos advised the GEC that we need to examine some new techniques to raise our retention rate among our freshmen students in the Gen Ed courses. She gave examples that some other universities have put into practice that are successful, such as giving students decorative, pocket folders reflecting the school colors and images, with the "BIG TEN" Learning Outcomes listed on the front and back. The GEC responded enthusiastically when she passed around a model. Another practice that Dean Scoufos plans is to send a "welcome" letter to all incoming freshman.

After further discussion, Dean Scoufos stated that the GEC will continue the review and discussion of the Gen Ed courses that are presently being offered with the intent to update the course offerings based upon need to offer our students a unified and related curriculum. She added that the GEC will embark upon selecting teams to review the goals and learning outcomes as were considered in General Education Council minutes from Tuesday, January 28, 201.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Recorded and Submitted by Danna Collins, Administrative Assistant to Dean Scoufos