ASCRC Minutes 3/8/162:10 GBB 202

## Call to Order

Members Present: T. Bundy, D. Coffin, C. Chestnut, I. Crummy, J. Eglin, E. Engebretson, C. Greenfield, B. Hillman, A. Lawrence, T. Manuel, M. Nelson M. Semanoff, G. St. George, E. Uchimoto, G.G. Weix

Ex-Officio Present: B. French, J. Hickman, N. Lindsay  
Members Excused: M. Boller

Guests: M. Andrews, C. Johnson, M. Unkuri-Chaundhry, P. Zagalo-Melo

The minutes from 3/1/16 were approved.

## Communication

* The General Education Committee is planning two listening sessions. The tentative session on March 16th is for instructors of y and x courses. The session on March 30th from 3:10- 5:00 p.m. in the DHC is for the campus community. The General Education Committee is hoping to have the revised definitions and learning goals for group X and Y as well as a possible redistribution. The Session on March 30th will like breakout into small groups. Dean Tessmen is helping the General Education Committee plan this event. More specifics should be known after the Committee’s meeting tomorrow.

## Business Items

* Cameron Johnson, the IB Coordinator for Big Sky High School joined the committee to address additional questions regarding the International Baccalaureate. Ryder Delaloye could not attend today’s meeting. He teaches History in the Americas, an IB course and has been involved in the social studies review as well as the IB adoption for several schools.

Big Sky High School is a Title 1 School given the number of low income or poverty students. There are mechanisms available to supplement the cost of IB ($820 –full diploma, $160 -course registration fee, and $120 –exam fee), or for these students. His mission is to advocate for the students. He would like to see more IB students stay in Missoula. These are motivated, gifted students that the University should want to recruit. A more nuanced credit equivalency chart would be helpful. MSU has actively recruited these students from Flathead (40 plus this year), which has had an IB program in place for 10 years.   
  
There are 2000 institutions offering credit for IB courses. They all handle the credit differently. The State of Virginia tried to mandate a standard system for accepting credits, but it failed. He prepared a PowerPoint presentation and handout that answered the questions provided in advance. It included slides that demonstrated how other institutions (MSU, Portland State, Weber State, University of Oregon) grant credit for specific courses. Gonzaga allows credit for History, but only if the student scores a 6. History departments are reluctant to grant credit for AP or IB because of the difference in material. Still the History IB course is still better than any state curriculum. Science on the other had can see that learning objectives align with their courses and language skills can be objectively tested. The University of Nebraska created a scholarship program for IB students. UM has a credit equivalency chart for AP. This could be emulated for IB. Currently UM offers general elective credit rather than course equivalencies. However, there is a misconception that UM does not grant credit. A translation to courses could make it easy for IB students to see themselves at UM.

The handout provided the language IB uses to describe a grade 4 in science with a [link](http://goo.gl/lYHwGe) to IB’s grade descriptors. The percentage of students that score a 4 or higher on the IB Biology exam is 71% with a mean score of 4.4. Typically 25% fewer score 5s than 4s. A link provided additional statistics from exams taken in 2015. The handout also included links to data from a [longitudinal study](http://edexcellence.net/publications/apandib.html) as well as peer reviewed studies. These concluded that the IB prepared freshmen to succeed demonstrated by higher retention and graduation rates. He did not have data related to IB students continuing to graduate school.   
  
Montana High Schools are looking to expand their IB offerings. Big Sky has 10 students completing the full diploma this year. The starting cohort was 22. Next year 26 are expected to complete diplomas. Hellgate has closer to 40 students. Franklin Elementary is looking at a Primary Years Program. This program offers continuity in learning and teaches students time management, research, communication skills

The most common SL IB courses taken by Montana students and may be accepted by peer institutions include Math, Spanish, French and Environmental Systems and Societies. Bigsky also offers IB Business Management, and Sport, Exercise and Health (which has 65 students enrolled) and are looking into offering Global Politics. The hours and course work varies per course / level. Chemistry for example is taught over two years. Biology HL is 240 hours.   
  
The logical next step is to have the departments where possible course credits could align review the IB materials with the instructors to determine whether credit should be granted. ASCRC could provide an introduction letter to the issue mentioning the meetings, discussions and resources. This could also go to the Faculty Senate as information. The specific course information is on the [Big Sky High School IB website](http://www.mcpsmt.org/domain/2411). He would be happy to engage in an email dialogue to further address questions. Student member Nelson would also like to see a more consistent approach to offering AP credit.

