

Curriculum Committee Retreat April 22 2011 Minutes

In attendance: Steve Smith, Sally Earll, Susan Lewis (CGCC), Jim Parks (Committee Chair), Scott Huff, Susanne Christopher, Kendra Cawley, Heiko Spoddek, Rick Willebrand, Andrew Roessler, Jeff Triplett, Joe Wright, Dorothy Badri, Tammy Dowd, Pam Kessinger, Melody Wilson, Linda Ferguson-Kolmes, Birgitte Ryslinge, John Sparks, Djambel Unkov Ross Kouzes.

Upper Vs Lower Division Collegiate. (Economic SAC, not History SAC on paperwork.)

Guidance is needed from when a course comes through, what will the Curriculum Committee be looking for to decide whether its upper or lower division. We are prohibited from developing and offering 3, 4, and 500 level courses. Some of our courses taught at 200 level are sometimes offered at the 300 level at the universities. (Paperwork handed out at meeting)

Kendra discusses two courses that came through. The committee decided that the first course, broader in focus would be ok and the second one would not be ok as it was more focused.

There was a discussion about the role of outcomes in determining upper versus lower division. Both outcomes and a description are needed.

Someone at the meeting stated that courses can be offered at the 200 level or at a graduate level just depending on the content and expectations not simply just the focus of the course.

The standard seems to be that if we can find a parallel course at a 3-400 level then we can't offer it.

The committee discussed that LDC tended to be survey and upper division courses tended to be narrow in focus.

What happens is that students take our course and then they have to take the 300 level versions at PSU. Kendra states that she has seen courses transfer from 200 to a 400 level and while that is a good value for the student it may not be appropriate for our level of students. It seems that you can use anything as a basic model. What is really needed is to look at the assessment tools not just the title of the course that is where you should be able to make the determination. It's not going to just be one piece of criteria but rather a set of principles that will be used to determine this.

Proposed Principles for SAC Guidance: There is not a single criteria that will be used to make the determination but rather a set of principles that will be applied.

- Introductory language
- Broad focus
- Transfer to other 4 year institutions at the 100 and 200 level and/or found in lower division collegiate handbook
- Introduction to an occupation vs. a specialization
- High vs. minimum level of prerequisites (Standard prerequisites being the minimal)
- Outcomes and description need to reflect the introductory nature of the course

Susanne Christopher:

Gave a brief history of General Education at PCC.

4 years ago, when we were starting pre requisites and standard pre requisites, there was a lot of discussion of what courses to use for this, people were using the words General Education to describe these courses. All 4 of our degrees had different lists of General Education. Accreditation stated they did not have a clear understanding of what our General Education is. The list was merged into the one list called the discipline studies General Education list. The criterion was then the prefix of the course, which we believed was a very loose criteria. The list was crafted in the 80s and has been with us for a very long time. 2007-08 it was merged and some things happened simultaneously, courses were grandfathered in which did not meet the criteria to be on these lists.

General Education Philosophy Statement

The faculty of Portland Community College affirms that a prime mission of the college is to aid in the development of educated citizens. Ideally, such citizens possess:

- understanding of their culture and how it relates to other cultures
- appreciation of history both from a global perspective and from a personal perspective, including an awareness of the role played by gender and by various cultures
- understanding of themselves and their natural and technological environments
- ability to reason qualitatively and quantitatively
- ability to conceptually organize experience and discern its meaning
- aesthetic and artistic values
- understanding of the ethical and social requirements of responsible citizenship

Such endeavors are a lifelong undertaking. The General Education component of the associate Degree programs represent a major part of the college's commitment to that process.

More recently the Joint Boards of the Oregon University System (JBAC) developed statewide criteria for General Education/Discipline Studies as it affects the Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer Degree (AAOT). PCC incorporated these criteria with some additions to form PCC's criteria for inclusion on our General Education/Discipline Studies list. The criteria are:

Lower division Collegiate (LDC) courses that apply for General Education/Discipline Studies status must:

- Be available to all students who meet the prerequisites for the course. (which means they cannot be in a limited entry program or have prerequisites which are too high)
- Ensure that the appropriate AAOT discipline studies outcomes and criteria are reflected in the course outcomes.
- Must be transferable to OUS schools – refer to the General Education Transferability Status form for more details.
- Have the Standard Prerequisites unless the SAC has completed the Prerequisite Opt-Out form and that request is approved.
- Be an LDC course that is eligible for the AAOT Discipline Studies List

Susanne discusses the Social Science General Education/Discipline studies List Request Form.

The General Education Philosophy statement goes way back and the bullet points are for clarity. Unless the language is clarified we are going to have constant conflicts of interpretation depending on who is sitting at the table. We own the form and it can be changed by the committee. The semantics are argued about on the forms as to whether or not things need to state (and/or) for clarity.

Sally Earll discusses General Education:

Referencing the General Education request form, Committee Chair Jim Parks asks what “In depth” means and would like someone to present examples. The committee then looked at recently approved submissions which vary. 1) Some submissions are very consistent in their use of single sentences. They have been approved this way. 2) Some requests provide a narrative about their class and what they do, I believe they are telling us why their course is uniquely applicable for General Education. 3) Some of the committee members liked one submission in particular because they used the course outcomes to justify inclusion on the list; they did not use a narrative to tell us what makes the course uniquely qualified for inclusion.

The question/proposal: What do you want to see and to what level you want to see a narrative; or are outcomes sufficient enough?

The committee discussed whether complex outcomes are sufficient and/or if a narrative is also necessary.

The committee decision was that the outcomes should clearly speak to the General Education criteria; sometimes it may be necessary to add narrative to help the committee understand what the course is about and the inclusion of a narrative is ok.

Proposed Principles for SAC Guidance:

- Develop course outcomes that speak to the PCC General Education/Discipline Studies philosophy statement and the AAOT criteria.
- Complex thoughtful outcomes which respond to General Education criteria are required.
- If the SAC would like to add narrative to provide more proof or explanation as to why this course is uniquely qualified to receive General Education/Discipline Studies designation, they may do so.

Kendra Cawley presents where we are currently on this topic:

Kendra passes around a handout about General Education criteria, Philosophy statement, and outcomes for discipline studies.

Please see Social Sciences General Education request form which is located on the Curriculum Office website.

Planning ahead:

- Jim would like to come to an agreement within the next couple meetings as to how to address the clarity PCC General Education Philosophy *ability to reason qualitatively and*

quantitatively. Should this statement be revised to reflect options, i.e. ability to reason qualitatively and/or quantitatively

- A subgroup of the committee may review the General Education request form with the assistance of the curriculum office to improve and clarify the requests.