

GEOC Meeting April 23, 2007

In Attendance: Hedley Freake, Michael Brezak, William Lott, Robert Jeffers, Michael Darre, Felicia Pratto, John Troyer, Niloy Dutta, Katharina von Hammerstein, Clare Eby, Deborah McDonald, Thomas Roby, Marie Cantino, Peter Gogarten, Anabel Perez.

Meeting called to order at 2:05pm.

Minutes from the April 9, 2007 meeting approved as written.

- Thanks to Kristen Mooney, GEOC student employee, for taking minutes.

Announcements

- Robert Bjork giving a talk on Wednesday April 25th at 11 (Konover) and 4 (Leiberman Room 116) – topic: “What we think we teach and what students really hear.”

Subcommittee Reports

Diversity and Multiculturalism

CA4 has held its open meeting to discuss the drafted CA4 learning goals and outcomes. The CA4 subcommittee is now going back to incorporate the comments into their draft learning outcomes.

Assessment

Distributed minutes from the assessment subcommittee meeting include a proposal for assessment that focuses on writing. In this first proposal to Veronica Makowsky, a major focus is on student writing in specific majors. The plan is: throughout the upcoming academic year, writing samples would be taken from different undergraduate stages within majors; in conjunction with the Writing Center, the assessment subcommittee would develop assessment criteria; and, graduate students would be hired to assess the collected writing samples summer 2008.

Other things that could supplement this plan:

- Focus groups with seniors
- SAILS would also be included in this first phase of assessment, as well as one content area, probably science and technology.

The goal for this subcommittee is to draft a more fleshed out plan to GEOC by its next meeting, May 7th, and then begin assessment next year.

Discussion:

The proposed plan allows GEOC to see how the assessment process works and whether it needs modification. This staggered approach also allows for more careful assessment, as opposed to assessing all areas at once.

Administrative overhead will also need to be clarified. Departments would assign a writing coordinator to handle the departmental administrative need, but is more central administration needed?

Quantitative

Thomas Roby has drafted a Q subcommittee document that will be distributed to the Q subcommittee for review.

200-level Regional Campus Courses

Regional campuses are encountering problems in offering relevant 200-level courses to their students.

Stamford interested in teaching HDFS 202 as a CA2 course, but the Storrs HDFS department is not interested in submitting it for CA2 due to problems of overenrollment. Should this course be an “official unofficial” CA2 substitution for regional campus students?

Option: create a second number for the same course and only allow the second number course to be taught at the regional campuses. Only this second course would be given gened credit. This may be a do-able P/S tracking device but the difficulty may be in explaining the process in a coherent manner. Hedley Freake will talk to Jeff von Munkwitz-Smith to discuss the viability of this option.

GEOC is interested in ensuring that the new gened system, initially created with traditionally aged 4-year fulltime students in mind, is accessible to other student populations. The 200-level regional campus issue raises the need for broadening the original intent of the gened system.

INTD 150 Alcohol and Drugs on Campus

Chronology of the course proposal:

- INTD 150 is a Provost’s GenEd Grant Competition 2006 winner.
- The course proposal was submitted concurrently to GEOC and SON C&CC in October 2006.
- GEOC approved it as CA2 and NURS approved it.
- INTD C&CC reviewed the course in March 2007 and approved it with the condition that it be approved by COMM department and CLAS C&CC.
- COMM and CLAS C&CC approved the course in April 2007 but CLAS C&CC has raised deep concerns over the suitability of the course for CA2 credit.
- The course has yet to go to Senate C&CC.
- Instructors want to teach the course Fall 2007.

CLAS C&C concern with this course was likely due to them having different information to review than did GEOC and its CA2 subcommittee. That subcommittee only approved the course after receiving more details from the proposers. However, Hedley Freake discussed CLAS C&CC concerns about the course’s gened suitability with the Senate Executive Committee. The SEC has stated that individual school/college C&C committees have no standing in the decision-making of gened courses, though they can reject a course. This committee believes that the structure of the university does not allow for this redundancy in gened course approval process and this should be communicated to CLAS C&CC.