* Marja Unkuri-Chaudhry:Director of Study Abroad, Student Exchange, and Institutional Partnerships, Paulo Zagalo-Melo: Associate Provost for Global Century Education, and student Makena Andrews (Not sure I got her first name right) joined the committee to address questions about the revised EDU 212 *Successful Education Abroad* course. McKenna spoke to the usefulness of the course for her study abroad in Germany. The course builds community; students maintain contact electronically while on exchange. It provided resources to survive and succeed, so that students better understand what to expect. Learning about cultural theories helped a lot. ISEP provided an online tutorial to prepare for the experience, but the course was more helpful. There is more value in face-to-face interaction with students returning from immersion programs.   
    
  Marja clarified which students would be required to take the course. There are approximately 100-120 per year in immersion programs with partner institutions. Students on faculty lead travel are not required to take the course. Most students are full-time so would not pay additional fees for the course. The department would work with any student who would not fall into this category. Associate Provost Zagalo-Melo indicates the requirement helps limit the liability and is valuable in terms of risk management. The course helps students be prepared to represent the University of Montana and the United States. Thinking of the student first by creating a support network is considered best practice in terms of internationalization. Many universities have created a similar course. Modern and Classical Languages also offers support for their students who study abroad.   
    
  Members asked about exceptions for students that couldn’t take the course or had gone on an exchange in high school or the possibility of offering the course in an alternative format. The Office of International Programs would work with the students to make sure they are well prepared and connect them with other students if they do not take the course for some reason. Every student has an online application and a lot of information can be provided in the online portal.   
  Students see the benefit of the course so it would be rare that they would not want to take it. Student member Chestnut was reluctant to take the course, but did see the value. He recommends that students be required to register with the embassy in the host country. This was critical in Korea where he studied abroad. There were a lot of protests while he was there.   
    
  There is a Risk Management Committee that reviews plans for study abroad and the International Committee reviews partnership agreements. Travel advisories are toughly vetted as well.

The course was approved with the condition that there is a provision for reasonable exceptions. Two members were opposed to the approval.

* Chair Manuel provided some background on the revision of the Graduation Appeals Committee Operating Procedure Policy. Originally a separate policy was drafted for general education substitutions for students with disabilities. However, Legal Counsel did not want students with disabilities to be treated differently, so the process was folded back into the Graduation Appeals Committee rather than establishing a subcommittee of the General Education Committee. The desire for general education substitutions for DSS students to be processed prior to students’ application for graduation is still applicable. In addition the Graduation Appeals Committee wanted to streamline its policy. The policy now requires three circumstances appeals must meet rather than four adjectives necessary for the justification. Chair-elect John Eglin was involved in the final revision. The draft policy for the DSS appeal had involvement from Kim Reiser- General Education Committee Chair, Mika Watanabe-DSS Coordinator, Jessica Weltman- Director, Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, and Lucy France-Legal Counsel.   
    
  A few small edits were made to the policy and the title of the Committee was changed from Graduation and Curriculum Appeal Committee (GCAC) to Graduation and General Education Appeal Committee (GGEAC). The policy appended was approved .

## Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM

# Procedure Graduation and General Education Appeals Committee General Policies and Procedures

Procedure Number: 203.50  
Date Adopted: 9/16/03   
Last Revision: 10/27/08, 3/8/16  
  
Approved by: ASCRC  
Appendix: Working Agreements, Catalog Language Changes

The Graduation and General Education Appeals Committee (GGEAC) is a standing subcommittee of the Academic Standards and Curriculum Review Committee (ASCRC), which derives its authority from the By-laws of the Faculty Senate.  
  
Section III. 3.c.1 of the Faculty Senate By-laws gives the GGEAC the authority to “grant exceptions to the faculty rules for graduation, admission, and readmission.” Its function is stated as: “Petitions for exceptions to the rules governing admission, graduation, retention, and readmission shall be reviewed and acted upon by the subcommittee.”

The committee primarily deals with University requirements for graduation, including general education requirements, academic policies and procedures, minimum credits for graduation, and residency requirements. The Committee also reviews petitions to use earlier catalogues. The Associate Registrar will research and provide the applicable policies for review by the committee.

## I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Policies determining standards for admission, readmission, General Education Requirements, late withdrawal from classes and transfer credits are developed in various faculty and administration committees, and form the structure of the educational environment on campus. The Graduation and General Education Appeals Committee serves to provide the structure enough flexibility to adjust to exceptional, compelling, and verifiable circumstances when necessary. Appeals are of two sorts: a student who is nearing graduation may petition to set aside particular graduation requirements on exceptional, compelling, and verifiable grounds; students with disabilities who are registered with Disability Services for Students may petition at any time in their college career to request an accommodation in the form of a substitutions for General Education requirements that their disability has prevented them from completing. (Note: substitutions for *major* and *minor* requirements for all students fall within the jurisdiction of major departments or programs).

1. With regard to **graduation** appeals**,** the underlying operating assumption of the Graduation and General Education Appeals Committee is that the University policy governing the particular issue will be followed unless there are exceptional, compelling, and verifiable reasons to set it aside.

