

GEOC Meeting March 20, 2008

*In attendance: Katharina von Hammerstein, Arnie Dashefsky, Marie Cantino, Hedley Freake, Anke Finger, Bill Lott, John Bennett, Jane Goldman, Murphy Sewall, Niloy Dutta, Xae Alicia Reyes, Felicia Pratto, Tom Roby, Janice Clark (for Mike Darre), Peter Gogarten, Rosa Helena Chinchilla, Anabel Perez.
Missing: Dan Civco, Dean Hanink, Cora Lynn Deibler, John Troyer.*

Meeting called to order at 11:00am.

1. **Minutes** from our last meeting:

- Deletion of the sentence: “Dept asked for revision of catalog copy of ENGL 223W” from ENGL 3117W and 3118W under W subcommittee reports.

Motion approve the February 28, 2008 minutes. Motion carried with two abstentions.

2. **Announcements**

- *GEOC Meetings.* The following GEOC meeting will be in ONE week, March 27, 2008.
- *GEOC Membership.* Senate Nominating Committee has made some suggestions for new GEOC members to replace those rotating off. Katharina von Hammerstein has asked for feedback about the suggestions, as well as any additional names to suggest to the Senate Nominating Committee:
 - CA2 Social Science
 - Robert Cromley (GEOG). He’s familiar with GEOC and undergraduate education mission.
 - CA3 Science and Technology
 - Marie Cantino suggested Randy Walikonis (PNB) and Kenneth Noll (MCB).
 - CA4 Diversity and Multiculturalism
 - Morty Ortega (NRME). Currently on the CA4 subcommittee. Very diligent committee member. Because of his experience, Ortega is GEOC’s first choice.
 - Guanhou Wang (HIST).
 - Susan Randolph (ECON).
 - Margaret Breen (ENGL). She is GEOC’s second choice for CA4.
 - Information Literacy Competency
 - Jean Crespi (EEB)
 - Del Siegel (ED PSYC). The Nominating Committee favors Del Siegel.
 - Letitia Naigles (PSYC). Letitia Naigles is on the IL subcommittee now. GEOC prefers Letitia Naigles.
 - Quantitative Competency
 - Peter Gogarten (MCB). Peter Gogarten is eligible for another term because his first term was of 1.5 years. This conforms to standard practice in the Senate.
 - Assessment
 - Hedley Freake will not return to GEOC, though will stay on the Assessment subcommittee as a member. Katharina von Hammerstein will replace him as chair.

3. **Subcommittee Reports**

CA1 Arts and Humanities

Subcommittee reports that discussions about assessment are continuing and they are working with the comments they received from Eric Soulsby.

CA4 Diversity and Multiculturalism

Subcommittee submitted a revised March 6, 2008 report with more information about how proposers can revise the course proposals to fulfill the CA4 requirement. This is in response to GEOC’s request that

more details be provided when courses are being sent back for revision or are being rejected for a particular content area.

The CA4 subcommittee report changes the previous “Rejection” of the courses below to “Revise and Resubmit”:

POLS 3208/W	Politics of Oil (The great majority of the course focuses on a commodity rather than on groups and perspectives. We strongly invite resubmission to show that a majority of the course focuses on the interrelationship of diverse groups with respect to the commodity.)
PHIL 220	Philosophical Foundation of Human Rights (The committee members think that the topic of human rights certainly falls within the purview of CA4. Nevertheless, the course does not show the ways in which the issue of human rights is played out in diverse political, social, ethnic, and cultural contexts. We invite resubmission of a proposal that displays a greater balance between the currently emphasized theoretical issues in favor of a more substantive representation of diverse groups and viewpoints.)

Felicia Pratto expressed support for the above change in practice to bring further understanding between departments, faculty, and GEOC.

Motion to approve the revised CA4 report. Motion carried.

CA4 Assessment. The CA4 subcommittee presented a revised assessment document for GEOC feedback that includes additions based on previous conversations about CA4 assessment, particularly with regard to the learning goals and objectives. Also added to the document is a section on Measures and Results as suggested by Eric Soulsby.

