



## BOARD OF GOVERNORS

### ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

November 10, 2017

#### Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m. by Governor Dunaskiss in Room BC of the McGregor Memorial Conference Center. Secretary Miller called the roll. A quorum was present.

**Committee Members Present:** Governors Dunaskiss, Kelly, Trent, Nicholson, and O'Brien; Linda Beale, Faculty Representative, Louis Romano, Faculty Alternate Representative; and Aaron Szpytman, Student Representative

**Also Present:** Governors Busuito, Gaffney, and Thompson, and President Wilson; Provost Whitfield, Vice Presidents Burns, Decatur, Hefner, Lanier, Lindsey, Lessem, Staebler and Wright, and Secretary Miller

#### **PRESENTATION: PROPOSED GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM REVISION**

Governor Dunaskiss called on Associate Provost Darin Ellis for the presentation on the proposed revisions to the General Education Program. Mr. Ellis began with a summary of the goals for the new program, which included a focus on student success and degree attainment, modernization of the curriculum content and pedagogy, to increase student choice and learner engagement, to make room for more rigorous upper division credential opportunities, such as minors and second majors, and to incorporate and promote elements of the university's mission and strategic plan, such as diversity and engagement.

The current general education program was adopted in 1986, and with some minor revisions over the last 10 years, currently stands at 46 credits in two areas – group requirements and competency areas. The general education program has been overseen by the general education oversight committee (GEOC) as provided by Board statute. The oversight committee was established for the purpose of making recommendations on implementation and review of the curriculum, and its membership, by statute, has broad representation among the colleges. Review of the Gen Ed program began with a charge to the committee in 2013, and the work began in earnest in 2014, through a second committee, the general education reform committee (GERC), established by the provost, whose membership included members of the existing GEOC and others drawn from the campus community. The charge was to review the program, agree on major parameters, determine learning goals and outcomes, and decide on a new curricular structure. A website was established for the campus community which includes documentation from this process. The review continued through 2014 and 2015, and in 2016, a framework was

presented to the Senate and broader campus community. Work continued, with both the GERC and the GEOC reviewing the framework and recommendations in close detail, and in June 2017, the GEOC approved its framework and communicated their preliminary recommendations to the provost. Through review by and discussions with the Academic Senate, additional input was received, and in fall 2017, the review by the Senate's committees was undertaken. Following committee review, further changes and suggestions were made, and on November 1, the Senate voted on an amended recommendation on general education, and forwarded their recommendations to the President and the Provost.

The administration's recommendation on general education takes into account much of the Senate's recommendation. Mr. Ellis summarized the program, which includes 12 credits of foundational competencies, a 1 credit Wayne experience course, and six inquiry areas, for a total of 32 credits. He discussed the differences between the existing program and proposed program. The competencies are similar to the current program, including Written Communication, Oral Communication and Quantitative Experience, where some flexibility was provided in alternatives to students to meet this requirement. He spent some time discussing the inquiry areas, and outlined how various courses and departments fit into the inquiry areas. Those areas include Cultural Inquiry, Natural Scientific Inquiry, Social Inquiry, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Inquiry, Global Training and Civic Literacy, and comprise 19 credits of the 32 credit Gen Ed program recommended. The one-credit Wayne Experience course is new.

An implementation stage will follow adoption of the new Board statute, and includes revising the University bulletin for publication in March, coding the degree audit and advising software program, and substantial advisor training. A student outreach plan is also included. Students will have the choice of whether to stay with their current plan of work, or to switch to the new curriculum. The goal is to have the new requirements in effect in fall of 2018.

Governor Dunaskiss thanked Mr. Ellis for his presentation, and expressed her thanks to all of the constituencies involved in the development of the revised curriculum, which has been long overdue. She expressed appreciation for the GEOC, the GERC, the Academic Senate, the Student Senate, and the administration for undertaking this reform. She added that the University is committed to doing everything possible to help students complete their degrees in four years. The reduction in general education requirements, and refining them, is a tremendous step in accomplishing that goal.

