

**NOTES – GEAC  
SEPT. 2, 2014**

**Convene 11:05 [San Jose connection difficulties]**

**Membership:**

Mark Van Selst (Chair), Mary Ann Creadon (Vice Chair), Robert Collins, Susan Gubernat, David Hood, Kathy Kaiser, Catherine Nelson, Barry Pasternack, Mark Wheeler, Bill Eadie, David Morse (for John Stanskas), Elizabeth Adams, Joseph, Terri Eden, Monique Reyna, Michael Adams, Chris Mallon, Ken O'Donnell.

**Guests:** Wayne Tikannen

**Quorum: present**

*The following is the "short form" report provided to the ASCSU for its September*

- 1. 4yr degrees @ CCC will need a GE component, the hope is that the GE requirements include, as a subset, work that meets CSU GE and/or IGETC content. Upper division GE is not a requirement and decisions regarding GE for a CCC program are the domain of the CCCs.*
- 2. Programmatic reviews of GE are seen as largely tied to WASC evaluation and may be a means of addressing concerns regarding program waivers where such waivers exist. EO 1065 clearly defines GE as a program and should be treated as such.*
- 3. Competency-based assessments remain a topic of interest. Relevant inputs were received from WICHE, ICAS, COMPASS, and our own internal pilot studies.*
- 4. Intermediate algebra should be looked at in the context of what an educated person needs – this became a referral to Academic Affairs since it exceeds the scope of GEAC as it dwelves into admissions and graduation requirements beyond GE. It is pertinent to GE in that our STATWAY pilot relies on an intermediate algebra waiver.*
- 5. Review of revision to EO 1065 (in progress);*
- 6. Compass – evaluation and dissemination phase. Increased connection to CCC initiatives and agencies (3CSN, linked learning, etc.). Culminating conference FEB 12-14, 2015 (Sacramento State). Merlot-based discussion groups are being advocated for.*
- 7. ITL director – job announcement will be posted shortly; ITL involvement and support for work on Threshold Concepts and the use of Wicked Problems as a tool for organization and engagement.*

**8. Thematic GE ; discussed and encouraged**

**9. On GE Waivers**

- a. “no recommendation” on exemption request (request permitted) from long beach*
- b. The only upcoming exemption request related to 120 unit constraints is San Jose for Biomedical Engineering;*
- c. There are existing waiver authorizations that are not being used by the local campuses.*

**10. Critical thinking**

- a. AP capstone and possible use within GE;*
- b. discussion of what our critical thinking expectations are vis-à-vis requests for waivers, “we do it anyway”, and critical thinking within the major.*

**11. GEAC pilot authorizations (continuing)**

- a. STATWAY (note 2014 ASCSU resolution on two year extension)*
- b. Online oral communication*
- c. Integrated GE (unit reduction)*

**NOTES from SEPT 2014 GEAC MEETING**

**I. Introductions, Modifications to Agenda**

- a. Added four-year degrees at the CCCs to the agenda (11:30)

**II. Review May notes, Year-end report.**

- a. No action items for this meeting.

**III. What should GEAC focus on for 2014-2015?**

- a. “Programmatic Review” of GE
  - i. Questions about whether GE is actually evaluated as a program – yes in some circumstances (WASC, thematic pathways outcomes), but often not part of a traditional review cycle (cf., major programs).
  - ii. It may be desirable to provide some guidance to campuses.
  - iii. factor in the implications for CCs—don’t leave them out of our thinking on this (and other) issues

- iv. No action item forthcoming.
- b. What is GE's role in a student's education?
  - i. Uniformity of GE attainment across campuses (CSU)
  - ii. What should occur as students move from first to second year vis-à-vis GE expectations (development, etc.)
- c. Let us explore what competency-based assessment really means
  - i. "Life experience" for GE counting; incorporating credit for competency earned elsewhere than in the classroom.
- d. Maintaining a balanced curriculum — there appears to be an increased insistence on professionalization; viewing GE as liberal arts learning vs. a necessary part of being an educated person.
  - i. What is the desirable balance of GE within and outside of major coursework?
  - ii. There appears to be a diminishment of GE (mostly in the social sciences and arts but including science) at the expense of the professionalization of the university
- e. Wrapping up the COMPASS project(s) provide us an opportunity to distill what is successful and good in GE implementation.
- f. Address issues in "unit creep" as it pertains to GE courses.
- g. Thematic GE and its promise
  - i. Thematic GE and GE in general will benefit from faculty development to make GE more robust and strong and meaningful but manageable
  - ii. The thematic GE pathways at Chico were developed by faculty who had a way to link themes to their expertise and were able to connect to a local community college.
  - iii. We need faculty to be able to think globally about GE, not just about individual courses.

