***General Education Council*  
approved minutes  
Thursday, December 13, 2018  
2:30am-4:00pm p.m., West Science 2803**

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| ~~August 23, 2018~~ | ~~September 13, 2018~~ | ~~September 27, 2018~~ |
| ~~October 11, 2018~~ | ~~October 25, 2018~~ | ~~November 8, 2018~~ |
| ~~November 29, 2018~~ | December 13, 2018 |  |

**Present:** Mike Burgmeier, Jim Cantrill, Brent Graves, Lanae Joubert, Brian Zinser, Judith Puncochar, (Michael Joy)

1. **Approval of Minutes**
   1. November 29, 2018 - approved
2. **Reports:** 
   1. Jim Cantrill - Director of General Education

Provost has no money to support attendance of the AACU conference in San Francisco; Jim is still fielding questions about artifacts. He meets with sociology tomorrow 12/14/18.

1. **New Business**

**A.** none

1. **Old Business**
   1. World Language Graduation Requirement –

Previous GEC vote on 11-29-18 on the proposal put forth was support = 1; opposed = 6

GEC is readdressing because GEC did not follow proper procedures. Michael Joy was in attendance and presented the case for the World Language Proposal. He shared Western MI’s College of Arts requirement for foreign language. He also shared the past objections to last year’s similar world language proposal:

-protecting department enrollment for languages

-English is spoken all over the word

-worthiness of one semester of language

-requirement will hurt enrollment

-requirement will hurt retention

Dr. Joy answered the following questions posed by GEC members:

1. What is meant by “World Language”? – A world language is everything in LLIS department, native American, sign language, Spanish, French, German, Russian, Chinese, Latin and other foreign language.

2. Do foreign students have the same requirement (would they get credit for a GEC Social Responsibility course by already arriving to NMU with their native language?) – yes they would receive the language proficiency, but they would need to still take the Social Responsibility credits

2. May a study abroad course waive this requirement? - if a foreign language course was taken while abroad and transferred back to NMU, yes

3. What is the difference between a BS and BA degree? At NMU it is at least 4 semesters of a world language that sets apart the BA from the BS

4. Does NMU have any sort of special recognition for a BA degree (when students have gone through the 4 semesters of world language)? Consensus was no, not at NMU. Also, there does not appear to be a national standard for how many semesters of language one needs to earn a BA.

5. The GEC recognizes a world language requirement is not the norm in MI. What does the nation require? No standard known – However, the schools we’d like to be like, according to Dr. Joy, do require a foreign.

6. What is the proficiency exam that students would need to take to ‘test out’ of the world language requirement if NMU adopted this requirement? It will be a national standardized test.

7. How many NMU orientation students do you anticipate passing this standardized exam? No data for how many would pass – if 1500 would need to take it during a summer orientation, perhaps a third may pass, but this is a BIG GUESS.

7. What is NMU’s remedial support for foreign languages? What is the need for tutoring or other support resources for students that will need help passing the 100 level courses? There is the LRC in place, which would anticipate an increase in users. This may be a challenge to meet with current staff, but could hire more students. Currently, Dr. Joy teaches a 100 level Spanish class of 30 students, yet the national standards strongly advise no more than 20 students per instructor (50% increase).

Conversations ensued:

High School Standards

State of MI high school foreign language requirements have changed to requiring only 1 foreign language credit – making it less likely that students will pass the placement test – although perhaps more support for why it may be beneficial to require it in college

<https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Complete_MMC_FAQ_August_2014_467323_7.pdf>

Level of competency

What level of competency constitutes proficiency in a world language?

Shall we require students to take both 101 and 102?

Passing the proficiency test places them at a 202 level

Does one semester or two semesters make one proficient to be global leaders?

Another requirement

Monopolizes Social Responsibility component of GE, thus most students will be forced into language, precluding other choices in this component area.

Flood gate proposal – there are many other important criteria for a 4-yr degree. What makes language unique, is it critical for all?

Some argued that language is central to civilization. Is this something we could ask of our alums or look to the literature for which level of competency equates to human relation success? How do we measure this?

Online Programs

Online only programs would not have an option to meet this language at NMU, since no language courses are taught online (at least not currently). This would be unattractive for students in certain programs that are solely online. It is difficult to apply the requirement to all students.

Room for credits

NMU’s Education program may support a language requirement, but 8 credits of language may be difficult to fit into their program unless specific advising takes place. Advising blocks may not be flexible.

Why is a foreign language is important

The purpose of an educated citizen is more than getting a degree to get a job or for economic gain. We need to articulate this better than we have to support why its inclusion is critical to the well-being of humans.

Does the world language requirement belong in Gen Ed?

We need to be articulate and clear for our purpose for Gen Ed. Many members suggested leaving world language a choice for students to make and not a requirement by the GEC or by any other entity of an NMU. The flexibility, as it stands within the Social Responsibility component of Gen Ed seems more advantageous to the student.

GEC will write a letter that lays out strengths and weaknesses for this proposal and we also need to vote as a committee. Not enough in attendance today for a quorum to vote.

Does the world language requirement belong at NMU?

Academic standards are different at NMU than many of the schools that do require language as a graduation requirement, among other differences, like student demographics, etc.

**5. Good of the Order**

**A**. Lanae will send a doodlepoll next week to organize a standing meeting next semester

Meeting adjourned @ 4:00pm

Minutes drafted by Lanae Joubert (School of Health and Human Performance)