

Educational Policy Committee Meeting Minutes, April 4, 2006

Present: Steve Bittner, Sharon Cabaniss, Mary Halavais, Perry Marker, Lynne Morrow, Vincent Richman, Rick Robison, Marci Sanchez, Thaine Stearns, Carmen Works, Carol Blackshire-Belay, Lindsey Simoncic, Art Warmoth

Guests: Paul Draper, Eduardo Ochoa, Sascha Von Meier, Roger Bell

Agenda: Approved.

Minutes: Approved as written.

Reports: Chair of EPC: P. Marker waived his report.

Business: FYE Pilot Program – second reading.

As chair, P. Marker, drew attention to two attachments to the agenda, the Memo from the GE Subcommittee regarding the Recommendation on University 150/FYE experimental course and the April 28, 2005, Report from the EPC regarding the FYE Pilot Proposal to the Senate. Additional handouts included

1. Response to University 150/FYE experimental course from the Philosophy Department.
2. Email to P. Draper from English Department re. FYE Pilot [distributed by T. Stearns]
3. Email to P. Draper from Nathan Rank re: On SST's advising/scheduling of FYE
4. Response to analysis of FYE costs by Professor Cabaniss from Eduardo M. Ochoa, Provost
5. Chronology leading to FYE review, through April 2006 from Paul Draper
6. Email to P. Marker from E. Ochoa re: FYE Proposal
7. SST Amendment to FYE Proposal [distributed by S. Cabaniss]

P. Marker explained that the goal of today's meeting was to make a recommendation to the Senate regarding the FYE pilot proposal. He then briefly reviewed the history and called attention to the March 23, 2006, EPC agenda attachments which contained the proposed curriculum, assessment plan, and budget. He said that first there would be three responses to the first reading from P. Draper, S. Von Meier, and E. Ochoa. Then there would be questions and comments from the EPC members. Finally, there would be questions and comments from the audience.

P. Draper, Chair of the GE Subcommittee, read a statement in support of the proposal and the curriculum. His statement is attached. [Attachment 1]

S. Von Meier, FYE Planning Coordinator, reported that she had met with the Philosophy and English Departments and had a very frank and constructive discussion. She stated that the assessment team will provide an unbiased report within the resources available. She invited any interested faculty to attend a meeting of the Assessment Team on Wed., April 26, 2-3:30pm in Stevenson 2011. She emphasized that the pilot was driven by the faculty and urged the EPC to judge it as such.

E. Ochoa, Provost, addressed several issues. First he commented that SSU was a "Liberal Arts and Sciences" institution, and he hoped that the science faculty will participate in the second round. He observed that the FYE planners must be sensitive to the constraints on SST students.

Secondly, he commented on the proposed FYE Pilot two-year budget. He said that his push for a university-wide strategic plan had two important results. One was that the entire University is beginning to "internalize the academic mission." He endorsed the APC recommendation on how

to advance academic priorities by tying them to Cornerstones Report and the 22 Points of Light. However, he feels that we cannot let lack of resources keep us from moving forward.

He pointed out that FYE is faculty-driven and the proposed syllabus is detailed, the assessment plan is rigorous, and the budget is carefully done. He observed that the proposal also demonstrates to WASC that we can make progress on GE, and that we are working on this.

With regard to the budget, he reported that the expenses for the first year of development were \$34,000. This was less than originally projected. He then explained that based on the Academic Affairs accounting procedures, the "true opportunity cost" of the FYE would amount to \$122,000 each year. That is, the pilot would cost an additional \$122,000 for each of the two years compared to not having a pilot. He then explained that in 2006-2007, each school will get substantial growth money (around \$1.2 million each) and have an SFR of 20 to 1. He projected that the budget for 2007-2008 looks even better, with \$2.2 million going to each school. He described this as a "win-win" situation for SSU with each School doing better financially while supporting the FYE Pilot.

He stressed that approval of the pilot was not a decision to scale up. That decision depends on assessment of the pilot and a discussion of the rest of GE. He emphasized that he is committed to the promise that any scale up will not have a permanent cost differential.