**IV. Proposed Changes to EO 1065**

- a. The changes basically accepts ASCSU and prior GEAC recommendations.
- b. An early version of the proposed changes was presented and discussed with the expectation that it will come back to GEAC before being finalized.

**V. "Credit by Exam" Part I: SAT / ACT**

- a. Kathy Kaiser reported on revisions to ACT and SAT exam structure. SAT actions are not yet clear, but ACT is now looking at career preparedness results. For some majors or careers, the results may not predict performance well. GEAC may want to look for these results.

**b. ACTION: follow up for future GEAC meeting.**

**VI. "Credit by Exam" Part II: AP capstone and research courses.**

- a. Topics vary widely from humanities to sciences. Only possible generic fit might be to meet critical thinking criteria but will require a detailed look at the AP requirements and the CSU Critical Thinking expectations.

- b. ACTION: solicit faculty from integrated sequences that include critical thinking (e.g., humanities-type course sequences) and from departments of Philosophy so that we can adequately explore whether there is a possible fit to articulation with our critical thinking outcomes.
  - i. Question: what are these outcomes? And what is the content of exams?
  - ii. Answer: research suggests that critical thinking does not transfer across narrow domains, but humanities has the broadest sense of critical thinking courses, so they could look at the course and exam and see about the articulation
  - iii. Answer: we did this already with IB capstone, so maybe use some of the same people on this committee. IB capstone is an application in varied topics. They must do research, and pull together from different courses they've taken. High school faculty get together to design the course.
  - iv. **ACTION: We are trying to come up with a way to get past the obstacle of how to see if AP capstone can fit. Will send out to honors programs at campuses, humanities or not, to look at possible articulation**

**VII. "Credit by Exam" Part III: AP exam development / renaming**

- a. Heads up for future GEAC meeting to further discuss "new format" (more integrative course structure, narrower scope of coverage).
- b. No action at this time.

**VIII. CSU Chancellor's Office report**

- a. Staffing at the CSU CO is really tight. Many of the staff are serving multiple functions.
- b. Question on Critical Thinking Waivers: LB State said they cover critical thinking in their major; they wanted a waiver, but only wanted it to accommodate transfer students because they might not have gotten it (and would be ineligible to transfer without such a waiver). But if they get a waiver, then they actually get formal training in critical thinking sufficient to have met the CSU GE guidelines for critical thinking in their remaining coursework?
- c. Comment: an A3 exception (critical thinking) for engineering program at SJSU has been requested for a new engineering program, but several exceptions that were authorized 20 years ago are not being used on some campuses —the existing waivers may be outdated, e.g. SLO has devised a critical thinking course and now don't want to use their old exception. There are no expiration dates, however, on old exemptions. Some campuses do not know they even have exceptions in the system. Right now, double counting is happening at several campuses.
  - i. Obtaining a list of campuses with "old" (as well as "new") exceptions might be a good thing to have, so that we can clean

up the list / notify campuses that have them and potentially see which exemptions should be de-authorized.

- ii. It would be good to let campus know if an accrediting agency has given them new standards, but is it possible to clean up the old one and reinsert it again without applying for a new exception document.

