General Education Program Committee
Minutes
14 March 2005

Present: Chuck Booth, Hope Cook, Richard Jones-Bamman, David Pellegrini, Delar Singh, Carol Williams, Nancy Salter, ex-officio.

1. Review and acceptance of draft minutes of 7 March 2005 with one correction noted. (Jones-Bamman, Booth)

Old Business

2. Faculty Forums and Feedback Mechanisms

The Social Sciences Working Group met on 10 March and reviewed the goals on learning outcomes of the Tier I and Tier II Social Sciences requirements; the group agreed that Tier I courses should emphasize methods and concepts, while Tier II courses will emphasize analysis and applications, consistent with other areas of study and GEPC recommendations. The group also agreed that the social sciences requirements would be open to any discipline or areas of study that meet the identified learning objectives.

Open forums were held on March 8 and 10. Topics discussed included the proposed requirements in the areas of inductive reasoning, health/wellness/fitness, and technological literacy; a possible speech/communication/oral communications requirement in the GER, the inclusion of social institutions in the social sciences categories, the focus of the Tier I Arts and Humanities: Literature requirement, and the goals of the Tier III requirement.

New Business

3. Proposal Development

Maggie Martin prepared a preliminary second draft of the GER (dated March 14) for GEPC consideration. Several issues will need to be resolved.

Maggie contacted the Office of Institutional Planning and Research about conducting a survey of the faculty on several issues of contention to provide the guidance to the GEPC in formulating the next version of the GER.

The relationship between the GER First Year Colloquium and the existing First Year Program is still uncertain; the consensus of the GEPC is that the proposed 4-credit colloquium-FY seminar, to be taken by all first year students, would meet the goals of both the GER and the FY program, provided class sizes are kept small. Richard Jones-Bamman suggested a meeting between GEPC members and the FY Program Committee to address this issue. Chuck Booth distributed a web document describing the learning goals of the Skidmore College First Year Scribner Seminar Series as a possible model for the First Year Colloquium-FY Seminar requirement.

A proposed broadening of the Tier I Arts and Humanities: Literature requirement to include non-fiction literature raised concerns about the goals and learning outcomes of this requirement; this issue requires further discussion.

It was suggested that the development of oral communication skills be listed as a specific goal for the First Year Colloquium, the Tier III Requirement, and possibly the two Tier I Arts and Humanities categories (if class sizes could be kept reasonably small); in addition, it was suggested the GEPC recommend that academic majors share responsibility for developing students’ oral communication skills.
No date was set for the release of the second draft of the GER.

Next Meeting: The next GEPC meeting will be Monday, 28 March at 2:00 pm in Webb 258

Respectfully submitted,
Chuck Booth, Acting Chair