

**Rhode Island College  
Committee on General Education**

**Special Meeting Minutes**

**Date: Friday, April 5, 2024 (9 – 11 am)**

**Location: Zoom**

**Regular 2023-24 COGE Members**

Present: K. Almeida, S. Basu (Chair), B. Caouette, J. Capece, S. Costa, J. Dagle, J. Harrison, Q. Hughes, R. Kraus II, Carolynn Masters, E. Miller, S. Oliveira, S. Picard, R. Quintana Vallejo, S. Ross, L. Schuster, H. Shadoian

Excused: D. Gill

The April 5<sup>th</sup> COGE special meeting had dual objectives: 1) to hear from non-COGE attendees a final round of comments on the General Education proposal in a short open forum followed by comments and discussion among COGE members and 2) for COGE members to vote on the proposal.

The meeting started at 9:00 am on Zoom with the following Chair's updates,

- The Chair established that the first 15 minutes of the meeting will run as an open forum to hear comments on the Gen Ed proposal from non-COGE attendees. The remaining meeting will run as a regular COGE meeting allowing comments and discussion on the proposal among COGE members only.
- COGE will then vote on the proposal in an up or down vote.

**Open Forum comments by non-COGE attendees.**

The following question was raised,

- The learning outcomes in the grid still includes research and information literacy when the revised learning outcomes identify digital literacy as the outcome. Is that correct?

The Chair clarified that the learning outcomes are not changing in Fall 2024 and the vote that day is to give permission to COGE to set up expert committees to study the learning outcomes proposed by the Task Force in the 24-25 AY, generate learning objectives for each outcome and propose mapping of learning outcomes to categories. Another round of voting will determine whether the revised learning outcomes are adopted after the learning outcomes committees complete their work. A holistic revision to Gen Ed includes

- No further questions were raised and the proceedings moved to discussion within COGE members only.

## Regular COGE meeting

The Chair invited a motion to discuss the Gen Ed proposal: Joan Dagle moved; Seconded – Stephanie Costa

The Chair then summarized the key points of the proposal as follows:

The proposal is divided into two parts: one that goes into effect from Fall 24 and a second implementation part that requests permission to set up expert committees to 1) study each Task Force proposed learning outcome, create learning objectives, generate assessment rubrics and map learning outcomes to categories and 2) compare RIC's signature Connections course with the Task Force's signature RIC course suggestion around a culminating experience on big ideas of the day, similar to URI's grand challenge model, 3) to study how to transition to the First Year quantitative experience in partnership with the Math department.

Otherwise, the items to be voted on include: Gen Ed will be a combination of 3 and 4 credits as long as students meet the 40 credit requirement, no more than 2 course prefix will count towards Gen Ed, RIC 100 will no longer be a Gen Ed requirement, the History category will be modified to include Philosophy in the a combined HIST/PHIL category, There is no second language requirement; instead Modern Language courses at the 102 level and higher will now be eligible for inclusion into the new LIT/LANG category. Students can choose one course from the LIT/LANG category to meet that requirement. Language courses at the 101 level will be considered for inclusion in the Elective category. There is no lab requirement in the Natural Science category but there are no further changes to this category. AQSR will be replaced with an Elective category; all AQSR courses will transition to the Elective category. Any new course proposed as an Elective will need to meet any one and up to three of the current learning outcomes. The Elective category can have prerequisite but courses must be General Education in scope, Connections can now count in the major and no longer subject to 45 credits. Students can take Connections at any point as long as they meet FYS and FYW.

Any course outside FYW and FYW can count towards electives to get to 40 credits.

The Chair then opened up the floor for discussion at this point. The following comments and discussion ensued

- No one is thrilled with the proposal but it makes important compromises that serves our students and administration. Down the road we can have a bigger revision but for right now it fixes some areas in the Gen Ed program that need fixing.
- In taking out the AQSR we are diminishing math and science at a time when our students need math and science without any promise for replacement.
- If the Elective category requires one learning outcome, then does a science course meet the Natural Science outcome or one for the Elective category? Why wouldn't every course on campus want to go into that category?
  - The course would have to demonstrate that they are a general education course. Not a typical course for a major but accessible to a general audience.
- Question to Carolyn – who should proposal questions be directed? And 1) what is the difference between FYS and Connections? Students could take Connections at 24 credits, possible that they take Connections in their second semester, 2) why full-time faculty for FYS and Connections only? and 3) How is RIC 100 not a hidden requirement?