* Students should understand that any petition submitted is a request for an exception to requirements that other students must fulfill. Every year, students graduate having fulfilled all requirements, often with substantial effort in adverse circumstances. In fairness to those students, exceptions to graduation requirements will not be granted merely for reasons of inconvenience, ignorance, error, or confusion. Petitions for General Education substitutions should specify the course(s) proposed as a substitute so that the GGEAC may determine whether it constitutes a reasonable facsimile of the learning objectives of the original General Education course. The appeals process must not be a method to avoid rigorous classes or one that fails to provide the student with a general education in the spirit of the original requirements. Substitute courses should be in a cognate subject to the extent possible.

1. Petitions for **general education substitutions** on the grounds of disability are handled much in the same way that other accommodation requests are processed. This process, then, necessarily begins with the student registering with the Office of Disability Services for Students (DSS).

* In the event a particular General Education group or course proves to be a barrier to a registered DSS student, the student may work with DSS and their academic advisor(s) to identify a possible substitution to complete the requirement. Students are encouraged to start this process early in their academic career. To begin the process the student should file a General Education Substitution petition. This petition may be filed well before graduation, and the student is encouraged to file as soon as they believe the requirements in Section IV B are met. Such petitions must demonstrate how the learning outcomes of the substitute course provide a reasonable modification to those of the General Education course or sequence in question.
* A student registered with DSS should generate the request for an accommodation in consultation with Disability Services. Requests must be accompanied by a letter from DSS to verify the functional limitations of the student’s disability and of the request for an accommodation. The student’s request must establish a logical link between the disability's functional limitations and the accommodation requested.
* The GGEAC will determine whether a proposed course substitution provides a reasonable facsimile for the learning objectives of the original General Education course. As in the case of other petitions for course substitutions, the process must not be a method to avoid rigorous classes or one that fails to provide the student with a general education in the spirit of the original requirements. Substitute courses should be in a cognate subject to the extent possible.

II. PRECEDENTS

In the case of **graduation appeals**, the GGEAC functions as an equity court, neither following precedents nor establishing them, only "letting right be done" in exceptional, compelling, and verifiable situations where a strict application of policies, procedures, or rules would impose an undue and unjustifiable burden on a student. It follows, then, that neither students nor faculty nor advising staff should assume that an exception granted in one case will necessarily be granted in another case, no matter how similar the circumstances may appear.

In the matter of DSS based **substitutions for general education courses**, however, prior practice may provide useful examples of courses substituted for particular requirements. For that reason, precedent may be followed and set in these cases.

III. PETITIONSIn most cases, **graduation appeals** are heard as a student nears graduation; **appeals for general education substitutions**, on the other hand, may and indeed should be submitted well in *advance* of a student applying for graduation. In either case, the petition must be filled out completely, and all signatures (student’s departmental advisor, department chair, and dean) obtained before the Committee will consider the request. These signatures reflect that the signatories have reviewed the petition and ascertained that it is clearly worded and that all appropriate documentation is present. They are not intended to be endorsements of the petition, and will not be interpreted as such, although signatories may, if they choose, provide a separate supporting letter to be submitted with the petition. Neither the Dean nor the dean's designate may sign as the petitioner's advisor.

## IV. STANDARDS

1. For **graduation appeals**, a threefold test will be applied. The petition should demonstrate that the case is exceptional, compelling, and verifiable. Every such petition is a request for an exception, and the petitioner must justify the exception by establishing (with appropriate documentation) three circumstances:

* That the petitioner made an effort in good faith to satisfy graduation requirements as written.
* That the failure of compliance with the requirement(s) in question was due to circumstances beyond the petitioner's control.
* That obliging the petitioner to meet the requirement now would impose an unreasonable burden on them.

1. Petitions for DSS based **general education substitutions** will be evaluated using the following criteria:

* There must be a verified need for a substitution. The student should provide a verification letter from DSS stating that a substitution for the General Education course is reasonable in this specific case. The student’s functional limitation should be relevant to the requested General Education substitution and there should not be another General Education course in the same group that a student with the given functional limitation could be reasonably expected to successfully complete.
* The suggested substitution should meet as closely as possible the intended learning objectives of the original General Education course. The petition must demonstrate that the proposed substitution is reasonable with supporting documentation. The GGEAC will then determine whether the substitution is acceptable.

All petitions from both groups must be clearly written, the specific action requested stated plainly and succinctly, and supported with documentation. DSS based petitions must include a letter from Disability Services verifying their request for reasonable accommodations. Students are responsible for building their case; a petition with unsupported claims has little chance of success.  
  
V. THE REGISTRAR

The Registrar or Designee is the non-voting secretary of the Graduation and General Education Appeals Committee and the petitions are available in the Registrar’s Office. The Registrar’s Office will review petitions and return them to students if they are incomplete or unclear, or lack essential information or documentation, including the required signatures.