

DATE: April 28, 2019

TO: Danny Paskin, Chair
Curriculum and Educational Policies Council

Tiffani Travis, Chair
General Education Governing Committee

Norbert Schürer, Chair
Academic Senate

FROM: Rebekha Abbuhl, Chair
Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) Committee

SUBJECT: GWAR Committee Report for 2018-2019

The Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) Committee convened on September 7, 2018 and elected the following committee officers:

Rebekha Abbuhl, Chair
Lori Brown, Vice Chair
Max Rosenkrantz, Secretary

The committee met on the first and third Fridays of each month from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

GWAR Committee Membership

The following individuals served on the GWAR committee during the 2017-2018 school year:

- Rebekha Abbuhl (Linguistics)
- Joseph Aubele (Library)
- Lori Brown (Information Systems)
- Lethia Cobbs (BMAC)
- Jason Deutschman (Advising Associate Director, College of Engineering)
- John Hamilton (AVP University Access and Retention, Interim Testing office director)
- Eileen Klink (English)
- Rebecca Lemme (Dance)
- Emely Lopez (ASI Student representative)
- Henry O'Lawrence (CEPC, Health Care Administration)
- Max Rosenkrantz (Philosophy)
- John Scenters-Zapico (WAC Director)
- Lori Smurthwaite (English)
- Lei Sun (Speech-Language Pathology)

- Mahdi Yoozbashizadeh (Electrical Engineering)

The major activities of the GEAR Committee will be summarized in the following sections.

GEAR Policy draft

Following the implementation memo from Jody Cormack concerning the university's plan for phasing in EO 1100 (which stated that the GEAR committee is responsible for "examin[ing] the current GEAR policy and develop[ing] proposed changes in consultation with CEPC and GEGC"), the committee deliberated and sent four proposals to the GEGC and CEPC Committees in Spring 2018. In Fall 2018, the GEAR committee discussed the informal feedback received on those proposals (e.g., from Norbert Schurer and Danny Paskin). In particular, the committee discussed:

- Potential methods of identifying struggling writers on campus should the GPE be eliminated
- Methods for assisting struggling writers on campus and resource ramifications
- Methods for obtaining further feedback from the university community on writing instruction and assessment on campus

The committee also discussed the recommendation from the GEAR Ad Hoc committee that all campus-specific graduation requirements, including the GEAR, be eliminated. After considerable discussion and debate, the committee reached the following points of consensus:

1. The committee does not support eliminating the campus-specific writing requirement, especially in light of the frequent criticisms heard concerning CSULB graduates' writing abilities.
2. The committee supports the continued use of the GPE as a placement mechanism.
3. The committee recommends the continued use of ENGL 301A and GEAR Portfolio courses as "special instructional support" for those students who receive a 10 or below on the GPE.
4. Recognizing the challenges associated with creating writing-intensive courses, particularly for departments who are struggling to keep their majors at or under 120 units, the committee supports giving departments some choice as to how their students fulfill the GEAR, for example: (1) have their students take one course certified as writing intensive with 5,000 or more words (course capped at 25 students), or (2) having their students take two courses certified as "writing intensive light" with 2,500 or more words (high enrollment cap possible).

College initiatives to address writing

Representatives from the College of Engineering (Jason Deutschman and Mahdi Yoozbashizadeh) presented information on the COE proposal on writing for engineering students. It is unclear at this point whether colleges will be able to decide how any upper-division writing requirements are handled within their colleges, or whether there will be a campus-wide writing requirement. If colleges are granted the authority to address upper-division writing requirements for their students, then most likely the GEAR committee or other body will need to develop a set of guidelines or parameters. To this end, it was noted that it is important for the committee to be kept current on existing college proposals for upper-division writing requirements.

GEAR Coordinator's report

The GEAR Coordinator regularly reported to the committee. The GEAR Coordinator also presented special circumstances waivers to the committee. Discussion was held to clarify the criteria by which waivers are granted.

GPE Advisory Committee Chair's report

The GPE Advisory Committee chair regularly presented data on the GPE as part of that committee's efforts to monitor the reliability and validity of the test. In addition, the GPE Advisory committee created new prompts for the GPE test, piloted those prompts, and examined the results of those pilots in order to make recommendations concerning prompt use to the testing office.