

MEMO

To: Educational Policies Committee, Perry Marker, Chair
From: General Education Subcommittee, Paul Draper, Chair
RE: Recommendation on University 150/ FYE experimental course
Date: March 17, 2006

Recommendation

The General Education Subcommittee forwards to the Educational Policies Committee its endorsement of the FYE experimental pilot (University 150), for the 2006-07 academic year.

The Subcommittee accepts that the syllabus, schedule and learning outcomes are appropriately advanced.

The Subcommittee believes that assessment strategies are progressing satisfactorily, and recognizes that alignment of strategies with outcomes will continue to develop and will reach the goal of a full and robust assessment.

The Subcommittee concurs with the assignment of GE credit of 3 units in each of Area A2 and A3, and 3 units of general elective credit for a total of 9 units. We understand that appropriate steps are being made through coordinated efforts between the Office of Admissions and Records and the FYE coordinator and her team to invite new first-year students to consider enrolling in U150. Efforts are also going forward to insure enrollment of 150 students into 10 sections of 15 students, and that proper credit is given for academic work completed successfully in U150.

The Subcommittee recognizes that the course offered in 2006-07 is an experimental course mounted for the purpose of examining pedagogical premises, teaching effectiveness, and potential for scalability.

The Subcommittee recommends, in accordance with the suggestion put forward by APC, that the pilot be run for two years to assure that the program is properly assessed.

The Subcommittee further advocates that the assessment of the FYE pilot be fully reviewed before recommendations are considered for broader, curricular change.

Rationale

In the summer and fall of 2005, GE recommended the appointments of the FYE coordinator Dr. Alexander von Meier and a team of faculty to plan and teach in the pilot. The GE committee has monitored the progress of the FYE faculty teams through regular reports from Dr. von Meier over the fall 2005 semester. Additionally, in two readings in the Subcommittee on February 16 and March 2, 2006, Dr. von Meier presented:

- a draft syllabus
- a tentative course calendar/ schedule of lectures
- a set of “Learning Competencies for FYE” that includes objectives in

- A2 (Written and Oral Communication),
 - A3 (Critical Thinking)
 - Reading
 - Information Literacy
 - Student Development
 - “Synergistic” Outcomes
- an outline of the assessment plan for the U150 pilot course

Important revisions to these documents were made in response to the Subcommittee’s comments. Attached are the most up to date versions of documents referenced above.

Resources

At the March 2, 2006 GE meeting Provost Eduardo Ochoa accompanied Dr. von Meier and presented his budget for the pilot U150.

The GE Subcommittee views the budget as transparent in its description of actual costs and sources of funding. The budget appears adequate, and accounts for reasonable start-up expenditures, while providing replacement costs to Departments for their faculty engaged in teaching the FYE pilot.

The Subcommittee asks that the Office of the Provost provide by March 1, 2007 an accounting of the pilot year including actual costs, funding sources and resource implication as they relate to other academic programs.

Conclusion

The Subcommittee acknowledges that 5 months remain before the first FYE class meeting and trusts that the FYE team is fulfilling its charge to create an engaging, cross-disciplinary and academically rigorous FYE pilot course.

The GE Subcommittee endorses the rigorous academic nature of the U150 pilot, its provision of integrated and sustained access to academic advising and career planning, and its student life component.

The GE Subcommittee recognizes the enormous creative, scholarly, and collegial effort by the FYE team and its coordinator. The FYE course development process has proceeded with particular attention to principles of academic freedom and collegiality.

This recommendation passed by unanimous vote of the GE Subcommittee on March 16, 2006

The GE Subcommittee respectfully requests that this recommendation be attached to any action taken by EPC, and forwarded to the Academic Senate.