Fall 2007 teaching: the instructors want to teach the course in the Fall 2007 but the course needs Senate C&CC approval both for gened and for 100-level teaching. This course will not be reviewed by Senate C&CC or the Senate in the Spring 2007 semester. If they want to teach it in the Fall, GEOC recommends that they teach it under a NURS special topics course designation, without gened credit. Once INTD 150 is approved by the Senate, this would then make a case for a dean’s substitution for those students having taken the course Fall 2007.

Six Department Distribution Rule

The School of Nursing has raised concerns over misunderstanding in the existing catalog language regarding the gened distribution requirement. Members of the School of Nursing interpreted current

language to mean that as long as 6 departments were represented in the three content areas, then two PHIL courses could be taken in one CA.

Hedley Freake drafted a rewording of the existing language. When he contacted the Registrar to update catalog language for next year, she informed us that the language was erroneously updated with the draft GEOC sent to the Senate at the end of the 2005-2006 academic year. This draft was sent back to this committee by the Senate. Next year's catalog will thus include the unapproved language GEOC proposed in the previous academic year.

The newly drafted language will be sent forward to Senate C&CC for inclusion in next catalog, 2008-2009. Language to read:

“The courses in Content Areas One, Two, and Three must be taken in six different academic units and the courses in each of these Content Areas must be drawn from two different academic units.”

Concrete examples will be included in this new draft.

Course Reapprovals

We need to start thinking about a process by which all CA courses would be asked to describe how they are now, at this time, fulfilling the criteria for that content area. The mechanism the assessment subcommittee discussed is that this would be part of the business of GEOC subcommittees. A time plan would be established to ensure that reapproval documents would come in at a staggered pace. As a practical matter, this system should take into account how many courses are in each of the content areas. Also, courses approved for CA1, 2 or 3, and CA4 will need to be reapproved at the same time.

Teaching of the same course can be quite different across faculty. GEOC should plan to obtain information from all faculty teaching the course in order to examine how and if the course changes from its original proposal.

- Could this be done with a 25% rule for instructor information?
- Should ALL instructors teaching the course be asked for information?

One thing that GEOC can build into the reassessment process is to ask departments:

- What steps does the department have in place to ensure uniformity of course teaching across campuses and faculty?
- Can we see the syllabi and other information appropriate to the content area?
- What are the assignments that you would give that would meet the specific criteria?

The above could be used for formative assessment, if done every three years. Within the reapproval, questions would be asked about student learning though this would not be the same kind of assessment as sampling across campus.

- A three-year cycle of rotation would be onerous to those content areas with large numbers of courses.
- Re-approvals should be uniform across campus and should be part of regular operating procedure.
- We need to figure out a system that is streamlined.

Substitutions

Substitutions play an important role in reapproval because of the large numbers of courses used for substitution of gened courses. Thus, it is suggested that those courses that are often used for substitutions of gened courses should be reviewed as well.

- The problem with this idea is that the instructors of those courses used for substitution credit did not submit their courses for substitution and therefore have little incentive for providing assessment data to GEOC.

Campus-specific substitutions data provided by Kim Page and distributed to this committee. Report shows that CLAS students are less likely to get a substitution at the regional campuses than at the Storrs campus. Therefore, it can be inferred that substitutions are not entirely an availability issue.

BGS substitutions are driving the larger number of substitutions at the regional campuses. An issue for this student population may be the times at which 200-level courses are taught.

Hedley Freake will be meeting with “high substitutors” and will report back to GEOC at the start of the next academic year.

Online courses

GEOC sent Senate C&CC a motion for online courses early in the semester. This was returned to GEOC for more justification.

Approval of online teaching of courses could be folded into the reapproval process and research compliance forms could be used as a basis for a branching system for review of online courses.

- Could GEOC say that any online courses must be previously vetted by ITL?
- What is the department’s role in the approval process for online courses?
- Could Keith Barker help us draft criteria to assess online course proposals? They may also be able to give us guidance for writing the online teaching portion of the new CAR.

GEOC will return to this issue.

Next GEOC meeting

May 7, 2007 2-4pm CUE 134.

Respectfully submitted,

Anabel Perez
Administrator