To begin questions on the proposed recommendation, the following motion was placed on the table:

**MOTION:** Upon motion by Governor Trent, seconded by Governor Nicholson, the Academic Affairs Committee recommended that the Board of Governors revise statute 2.43.03; GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM; REQUIREMENTS, as presented, effective fall term, 2018.

Professor Roth stated, on behalf of the Academic Senate, that they engaged in considerable discussion and had productive interaction with members of the Provost's Office. Some changes they advocated have been incorporated, for which they are pleased. Concerns remain stemming from a discussion from Senate members who advocate changing the 32 credit hour limit to 35 credit hours, and adding an additional natural science inquiry course. They felt that the 32 credit

hour limit was somewhat arbitrary, and needed to be balanced against other considerations that would provide a well-rounded education. Professor Roth advised that there was a strong sense among a majority of members of the Senate that there is a distinction to be drawn between physical and life sciences, and that including both a life science and a physical science requirement would strengthen the general education program. Of the Michigan public universities, he found that only one other required less than two science classes. There was concern expressed about the reputational impact if WSU was an outlier in this requirement. It is important to the Senate that WSU is associated with academic excellence, and Professor Roth reiterated the Senate's position that the 32 credit hour limit be raised to 35, with the addition of a second science course, requiring students to take one life and one physical science class.

Mr. Ryan Laith, the Student representative, spoke on behalf of the Student Senate and advised that they have reviewed the proposal, examined credit hour requirements and he spoke on behalf of the proposal as presented. He believes the new requirements will provide greater opportunities for students in terms of research, co-ops, internships and global learning. He indicated his support for maintaining the credit hour requirement at 32 hours.

Professor Brumley added additional context and background on the Academic Senate's discussions, and indicated that there was spirited discussion about the proposed change to 35 credits, and that the vote was relatively narrow. The faculty have struggled to determine the best thing they can do as faculty members and in the best interest of students. She advised that the Senate had four committees review the proposed Gen Ed program and three of the four committees recommended there not be a second science course. She felt there was not an opportunity for meaningful dialogue on the impact of adding the second science course, and added that many students already take a second course because of the requirements of their respective programs. This is a complex situation, with a number of issues to balance, and she appreciated the opportunity to provide an alternative viewpoint. Governor Kelly asked for clarification on the Senate's vote; Professor Brumley concurred that it was a close vote, 24-16, a majority but she felt not a strong consensus.

Professor Roth indicated that he chaired the Curriculum and Instruction committee, which spent considerable time reviewing the proposed Gen Ed program. The committee endorsed the inquiries as set by the Provost's office, but did not address the merits of a second science course because they felt that the 32 hour limit set by the Provost and the President was firm, and they did not want to reopen agreements reached on the other components of the program.

After seeing no other questions, Governor Dunaskiss called on two speakers who had requested the opportunity to present a statement on this issue. Professor Louis Romano was called on first – he asked if there was an amendment on the floor, and was advised that there was not. He then made the following statement:

Professor Romano: "So I was prepared to speak at the end of the meeting to either thank or acknowledge defeat on the proposed amendment. So, I wasn't sure that this was when I was going to speak, but I don't think I could say anything more than what Brad said about the merits of this. I will say that those of us who are scientists realize the importance of the difference between the physical sciences and the life sciences. I mean the physical sciences talk about energy and forces, and atoms, and matter. These are important concepts that we think our students need to learn. Not saying that they need

