

Minutes of the GVAR Committee

Meeting Number 8

February 4, 2011

1:30 – 3 PM (USU 311)

In attendance: Colleen Dunagan, Susan Platt, Linda Sarbo, Rick Tuveson, Karin Griffin, Mark Wiley, Rebekha Abbuhl, Lori Brown, James A. Ahumada, Rosi Grannell, Gary Griswold, Diana Hines

1. Approval of agenda MSP
2. Minutes of meeting on December 3, 2010 – MSP
 - a. One amendment – remove “Development” from title
3. Announcements
 - a. Susan Platt: Testing 2600 students in February
4. Policy revision: Distribution of first drafts of GVAR Overview, Undergraduate Policy, Section 2 and Section 5
 - a. Overview:
 - i. Suggested amendment of paragraph 2 of the Overview: “At California State University, Long Beach a highly valued degree includes evidence of the ability to write effectively. At all levels and in all disciplines CSULB is committed to developing students’ academic, professional and public writing skills.”
 - ii. Add before last paragraph: “Therefore it is the intent of this GVAR policy to implement appropriate assessment and instruction to help all CSULB students achieve these goals.”
 - iii. Change “the AWATF identified the following student learning outcomes that CSULB writing intensive courses should teach and assess” to “the AWATF identified the following student learning outcomes that CSULB upper division writing intensive courses should teach and assess”
 - iv. Do we need the title of the executive order? The committee decided to keep the title so that we know which policy, rather than having it named only by number.
 - v. Amendments to the overview were MSP.
 - b. Section 2
 - i. Suggestion – change “must have earned a minimum of 50 units before they are allowed to attempt the DWE” to “must have earned a minimum of 50 units before they attempt the DWE”
 - ii. Suggestion – change “by their first semester for graduate students” to “during their first semester as graduate students.”

- iii. It was noted that it seems wise to keep the nature of the diagnostic tool fairly general so that we have room to develop and change that tool as we go.

c. Section 5

- i. A question was raised concerning the membership of the DWE committee and who the “six instructors of GVAR course” would be. A concern was raised whether those instructors would be lecturers or tenure-track faculty. Is the intention to have GVAR instructors be people familiar with the courses or with writing assessment? Do we want to designate full vs. part time, say GVAR instructors or designees, or instructors familiar with writing assessment? What qualifications are we looking for? How familiar do test makers need to be with overall writing instruction in university? Could it be either/or – GVAR instructors or instructors of writing intensive courses? Would it be good for them to know what validity and reliability in assessment really is? Should we include the option of having consultants? What does understanding assessment mean?
- ii. Suggestion – change wording to “Six instructors with experience in writing instruction and writing assessment, three of whom preferably have taught GVAR courses.”
- iii. We could make a note someplace else in the document that explains what we mean by “writing assessment”.
- iv. This section will be revisited at the next meeting.
- v. Will the DWE members also be members of the GVAR committee? The answer is no, at least as written at this time. There is some overlap but they are not identical.

d. Undergraduate Pathways

- i. Change “Students with an upper range score as determined by the Diagnostic Subcommittee must complete a General Education course certified as “writing intensive” and one of the following: a capstone course in their major, a writing intensive course in their major, or another course certified as “writing intensive”” to the following: “Students with an upper range score on the DWE as determined by the Diagnostic Subcommittee must complete a General Education capstone course certified as “writing intensive” and one of the following: a writing intensive capstone course in their major (a LEAP course), a writing intensive course in their major, or a technical or professional writing course.”
- ii. Who certifies that a course is “writing-intensive”? Should we just make it a LEAP capstone in their major because GEGC will be overseeing this designation and then also a writing-intensive course in the major, leaving it up to the Departments to determine what is writing-intensive? This seems to mean that we need to remove the word “certified”.

- iii. We need to define what we mean by “writing-intensive” course. Is it the number of words? Is there anything in the GE policy? All we can do is make recommendations (e.g., include the wording “writing intensive as preferably conforming to GE guidelines” as we cannot mandate/oversee writing instruction in the majors). We need to making “writing intensive” clear and not requiring a body to oversee that determination.
- iv. We will revisit this issue at the next meeting.

e. Graduate Pathways

- i. There is same problem defining what “writing intensive” means.
- ii. Suggestion – change “other approved course” (Level 1) to “pre-GWAR course”
- iii. Suggestion -- change 301B to “GWAR course” (Level 2)
- iv. It was noted that a writing intensive course within the student’s major (Level 3) may not be appropriate for graduate students.
- v. We could hold graduate students to a different (higher) level on the DWE than undergraduate students. We could demand coursework only if they fall below that level. (Thus students who score high enough may not have to take coursework.)
- vi. Alternatives: Demand that all graduate students receive at least a 4 on the GRE, leave it up to the departments to monitor and guide graduate students to insure that they are prepared to write theses and comp exams? According to the mandate, there has to be some kind of assessment, but we could say that it is the department’s responsibility.
- vii. We should invite Cecile Lindsay to our GWAR meeting to discuss writing assessment at the graduate level.
- viii. This issue will be revisited next meeting.

5. Questionnaires

- a. Rebekha sent questionnaires out to us with our suggested revisions.
- b. Rebekha emailed Lynn Mahoney the questionnaire but hasn’t heard anything yet. She is expecting a green light to be able to distribute to the campus soon.

6. GWAR Coordinator’s report

- a. Susan Platt: 17 students registered for the WPE but were ineligible to retest. These students were notified.
- b. Susan Platt: 250 students failed in September/November tests. About half of the September fails have come in for advising. Some of those who didn’t come into advising have enrolled in a GWAR course. The testing office is monitoring students who have neither seen an advisor nor enrolled in a GWAR course. They have received a warning indicating they will receive a hold at the end of March if they don’t do it.

- c. Linda Sarbo: The current GVAR course enrollment: 1 section of COTA, 4 sections ENGL 301A, 12 sections of ENGL 301B, 2 sections of ENGR 310, 2 sections of IS301L. There is no way to count linguistics, history, and fashion merchandising courses because won't know who will decide to submit a portfolio until later.

7. Adjournment

- a. 2:55 pm

Minutes submitted by Colleen Dunagan
These minutes were approved on 2/18/11.