Finally, he referred to the issue of the relationship between the FYE proposal and the Green Music Center. He said it is a positive thing if SSU can use the GMC to advance a key academic objective. He said there had been a tremendous scaling down of the contribution from Academic Affairs to the GMC. In fact, there are currently major changes going on university-wide regarding campus resources.

P. Marker: He read the last three paragraphs from the "Recommendation" section of the GE Subcommittee proposal Memo and said that was the essence of what the EPC was discussing today [Attachment 2].

Discussion (EPC):

A. Warmoth: He spoke in favor of the proposal. He said that it should test two hypotheses: 1) small seminar sections are more effective, and 2) one can generate a large lecture experience that can work.

T. Stearns: He distributed copies of a statement from the English Department. [Attachment 3]. The department voted 8 in favor to 5 opposed to approve the GE substitution of FYE pilot courses for English 101. He then explained some of the concerns of the minority and opinions of the majority.

TS continued that he conducted an informal poll of to see how many of the English faculty would want to teach in the program if the two currently participating opt out. Two people said "yes", three were "reluctant yes/ probably no" and 8 were "no". He said he would support the proposal if both English and Philosophy agreed to accept the GE substitution.

Roger Bell, Chair of Philosophy Department: He addressed the statement from the Philosophy Department [Attachment 4]. In addition to the document, he raised three concerns: the search for two tenure-track faculty next year and how to hire without discussing the impact of FYE and a possible roll out; how training of FYE faculty would occur; and how to protect the Philosophy Department if Critical Thinking is removed. He favors innovation but would like guarantees about the survival of the department.

C. Works: Queried T. Stearns about a proposal for a required second writing class, such as English 200.

T. Stearns: He responded that the English 200 proposal involves the potential scale up of the pilot to a second year. Then, the department would want English 200 to be required.

P. Marker offered the presenters a chance to respond:

P. Draper: He explained that in the full proposal, there would be four writing classes. He said he agrees with the need for a strong Philosophy Department.

E. Ochoa: He said his opinion is that the Philosophy Department is a core part of SSU. Perhaps job announcements can include a "willingness to teach in interdisciplinary programs."

S. Bittner: Asked for confirmation that Philosophy searches are on hold until the Pilot is adopted.

R. Bell: Responded "yes".

Discussion (Audience and EPC):

Sara Statler: She spoke about students' needs to feel supported. She agrees GE is important, but students currently do not like some of the offerings. She thinks FYE will make "stronger students."

Wanda Boda: Asked EPC to consider four things: the implications of a full scale up; the potential need for 100 faculty; the impact on Hutchins; and the recommendation for SST students to take Philosophy 102.

Elisa Velasquez: She spoke as chair of the EMT Committee. She raised four points: economic concerns because Freshman Seminar does not have enough resources at this time; curriculum because GE is different from Freshman Seminar and faculty need special training; diversity because the proposed FYE curriculum does not address a variety of diversity and; and assessment, which needs to address why the pilot may be better (ie 15 students per class) and needs random selection of FYE students. She also asked about the diversity of the FYE faculty.

Andy Wallace: He said he sees the academic merit of the proposal if done correctly, but is concerned that the Philosophy Department is funded by teaching Critical Thinking and may lose that resource. What process is in place to address the concerns of the department regarding its role in a reformed GE? The Department is divided and needs these issues addressed. Also of concern are issues of academic freedom and workload.

Robert Coleman-Senghor: Addressed the question of student opinion of the current core; students would like the present core better if the SFR were lower. He explained that if we could teach 15 to 1, we would get results. English has long argued for a 22 to 1 SFR but at this time it is supposed to be 27 to 1 and is often 30 to 1. He asked how can we lower SFR? Secondly, WASC did not say SSU had to go in the direction of reform. SSU could assess the current GE. He noted the lesson of EMT: the cost factor came in and we are not now able to serve all the students.

S. Cabaniss: Discussed the proposal from the SST Curriculum Committee that many SST majors do not have room in their freshman schedule for a 9-unit FYE course. She drew attention to the second page of the SST Amendment to FYE Proposal [Attachment 5] taken from a 2004 letter to the GE Subcommittee, which shows the freshman year unit load for various majors. For example, Biology, Chemistry, Engineering Science and Physics students must take more than 21 units of math and science their freshman year.