to take higher level physics, but we have a course called physics of music, and it is a very popular course. I think that students need to know something about the life sciences. Disease, DNA, genetics, recombinant DNA, cloning, these are topics that students learn not in depth but just understand what they read in the newspaper about these areas, so that's why we think that is very important. And those of us in the Senate think it's very important that there be two science courses. And with regard to how the committees voted, I take issue with what Krista said. There were 5 committees that looked at this. Research voted overwhelmingly, almost 100% that science should be two courses, one life science, one physical science. Budget didn't consider this at all, but I'm sure if it was polled, it would be a pretty close vote, if not in favor. But, the important point is that when the Senate voted overall, the vote was a sizeable super majority of 27 to 19. So, if you think about this just on the merit, even without the vote, we think it's important that there be 2 science courses for all the reasons Brad said, but I'll just emphasize that if we don't do this, it's going to hurt our reputation. I believe to the same extent that dropping the math requirement hurt our reputation. So, I urge you to consider the amendment that I hope will be presented that we increase our credits to 35, include two science courses, like every other research university in Michigan does, every other public university does, except Oakland. And I think this will do us well in the future."

Governor Dunaskiss thanked Professor Romano for his comments, and then called on Professor Lisa Hock.

Professor Hock: "So, thank you for this opportunity. My name is Lisa Hock. I'm an Associate Professor of German and CMLC and a member of the diversity subcommittee of the Gen Ed reform committee. Most importantly for today, I regularly and willingly teach Gen Ed classes, and I appreciate general education with its commitment to having breadth to undergraduate study, this unique and precious aspect of higher education in North America, that does not exist anywhere else. I've given the Board a written statement and am happy to share that with anyone else who is interested. In my short time, I'd like to address three points. The deliberation process, unique aspects of the proposal, and a concern on process. While there will be disagreements about this, the inevitable messy process of developing a Gen Ed model for Wayne State has been a democratic, campus wide effort involving faculty, committees inside and outside the faculty Senate, the administration, staff and students. And here I'd like to thank especially the advisors for the great idea of the inquiries. The 32-credit cap was a challenge, yet the process also led to new learning outcomes, particularly in the classes I will discuss below, and will hopefully encourage all of us to rethink our basic course in ways that are beneficial to the students who are our bread and butter, uniquely Wayne. The cluster of the three inquiry courses that I use LEAP outcomes to refer to as inquiries related to personal and social responsibility is the most unique and uniquely Wayne part of the proposal. These three courses are diversity, equity and inclusion in the United States, global learning and civic literacy, and I want to underscore that when we wrote the learning outcomes for diversity, equity, and inclusion, and global learning, they were written such that natural sciences and physical sciences can teach courses in those areas. It requires creativity, but those are possibilities for science classes. We wrote the learning outcomes so we'd be open to all disciplines. Together these three inquiries directly fulfill the Wayne State mission to, I quote, "prepare a diverse student body to thrive and positively impact global and local communities." Together, they address the needs outlined in the 2011 report on college

learning and democracy for students to understand democratic institutions in the U.S. To understand the diverse cultures that shape the U.S. and to understand diverse cultures across the globe. A second unique aspect of Gen Ed, the first-year inquiry, did not make it into the Provost's proposal. Having taught previously at a private liberal arts college, I was excited to give our students the opportunity usually reserved for the more privileged. I was even more excited about cross disciplinary courses that focus on cutting edge questions and explored how different disciplines approach problem solving. My hope is that FYI is not on the table today only because it requires development, and that the university is committed to providing the resources necessary to make FYI a reality. A concern. I believe in science education. I encourage all of my German majors to double major across disciplinary fields. I want my students to take one physical and one natural science course and I do as a humanist, understand the difference between them. My college is now discussing its own general education requirements and I will advocate for it to continue to require an additional science along with a foreign language requirement. For three reasons, however, I cannot support adding a second science, or actually four reasons, I cannot support adding a second science to university requirements. First of all, the vote in the Senate carried by fewer than 10 votes. Secondly, ultimately the Senate was not able to put forth a 32-credit plan that included two sciences. Thirdly, the Provost is unlikely to allow for a 35-credit plan, and fourth, adding a science would therefore mean bumping one of the courses that had been thoughtfully assembled into a whole that was then approved by dozens and dozens of individuals. By all subcommittees of the General education reform committee, and by the Senate's own curriculum and instruction committee, as well as the General Education review committee. To conclude, I do not support adding a second course to the Gen Ed requirements. I do support the Provost's proposal with the caveat that I hope the University will promote the development of the first-year inquiry course and I'm really excited to be part of the new Gen Ed program at Wayne State. Thank you for your consideration."

