

General Education Committee Meeting  
Mississippi State University  
March 20, 2015

Present: Kari Babski-Reeves, Russell Carr, Amy Crumpton, Kevin Hunt, Mitzy Johnson, Kelly Moser, Bob Otondo, Kathy Sherman-Morris, Kirk Swortzel, Jenny Turner

Swortzel called the meeting to order at 11:45 a.m. on Friday, March 20, 2015 in room 324 of the Student Union. Swortzel welcomed the members of the committee to the meeting. He explained that the General Education Committee is a subcommittee of the University Committee on Courses and Curricula, and its charges are to provide oversight of the General Education Curriculum of the University and to coordinate efforts to comply with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) general education standards. The General Education Committee has been a standing committee since 2007.

Sherman-Morris moved to approve the minutes from the February 21, 2014 meeting, and Carr seconded the motion. The motion passed with one member abstaining.

**Old Business**

Swortzel reported that some of the General Education Committee members were interviewed as part of the SACSCOC Reaffirmation Visit and the Visit went well with no recommendations in the area of General Education. The next full SACSCOC visit is in ten years.

At the General Education committee meeting on February 21, 2014, there were questions about how many critical thinking questions are on the ETS Proficiency Test (Abbreviated Form). Johnson provided a handout that explained there are nine questions measuring critical thinking skills. Committee member, Amy Crumpton, commented she would like to see the critical thinking questions, and Johnson said she would try to obtain some examples.

Committee member, Kevin Hunt asked if the ETS Proficiency Test script read before the test is administered could be reduced. Johnson said the script has been reduced as much as possible. Johnson asked committee members if the students need more than the allotted 40 minutes to take the test since students identified as having test anxiety are usually exempt from specific time restrictions. It was the consensus of the committee that everyone who is taking the test be given the only allotted 40 minutes. Johnson will check with the ETS Proficiency Test policies to be sure this is not in conflict with their testing procedures.

Committee members reviewed the new format/report for ETS Data Analysis based upon the committee's recommendation from last year's meeting. Committee members discussed how to determine if there is a significant difference in the MSU freshmen and MSU seniors. Committee member, Kevin Hunt suggested the best markers to examine would be how MSU freshmen compare to the national average for freshmen and applying the same analysis to seniors.

Committee member, Russell Carr, stated that the information was listed in the report. Committee member, Kari Babski-Reeves, asked since reading, critical thinking, writing and math are the only subject areas that are tested, how are the subcontent scores derived? Johnson stated she would ask ETS of how this was derived for the Special Report.

Information provided in the handout outlined that freshmen (2008) Mississippi State students' scores are slightly higher than the national students' scores (2008) on both the ETS Proficiency Profile (EPP) total and subscores; four-year senior (2012) Mississippi State students' scores are close to that of the national Senior students (2012) on all EPP scores; and five year senior (2013) Mississippi State students' scores are slightly lower than that of the national senior students (2013) on all EPP scores. In analyzing the community college students, the handout provided that four-year (2012) Mississippi State non-transfer students' scores are higher than that of the transfer senior Mississippi students (2012) on total EPP scores and in 3 subscores (reading, writing, and math) and five-year (2013) Mississippi State non-transfer students' scores are higher than that of the transfer senior Mississippi students (2013) on total EPP scores and four subscores (reading, critical thinking, humanities, and social science). Committee member, Kevin Hunt, asked how to determine what is a meaningful affect, and who makes that decision. Johnson said that SACSCOC does not determine that, SACSCOC just asks for justification of the benchmark. Committee members pointed out MSU is at the national average and will have to determine where it wants to be. To further compare the transfer students and the non-transfer students, committee members discussed whether they should be tested separately. At the present time, both are being tested in the classroom together. A committee member pointed out that some introductory classes on campus have sections for transfer and non-transfer students and that would be a good place to test them. A committee member suggested testing transfer students at transfer orientation. Johnson indicated she would check to see who attends transfer orientation to determine if testing transfers at that time is even possible. She stated that the committee needs to consider the testing costs and manpower of administering the tests separately.

### **New Business**

Committee members reviewed the 2013-2014 Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Report and Feedback. MSU received "excellent" in all areas but received comments from the University IE Committee that pointed out typographical areas in the report. Departments submitted their reports separately, so the committee suggested Swortzel review the final copy before it is submitted to the IE Committee

The 2014-2015 IE Template modifications were reviewed by the Committee. The modifications include the 2<sup>nd</sup> Column being divided out into two sub-columns (Assessment Procedures and Criterion). This modification is to assist with the transition to the new assessment software system TracDat that is to be implemented in the future. Undergraduate program coordinator or instructors of certain general education courses complete the IE Template after it is sent out with instructions.

Committee members reviewed an excerpt from the 2014-2015 Undergraduate Catalog that listed all of the general education courses and discussed whether so many courses should be designated as general education courses. Johnson suggested the Committee look at the course

enrollments as they did in 2010. Then determine from the total enrollments of the general education courses who the non-majors and majors are to determine which students are taking the courses for general education. Swortzel mentioned that some of the courses may be designated general education because of an articulation agreement with the community colleges. Swortzel stated that he and Johnson would work with ITS to see what possible data can be compiled from the general education courses and share with the committee at its next scheduled meeting. Swortzel announced a General Education Committee meeting will be held Friday, October 16, 2015 at 11:30 p.m. to look at the general education courses. Some committee members stated September may be a better option. Also, committee members suggested the spring General Education Committee meeting be held in February 2016. Otondo moved to adjourn the meeting, and Hunt seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m.