

**Council on General Education Minutes**  
**April 20, 2021**  
**10-11:00 a.m., Zoom Meeting**

**Presiding:** Chris Worland

**Present:** Brian Aitken, Mary Elaine Califf, Stella Liao, Tony Marinello, Sally Parry, Carla Pohl, Liz Sattler, Xing Wang, Gary Weilbacher, Amy Wood, and Chris Worland

**Guests:**

Malinda Aiello, Program Director, Illinois Articulation Initiative

Katy Strzepek, Director, Center for Civic Engagement

Annie Weaver, Assistant Director, Co-Curricular Programs, Center for Civic Engagement

Worland called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

**Action Items:**

**1. Approval of March 23, 2021 Minutes**

Worland asked if there were any corrections to the March 23, 2021 minutes as submitted. There were no corrections. The minutes were accepted as submitted.

**2. IDS 231 Civic Engagement in Global Community (new course proposed for ICL designation)**

The course was proposed by Katy Strzepek, Director, Center for Civic Engagement. The proposal was discussed at the previous meeting and was tabled as the Council had questions. Worland contacted Strzepek and Annie Weaver and asked if they would attend the meeting in order to address those questions.

Strzepek explained she was helping Weaver facilitate the process for the course, as long-term, they would like to for students to be able to take an Alternative Break course and earn credit for the service experience. The Kenya trip would integrate social, global and public health aspects and would include 80-90 hours of service. Per Higher Learning Commission (HLC) guidelines, 45 hours of learning activities would be equal to one hour of course credit which is the guideline that was used when proposing this variable hour course. Strzepek explained that shorter trips lasting one week would most likely be for two hours of credit, while a local, limited experience would count for one hour of credit. The determining factor on the number of hours a student would earn would be based on the service component but would also include items such as student reflections, weekly readings and other assignments.

Weaver went on to explain that Alternative Break is a fully immersive service experience. Students travel to the community/area and work with a community partner from 8am-5pm completing service projects within the community. Those projects vary depending upon the community and what is needed. During the evening, students participate in 90-minute reflections that are led by student leaders. Strzepek added the idea is to connect civic engagement theory with acting in real world settings. Students are given the opportunity to experience their identity in social locations and do community work while dispelling myths about "savior mentality."

Califf asked if students would choose the number of credit hours for the course. She expressed concern regarding the logistics of students selecting the right number of hours and asked if the Registrar's Office had been consulted. Strzepek believed they could add the information in as a course attribute so when students were registering, they would have the guidelines available when selecting the number of course hours to register for. Aitken noted the same situation already occurs with students registering for certain Music courses. While the process doesn't always work cleanly, it would not be a new challenge for the Registrar's Office. Marinello added that for the Music courses, the variable hour component required that much more communication between the student and the faculty member. He believed the number of students who would enroll in this course would be small enough to work but stressed that there would need to be clear communication between everyone involved.

Califf and Parry both expressed concern regarding the academic vigor of the course, especially for those students taking in for one credit hour. Strzepek responded the shorter the experience, the fewer the credit hours the student would be able to take. Weaver added longer, more extensive trips can last anywhere from 11-22 days which gives students more opportunities for reflection, read more articles, and write more journal assignments. A shorter, one-week trip would culminate in a final paper/project.

Worland asked in regard to the Kenya experience, if all students earn three credit hours and would be required to travel to Kenya. Strzepek confirmed students who participated in the experience were required to travel to Kenya as it was a key part of the experience and all would earn three credit hours. Tsouvala asked if students had time before or after the trip to complete assignments or do additional work. Weaver explained that during the trip, students do not have free time. Also the Wi-Fi is very limited and between meals, team building, reflection meetings and the work, there is no extra time for them to work while they are there.

Pohl questioned if faculty would go on the experience. Weaver confirmed every trip has a staff/faculty member who does travel with the students. Pohl then asked if there was a link available in the course syllabus that would explain in greater detail the experience's expectations/requirements to the students. If not, how is this information relayed to the student(s). Weaver explained students are given a link to an outline of what they can expect on a typical day. This link also provides information regarding service expectations, assignment expectations, and that all Alternative Break experiences are alcohol/drug free. Strzepek added this information could be included as part of the registration process as a course attribute so students could see it as they are registering.

Worland agreed adding the information so that students could see it when registering would be good and suggested they work with the Registrar's Office. Worland then went on to ask if the course would need to be decimalized based on different trips/experiences. Parry thought that was an excellent question and one her college curriculum committee deals with frequently. If the course is intended to be repeated and is not going to be offered as a "one-off," then it would be appropriate to decimalize it. If the intention is to only offer it once or for a short period of time, it would be best to leave it as undecimalized. Parry thought it would be best to check with Amy Hurd regarding her thoughts on decimalizing the course and check on the repeatability guidelines for the course if it ended up being decimalized. Strzepek responded she would contact Hurd for guidance. She also asked that if anyone had any further recommendations, to please send them to her.

A motion was made by Pohl to table the proposal until the question of decimalization could be answered. Parry seconded.

All in favor, none opposed, none abstained.

The motion passed.

**3. International Studies Minor (program deletion)**

Worland noted the Council had already approved the new Global Studies minor and that this was just the final step to removing the old program.

A motion was made by Parry to approve the program deletion. Califf seconded.

All in favor, none opposed, none abstained.

The motion passed.

**Discussion/Information Items:**

**4. Letter for ASPT portfolio**

Simmons asked that if anyone would like an updated service letter for their ASPT portfolio, to please email her.

**5. Recognition of outgoing members**

Outgoing Council members were thanked for their service to the Council. Worland was thanked for serving as chair. Parry and Pohl were congratulated on their upcoming retirements.

Tsouvala made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Parry seconded.

Meeting adjourned: 10:48 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Soemer Simmons