

**Diverse Perspectives ESLO Committee**  
**Annual Report for Academic Year 2016-2017**

Dr. Ben S. Bunting, Jr.

**Members of the Committee:**

Ben S. Bunting, Jr., Humanities and Social Sciences

Sharon Beaudry, Management

Barry Canaday, Medical Imaging Technology

Dibyajyoti Deb, Mathematics

Veronica Koehn, Communication

**Responsibilities of the Committee:**

The responsibilities of the Diverse Perspectives ESLO Committee have been varied as the Essential Studies general education model has moved through development and on into implementation over the last three years. The committee worked closely in the past with GERTF and began a similar relationship with GEAC this AY. The committee's work this AY was focused primarily on two tasks: Essential Studies course approval and participating in a pilot study to determine how switching to an outcomes-oriented general education model will affect Oregon Tech's transfer process.

**Committee Activities:**

Before classes began this AY, members of our committee helped organize and participated in a panel at the Pre-Convocation Excellence In Teaching Conference. This panel, titled "Integrating Diverse Perspectives," helped Oregon Tech faculty outside of our committee brainstorm and develop ways to integrate the goals of the Diverse Perspective ESLO into their courses in preparation for submitting course approval forms for a Diverse Perspectives ESLO tag during the upcoming academic year.

Throughout the AY proper, our committee generally received charges on an as-needed basis from GEAC. As a result, the remainder of this report isn't organized by a list of formal charges, but rather by what our committee accomplished during each term in response to GEAC's requests.

Fall Term:

During fall term, our committee's primary focus was on evaluating course approval forms submitted for Diverse Perspectives ESLO tags at the Foundational and Essential Practice levels. During this work, we evaluated twenty-two courses. After lengthy deliberation and discussion, we agreed to accept seventeen of these courses. We rejected five of these applications for various reasons, and tried when possible to pass on feedback to the submitting faculty members so they would feel encouraged to revise and resubmit their applications.

After this initial submission and evaluation of course approval forms, faculty had a number of questions about the Diverse Perspectives ESLO, and we were tasked by GEAC with clarifying our expectations for courses tagged with the ESLO. In particular, we worked to reword the ESLO definition and criteria so as to make clear that 1) "diverse perspectives" is a broader idea than simply "cultural awareness," and 2) that even at the Foundational level the outcome requires a course to include an assignment that tasks students with reflecting on their own perspectives in the context of the course material.

Winter Term:

During winter term, our committee was encouraged to give our own feedback on the course approval process. In

particular, we discussed implementing a standard procedure for getting “revise and resubmit” information back to faculty who submit course approval forms that are not initially accepted. We also discussed the course approval form itself, and generated a few small changes meant to make that form easier to understand for faculty using it in the future. I presented this feedback to GEAC in an informal report. After all six ESLO committees presented their feedback on the course approval form, our committee considered and discussed significant changes to the form as proposed by the Communication ESLO Committee. I also presented our feedback on these changes to GEAC.

Our committee also investigated the possibility of using the Interstate Passport transfer program to simplify incoming and outgoing transfer under the Essential Studies model.

Near the end of the term we were presented with five questions asking about issues central to the implementation of the Essential Studies model and how those issues intersected with the work of our particular committee. The group discussed these questions at length and I submitted a long-form, written response to the questions to the GEAC Chair.

#### Spring Term:

The primary work of our committee in the spring term dealt with how transfer will work under the Essential Studies model. The committee participated in a pilot transfer study, which entailed significant discussion of potential transfer issues introduced by the new model, the evaluation of sixty example transfer courses, and ultimately a meeting with the department chairs of HSS and Communication Studies. Each member of the committee evaluated all sixty of the transfer courses to determine whether or not they qualified for a Foundational Diverse Perspectives tag, and then the five of us met to discuss and synthesize our findings. This work took a number of weeks, but combined with the culminating discussion with the HSS and Communication Studies chairs, it yielded significant insight into what a future transfer process might look like.

Part of what came out of that final discussion about transfer was a request that our committee generate a simplified flowchart to assist the Registrar and the relevant department chairs with efficiently and effectively evaluating future transfer courses. This work continues as I write this report, but we fully intend to have a working draft – at least – of this document before the end of the term.

On the course approval front, we approved one course that was resubmitted by a faculty member after he received our initial feedback on his rejected application in the fall. We also solicited two course approval applications at the behest of GEAC and evaluated those.

Finally, we dedicated a meeting to discussing the direction of the committee in AY 2017-2018 with senior GEAC members. GEAC’s intent is that the ESLO Committees transition from being standing committees to being “learning communities” next year, so as a final exercise, our group began brainstorming what this transition might look like and how our work could continue to benefit general education at Oregon Tech and the university at large in this new form.

#### **Accomplishments:**

I consider this to have been a very successful year for the committee. Our work contributed greatly to the implementation of the Essential Studies model, in particular in the areas of course approval and course transfer. In addition, through our Pre-Convocation panel and conversations throughout the year with affected faculty and department chairs, we’ve paved the way to becoming a learning community that will be a valuable resource to the campus at large once the Essential Studies model is fully implemented.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. Bunting, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Ben S. Bunting, Jr.  
Chair, Diverse Perspectives ESLO Committee