

MINUTES

GWAR Committee

1:30 – 3:00

Meeting Number 2

October 6, 2023

In Attendance: Eve Baker, Nicolle Brant, Lori Brown, Jill De La Torre, Navdeep Dhillon, Tom Do, Meghan Griffin-Pina, Lorenzo Gutierrez-Jarquin, Eileen Klink, Benjamin Perlman, Loretta Ramirez, Deepti Singh, Courtney Stammeler, Katherin Toscano, Alexandra Wilkinson

Call to Order: 1:34 pm

Approval of Agenda

Perlman moves to approve the agenda, and Brant seconds the motion. The agenda is approved unanimously.

Approval of meeting Minutes for September 15, 2023

Baker moves to approve the minutes from September 15th 2023, and Brant seconds the motion. The minutes are approved unanimously.

Announcements

Welcome to Katherin Toscano and Nicolette Brant.

Testing Update

Baker notes that we have 1275 students registered for the exam. Students have received scores from the last GPE. Baker states that testing needs prompts for the upcoming GPE.

GWAR Coordinator's report

Brown notes that we are in serious need of prompts. She requested that the GPE advisory committee be repopulated back in May. Brown recommended 15 names for the committee. The process is not difficult, but it does take time as it needs to go through the college nominating committee. Ramirez has self-nominated for chair. She is currently the only person on the committee and needs additional members.

In summary, the GPE advisory committee advises the GWARC about the GPE. The main deliverable is producing the prompts for the GPE. Prompts are very short pieces of writing that allow students to argue a side. Prompts include two pieces of evidence. One is usually an informational text component, and the other is a visual component. Another challenge is remaining neutral. We need to pilot them as soon as the GPEAC can. This usually happens on testing day, and students are allowed to retake the exam if needed in exchange for feedback. The GPEAC reports to GWARC. Another task includes the need to review the GPE.

Klink and Stammer have previously served on GPEAC. Baker serves on the committee but does not write prompts. However, she serves a vital role in editing prompts.

Stammer asks how many people should be on the committee and what background members should come from. Brown notes the charge is similar to this committee. However, for the sake of time, previous restraints are more flexible as long as members have previous writing instruction or writing assessment experience. Stammer, Do, Brant, and Wilkinson are willing to join the committee and will start the process. Brown notes that the committee members do not need to be official to get this process started.

We will most likely need to have an interim meeting before the next GEAR meeting to get prompts started.

Klink states that we can also ask the composition committee because there are quite a few lecturers who do holistic or portfolio grading at different times. However, Klink notes that GPEAC should not be an English department committee. However, they have a lot to offer. Brown concurs and suggests having someone who previously read for the GPE and scored. Brown also states that the GPEAC does not have a lot of outside factors that need to be examined. Do asks for samples of prompts. Do also notes the importance of equity. Brown states that equity and accessibility are two challenges. Brant asks if library staff are welcome, and Brown says yes.

Brown also states the GPEAC reviews stats on the GPE. Brant asks what demographic information is collected from students. Brown notes that they will look at pass rates and equity issues. Baker notes that demographic questions and what college they are in are collected from students. Pass and fail rates are also used to determine if prompts were equitable. Brown states that she was never bored on this committee, and Klink concurs. Klink also adds that reading student papers on GPE prompts is very fulfilling and provides a greater appreciation of our students.

Brown reminisces on the simplicity of the WPE prompts compared to the GPE prompts. The prompts are snippets of information, and members do not need to find detailed articles.

Moving on, Brown notes that Johnson and Brown met with CEPC regarding the proposal. Brown notes that CEPC seemed to be a little surprised with how detailed the proposal and policy were. Brown understands that the policy is proposing a big campus change. CEPC will be reconvening next week to review the policy further. The committee did not have enough time to review the proposal. However, they did have some comments.

CEPC has echoed the concern about adding extra classes. Brown believes that it is possible to accomplish a WAC program without adding extra units. If the colleges and departments buy into the WAC program. Brown notes that previously, this campus put together 80+ WI classes in a year and a half. Wilkinson, via chat, states the committee only proposes two extra classes. If every college converts 3 to 5 classes to “W” classes. The campus will get there in no time. Wilkinson notes that many classes already meet the criteria to transition into “W” classes. Brown notes that the policy is key to the success of a WAC program because it drives support from other sources.