- We should take a look at RIC 100 and the whole first year experience; It is not the intent and purpose that a second semester student take Connections; we cannot have all Gen Ed be taught by full-time faculty both for financial and volume reasons. Also, adjuncts bring a wealth of experience to the classroom.
  - Further on the difference between Connections and FYS – Chris DaCosta has been making a concerted effort to ensure that students do not take FYS and FYW in the first semester so very unlikely a student will take Connections in the first year. Also, Connections has very different learning outcomes and the courses are set up to do very different things from the FYS. Even if students are taking a little earlier under the new proposal, the design and content are very different and designed to build on what students learn in FYS.
  - The full-time faculty condition for FYS and Connections was already written into the previous Gen Ed proposal, therefore, it is a procedural issue that is being preserved.
  - Part of the proposal not going into effect in Fall also includes work comparing the Connections and Culmination models for RIC's signature Gen Ed course. Questions raised here can also be discussed there and we will revisit the Connections piece once that committee finishes their work.
- For the sake of transition, need confirmation that currently accepted courses that fulfill the second language requirement at the 102 level and higher would apply to the new LIT/LANG category and 101 level courses would apply to the Elective category starting this summer.
    - Yes, courses that have already been approved are eligible for inclusion either in the LIT/LANG or Elective categories.
    - Students graduating in summer will need to fulfill the second language requirement. Students who are here in Fall will be held to the new proposal
  - Can a new course have one of the learning outcomes be DEAI focused?
    - The Task Force embedded DEAI into Learning Outcomes and that will be part of the conversation within the LO committees. It is clearly an important element of the Gen Ed program and is one of the crucial things that will happen in the implementation process in 2024-25 year.
  - The language is buried in the proposal in the 5<sup>th</sup> page and not on the summary page. Are we voting on the current changes and the future charge? Not sure about the scope of the proposal.
    - The scope is that it has elements that can be acted on and be effective from Fall 24 and elements that need serious conversation through implementation committees. The vote would approve a list of items effective from Fall and give COGE permission to implement Task Force recommendations on learning outcomes, comparing Connections and Culmination, and studying the math transition to a first-year experience in partnership with the Math department.
  - Would like to see DEIA as a distinct component threaded through LOs and listed in the summary document.
    - To clarify we are voting on the full proposal, not the summary document. Some of these things will require specific UCC changes to be effective from Fall and others are broader in scope.
    - The March 31<sup>st</sup> version sent out to COGE members is the version we are voting on, not the one that was shared in error with the while faculty on April 4<sup>th</sup>.

- Confirming that LANG 101 is going to be considered for Electives; Answer is yes.
  - Courses may be in Gen Ed but needs COGE approval. Some departments are already working on proposals to follow the Gen Ed revision should it pass, others are waiting for Fall to make changes.
- Concern with first year math experience. Lot of students need math in their first year, but some students will do better by waiting because of the learning loss from Covid.
  - Transitioning into First Year Math is up for discussion in 24-25. The math category remains as is for now. Also, the math component is advisory not a mandate. The math department has a lot of interesting ideas that can be incorporated into a First Year math model but need time to have that conversation.
- We have to advise students based on what happens to the proposal at COGE, UCC and Council.
  - The proposal is scheduled to go to Council at the May meeting.
- So, COGE wouldn't be able to work on anything in April if we officially don't have a program?
  - One possibility would be to look at courses that can be tentatively approved. So, if Philosophy wants to put forward a course it can be considered conditionally in the event the proposal passes.

There was a clarifying question about the role of Council in this process. Does the proposal need further approval at Council after it potentially passes COGE and UCC? UCC Is a Council committee and Council can always take up any proposal that passed UCC.

Special note that COGE granted permission to Sue Abbotson and Tom Schmeling to state these points as they relate to the full approval process.

- Note that we will move the COGE May meeting to before graduation and COGE Executive will look into alternative dates after today's vote.

The Chair then invited a motion to vote on the full proposal and reminded that this would be an up and down vote. Elisa Miller moved; Quenby Hughes seconded.

There was a request for one more round of clarification on what is being voted on. The Chair read the bullet points on page 1 and top half of page 2 and summarized the implementation details, potential catalog changes should the proposal pass, and comparison of learning outcomes in the **March 31th proposal**

Voting then proceeded as follows:

Votes in Favor: K. Almeida, S. Basu, S. Costa, J. Dagle, Q. Hughes, R. Kraus II, Carolynn Masters, E. Miller, S. Oliveira, R. Quintana Vallejo, S. Ross, L. Schuster

Opposed: B. Caouette, J. Harrison

Abstain: J. Capece, S. Picard

With a majority of 12 votes in favor, the Gen Ed proposal passed at COGE.

The Chair updated that the proposal now comes to COGE and relevant paperwork will be prepared and submitted to UCC to prepare for the next round of voting at the UCC.

Sylvia Oliveira moved to adjourn the meeting; Ricardo Quintana-Vallejo seconded. The meeting adjourned at 10:40 am.

Respectfully submitted by

Suchandra Basu

COGE Secretary for the April 5<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting, 2024