**DATE**:

**TO:** Lisa Vollendorf, Chair

 Academic Senate

**FROM:** Susan Platt, Chair

 Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE) Development Committee

**SUBJECT:** WPE Development Committee Report for 2010-2011

The WPE Development Committee, a subcommittee of the GWAR Committee, included the following members for the 2010-2011 academic year:

Abbuhl, Rebekha Assistant Professor, Linguistics, CLA

Brown, Lori Assistant Professor, Information Systems, CBA

Dunagan, Colleen Associate Professor, Dance, COTA

Griffin, Karin Sr. Assistant Librarian, Library

Nyssen, Carla Lecturer, English, CLA

Pastrana, Cynthia Lecturer, English, CLA

Platt, Susan Director, Testing, Evaluation & Assessment

Schefski, Harold Professor, Romance, German, Russian Languages & Literatures, CLA

Zhang, Mason Associate Professor, Biological Sciences, CNSM

Consultants to the committee included Linda Sarbo, GWAR Coordinator, and Gen

Ramirez, Director, Learning Assistance Center.

The committee convened on September 3, 2010 and elected the following officers:

Susan Platt, Chair

 Rebekha Abbuhl, Secretary

The committee met on the following Fridays from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m.: September 3, October 1, December 3, February 4, March 4, April 8, and May 6. Throughout the academic year, the WPE Development Committee worked to develop the WPE and monitor WPE readers as charged br the GWAR policy of the Academic Senate. WPE Development Committee activities and discussions are summarized in this report.

***Revision of the WPE rubric*:**

The committee examined the current WPE rubric and felt that it could be improved in several ways; first, its terms could be better operationalized, and second, each point in the continuum (from one to six) could be made parallel. The committee studied examples from other colleges and universities and rewrote the rubric using best practices illustrated in these rubrics. The final version was approved at the May 6 meeting. The committee developed a plan for its introduction to chief readers, table leaders, and readers in the fall of 2011 and its implemention in spring of 2012.

***Development of WPE Topics*:**

The committee wrote twelve new WPE topics and approved five of these. The five approved topics will be pretested in the fall of 2011.

***WPE Validity and Reliability*:**

The committee spent several meetings discussing the purpose for which the WPE exists (now largely diagnostic, due to changes brought about by the GWAR Seamless Advising Pilot program). It was noted that the WPE may not be the best tool for measuring specific learning outcomes necessary for placing students into appropriate pathways. The committee made a recommendation to the GWAR Committee that alternate assessments be developed and/or considered for use in the future. Moreover, the committee examined descriptive data for a year’s worth of WPE results, including means and standard deviations, to see if significant differences among topics existed. It was discovered that topics over the one-year period were equivalent. The committee also looked at discrepancy rates among readers to ensure inter-rater reliability.

***WPE Topic Evaluations*:**

The committee examined the topic evaluation form used by readers at the end of each WPE reading and completely modified it. The new form is strictly qualitative, and asks readers to assess topics from both reader and student perspectives. The new topic evaluation form was approved by the committee and used at the April 2011 reading. Readers, table leaders and chief readers gave very positive feedback about the new form. Data from the April topic evaluations were examined by the committee; both A and B topics used in the April administration were determined to be good to excellent, according to reader feedback.

***WPE Reader Evaluations***:

The committee examined reader evaluation forms used by table leaders to assess readers at the end of each WPE reading. The committee decided that the evaluation form would be eliminated, and reader data would be examined after the WPE was completely scored by the office of Testing, Evaluation & Assessment. Thus, table leaders did not complete a reader evaluation from at the April reading, and the WPE Development Committee examined reader data instead. After examination of data, several readers were invited to participate in further training to improve their reading rates and accuracy.