

MINUTES
GWAR Committee
ZOOM Conference
1:30 – 3:00
Meeting Number 4
October 16, 2020

In attendance: Joseph Aubele, Eve Baker, Lori Brown, Jason Deutschman, Annel Estrada, Noah Golden, John Hamilton, Sarvenaz Hatami, Kerry Johnson, Isaac Julian, Elizabeth Lindau, Tina Matuchniak, Henry O’Lawrence, Cynthia Pastrana, Benjamin Perlman, Alexandra Wilkinson

The meeting was called to order at 1:33 p.m., and the agenda was approved.

The committee was joined by **Data Program Analyst Lizzette Rojas**, who presented on “pass” and “fail” rates of the GPE by demographic. The majority of CSULB students pass the GPE, but Dr. Johnson’s office wanted to know about the demographics of the roughly 10% of students who do not pass, hence Rojas’s study. Rojas shared a couple of tables listing her finding by different demographic characteristics. She discovered that:

- male students are less likely to pass than female students;
- international students are less likely to pass than US students;
- among non-minority students, Asian American students are less likely to pass than their peers (Asian American students are not considered “Underrepresented Minority” students for the purposes of this study);
- first-generation college students have lower pass rates, as do students who do not report their first-generation status;
- lower-income students are slightly less likely to pass;* and
- the higher a student’s GPA upon entry to the university, the greater their likelihood of passing the GPE.

Several committee members asked Rojas follow-up questions:

- Matuchniak inquired about overlap between the students who self-identified as “Asian American” and international students. Rojas explained that these two categories were considered entirely separate. Dr. Johnson asked whether the “Asian American” category could be broken down into subgroups.
- Golden asked Rojas if she found anything about the data surprising. In response, Rojas noted the high rates of non-passing among graduate students was so high, but this is because only international graduate students take it, as Brown later clarified. Rojas noted that the presence of multiple significant variables was somewhat unusual.

* Income status was available for only the 71% of undergraduate students who self-reported their family income.

- In response to questions from Matuchniak, Rojas explained that the institution does not collect data on students' language proficiency in languages other than English, and that transfer students were excluded from the Logistic Regression analysis because some of their data points (e.g., family income, entry GPA) were missing.

The committee discussed other data on the GPE and student writing that it might like to consider:

- Brown asked how GPE results lined up with success rates in Upper Division coursework, graduation rates, and success in WI courses. Deutschman also posed this last question about WI courses, and suggested trying to gather demographic data on the students who are going straight into those courses with the GPE waived because of the pandemic.
- Deutschman asked for data on students with AP credit who do not take CSULB composition courses.
- Brown brought up information on high schools, asking whether they could be used to find patterns.
- Matuchniak asked whether a "C" grade in Freshman comp was predictive of passing or failing the GPE. (As an aside, Rojas noted that average or poor performance in 100A/B was predictive of academic probation.)
- Brown wondered how students who took a GVAR portfolio course have fared in the WI courses.
- In the Zoom chat window, Deutschman asked whether "pass" rates could be broken down by major or college.

In short, the committee is interested in the following variables: students' level of performance in 100A/B, whether they enter the university with previous credit for writing, whether or not they take the GPE, and their pathway to fulfill the GVAR (that is, portfolio course vs. straight into WI).

Rojas asked for a complete "wish list" of requests for Institutional Research (IR), as that office has been subject to staffing cuts. For efficiency, she would like to send them one list of data analysis requests. She predicted it would take roughly one month to process them.

The minutes for October 2, 2020 were approved with one minor correction.

The committee then turned to the **GPE Online Pilot**. Brown reminded members that they had already voted in March to move forward to the pilot, but asked for confirmation.

Hamilton described a series of "hurdles" facing continuing the GPE: putting the exam online, the Chancellor's ban on requiring students to be on camera, and the recent Coronavirus outbreak on campus. Each time one was cleared, it seemed that another was erected. A reading protocol has to be developed and approved, but Hamilton and Baker hope to have this accomplished within the next couple of weeks. Hamilton noted a planned 5-7% increase in campus activity next semester, but this has yet to be approved by the City of Long Beach.

Pastrana said that the camera restriction hurdle does not apply to the pilot, as that exam is optional for students. She also suggested that international graduate students be invited to take the GPE. (These recommendations were later adopted.)

On the subject of recruiting students for the pilot, Baker asked that interested participants e-mail testing@csulb.edu. Baker and Hamilton will create an online registration portal, which would allow us to continue collecting demographic information.

With plans for the pilot more or less resolved, the committee turned to the **Spring semester GPE planning**.

Brown asked representative from testing how much time they needed to execute a spring GPE. Hamilton responded that he can recommend dates by the end of the month.

Brown summarized the pros and cons of administering the spring GPE. On the pro side, giving the exam would do away with the cumbersome process of granting waivers, and would mean that no students in need of writing instruction get sent straight to WI courses with unknown results. 700 students typically take portfolio courses each year, and waiving the GPE will reduce those offerings. On the other hand, waiving the spring exam would guard us against major logistical roadblocks and possible short-term shutdowns of the campus. To these, Matuchniak added that waiving the exam would stave off student complaints. (No one will complain about *not* being required to take an exam.)

Hamilton noted that a quick decision on this spring waivers would allow Enrollment Services to update letters to incoming Spring transfer students.

International graduate students were another major topic of discussion, as they are still required to take either GPE or a GVAR portfolio course. (In other words, the exam was not simply waived as it was for undergraduates.) Pastrana and Perlman both suggested offering all of these students the option to take any pilot exams that are offered. After some discussion, Brown and the committee agreed that we could require on-camera testing for the pilot while still being in compliance with the Chancellor's order. (If students do not wish to appear on camera, they can bypass the exam entirely by taking a GVAR portfolio course.)

The committee voted to:

- offer Fall and Spring pilot online GPE exams to grad students needing to fulfill the GVAR as an alternative to taking a portfolio course;
- extend the GPE waiver to the Spring; and
- include undergraduates in the Spring 2021 pilot opportunity.

Brown reminded the committee that these votes are recommendations.

GVAR Coordinator's report: Twenty sections of the GVAR portfolio course are currently running. The online transition has affected the instructors of these courses, who normally collected physical portfolios. The current process being used to bypass this won't work for long-term record keeping. Brown has worked with ATS to create a file submission system on OneDrive that all instructors will have an opportunity to try this week. The system should retain files and records digitally.

The meeting adjourned at 3:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Ann Lindau