Gen Ed Discussion EAC Retreat, September 23, 2016

- **Readings for thought and discussion:**
  - Last Year’s Charge on Gen Ed [PDF]
  - End of Year Report on Gen Ed [PDF]
  - AAC&U Reading on Gen Ed Issues [PDF] [PDF] [Note: this is the same reading we did as last year. We looked at other alternatives and felt this was the best overview and could bear a second read, for those of you who were with us last year]

- **Questions to think about and be prepared to discuss:**
  - **For the faculty in the room:**
    - What knowledge and skills do you hope students attain by the end of their educational experience at PCC?
    - What concerns do you have with PCC possibly undergoing a General Education reform?
  - **For the students in the room:**
    - What are your thoughts on General Education courses at PCC? Do you feel they are preparing you for future courses or your career choices? What would you like to see in a Gen Ed program? How can PCC best prepare you for the university, your career or next steps?
  - **For administrators/advisors in the room:**
    - What knowledge and skills do you hope students attain by the end of their educational experience at PCC?
    - How can PCC's General Education reflect the PCC identity and our specific student body? (adapted from consultation with Yves Labissiere at PSU)
  - **General speculative questions for all:**
    - What if we were to require students to submit "signature work" addressing core outcomes in gen ed courses in eportfolios?
    - What if we were to require that every gen ed course deliberately and clearly addressed two core outcomes, and have students submit the work into these eportfolios for (among other things) assessment at the meta-level - summative assessment of core outcomes for the college?

Questions for Discussion in Small Groups
1. What should students know/be able to do by the end of a 2-year degree?
2. What role should gen ed play in accomplishing this?
3. What is working/lacking in our current model?
4. What concerns do you have about changing our current system?
5. What do you think about coordinating student gen-ed learning through e-portfolios?
6. Any other thoughts based on the reading?
Collected Comments from the various small group discussions:

[Note that many of the groups utilized the diversity/equality cards as they proceeded in their discussions.]

1. What should students know/be able to do by the end of a 2-year degree?
   - One group’s list:
     - How to speak, write, effectively communicate
     - Math skills
     - Critical thinking skills
     - Appreciate diversity/culture
     - Purpose of Gen Ed
     - Self-advocation
     - Language proficiency
   - Other group’s list:
     - How does their 2-year degree tie into the future?
     - Ability to network
     - Civic engagement
     - Degree completion
     - Financial management skills – financial literacy
     - Diversity, equity, inclusion
     - Critical thinking.
   - Other group’s list:
     - Globally competent
     - Lifelong learner
     - Professional competence
     - Read, write, speak in public
     - Pay back student debt
     - Quantitative skills
     - Informational literacy
     - Critical thinking
     - Inter-cultural awareness/competency
   - Group E’s List:
     - Critical Thinking skills
     - Media critique
     - Connections to world and relevancy
     - Access info to get them to go to where they want to go
     - Confidence to
       - Make happen
       - Self-motivation
     - How to empower/strengthen
     - Wider student body in addition to ASPCC
     - At least which direction they want to go
     - Self-reflection:
- Strength and weakness
  - Learning styles
  - Well-rounded, holistic
  - Recognize their own growth
  - Internship CBL/practical
  - Alum. Connections to current students
  - Help facilitate connections

- Other group list:
  - Critical Thinking
    - Analyze into from different sources
    - Evidence based
    - Not one universal analysis
    - Base decisions in valid literature
  - Be prepared for job market
  - Reading/writing, speaking skills for our society
    - Communication skills/intercultural communication
  - Job Expectations/Job skills/life skills
  - What can you do with a degree?
  - Pay for careers
  - Solid Reading skills
  - Social Justice Knowledge/Background

- Other group’s list:
  - Understanding human impact on resources and our planet
  - Problem solving skills
  - Clarity about next steps
  - Independent learners
  - Know themselves better. Sense of identity
  - Make decisions based on evidence
  - “Information” literacy

2. What role should gen ed play in accomplishing this (what students should know/be able to do & end of 2-year degree)?

- Structure that allows us to accomplish 2-year outcomes
- Broad, but with a core set of courses
- L.A.[?] exposure
- Well-rounded knowledge base
- The transfer degree – AAOT
- Gen ed is the basis for a liberal arts education
- Communication between advisors, faculty, and students
- Avoid turf wars [between?] stakeholders
- What can you do with a Gen Ed degree:
  - Take classes
  - Repeat [?] message
  - Helping to decide what classes for the person/student
Empower and encourage student – they can achieve
Develop skills and push people to incorporate skills
Emphasize the fields students can go into

- Awaken opportunities for student success
- Making connections between disciplines
- Outcomes are front and center for all Gen Ed
- World beyond their goal – sparks curiosity and wonder

3. What is working/lacking in our current model?
   - Hours vary with different degrees
   - We silo the different categories and don’t make connections between
   - Career Guidance required
   - Pre-reqs
   - Evaluation of our model of pre-reqs to Gen Ed... are they a necessary barrier? Is it achieving the goals we think it is?
   - There are courses not covering all core outcomes
   - Cafeteria style Gen Ed
   - Missing: Intentionality – like in Jenkins model -  [circular diagram pie with core in the middle and Gen Ed, piece of the pie, related to the core]
   - Missing: interdisciplinary studies
   - Missing: studentship (CG) as part of the core
   - Too Broad – transferring – need consistency. Complex – too spread out. Also, broad base of classes is beneficial, too.
   - Too many courses/students don’t know what to take.
   - Some students love the choices
   - Preparation of courses (CPL).
   - Unintentionality of purpose
   - Got what they want for their career and what we expect students should attain
   - Individualization.

4. What concerns do you have about changing our current system?
   - A Gen Ed class – a course that addresses concerns of people of color from different perspectives
   - We don’t have devoted/focused Gen Ed leaders to engage stakeholders in discussion/planning. We would need to devote $ to professional development and participation in the Gen Ed discussion
   - Should core outcomes be changed, kept? Should courses be better mapped? Taken at will or will revising help with Gen Ed?
   - Fear of losing advantages, competitive advantage

5. What do you think about coordinating student gen-ed learning through e-portfolios?
   - E-Portfolios – Allows students to be self-reflective.
   - In an employment standpoint suggests organization.
   - The platform on which it is presented

6. Any other thoughts based on the reading? [no comments]