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CWU General Education Committee Minutes - 11/29/10

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**Central Washington University
General Education Committee
November 29, 2010
Minutes**

Present: Phil Backlund, James Beaghan, James Bisgard, Cynthia Coe, Toni Čuljak, Duane Dowd, Sharon Rosell, Tracy Pellett, Scott Carlton and Sheryl Grunden.

Absent: None

Guests: Jim Gaudino, Sherer Holter, Charlotte Tullos and Rodney Bransdorfer

Convene meeting at 2:10 p.m. by Cynthia Coe acting chair. Toni took over the meeting at 2:20 p.m.

Changes to the Agenda - None

Phil moved to approve the minutes. Sharon seconded and minutes were approved.

Announcements - None

President Guadino/Sherer Holter/Charlotte Tullos – Cynthia gave a brief overview of what the committee would like to know. What would the President like to see the program look like, or what he sees as strong or needs to be revised of current proposal? What would a better proposal look like? Rodney explained that one of the problems with Gen Ed is there currently is no ownership and nothing seems to happen. The committee comes up with ideas, but does not have the authority to make it go anywhere. Rodney expressed that there needs to a discussion on who is going to be in charge and how to keep it on track as well as how it will be access and who will be in charge of that. President Gaudino sees general education as a set of courses that all of our students take or basic courses. Then there is liberal education which is the breadth courses, such as life-long learning, critical thinking, etc. At a comprehensive university, gen ed should probably be a defining characteristic along with the strength of our majors. General Education should be consistent with the basic core values of the university. Outcomes based, rather than course based. The courses within the program should be designed to these outcomes, not as an introduction to majors. Also need to keep in mind that we are serving two purposes with the general education core. One is preparing students for their majors and the other is the language of lifelong learning. One of the questions to ask are we adequately preparing them for these areas? What are the core things they need to learn and not for just today's students but preparing them for what they will need to know 10-15-30 years from now. Need to broaden the concept of literacy away from just reading and move into concepts of scientific literacy, computer literacy, information literacy, etc.

Scott expressed concern about making basic courses a pre-requisite for major courses. Cindy indicated that she is not sure the committee is in a position to get faculty fired

up that general education is important and should be the core of the university. This may need to come from a higher level.

President Gaudino talked about the high number of transfer students we have coming to Central who complete most of their general education/liberal education somewhere else. Outcomes need to go back and look at the DTAs and see if the courses are meeting the outcomes. Dr. Pellett indicated that any transformation needs leadership from the President, while the curriculum needs to be faculty driven. He also expressed that it should be outcome based rather than course based.

President Gaudino talked about that 60% of our students are transfer students, which makes assessment difficult. We have several choices. One is to make general education/liberal education a defining characteristic of the university, one of the reasons students come here. Or we somewhat abandon our passion for liberal education and make it more basic skills based and put less emphasis on it. We need to identify potential obstacles and remove as many as possible. The accreditation report said that our current general education is not really a program. There is no one that is the head of it. There is no one who consistently reviews the program and nowhere for assessment reports to go to try and address issues found through the assessment. President Gaudino said that AACU has consults that can help review and resolve problems with general education reform.

Toni would like to see the committee come up with a framework for the program by April or May. Then spend the next year working with departments building curriculum.

Phil summarized it that sounds like we are taking the current system and blowing it up. That it should be an outcome based system. The possibility of a general education college where faculty are loaned out and courses would have a general education prefix rather than a departmental prefix. If the university is really going to do something like this, the committee should really start from scratch and not try to do an incremental approach.

Cindy indicated that is what the committee has tried to do, but it always seems to come back to finances. President Gaudino expressed where there is a will there is a way. Finances are an obstacle to overcome, not a roadblock. If the program is attractive to students and that student is retained, each student brings in \$18,000. The university would be in a better financial position if we can shift the reliance of transfer students to additional incoming freshman.

Phil suggested that the program still needs a person who has the responsibility of moving this process along. Need to have a termed half-time faculty member to serve in an administrative position. Once program is up and running, then we can reassess the need to continue the position. Phil moved that the General Education committee recommend to the President and Provost that a faculty member, with an appropriate

budget to facilitate the process, be appointed to serve as the General Education Czar. Cindy seconded and motion was passed with one abstention.

Janet will send out Patsy's version of the program as well as the Verhey whitepaper to the committee. Toni asked that committee members also review the university mission. Also come prepared to talk about "What is most important that students learn and how would that be manifested?"

Meeting times next quarter will be every other Monday from 3-5 p.m.

Petitions/appeals (if any) - None

Meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Next meeting January 10, 2011