Dr. Norwood introduced himself and commented that the General Education Task Force has been charged with reviewing the current general education policies and practices and proposing what general education should be at OSU. The task force is starting out with a blank slate and will begin deliberately slow to reinforce a broad overview and attention to detail and for the strongest outcome. The purpose of this forum is to listen to individuals have to say and allow them to express their strengths, weaknesses, and desires in regards to general education at Oklahoma State University.

The task force is discussing the following topics:
1. What are the goals of General Education?
2. How should those goals be pursued?
3. How should general education courses be taught?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current general education curriculum?
5. Are there any innovative general education activities (besides traditional course offerings) that OSU should consider?

Dr. Norwood asked the audience for their view of general education at OSU. Dr. Norwood encouraged communications but noted that if members of the audience were uncomfortable with speaking out in a group setting to please contact him in person or post comments to the D2L site. The task force needs OSU’s input.

Dr. Damron welcomed the attendees and explained that this is a process and that it will take dedication, detail and time to complete. There is confusion of the desired outcomes and the task force/university needs to rethink general education and what does OSU what the image to be.

Audience Commentary:
There was an option that the general education “I” designation should not be limited to contemporary culture, that the requirement should include international history as well. It was noted that Mathematics should be a part of general education and all foreign language course should have an automatic “I” designation. Members of the audience commented that there should be history/government requirements and international students should be exposed to global history that would substitute. What do students need to meet the global world? Students view general education as punishment rather than understanding what they can learn and how they can grow by taking general education curriculum. It was noted in the forum yesterday that some faculty feel that general education should not be taught by new faculty and there is some disagreement to that. General education should be taught properly regardless of the position level of the faculty member to attain optimal outcomes. It was noted that study abroad courses does not automatically get the “I” designation and there is disagreement to that concept. Faculty are concerned about the writing requirements attached to the majority of the general education designations as faculty in large classes do not have the time to grade the writing assignments effectively. Writing is important but we need to have a structure that assists these endeavors. Hargis wanted to help make OSU one of the top land grant universities and this will take a great deal of resources and must begin with general education. It was noted that the university must receive input from the student community and students must view themselves as leaders.
The audience noted that there needs to be more general education integration in the skills, ways of thinking, and areas of knowledge. It was asked, what do we want students from OSU to take with them after they graduate? It was said that student’s writing skills are lacking but so are communication skills as a whole. It was suggested to integrate writing in some of the smaller classes in order to facilitate proper grading and feedback on writing assignments. Instructors need to think through the next five to ten years as they teach general education curriculum. It was suggested to think about teaching general education through a theme model such as sustainability. Incorporate general education through the students discipline tracks and cross colleges and disciplines that may fit. Another suggestion was to look at creating a certificate program for general education and sustainability and creativity would be good topic to tap into. Students view all general education courses as required courses necessary to complete their degree requirements to graduate and obtain a job. The university needs to find out the goals of our students. Algebra, for instance, in not a subject viewed to be useful in real life but if connections can be explained on how to relate this knowledge to real world application it would gain more appreciation.

Conclusion:
What is going to become of these discussions? The task force will meet after the forums to disseminate the information and determine the next steps. Nothing will be passed to the Provost without input from the University community. There is a concern throughout the group about the lack of input from the student body (only 3 students and one staff attended the two forums) and it was noted that it will be a process and that there are numerous resource to tap into including the “Journal of Education”. The task force is also examining the processes of other universities in regards to general education.