The following feedback was provided:

- Tom Roby suggested that repetition within the document be deleted.
 - Anke Finger noted that this is something that, during an earlier general discussion about CA4 assessment, was recommended to be included in the document.
- Felicia Pratto pointed out that Comparative Analysis is a formal technique that may not be used in each CA4 course.
- “At least one of the basic principles of assessment in CA4 should be based on (*graded? we are not sure about this*) written reflection (or work of equal substance) as part of the course, which would include comparative analysis of two or more groups or perspectives, through the lens of “race”, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, political system, religious tradition or disability, and its application to relevant theory and methods presented in the course.”
 - Anke Finger pointed out that this does not HAVE to be a written work. In whatever format, the CA4 subcommittee believes it is important that there is student engagement with multiple perspectives on a particular topic. This assignment may not have to be graded if the assignment is not a normal part of the course, but may be collected only for review by GEOC.
 - Katharina von Hammerstein asked that the word “written” be stricken from the paragraph, if it meant an additional, separate written assignment. This would mean an unreasonable addition to the workload of instructors/TA’s of large lecture

courses. However, if the assignment could be short and embedded in another course assignment, a written assignment may be feasible.

- Arnie Dashefsky asked, if the assignment is not written, how can it be evaluated?
 - Would additional funding make evaluation of this assignment more manageable?
 - This assignment, if it is a part of the assessment of CA4, does not have to apply to all students taking a CA4 course.
 - In the case of large courses, it makes sense to do a sampling of some students.
 - Problem- this approach implies that the assignment is not part of the course grade and thus it may be difficult to motivate students to work on it.
- Meaning of the phrase: “through the lens of ‘race’, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, political system, or religious tradition or of disability”
 - Does this mean consideration of one other (singular) perspective? Or of whole concepts (of race, gender, etc.)?
 - Can this be revised to read “through the lens of one other...”? Or, “through the lens of differing perspectives of dominant and non-dominant cultures...”?
 - Do we mean presumptively “normative” or “dominant” cultures when differentiating “other” cultures?
 - Anke Finger notes that the current terminology does not exclude singular analyses.
- Marie Cantino suggested defining what is meant by “perspectives” at the start of the document and then using the word “perspectives” instead of the full phrase that is currently used throughout the document.
- Hedley Freake noted that a key criteria of CA4 is that a student see the world through another’s perspective. As stated, the requirement does not include a comparison between perspectives.
- There are two questions that need to be clarified:
 - Are we asking the instructors how they know if their students are meeting the CA4 requirements? Or
 - Are we asking if the CA4 requirements are being met overall?
- What are differences between learning goals and learning objectives in this document?
 - Objectives should be measurable things.
- Niloy Dutta pointed out that these documents will be regularly revised over the coming 5-10 years and so must not be too detailed.

The Assessment subcommittee will review the CA4 assessment document once CA4 will finish its work on the document, including a fine-tooth reading of the measures and learning objectives. Detailed planning of CA4 assessment will be done by the Assessment subcommittee. Katharina von Hammerstein asked that the revision of the CA4 document be ready for the Assessment subcommittee as soon as possible (within the next few weeks), so that the actual planning and budgeting of CA4 assessment can be developed (by the Assessment subcommittee) and CA4 assessment can begin in AY 2008/09.

4. Interdisciplinary Courses

Our last discussion on the topic revolved around the following key points:

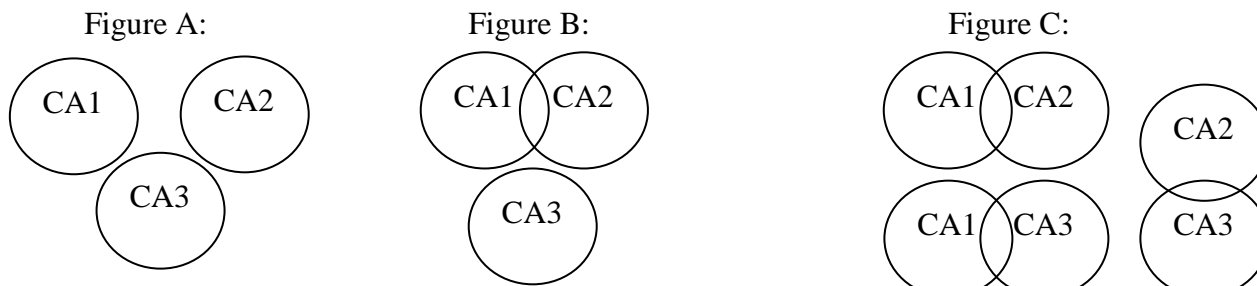
- Securing the integrity of the content areas, and
- Allowing for bridges between two content areas (not including CA4)

Previous GEOC motion on the topic - **Motion to approve of the concept that interdisciplinary courses may be approved as Gen Ed courses across two content areas (1, 2, 3)** – resulted from the

consideration that the whole of an interdisciplinary course is more valuable than the sum of its parts. This motion carried at the February 28, 2008 meeting.