Brown states another concern about funding arose from CEPC. Brown and the committee emphasized that funding and support are needed to incentivize departments and faculty to include writing in classes. This includes the need for money and training. CEPC appeared divided on the issue of funding, which is detailed in the proposal. Some CEPC members wanted to focus on the policy and not look at the proposal. However, without funding, the policy does not happen. Brown wants to be prepared to talk about these concerns and embody the voice of this committee.

Brown notes that this committee proposed having people from across campus compensated to develop online modules. This committee needs to be ongoing even if it becomes smaller over time. Brown asks the committee if funding and support are not offered to instructors to be trained and develop “W” or WI courses is a WAC is even possible. The committee overwhelmingly agrees that funding needs to happen to ensure a WAC success.

Klink notes that the Chancellor’s office is trying to figure out what our GE will look like. There is a discussion about requiring six or nine units, and mixed statements are being heard. However, the Chancellor’s office has stated there needs to be some type of writing assessment at the college. Klink notes that writing skills are desired across career fields, but when students graduate, their communication skills are among the weakest. Klink states that the campus will see more GE changes. Klink also addresses concerns of dual enrollment with community colleges and high schools. Students will be bringing various numbers of units with them when they transfer to CSULB.

Brown notes she is meeting with Chris Fosen from Chico State. The current proposed policy is being modeled after Chico State’s WAC program. This has been in place since 2017/2018. Brown notes that their campus has four W classes. Brown is curious about how the campus secured funding and training.

Brown notes that a new GE for critical thinking and composition is coming. Brown states that CEPC is most likely going to want this to be the second lower division. If students are transfers, then they only need to take two classes. Klink notes that critical thinking and logic classes are currently offered across campus.

Another question that was proposed was having only three classes instead of four. Brown states concern about not keeping an upper division writing class in the major or recommended by the college. Although it sounds logistically smooth only to have three writing classes, it may not be the heart of what WAC really is and why it is beneficial for our students. Klink notes that students will need different writing across the campus through various fields. Ramirez states that she cannot support removing the fourth class. Writing is not just something students need to get out of the way. It is something that needs to be practiced across several courses. Removing a class does not allow our students to develop strong writing skills. Brant and Wilkinson agree that three classes are not enough and do not provide adequate exposure to writing for our students.

Stammler notes that having one upper division writing class in the major and having the other be a true writing across the curriculum makes sense. This will allow students to really gain skills that the campus and employers desire. Brown notes that class one will be met by freshman composition, and the new critical thinking and composition class can meet course two.

Brown notes that another concern regarding the last writing course that will meet the GVAR. This concern was about small department challenges. Brant discusses an economics student example who was interested in taking a business class as their WI class. However, IS 301 is closed to non-business majors. Brant sees the benefits of allowing students to take courses across the campus. Another example is a fashion major wanting to take a business writing class if they are more interested in merchandising.

Klink discusses changing 301B to a WI class if the new policy is passed. Klink and Gutierrez-Jarquin note that 301B is not a punishment but is meant to strengthen students' writing skills. Do notes that while teaching 301B, he often reworks students' perceptions of themselves as writers. Writing is deeply personal and can be difficult. Brown notes that there may be a number of classes that will be recommended 301B as their WI class. Brown states that this will be a lot of PR work. Klink envisions lists of classes that could meet the writing designation. Klink also echoes the importance of training and funding to persuade instructors and departments. Klink also notes that because our campus is so large, students should have options for their writing courses. Advisors should work with departments to come up with lists of approved courses. Brown notes how the committee defines discipline will be important.

Wilkinson asks if it would ease some pressure and persuade CPEC to allow students to take the upper division writing classes in the discipline or similar discipline. Wilkinson states for example, if one of our Gerontology students wants to take a class in Psychology about aging. Psychology and Gerontology are closely related, and she does not foresee a problem.

Brown notes it has some negative components, including that students could take additional classes and add units to student coursework. However, it creates the opportunity to take classes outside of their units and explore other concepts. The class may double count, or it may not.

Ramirez and Klink agree that students should have the flexibility to take the upper division (WI) courses that best suit their needs.

Old Business

Brown briefly discusses the WAC Proposal Online Module Ideas. In the current policy proposal, the committee has suggested two possibilities. Option one included requiring modules for every single student somewhere as they complete four writing classes. Option two includes having all of the online modules completed within the students' time on campus, and instructors can use them as needed within a class.

New Business

Adjournment: 3:13 pm