## **IX. CCC Chancellor's Office Report**

- a. The CCC system is trying to implement the "Student Success and Support Act." This endeavor to provide several different services to 2+ million students is hard, but the CCC has been given \$100 million to get these up and running. The system can get more funding if they do this and get students through to graduation at a higher rate. It is intended to get students off on the right foot, by encouraging students to have a concrete plan of action rather than just taking courses.
- b. Student equity plans are also being sought from local districts.
- c. Technology initiatives are also on the table.
- d. The CCC central office is providing outreach to CCCs that are in trouble (before SFCC-like debacle happens).
- e. Questions were asked about the four-year baccalaureate authorization (AB 850).
  - i. Would begin in 2017.
  - ii. Program should not conflict with CSU programs.
    - 1. One aspect is that a CCC four year degree cannot be one that is done in the CSU or UC; but there are degrees without consistent names.
    - 2. How to check? It was noted that final language in the bill points to learning and preparation, not to the name of the degree awarded.
  - iii. Implications for GE (and potential articulation concerns on upper division GE) were discussed. It was noted that the campuses of the UC have different GE requirements (commonly all accept IGETC).
    - 1. Under a shared governance model how might courses and programs get approved? Would this change from current status?
    - 2. CCs still use Title V, so going on that assumption, including the approval of upper division courses at CCs for u.d. at CSU.
    - 3. No one has quite figured out how GE would work with this act. We need to have a broad discussion about this, not driven by those most vested in making it happen. CCCs are not accredited by WASC, so there is no discussion about upper division GE in CCC accreditation standards.
  - iv. Comment: at the CCC there have been no formal discussions of qualifications for faculty teaching in these potential degree

programs yet. Task force that worked on it was mostly about how this worked in other states, not how it might work in California.

- v. The task force recommended more investigation prior to action but AB 850 went forward anyway.

**X. GEAC recommendations vis-à-vis GE waivers**

- a. Review of prior GEAC recommendations: no recommendation on CSULB waiver request.
  - i. Question: has our “no recommendation” created a precedent whereby we provide no recommendation or terms for waivers?
  - ii. Chair Van Selst: the tension is between a pragmatic versus a virtuous response. We clearly understood the 120 unit pressure behind the request, but, since we did not agree with the premises and context of the request, we did not necessarily agree with a waiver.
  - iii. *Comment: there is a difference between saying critical thinking goes on in your major, and saying critical thinking should go on in the presence of other majors and in thinking through issues in the context of those other students being in the room and having more divergent opinions. One thing allowing the waiver does is eliminate breadth of experience/ greater exposure to diversity for our students.*
    - 1. What does it mean if all of your colleagues are in the same field when you have an intellectual discussion?
  - iv. There is a difference between experience with critical thinking and being an effective instructor in the formal domain of critical thinking.
  - v. There has not been an avalanche of requests since the CSULB waiver was granted, so maybe the weakening of critical thinking standards won't be as daunting as we feared. Science fields themselves seem to be requiring more breadth.
  - vi. *Is it too late to talk about principles? Should GEAC bite the bullet and say this is what we believe in on this issue?*
  - vii. In the upcoming Board of Trustees agenda there are items on time-to-degree and there is increasing discussion of systemwide approaches to meeting system requirements/constraints, both could relate to GE.

**XI. GE Definitional Issues**

- a. Inter-campus and Intersegmental transfer of GE
  - i. Clarifying changing expectations for GE. Upper division GE definitions will become increasingly relevant. CourseMatch will potentially put some pressure on upper-division GE.
    - 1. We could recommend in a white paper without being completely prescriptive. We don't want to homogenize.

But should produce a broad policy recommendation that better defines expectations for upper division GE.

- a. What does it mean to be an educated person concept might work—very broad. Anything from Compass?
  - b. AAC&U provide degree qualifications profiles in terms of performance. Four levels of capacity, depending on the level of the degree. So there are national guidelines, which many CSUs have used during accreditation, and more developments may emerge from AAC&U.
- ii. Campus to campus articulation (CSU to CSU)
    1. If a student takes an online oral communication course at a CSU that offers such an animal, and another CSU campus doesn't want to accept online oral communication for pedagogical reasons (and won't accept it from a CCC).... What are student options? Does this extend to online GE offerings? Who should approve GE for oral communication courses at CSU campuses that are principally designed for use at other campuses (e.g., "service" courses)
  - iii. There are historic transfer issues between CCCs and CSUs over courses offered at the CCC that appear to be comparable to upper division offerings at a local CSU.
    1. Not generally a problem for upper division GE given the normal prerequisites of GWAR, upper division standing, and completion of lower-division GE --- more of a problem for major-based courses that might be lower and/or upper division depending on the CSU campus.
- b. At the system level, there is no formal expectation (except for LEAP) that upper division courses be capstone-like. GEAC may need to better articulate why upper division GE is important. (it was noted that many, maybe most, campuses have elements to differentiate upper and lower division GE beyond the level of the offering).
  - c. The Academic Senate of the CSU (ASCSU) passed a series of resolutions on the importance of ethnic studies. GE across the system emphasizes diversity, but there are not any specific systemwide requirements for ethnic studies in GE (some campuses have adopted more specific criteria [SFSU, CSULA, etc.]
    - i. The Ethnic Studies task force report is forthcoming and will likely speak to expectations vis-à-vis diversity criteria.