Questions GEOC is still exploring:

- What is an interdisciplinary course?
- What version of bridging do we want to permit? The GEOC vote was to move away from figure A and toward figures B or C. Figures reproduced below.



- What criteria for evaluating interdisciplinary course proposals will be developed?
 - Quantitative and/or qualitative?
 - Who will determine the evaluation criteria?

Once the above decisions are made, GEOC must focus on guidelines for those proposing Gen Ed courses across CAs and another for what students are allowed to do in the new Gen Ed scheme. Also, once these decisions are made, GEOC will draft a recommendation to the Senate Curricula and Courses Committee. The Senate C&C may then make a motion to the Senate.

What is an interdisciplinary GEOC course?

A discussion ensued:

- Hedley Freake: the interdisciplinary GEOC courses we are concerned with in this discussion are the ones that meet the criteria for more than one content area.
- Marie Cantino: the CA3 subcommittee will not be happy with a course that is anything less than 70% science. Interdisciplinarity should be encouraged in courses even if the inclusion of the second discipline does not mean the course will be included in another content area. Our discussion of “interdisciplinarity” should not be limited to the 4 GEOC content areas.
- Bill Lott: splitting the course into percentages is more relevant for instructors than for students taking the course. Students may be able to absorb even more about a particular discipline when it is coupled with another discipline so long as the course engages them.
- Marie Cantino: in practical terms, bridging CA3 and another CA is more complicated than saying that science as taught through another discipline can be more successful for some students. There must be a firm introduction to a science in order to fulfill the stated CA3 requirements.
- Katharina von Hammerstein and Xae Alicia Reyes: interdisciplinary GEOC courses must be able to stand alone in each content area.
- Jane Goldman: the solution may be to exclude CA3 from any bridging.
- Felicia Pratto: excluding CA3 implies that bridging between CA3 and another content area cannot be done; but bridging between CA2 and CA3 can be done.
- Marie Cantino: a non-bridged CA3 course does not prevent faculty from including other disciplines. However, there must be a threshold at which a science course IS a general education science course meeting the CA3 requirements.
- Peter Gogarten: urged caution about the language we use in formulating a policy about interdisciplinary general education courses. GEOC should not limit the phrase “interdisciplinary”

to those courses that are in two content areas. Using “general education cross-content area courses” or “general education courses across content areas” rather than “interdisciplinary” courses acknowledges that there are many courses across the University that are interdisciplinary in nature without being in the general education curriculum, and that there are interdisciplinary Gen Ed courses that don’t bridge content areas.

- Murphy Sewall and Peter Gogarten: expressed preference for Figure C (as shown above) with some acknowledgement of the difficulty in bridging CA3 with other CAs.
- John Bennett and Jane Goldman: there is a possibility, in the future, of adding a “Content Area 5” for interdisciplinary courses – similarly to CA4.
- Marie Cantino: reminded GEOC that the issue of interdisciplinarity in regards to general education courses was raised as a result of the CA3 subcommittee reviewing three separate interdisciplinary courses they had a very hard time evaluating.

Generally, there was a consensus that Figure C- bridging across two CA’s out of CA 1, 2, 3 - is the favored vision for revised Content Area Operating Principles.

- Hedley Freake suggested that our next conversation be about the practicalities of Figure C; this discussion may then determine if Figure C still makes sense.
- Jane Goldman pointed out that general GEOC support for Figure C does NOT yet include support for student decisions about assigning credit to one or the other CA.

Future discussion of interdisciplinarity in UConn’s Gen Ed program will use the following terms to identify those courses that would come under the purview of GEOC review: “general education cross-content area courses” or “general education courses across content areas.”

Criteria for the Evaluation of Proposals

Next step for the conversation is the establishment of criteria.

- In concept, these criteria should be general enough to apply to the pairing of any CAs.
- Bill Lott would like to see CA subcommittees require that students finish a general education cross-content area course meet the defined content area criteria. Student learning, he stated, is the issue, not the division of course content across content areas.
- Hedley Freake noted that we do not have any data yet about student learning in general education courses, so GEOC discussions about student learning and students’ meeting criteria should be tempered by this knowledge.
- Murphy Sewall pointed out that quantitative criterion should be determined by individual CA subcommittees. He also recommended that we consider giving “provisional” approval of a cross-content area course similar to the provisional approval we give to intensive session courses.

KVH asked for volunteers to draft a few sentences to help guide proposers when submitting a general education cross-content area course. Anke Finger and Xae Alicia Reyes volunteered.

Meeting called to a close at 1:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anabel Perez
GEOC Administrator