Governor Dunaskiss asked whether there were further comments from the committee. Professor Roth proposed the following motion to amend:

**MOTION TO AMEND:** Professor Roth moved to amend the main motion, indicating that in addition to the inquiry requirements set forth in the Provost's recommendations, the general education program shall require a second natural science inquiry course. One natural science inquiry course shall be in the physical science and one in the life sciences. One of these courses should include a laboratory section.

Professor Roth advised that he had a second amendment for consideration that he did not feel would be controversial, which would be to have an academic staff member placed on the general education oversight committee, which would provide input of academic advisors on that committee. President Wilson agreed with and accepted that recommendation as a friendly amendment.

With agreement on the addition of an academic staff member to the general education oversight committee, Governor Dunaskiss clarified that the amendment proposed by Professor Roth would increase the number of credit hours to 35, with the addition of the second science course, and that there would be a distinction that one science course be in physical science and one in life

science. Governor Kelly seconded the motion to amend. Governor Dunaskiss asked for questions on the amendment.

Governor Thompson asked of the impact on graduation and retention rates moving from 32 to 35 credits. Associate Provost Ellis advised that there was not a statistical model that would provide a percentage increase. Science requirements vary by college and major area, and he provided an example that engineering may require, depending on the major, three or four science courses, but it may not include a life science course, and would thus add a requirement to their curriculum. In social work, a life science is required by their accreditation requirements, but the physical science is not.

Governor Trent asked how many of the other Michigan public universities require both a life science and a physical science. Associate Provost Ellis advised that only Michigan State and Grand Valley specifically require life science and physical science as separate requirements. Governor Trent reaffirmed that with the amendment as stated, under the examples provided by Mr. Ellis, both engineering majors and social work majors would have to take an additional science class.

Mr. Laith talked about student success, and believes that adding three more credits will hinder student success and limit the opportunities for students, and believes the program should remain at 32 credits to let students decide for themselves. Governor O'Brien spoke to Mr. Laith's concerns, and indicated that with the changes proposed in the Gen Ed program, the requirement has been reduced from 44-46 credits down to 32 or 35 credits, which is a significant reduction, and believes there are other barriers to graduation. She would like the next phase of review to look at why some degree programs require more than 120 credits.

Governor Busuito asked Professor Brumley if she felt the democratic process had been subverted during the Senate's discussions. Professor Brumley responded that no one had been denied an opportunity to vote. She felt instead that it would have been helpful to have meaningful conversation about the implications of the proposed changes. It was a complicated issue, and she felt the vote occurred without the opportunity for full discussion. Faculty have different perspectives and backgrounds and she encouraged the board and her colleagues to think out of the box and look for creative solutions. She provided some examples of how the science requirement could be approached in new ways, relating current events to science, and broadening student interest. Governor Busuito agreed with her concept that everyone is a scientist, regardless of discipline. He advised the students that when he was an undergraduate, there were requirements he would have preferred not to have to take that have been very valuable to him throughout his career. He believes there is no substitute for understanding the scientific method, and that limiting science to one course will shortchange the students. Professor Brumley added that a consideration for faculty who did not support the two science proposal was the number of science classes that students are already taking as part of the general education requirement in their respective school/college, and that if innovative courses are developed, students will have options to meet their inquiry requirements. Faculty are creative and innovative and thinking about ways to provide a broad-based education to our students within the six inquiry areas, without over-burdening them.