## **XII. COMPETENCY-BASED ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING**

- a. There is a push for credit by examination and for credit for prior experience. How to assess these experiences? What role should they play in a degree? Faculty should have final say in what counts for credit.

- b. There is an ICAS statement *on Competency-Based Assessment of Student Learning*. This statement asserts that nothing replaces classroom experience. There is a place for credit by exam, and prior experience, but be clear that “seat time” is a misnomer that damages the idea of the classroom experience. Certainly pressure from time-to-degree works for giving alternative credit, also. This is not about online courses. This statement was adopted unanimously by ICAS.
- c. Comment: note however, that we (CSU GE criteria for oral communication) did not say what the classroom experience in oral comm should be without saying what the student in oral communication is expected to be able to do in order to be validated as having achieved the course outcomes. (similar case for CHEMISTRY lab versus practical experience).
- d. Comment: people have been giving credit for alternative experience for a long time (for-profit businesses, military, etc.). Does anybody know what best practices are for allowances such as these?
  - i. One group organized by College Board meets and develops policies around outcome expectations and assessment of learning – they often look to California because of our faculty senate involvement in setting systemwide expectations and evaluation models.
  - ii. WICHE is also ostensibly dependent on competency-based credit processes.
  - iii. We will keep this topic active in our work for this year it may be that GEAC can contribute to this discussion since much of the policy impacts GE assessments and thus GEAC has the expertise borne of familiarity and exposure.

**XIII. Articulation update.**

- a. Articulations in Assist are somewhat freeform. Assist has not kept up with education planning and the database is really just all the PDFs of articulations. The system offices are now trying to make it technologically more data driven: the intent is to use less text and more data-friendly processes (the text “this course requires a prerequisite,” might be replaced by a box that gets checked to assist in articulation searches).
- b. A question was asked about SB1440 requirements and their need to meet C-ID descriptors where such descriptors exist. This is an ongoing endeavor.

**XIV. Upcoming conferences:**

- a. Academic Conference in mid-November
- b. WICHE Passport meeting—everyone likes our GE and so always goes well. WICHE Passport is about the 3 basic subjects including writing, oral, and quantitative reasoning articulating with CSU. But no critical thinking! So how useful? Sacramento State has signed on as a pilot, but will have to check out how it looks and works. Oregon has 3

systems with no articulation between them. There is likely to be a WICHE part II.

- i. Confidence in criterion setting / adherence is a problem.
- ii. Although faculty do not lead WICHE, faculty did establish the proficiency criteria.
- iii. QUESTION: What problem is WICHE trying to solve? If Oregon, North Dakota, Nevada, etc. students already accept transfers based on CSU GE, what is the problem?
  1. we're big and we have the articulation agreements. Other states don't talk to each other.
  2. This project is partially funded by the Gates foundation, so money will go to people who do this.
  3. Another view is that we do the "business of education" in units for units, for the most part, but businesses think money can be made by creating tests, assessments, etc. to establish competency.
  4. A danger of a wide-open passport is that local institution (often a junior college) decides what will work and the end-user (often a four-year institution) may just have to accept it if they have signed on.
- iv. The WICHE conversations do almost always defaulted to credits/units, though. We need to be aware of what the landscape of legislator visions and outside of California looks like. Bologna-type changes might be coming and may have implications for how we assess GE (and other program outcomes).
  1. WICHE is not near competency based Passport yet, and faculty are setting outcomes and proficiency standards. This work may be the start of a slippery slope on external standards.