Motion by M. Sanchez, second by L. Morrow: The EPC recommends implementation of the FYE Pilot for the 2006-07 academic year and a second year of 150 students each year,

along with the amendment from the School of Science and Technology and attachments from the departments of English and Philosophy and the GE Subcommittee proposal.

[Note: Original motion used the phrase “friendly amendment”, and Chair P. Marker suggested dropping the “friendly” when the vote was taken. –S. Cabaniss]

M. Halavais.: Suggested it would be more prudent to have a one year trial and a full assessment of it before implementing a second year.

S. Bittner: Said that there were still issues of assessment and attrition.

L. Morrow: Pointed out that adjustments can be made by the committee as needed.

T. Stearns: Asked about a previous proposal to have learning outcomes assessed by the Director of the Writing Center and the chairs of the English and Philosophy Departments, or their designees. This would be done in the first year so that changes could be made. Requested to make a motion and was ruled out of order.

L. Morrow: Responded that these issues had been addressed.

C. Works: Will selection of students be random or not?

S. Von Meier: Not technically feasible to have random selections; it must be first-come, first-serve. Agreed that we want diversity among the students, but are limited by logistics.

W. Boda: Raised a question about Philosophy 101 and English 101.

P. Marker: Reiterated that a two-year pilot is needed to collect data.

Birch Moonwoman: She raised a concern that the FYE proposal would lead to a loss of faculty.

E. Ochoa: Responding to B. Moonwoman, he stated that the lower SFR should result in more faculty, not less.

Susan McKillip: Asked about the amendment and requested the motion be read again.

Motion by M. Halavais to call the question. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Vote on motion: 7 yes, 1 no, 2 abstentions

S. Cabaniss: Explained her abstention was based upon a concern about approving a two-year program when the budget is not guaranteed. Asked what will happen if next year's budget is not as projected by the Provost.

E. Velasquez: Raised the question of how Program Evaluation will be organized.

P. Draper: Said that he would want the Philosophy and English Departments to participate in assessment.

E. Ochoa: In answer to E. Velasquez, he said that Program Evaluation is part of the assessment plan. In answer to S. Cabaniss, he said that if the budget projections are not realized next year, then the program will have to be reevaluated at that time.

Adjourned

Submitted by S. Cabaniss

ATTACHMENT 1

Statement by Paul Draper to April 4, 2006 EPC Meeting

SSU is a liberal arts and sciences campus, and prides itself as such. It boasts many highly qualified faculty, both tenure line and lecturer. It is a place of deeply held ideals about the value and meaning of education. It wants its students to become more than workers—but thinkers and leaders as well.

SSU is also strapped for resources. There is always much to be said about whose fault that may be. My own opinion is that the legislature and the Governor have failed the CSU (as well as the JC's, High Schools and grade schools—that education as a whole in California is strapped. Many faculty disagree with the administration has prioritized. We will continue to debate what is right and what is best. But now we are at a turning point in a key discussion of priorities.

Two years ago when the FYE proposal was first presented in the Senate, Dean Karsrud said “I’m a great teacher in my class of 50, imagine what I could do with a class of 15? But can we afford it?”

I ask : “Can we afford not to?” Ultimately this is the primary question before the faculty when it looks at FYE. “Can we afford it?” and if we do support FYE, will the cost diminish our majors?’ This is a great question, and the debate is a worthy one.

I ask: “Can we afford not to?” Can we continue to solve the problem of high SFR and the need for reasonably sized and an adequate variety of course work in the majors by weighing down GE with ever larger lecture courses? Can we afford to burden students who come here less and less prepared each year with figuring it all out for themselves?

I believe new college students need support in a variety of ways, and since the purpose of the university is to educate, the support needs primarily to be in the academic area—and to come from faculty who are immediately involved in the progress of students, where these students are who are known to faculty by name.

With this support, I believe these students of FYE will do better in the large lecture they will certainly enroll in, and that they will do better still in major courses and seminars, special projects, collaborative endeavors, and service learning. They will do better because they will have entered into a supportive, rigorous relationship with higher education because they are asked, as this FYE syllabus does, “why is it important for you, dear student, to become educated?”

