

MINUTES

GWAR Committee

1:30 – 3:00

Meeting Number 6

December 4, 2020

In attendance: Joseph Aubele, Eve Baker, Lori Brown, Jason Deutschmann, Annel Estrada, Noah Golden, Sarvenaz Hatami, Isaac Julian, Eileen Klink, Elizabeth Lindau, Tina Matuchniak, Henry O'Lawrence, Cynthia Pastrana, Benjamin Perlman, Shabnam Sodagari, Alexandra Wilkinson.

The meeting was called to order at 1:34 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: Golden moved and Aubele seconded approval of agenda. The committee approved the agenda.

Approval of Minutes: The committee reviewed the minutes for November 20, 2020. Brown requested additional context in Lindau's account of the online GPE. Lindau will also develop a system of codes for anonymizing student names. Golden moved and Wilkinson seconded approval of the minutes. The committee approved the minutes.

Final Meeting: Brown called another committee meeting for December 18 meeting with a goal of having a recommendation for Spring. Matuchniak suggested having a document earlier than this date for committee members to simply edit or vote on.

GPE Online Updates and Planning: The anticipated report from ATS did not materialize as of the morning of the meeting. In order to get the pilot of the online GPE running, we will have to accept imperfections. We are currently "stifled" by the limitations of BeachBoard, which make it difficult to have multiple readers. Options for salvaging the current system include putting some version of the exam online, and possibly testing smaller groups in the fall. Our spring agenda could include reconsidering the format of the test, or moving away from a test entirely and coming up with a new system for placement.

Klink reported at length on the statewide Academic Senate. She mentioned complications raised by EO 1100, Educational Policy 1100 and the impact of the new Ethnic Studies requirement. The latter policy will affect Lower Division courses. Klink reported that our campus is not offering enough writing intensive courses this spring. Large lecture of more than 80 students will be virtual in CLA for the spring semester. We are down in enrollment from 38,000 to 33,000 in the spring because students don't like the online format.

A discussion of the Writing Intensive (WI) course offerings and their place in the curriculum ensued. Klink floated the possibility of designating ENG 301Bs as a WI. Pasternak and Estrada

discussed GEAR portfolio courses, with Pastrana sharing anecdotally that her courses are currently under-enrolled.

Brown sought a recommendation for our work in the spring semester. Do we work on getting an online test piloted? Do we want to focus on improving and adapting the test, or on thinking about different possibilities for the GEAR?

Klink argued in favor of piloting the online GPE. The “Directed Self-Placement” being used elsewhere might be an option. Matuchniak argued that an online pilot is worth it. It would give us data, even if it’s data that says the test doesn’t work. It would also buy us time to consider the work of re-writing policy.

Brown asked whether we would accept a test with one reader if the double reading is not possible. Matuchniak and Aubele both said they would not.

In hopes of solving the technical hurdles, several committee members suggested alternatives or supplements to BeachBoard for the online GPE. Matuchniak asked whether the exams could be printed and graded by hand using social distancing. Klink suggested InfoReady, reporting its efficient use in tenure-track searches. Baker said they asked about exporting and photocopying and were denied. Matuchniak suggested a Qualtrics survey where the readers would enter the student ID #s. Baker agreed to set up a meeting with ATS to discuss these possibilities, but asked for help and direction from the committee.

Exam integrity came up once again. Klink discussed widespread cheating and plagiarism in the remote learning, and Hatami raised concerns about the integrity of an online GPE. Brown was uncomfortable with a test that doesn’t verify student identity, and brought up the possibility of requiring students to be on camera. (Aubele concurred that he had no issues with camera use during testing.) Golden reiterated the idea of an integrity statement. He also argued for tailored prompts that might take students’ background and interests into account. In a position of triage right now, and rethinking the exam might be too much. Later in the chat, Golden expressed interest in “exploring more meaningful policy alternatives” while also being concerned about “what changing policy would entail . . . I would love to get a greater sense of this whenever possible.”

In the Zoom chat, Lindau, Perlman, and Golden discussed the merits of an online pilot. Lindau argued against putting ATS colleagues through additional work simply to pilot a flawed exam. She noted that all of our energy is being spent discussing technical issues with the online GPE, when it might be directed toward overhauling policy. Perlman argued (in line with Matuchniak’s points earlier) that it could provide data to inform policy.

The conversation moved toward policy more generally. Perlman advocated moving away from the test and encouraging more writing in more courses. Brown reported fielding questions every week from advisors and students, meaning that we need to come to a decision. Other CSUs are changing their campus policies and given our infrastructure of instructors, portfolio courses, and WI courses, we are in a better position than most. Brown was excited about the portfolio placement idea to preserve our instructors and talent.

Brown asked the committee to take 15 minutes in the next couple of weeks to share “best laid plans.” She agreed to create a discussions area on BeachBoard.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Lindau