

Minutes of the GVAR Committee

Meeting Number 10

March 4, 2011

1:30 – 3 PM (USU 311)

In attendance: Rebekha Abbuhl, Nathan Jensen, Gary Griswold, Carol Zitzer-Comfort, Diana Hines, Susan Platt, Colleen Dunagan, Rick Tuveson, Bron Pellissier, Karin Griffin, Mark Wiley

1. Approval of agenda: MSP
2. Minutes of meeting on February 18, 2011: MSP with following amendment.
 - a. 3c typo – change ‘form’ to ‘from’
3. Announcements
 - a. Faculty questionnaire went live online a few days ago, and currently we have approximately 252 responses.
 - b. A separate administrative body is administering the student questionnaire, and it will go out to a random subset of the student body.
 - c. WPE tomorrow (3/5/11) – more than a thousand papers in each reading.
4. Discussion of “writing intensive” criteria and definitions
 - a. Integration of writing into the course in as an on-going component of the course and having writing to learn be part of the course discussion is good.
 - b. Ratio of student to teacher was discussed as important. Ours is currently set at 35, which may be high, and most of these examples are set between 20 and 30. We may be able to lower it to 30, but lowering to 20 seems unlikely due to FTE needs.
 - c. The revision component and emphasis on the process of writing was discussed as important.
 - d. Class time/instruction devoted to writing skills and writing in the discipline, providing examples, etc as discussed as important.
 - e. The writing component needs to be a significant portion of the course grade; however, what that portion is seems uncertain...somewhere between 20 and 70%. Do we want to consider making the percentage such that failure to achieve at least a passing grade on writing assignments would mean failing to

achieve a passing grade in the course? How do you manage writing/content ratio in terms of course grade? Writing as 2/3 of the course grade might be reasonable. Assignments should be writing in genres appropriate to the discipline.

- f. Should there be a minimum word requirement and should revision/drafts be counted?
- g. Should the courses have something that is an extended piece of discourse and not just simply an answering of questions based on reading or lectures?
- h. Council of Writing Program Administrators
 - i. Developing students rhetorical knowledge
 - ii. Critical thinking
 - iii. Knowledge of conventions and ability to compose in multiple environments
 - iv. Writing processes
 - v. Abilities to compose in multiple environments
- i. How much do we want our definition to match the current GE policy in terms of what is considered writing intensive? We need language to be different if we are making writing intensive capstone courses and then another kind of writing intensive course. If so, then we need different language than that of the GE policy. So the goal would be to try and get control over one section of capstone or writing intensive courses.
- j. LEAP Capstone – integrated learning capstone
 - i. Capstone integrates GE skills and disciplinary knowledge and utilizes LEAP within the course in order to make a connection between discipline skills, GE skills, and life skills. This goal is to acquire these skills through ongoing practice and development of a project in the discipline, including performance, portfolio, research, or writing. The LEAP capstones must use the LEAP framework. The course must include development of written communication and one other learning outcome.
 - ii. Based on this information, we feel like we need to talk to the Executive Committee, who is currently holding the GE policy revisions and will be presenting it to the Senate possibly this semester.
 - iii. Gary proposes we form a subcommittee: Gary, Mark, and Rebekha. They will contact Lisa Vollendorf to set up a meeting to discuss how our policy may or may not integrate into the GE policy and the nature of the LEAP capstone.

- k. Do we want to hammer out a rough concept of writing intensive for us? Yes.
 - i. Cap classes at 30.
 - ii. Faculty of any rank may teach.
 - iii. Word requirement: approximately 5,000 words
 - iv. Must be some opportunity for revision, at least once on one assignment during the semester.
 - v. 70% of the course grade from writing
 - vi. assignments relevant to discipline, must be spread throughout the course in a sequence of related assignments rather than in one large term paper.
 - vii. Some writing instruction must be included in the course.
 - viii. Resources: Center for Faculty Development, Writer's Resource Lab, Learning Assistance Center.
- l. Rebekha will post the larger chapter she is pulling ideas from on Beachboard. And she will set up a time for the subcommittee to meet with Vollendorf.
- m. Discussion of our ideal Capstone set up:
 - i. We need to know if LEAP capstone is like the others in terms of word count etc. We assume such, because in the document it falls under the larger Capstone category and so will require the 5,000 words.
 - ii. Should we move forward as though LEAP won't happen?
 - iii. Possible language:
 - 1. Pathway One: a student must complete one course that is writing intensive and upper-division. Writing intensive will be certified by whom? Two would be better.
- n. Recommendations have been made to create an oversight process for writing-intensive courses.
- o. Motion to have subcommittee meet with Vollendorf and report back: MSP
- p. Do we want to invite Keith (Chair of CEPC) to our next meeting? Yes. Rebekha will contact him.

5. Policy revision

- a. Possible Changes:
 - i. Second paragraph – “at CSULB, our highly valued degrees include evidence of the ability to write effectively.”

- ii. Section 2: Change first sentence to “CSULB students are required to fulfill the grad writing assessment requirement must first ...” Change fourth sentence to “the DWE will be used to place students into pathways that give them opportunities to achieve required learning outcomes.” Delete “specific in sections three and four of this policy.” In the very last paragraph “The DWE and its administration will be monitored” (delete “designed and”).
- iii. Strike the italics in section 2.
- iv. Will work on finding a new acronym, maybe.
- v. Section 3A: “A student’s score on the DWE determines which of the following course sequences the student needs to fulfill the GVAR.”
- vi. We could have the policy reference another document where scores will be explicit.
- vii. Graduate Pathways
 - 1. Do we want to exempt incoming graduate students from pathways 2 and 3 if they already hold a graduate degree? We think the current appeal process covers this aspect.
 - 2. Pathway 3 – change to 301A or equivalent. Students with a low-range score must successfully complete ENGL 301A before completing the course sequence described in Pathway 2. (This sentence needs to be changed in undergrad pathways too).
- viii. Section 5
 - 1. What is the point in having a DWE committee and are we making it too difficult if we require too specific of skills.
 - 2. So why don’t we make it more about oversight and advising, rather than creating.
 - 3. Who creates the test? GVAR committee could deliberate whom they trust with the design of the test.
 - 4. Postpone this element to next meeting agenda.

6. GVAR Coordinator’s report

- a. Susan reporting for Linda.
- b. GVAR instructor workshop on March 11 from 1:30 to 4:00pm. There will be 1-3 first-time instructors, 3 guests, and about 15 instructors. The theme is maintaining consistent standards in GVAR courses.

- c. 291 students did not pass the September WPE. Last week 85 had still not contacted advisor. They were notified that a hold would be put on account if they didn't do something by March 7, and now that number of delinquent students is down to 38 students. In April the hold will go back if they haven't enrolled.
- d. November cohort has not been presented with the possibility of having a hold put on their account yet, but they are on a different time frame.
- e. The GVAR Coordinator has asked COTA, Dept of Engineering, and IS301L to offer additional sections in order to accommodate everyone. They have responded positively. Linda has provided the colleges and departments with a list of students who need a GVAR course so that advisors can work with them to get them into a course.
- f. Cecile and Sharlene want a self-study of the GVAR program, and the template they gave us doesn't really suit the GVAR program well. Linda contacted them to ask if the self study is really necessary since we recently had an outside review. The response was "yes, we need to do a self-study". Linda will meet with Cecile to make sure the study is meaningful.

7. Adjournment 3:05 pm

Next meeting is set for March 18 (1:30 to 3:00 pm).

Submitted by Colleen Dunagan

(These minutes were approved on 3/18.)