In case you haven't guessed it, FYE is a project I've devoted much energy to, and would like to see it attempted. If the pilot is approved, and proves sound pedagogy I'll be pleased. If not, I'll be disappointed, but I will also admit it and call for its withdrawal.

What will we be saying to our students, and indeed to ourselves, if after three years of development, the work of over 100 faculty voices, hundreds of hours of meetings—

creative, managerial, and review—capped by a phase where in the spirit of true collaboration and academic freedom 13 faculty sorted through quite weighty issues of curricular design, course content, learning outcomes, reading assignments, and lecture voices to present to the campus community an experiment in education that is exciting, broadening, rigorous, skill building, and welcoming of 150 new college students? What will you be saying if there is a favorable resolution passed—a vote recommending this pilot?

You will be saying that the spirit of discovery based on a sound hypothesis and tested in a real time laboratory under controlled circumstances—you will be saying that the spirit of inquiry is alive and well at SSU, that we can do this. You will be saying that this ability defines this University in a very good way, and that we are able to come together to try to grow our selves as educators. You will be saying to young faculty “please have curricular ideas of scope, that are sound pedagogically, and rigorous in content and expectation for student achievement.” You will be saying that faculty governance is a construction of ideas, and that we govern for our own, and for our students’ advancement. You will be saying that you place trust that those who developed this experiment have the integrity to run it, to assess it, and to return here with their findings for advice and, if warranted, further consent. You will be saying that you place trust that those who developed this course have the integrity to adjust or withdraw it if it turns out to be less than what is hoped for it.

You will affirm principles of academic freedom and peer review in the service of improving education at this University.

I respectfully ask that this pilot be approved by you today. Thank you.

ATTACHMENT 2

MEMO

To: Educational Policies Committee, Perry Marker, Chair
From: General Education Subcommittee, Paul Draper, Chair
RE: Recommendation on University 150/ FYE experimental course
Date: March 17, 2006

Recommendation

The General Education Subcommittee forwards to the Educational Policies Committee its endorsement of the FYE experimental pilot (University 150), for the 2006-07 academic year.

The Subcommittee accepts that the syllabus, schedule and learning outcomes are appropriately advanced.

The Subcommittee believes that assessment strategies are progressing satisfactorily, and recognizes that alignment of strategies with outcomes will continue to develop and will reach the goal of a full and robust assessment.

The Subcommittee concurs with the assignment of GE credit of 3 units in each of Area A2 and A3, and 3 units of general elective credit for a total of 9 units. We understand that appropriate steps are being made through coordinated efforts between the Office of Admissions and Records and the FYE coordinator and her team to invite new first-year students to consider enrolling in U150. Efforts are also going forward to insure enrollment of 150 students into 10 sections of 15 students, and that proper credit is given for academic work completed successfully in U150.

The Subcommittee recognizes that the course offered in 2006-07 is an experimental course mounted for the purpose of examining pedagogical premises, teaching effectiveness, and potential for scalability.

The Subcommittee recommends, in accordance with the suggestion put forward by APC, that the pilot be run for two years to assure that the program is properly assessed.

The Subcommittee further advocates that the assessment of the FYE pilot be fully reviewed before recommendations are considered for broader, curricular change.

Rationale

In the summer and fall of 2005, GE recommended the appointments of the FYE coordinator Dr. Alexander von Meier and a team of faculty to plan and teach in the pilot. The GE committee has monitored the progress of the FYE faculty teams through regular reports from Dr. von Meier over the fall 2005 semester. Additionally, in two readings in the Subcommittee on February 16 and March 2, 2006, Dr. von Meier presented:

- a draft syllabus
- a tentative course calendar/ schedule of lectures

- a set of “Learning Competencies for FYE” that includes objectives in
 - A2 (Written and Oral Communication),
 - A3 (Critical Thinking)
 - Reading
 - Information Literacy
 - Student Development
 - “Synergistic” Outcomes
- an outline of the assessment plan for the U150 pilot course

Important revisions to these documents were made in response to the Subcommittee’s comments. Attached are the most up to date versions of documents referenced above.