#### **XV. GIVE STUDENTS A COMPASS Report (Debra)**

*The core idea of COMPASS was to increase student success. This was largely achieved through making GE more engaging and relevant. COMPASS has been well funded externally. COMPASS asked faculty on campuses to come up with something that would work locally and across the system. First money came in March 2011 and the last grant is scheduled to end in April 2015. Projects are on (or have been on) various campuses. The COMPASS Steering committee was drawn mostly from (historic) GEAC representatives (including a student representative). GE has been central to COMPASS in that GE is often what will make the COMPASS project work. The NESI survey data at CSUN highlighted the impact of high impact practices that seniors participated in during their undergraduate experience? There was a significant difference in graduation rate for those who participated in HIPs, especially among Latino seniors.*

*There are also two studies from the RP group (CCC research group) that are important: in one, factors that are not necessarily cognitive—feeling they*

*belonged, feeling engaged — worked for student success. Another on basic skills said if learning was contextualized, the students experienced more success. (these argue for the cohort effect and the context effect potentially experienced via thematic GE).*

*Compass projects now ending or ended, so lessons learned are now focusing on quantitative and qualitative research. For quantitative results, too early to have real results. There are now integrated GE programs at CSUN, Chico, and at LA Pierce College, and are set to begin at Stanislaus and Bakersfield. Thematic GE is catching on: sustainability, social justice, etc. are common themes.*

Question: There must be a difference between first year experiences like at East Bay and these thematic compass-type projects which are mostly achieved via upper division GE?

Question: Have these thematic pathways proved to be sustainable without heavy extra investment?

Comment: SDSU is working on a second-year certificate in each themed area.

*We want to encourage everyone to steal the idea. We are working now on dissemination of the products and ideas. COMPASS had originally settled on 6 projects with CSU campuses who work well with their local CCCs. Some things didn't work, including service learning at some of the CCCs and follow-through at some CSUs. We recognize the need to change faculty support for doing this: including from conception through capstone and assessment.*

*One initiative is working on Threshold Concepts. In disciplines, what are the seminal ideas that students struggle with? University's responses were about GE. Students need to be able to communicate across disciplines about Wicked Problems. E.g., what should we do about the drought? What should we do about immigration reform? Unscripted problems that must be discussed. Institutes held to discuss these problems, equally attended by CSU and CC faculty. Want to create an ongoing community attached to these issues.*

Susan: can money be sustained for this, or will this dry up now with the loss of funding?

*It does cost some money, but not a great amount. Initial staging and faculty groups initially costs money. Not so much since then. But do need an advocate in the provost. Will look at scalability, and at rewards for, e.g., reading E-portfolios.*

## **XVI. ITL updates (Wayne)**

- a. Threshold Concepts and Wicked Problems—Went to first institute for this and was very good, very intense. Encouraged collaboration. Thought ITL could do something to continue conversation including finding a way to take articulation beyond IGETC. Wicked Problems require framing from within a variety of different disciplines. ITL has

an RFP out that can be pursued—announced at campuses. The RFP talks about the viability of getting two campuses together (CSU and CC) to talk about problems and ideas. The topics cannot be discipline specific, though it can be discipline related. Compass will throw in \$100 to get an agenda ready and initiate members from each segment getting together. The projects must have faculty interest to begin with. The deadline is Friday, Sept. 5<sup>th</sup>.

- b. *There is a project on writing to enhance critical literacy and other upcoming ITL initiatives including using Grademark in TurnItIn to aggregate comments to discover student and program strengths and deficits.*
- c. New position description coming out for ITL.

**XVII. Updates on CSU GE pilot programs**

- a. STATWAY: if we accept, then we don't hold them accountable for Algebra. We need to fish or cut bait after we get data. They either do or don't need intermediate algebra.
  - i. UC does make a tripartite distinction. Does not seem rigorous enough. What will be a measure of success, and will it differ in different disciplines? Pilot at SJSU is using Psych students, UC may be looking at STATWAY again.
  - ii. The data we are going to get does not seem like it will be meaningful for a decision, but the decision must come pretty soon (May 2015?)
  - iii. We should be able to get a more robust set of data for STATWAY because more than one campus is doing it and 6 CCC districts are doing it.
  - iv. *A difficulty in assessment is that "STATWAY" is not a unitary thing – it differs by campus and implementation.*
- b. Integrated Oral Communication (SBCC)
  - i. *We should get an update in January after the first semester is complete. Maybe March? Possibly ask SBCC to participate in an ITL / COMPASS related conference?*