

MINUTES

GWAR Committee

1:30 – 3:00

Meeting Number 5

November 4, 2022

In Attendance: Eve Baker Lori Brown, Navdeep Dhillon, Jason Deutschman, Benjamin Perlman, Loretta Ramirez, Deepti Singh, Courtney Stammmler, Alexandra Wilkinson

Call to order: 1:38pm

Approval of Agenda

Wilkinson moved to approve, and Singh seconded the motion. The agenda is unanimously approved.

Approval of meeting Minutes for October 21

Perlman motioned to approve the minutes and Ramirez seconded the motion. The minutes are unanimously approved.

Announcements

Chair Election

By default, Brown will fill in as chair this year and appreciates the committee's support. Brown states that the academic senate chair reached out to previous GVAR committee chairs to confirm if this was acceptable, given that Brown is not representing a college on the committee. It was determined that this is okay by the academic senate chair.

Wilkinson moves to nominate Brown as chair, Stammmler seconds and Brown was unanimously approved to serve as chair of this committee.

WI Applications Moving to WI Subcommittee

English 317 application will be sent to the subcommittee.

GVAR Policy Draft Review

A brief history of the GVAR policy is as follows. The Gvar policy that the campus currently has in place was written in 2011 and approved in 2012. However, the policy was not implemented until 2015/2016 because writing courses needed to be created. The policy states that students must take the GPE exam. How a student scores on the exam will place them on a pathway to completing the GVAR (either a WI course or portfolio course).

Last year a memo came from the Chancellor's office stating that the final step for meeting the GVAR must be a 3-unit course and cannot be an exam. Our campus already has the WI course component, but we also had a placement test (GPE). This committee has been going back and forth about the role the GPE would have, if any, and if the test could remain. After much

discussion within the committee, another memo came from the Chancellor's Office stating that high-stakes testing should not remain. However, further discussion occurred about whether the GPE was considered a high-stakes exam, although the policy did not explicitly eliminate a pre-test. This is where last year's GEAR committee left off on discussion.

However, over the summer, the Provost and Brown put together a small workgroup to discuss the next steps without a GPE exam. The goal was to make CSULB policy align with the new policy of no high-stakes testing. During the summer workgroup, two branching policies emerged – one keeping the GPE and one eliminating it. As the workgroup continued, it became clear that keeping the GPE was not an option, and the policies evolved and have since been combined.

Note: This committee has one more week to send the draft policy over to CPEC.

Via email: Klink notes that she is at the ASCSU meeting and one very interesting comment on the status of the GPE arose. As of today, the CO's reps (A. Wrynn and others) have reaffirmed that tests like the GPE are determined by individual campuses. Thus, it looks like the GPE can still be a part of the GEAR process to complete this requirement.

Brown notes this committee could offer up two policies, one keeping the GPE and the current WAC policy. Brown notes that the chancellor's office representative strongly suggested that GPE could not remain on this campus, but now it seems as though they are reconsidering.

Discussion about bringing the GPE back: Ramirez notes that if students are already taking 4 classes which is basically one a year. It may be difficult to fit an exam in there. Wilkinson notes that the exam is not predictive of the writing students will do in a writing intensive course. Ramirez states that more guidance for students will be more efficient through additional writing courses. An exam is not as pedagogically sound. However, it catches students who need help. So, Ramirez does not want to undermine the exam, but felt enthusiastic about the current WAC draft. Singh notes that some students do not test well. Brown continues with the possibility of having an early referral process if it is simple enough. Early writing instructors could recommend that students take a certain course. However, we are relying on the campus to support our students and catch students that need help. But there are other ways to catch the students.

Stammler discussed the recommendation idea and notes that the English department has done this. The process does not seem to work. Students seem to take the path with the fewest courses. Stammler asks a clarifying question. How will the referral process work if the student fails a W course? Because there is concern for the low-level students that need the help. Stammler notes that is what the writing portfolio classes were supposed to have students work on needed skills before they get to the writing intensive course. Will the plan be to have four sequential classes or just four classes total to improve these skills, and if they fail, then what do students do?

Brown adds that she does not have a complete answer but a partial one. Brown notes that we should add the following information to our draft policy stating that first-time freshmen will take all four courses, and transfer students coming in with 60 units would only take the last two courses. Brown notes that the upper division W and WI courses would have to be taken at CSULB, even if someone transferred in with 5,000-word outside writing course. Brown further discusses that if students fail one of the first two courses, they could automatically veer into

another pathway for the next W course, and that could potentially be a portfolio class. However, this is just a thought.

Stammler raises an important thought of why students are failing the course. If students fail because they struggle with the work versus because the student not wanting to do the work. Stammler notes that when international students fail and repeat a course, they are required to work with a tutor. Wilkinson notes that whether a student fails because they lack skill or effort, supportive services could benefit them. Brown asks Stammler if students have pushed back on the tutor concept. Stammler states not much because they are on probation if they do not sign up for the weekly tutor.

Brown also asks whether students have to take the same course when repeating a failed class or they can take a different course. A consensus seems to be that except for freshman comp, the student can take other courses as a repeat W or WI course.

Singh asks if we provide a mentor for students that need to repeat a course to determine if they need extra support versus the student not putting in effort and just waiting for our resources. Brown reaffirms that either way, students are going to benefit.

Vote: Wilkinson makes a motion to reframe from re-introducing the GPE into the current GEAR policy proposal plans for favoring writing across the curriculum (WAC) as supported by the campus. Perlman seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Brown urges everyone to review the current draft policy on Beachboard and contemplate ideas and concerns that may arise. Potential questions include: can students take multiple classes in one semester? What if a student fails? Pay special attention to the highlighted areas and how this committee wants to define the writing (W) VS writing intensive (WI) course.

GEAR Coordinator's report

New Business

The campus is moving to Canvas and Beachboard will no longer be an option starting Summer 2023. Migration to Canvas needs to happen eventually. Wilkinson is comfortable with Canvas and will assist with the process.

Adjournment: 2:35pm