Resources

At the March 2, 2006 GE meeting Provost Eduardo Ochoa accompanied Dr. von Meier and presented his budget for the pilot U150.

The GE Subcommittee views the budget as transparent in its description of actual costs and sources of funding. The budget appears adequate, and accounts for reasonable start-up expenditures, while providing replacement costs to Departments for their faculty engaged in teaching the FYE pilot.

The Subcommittee asks that the Office of the Provost provide by March 1, 2007 an accounting of the pilot year including actual costs, funding sources and resource implication as they relate to other academic programs.

Conclusion

The Subcommittee acknowledges that 5 months remain before the first FYE class meeting and trusts that the FYE team is fulfilling its charge to create an engaging, cross-disciplinary and academically rigorous FYE pilot course.

The GE Subcommittee endorses the rigorous academic nature of the U150 pilot, its provision of integrated and sustained access to academic advising and career planning, and its student life component.

The GE Subcommittee recognizes the enormous creative, scholarly, and collegial effort by the FYE team and its coordinator. The FYE course development process has proceeded with particular attention to principles of academic freedom and collegiality.

This recommendation passed by unanimous vote of the GE Subcommittee on March 16, 2006

The GE Subcommittee respectfully requests that this recommendation be attached to any action taken by EPC, and forwarded to the Academic Senate.

ATTACHMENT 3

The English department took a vote on approving the GE substitution of FYE pilot courses for English 101. The faculty voted on approving only the pilot as it now stands. The vote was 8 in favor and 5 opposed. Some of the concerns of the minority were:

- 1) Fiscal Impact on the English department (current and future)—will funds eventually be taken from A&H and English to subsidize FYE?
- 2) The potential scaling up of the FYE that may permanently threaten the English 101 program.
- 3) Quality and Quantity of Writing instruction
- 4) Selection process with regard to which students would participate in the program.
- 5) The impact on our scheduling of 101 sections and faculty assigned to teach additional sections given the increased number of incoming students that need to be accommodated for English 101. That is, we have two faculty teaching in FYE, which means they cannot teach in our 101 program and are also unavailable to teach other English GE and major requirement courses.

Majority opinions:

Those in favor (the majority) felt that the innovative nature of the FYE program, especially its disciplinary integration, was worth testing. Also, having two of our faculty involved in the planning stage would presumably assure that the teaching of writing as a discipline was well integrated within the program.

Kim Hester-Williams
Chair, English Department
April 6, 2006

ATTACHMENT 4

To: GE Subcommittee
From: Philosophy Department
RE: Response to University 150/FYE experimental course

The Philosophy department endorses the critical thinking learning objectives of FYE, as they are identified in the proposed pilot syllabus.

The syllabus does not explain the methods or strategies that faculty will employ to teach those objectives. We understand, however, that the FYE curricular committee is currently working on identifying how it will integrate critical thinking into the thematic content of the course and that they plan on completing this work before the fall term commences.

In general, the philosophy department has three concerns with FYE. First, we remain deeply worried that FYE will increase the teaching component of the overall work load for participating faculty through requiring significant additional course preparation and administrative meetings beyond what we currently require to teach those courses. Second, we are deeply worried that FYE will decrease the quality of critical thinking instruction when faculty unfamiliar with the mechanics of such instruction turn to teaching it. And third, we remain deeply worried that a full implementation of FYE will not be coupled with a suitable replacement GE course or courses for the philosophy department, thereby eviscerating our operating budget, undermining our ability to recruit and retain new faculty and making it impossible for us to mount a vibrant, rigorous and meaningful major.

The philosophy department in principle supports innovative curricular change in general education congruent with the mission of the university and the viability of our major. The pilot should provide us with information for addressing our first two concerns. However, it will not provide us with information for addressing our third and perhaps most important concern. The department would like to endorse the pilot as an experimental course. But we are reluctant to do so in the absence of a plan in place or a serious commitment to insure a proper role for philosophy in a liberal arts education consequent upon the full implementation of FYE.

