General Education Task Force
MINUTES
February 15, 2012

Present: Rick Bartholomew, Jon Comer, Bruce Crauder, Steve Damron, Shelia Kennison, Amy Martindale, Brenda Masters, Kevin Moore, Joe Schatzer, Ajay Sukhdial, Alan Tree, and Mark Weiser.

I. Timeline Considerations (for the task force)
Dr. Kennison passed out a copy of the OSU General Education requirements as well as an email from Dr. Spurrier in which he noted that the number one goal of the task force should be deciding what to focus on for the remaining of the semester. It was noted that there are three task force meetings remaining. The group agreed that coming up with the student learning goals for OSU can be accomplished in that timeframe.

II. Discussion of Dr. Rhodes's Visit
It was noted that many of the task force members felt that Dr. Rhodes’ visit was beneficial. Dr. Martindale commented that she has begun to reassess her thinking about general education after discussions with Dr. Rhodes. When thinking about reforming any practice the thought process must be intentional and there must be intentional goals and plans for implementing. A timeline needs to be determined, then work backwards to meet that timeline. It was noted that the task force might want to consider the Higher Learning Commission’s (HLC) open pathway process (not finalized). Each institution identifies one area for improvement; such as student success and learning improvement and the overall development of students. Dr. Masters noted that the institution needs to demonstrate to HLC our plans for improvement. Dr. Master also said that if the task force could develop a plan to be implemented by the 2015 accreditation, an assessment plan could be in place immediately following and both could be noted in the accreditation reporting. It was noted that Dr. Rhodes mentioned that institutions took anywhere from 3 1/2 to 12 years to develop and implement changes to their current processes. Visiting with Dr. Rhodes also confirmed that the task force discussion were on track with some great ideas. One of the ideas used by other institutions was to put together a plan to share with the university. Dr. Damron would like to as the task force to put together a plan. Members noted that we need to view students as our products. Dr. Masters asked if the university should consider a general education portfolio process where students identify a variety of general education courses. Some comments surfaced that there was disagreement on requiring that certain faculty teach general education and Dr. Crauder noted that there is a reason for this in that some faculty aren’t as knowledgeable as other about the subject matter. Members asked if the task force had determined what’s wrong with the current general education system. Members responded with the following:
1. The writing requirement for general education specifies the number pages required for lower and upper division courses but there are no specific requirements on content or assessment. The university needs to improve student’s communication skills not just writing skills.
2. Limitations on being able to give general education credit to courses.
3. Check Boxes – get rid of them and come up with another way of demonstrating the criteria.
III. Process for Moving Forward

One suggestion was to strip down the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) general education requirements but others felt that this would be problematic for transfer students. Members asked if it would be beneficial to create a general education advising area.

Members need to decide as a group: (1) desired general education goals for the university (2) steps to reach those goals, and (3) what needs improvement in regards to the current process.

The Mathematics Department and other key individuals have been working to find better ways to assure student success in Mathematics at OSU. It was noted that students who remediate and come to OSU still do poorly in Mathematics. The university has acquired a program called “ALEKS” as a testing placement mechanism to help guide students to better succeed in Mathematics.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Dr. Damron suggested that individuals and/or groups come to the next task force meeting with proposals for the future OSU General Education requirements. These proposals can be discussed one-by-one and edited by the group until the group settles on a single approach that the group agrees is the best option.

Next meeting
March 1st, 2:00 p.m.-3:30 pm in Telecommunications Building, Room 143