GenEd Re-Certification Narrative Guidelines

Introduction

The General Education Curriculum (02.10.02) policy document established the General Education Program act in accordance with the University’s Periodic Program Review Process and also charged the General Education Executive Committee with reviewing all courses after the fourth year they are taught.

We are approaching the four-year anniversary of the program’s implementation and thus, the first phase of course recertification.

GenEd recertification seeks to answer two fundamental questions about courses scheduled for review:

* How has the course maintained fidelity to the approved proposal as the course has developed and changed over time?

* How does the course continue to meet GenEd learning goals?

This document is one of a series of documents intended to help faculty understand the recertification project. Other documents for consultation include:

- the GenEd Re-Certification memo and
- the Re-Certification Portfolio Content Detail.

Re-Certification Overview

In Fall 2010, GenEd solicited input from instructors on the best way to document answers to the fundamental questions, and the feedback helped craft the framework of course recertification. Faculty feedback suggested the following course artifacts be required:

- Syllabi,
- Key or Major Assignment Sheets and
- Sample of Student Work.

Additionally, course portfolios must contain a narrative.

Course artifacts, such as syllabi, assignment descriptions and student responses provide documentation and support regarding the learning goals and classroom approach. These course documents are quite familiar to faculty and need little explanation.

* Please contact the relevant area coordinator or GenEd administration for a copy of the approved proposal if one is not available.
Collaborative Narrative

The narrative required of all courses up for recertification requires a bit more explanation. Faculty suggested a collaborative narrative would provide additional insight and context regarding the changes and development to a course as it has evolved over time. The narrative should be considered as a strategy for exploring the portfolio contents and should reference the materials to support claims about the course.

The fundamental questions guiding GenEd recertification can be broadly categorized into three themes:

- **Evolution**, **Pedagogy** and **Consistency/Coherency**.

GenEd offers the following questions to assist teams in thinking about the evolution of courses in the inventory.

Questions

These questions are intended to assist in thinking about the narrative. We do not intend for all questions to be answered but to prompt thinking about thematic threads for the narrative’s content.

Evolution

- How has the course changed from the approved proposal? How have the changes improved the course? In what ways, have course assignments evolved? Describe how the course delivery methods have changed in terms of class size? Number of sections? Instructional staff?

- What original course elements (i.e., content, readings, assignments) remain from the original proposal? What original course elements have been dropped or omitted? Why? What have been the effects?

- What are the greatest differences between the course as it is currently taught and the course as originally proposed? Why have these changes been adopted? What are the consequences?

Pedagogy

- How does the course meet the GenEd learning goals, particularly students’ abilities to think critically, communicate clearly, and exercise information literacy?

- How does the course engage students as active participants in the learning process? Examples may include how the course incorporates experiential learning, any Philadelphia experience component or community-based learning components or other placed-based teaching strategies.

- What is the team most pleased with in the course? Why? What is the team least pleased with in the course? Why?
**Consistency/Coherency**

- What is the overlap among the multiple sections? What are the significant similarities across the multiple sections? Across departments? Across colleges? The team may want to consider the topics, readings and assessment techniques in responding.

- What are the significant dissimilarities across the multiple sections? Across departments? Across colleges? The team may want to consider the topics, readings and assessment techniques in responding.

- What are the most significant areas to address in order to create a more common experience for students in different sections? Why?

- What kinds of strategies will the team adopt to bring the multiple sections into closer alliance with one another (the original proposal serves as the common touchstone).