ATTACHMENT 5

The following Amendment to the FYE Proposal from the GE Subcommittee was approved unanimously by the Curriculum Committee of the School of Science and Technology (SST) on March 28, 2006:

Whereas many programs in the School of Science and Technology have fewer than three units of elective, and

Whereas many programs in the School of Science and Technology recommend that their students take Philosophy 102, Introduction to Logic, and the proposed FYE Syllabus does not cover the material from that course, and

Whereas enrolment in FYE is likely to delay graduation within four years by preventing SST students from completing the required sequence of courses in their program,

All students majoring in a program in the School of Science and Technology must obtain the approval of their major advisor before enrolling in University 150 and,

All students considering majoring in a program in the School of Science and Technology are strongly encouraged to check with the major advisor in that program before enrolling in University 150.

Submitted by Sharon Cabaniss
April 6, 2006

To: The University Community
From: The SST GE Committee
Re: Response to the Proposed GE Path
Date: 30 April 2004

As faculty in the School of Science and Technology (SST), we fully support the incorporation of a comprehensive general education experience for all Sonoma State students. Further, we applaud the efforts of the GE Subcommittee for the development of the proposed GE reforms.

In this document we address the effect of the proposed GE path on the School of Science and Technology (SST). We present both proposals for enhancing the role of SST in the GE path and concerns regarding integrating the path within science students' major requirements.

We feel that SST has much to offer to the GE path. SSU has achieved distinction for its science major programs. Graduates in several science majors have won national awards and recognition. Several of the programs at SSU are much larger, in proportion to the size of the university, than others in the CSU. For example, there has been a larger proportion of undergrads majoring in physics at SSU than at 21 of the other 22 CSU campuses.

In particular, we address four components of the proposed GE path:

The GE Freshman Year Experience

Quality science major programs require a lot of units. This was recognized recently when B.S. programs were permitted to stay at 124-126 units while B.A. programs were reduced to 120 units. Additionally, upper level science courses frequently require a number of prerequisites and to complete the course work in 4 years, majors typically begin taking major courses in their freshman year. The attached document addresses our concerns regarding the impact of the First Year Experience on our majors.

The GE Mid-Level Experience

Currently SST GE courses fit into the category B requirements specified by Executive Order 595. The attached document proposes a new structuring of the category B requirements to increase both the breadth and depth of a student's science GE experience.

The GE Capstone Experience

Several of the major programs in SST currently include a required capstone experience and other majors are considering inclusion of a capstone requirement. We would like to see the major capstone requirement integrated with the GE capstone experience. In the attached document, a possible format for the integrated experience is described.

Writing Across the Curriculum

Recognizing that well qualified scientists must be able to communicate effectively, SST fully supports the inclusion of Writing Across the Curriculum in the proposed GE path. The attached document expresses our concerns and wishes for the WAC component of the GE path.

Science & Technology Major & Associated Requirements in 1st and 2nd Year

Department

13 Year 1

Fall

Spring

Response to GE Freshman Year Proposal. Required

Major Science Major Science Total Year 1

Astronomy (see Physics)	4	9	5	22
Biology	3	4	3	10
Chemistry	5	4	3	24
Computer Science	4	0	3	10
Engineering Science	1	13	0	25
Geology	3	5	5	16

The Vertical Major Problem. Majors in the School of Science and Technology (SST) have a high number of lower division courses that need to be taken in a particular order so that students have the knowledge base for their upper division major courses. If a student is forced to delay taking some of those courses to take a freshman year experience package, they will most likely have to delay graduation. We have taken a close look at those lower division major requirements, and find no way to rearrange those courses. Our majors are structured in a very standard way that is mirrored by science and mathematics programs around the country.

Kinesiology The following table details these requirements. The two columns for each semester are the units required from the major department (Major) and the units required from other departments in the School (Required science). As you can see, there are at least 21 units of other courses that SST students should be required to take in their freshman year, assuming a 32 unit load for the first year. We recommend that any new general education package not burden Year 2 students with any extra units.

Fall Spring

	Required		Required		Total Year 2
	Major	Science	Major	Science	
Astronomy (see Physics)					
Biology	4	5	7	0	16
Chemistry	9	9	5	9	32
Computer Science	3	4	3	4	14
Engineering Science	4	10	8	4	26
Geology	7	4	4	2	17