Governor Dunaskiss expressed her support for keeping the required credits at 32 to provide students with the opportunity to make their choices as to what they want to pursue beyond basic general education courses. Within the schools and colleges, there are further requirements for

sciences, for math, and those decisions are made by the departments within the schools and colleges. She strongly believes in providing students a pathway to complete their degrees in 4 years, to provide them the basic requirements, and let the students make decisions for themselves beyond that, and trust them to select their path.

Governor Thompson agrees that students should have a certain amount of flexibility and freedom, but added that even by having gen ed requirements, the university is stipulating a certain number of courses to provide a well-rounded education. She sees the main decision point as whether to have one or two science courses, and what the benefit is to the students. With the number of Michigan public universities who currently require two science classes, she believes two courses makes sense, and that the reduction in credit hours required from the old program to the new program will provide students needed flexibility. Governor Busuito agreed some guidance is necessary, and concurred with Governor Thompson's summary.

Mr. Laith asked Professor Roth if he had used any data or statistics to determine the need for a second science class. Professor Roth would have to defer to his colleagues in the hard sciences for a data driven answer, but advised that data in this instance would reflect looking at what other universities require, and seeing how Wayne fits in with that comparison.

Governor Trent commented that this process began to identify requirements that would give students the room and flexibility to pursue their own academic interest, and over the span of the review process, two separate committees decided to hold general education requirements at 32 credits, and she believes that the board should respect the process. She does not believe two science courses are necessary for one to be a well-educated student, and that schools and colleges have the flexibility to have two or more science courses required in their respective curriculum. Given that the 32 credit hour requirement was derived through multiple organizations, she does not believe it should be taken lightly.

Governor Dunaskiss concurred that a significant amount of work and research went into the proposed recommendation, but also believes that the university should not wait another 20 years to review the curriculum again. She advised that one way to ensure the success of our students is to have a data driven review, and that the Board should review the data on the general education program every three to five years to ensure that what has been implemented is the most effective. If changes are warranted, based on data received, the board should act on that information in an appropriate manner. She asked the President to charge the Provost with a periodic review that comes to the Board, that assesses this program.

Professor Roth reiterated the role of the Senate in this review process, and the Senate's responsibility for formulation and continuing review of educational policy, and expressed his wish that the Senate be acknowledged for the important role it plays in this process.

President Wilson thanked the various committees that have been involved in this review. It is hard work, and a lot of people have put forth considerable effort. He acknowledged the advisory role of the Senate, and that as President, he has the burden of taking all of the input he has received, and coming up with what he believes is the most representative of the general will of the entire campus, including the students and the faculty, as well as other considerations.

Governor Dunaskiss called for a vote on the amendment, which is restated as follows:

**MOTION TO AMEND:** Professor Roth moved to amend the main motion, indicating that in addition to the inquiry requirements set forth in the Provost's recommendations, the general education program shall require a second natural science inquiry course. One natural science inquiry course shall be in the physical science and one in the life sciences. One of these courses should include a laboratory section. The total gen ed credit requirement would be raised to 35 credits with this change. Governor Kelly seconded the motion to amend.

The amendment failed, with a vote of 3-4.

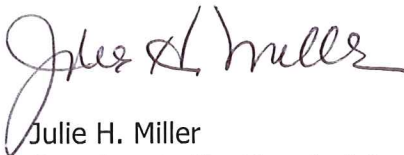
The committee then voted on the original motion, which is restated as follows:

**MOTION:** Upon motion by Governor Trent, seconded by Governor Nicholson, the Academic Affairs Committee recommended that the Board of Governors revise statute 2.43.03; GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM; REQUIREMENTS, as presented, effective fall term, 2018. A friendly amendment was added to include an academic staff member with advising responsibilities to the General Education Oversight Committee. The motion carried.

Governor Dunaskiss echoed President Wilson and expressed her thanks and respect for the committees, to the Academic Senate, and to everyone who has worked on this effort for all of the work they have done, and for their passionate belief in what they feel is best for the students.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Julie H. Miller  
Secretary to the Board of Governors