

**Minutes  
GWAR Committee  
USU 311  
1:30- 2:15 PM**

**Meeting Number 11  
May 3, 2013**

Members in Attendance: Linda Sarbo, Rebekha Abbuhl, Colleen Dunagan, Yu Ding, Melissa Lyon, Maryam Qudrat, and Jason Deutschman

1. Approval of agenda (as amended): MSP.
  - a. Discussion of the Process of insuring consistency in standards was moved to the end.
2. Minutes of meeting on April 19, 2013: MSP.
3. Announcements:
  - a. WPE reading on May 11. It may be a smaller test this time – approximately 1200 tests.
4. WAC Director Search
  - a. Mark is the Chair of the search committee and there are 8 other members who represent writing units on campus and the colleges.
  - b. There were a total of 42 applicants for the Director pool. The pool was narrowed down to 9 semi-finalists for telephone interviews. One dropped out at that point due to accepting another position. Telephone/video conferencing interviews were conducted with 8 applicants. That pool was then narrowed down to 3 for on-campus interviews. All have a comp/rhetoric background, making English their home department if they are hired. They will each be visiting for one day and the schedule for those days will be posted. The interviews will be held on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. The interview will include an open forum in the Anatol Center (2-3 pm), which is an event that the GWAR committee members should try to attend. The interview process will include the interview with the search committee, a teaching demonstration, lunch, the open forum, and then meeting the Provost and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies.
  - c. One focus of this position is to help departments and faculty develop writing intensive Capstones. The target deadline for having these courses ready is Fall 2015. The WAC director will be doing faculty development to help prepare faculty for the writing instruction and assessment in the writing intensive courses. As a result, the WAC director will be working closely with the GWAR Coordinator in regards to the assessment portion of those courses. Linda thinks the director should participate in the GWAR Committee.

5. Plan for next semester:
  - a. We need to continue our discussion concerning the consistency of standards across the GWAR portfolio courses
  - b. We can also discuss options for people who are far away or out of the country to meet the GWAR, for example through an online course. It was noted that some tests are already available (such as the GRE) for students out of the area who need to satisfy the GWAR, but these are essentially the same as the WPE, and individuals who have difficulties passing the WPE will not be able to pass these alternative tests.
  - c. We should also discuss ways to elicit ideas from faculty for test topics under the new model.
6. GWAR Coordinator's report:
  - a. The MOU raised the issue regarding the need to look into the consistency of the GWAR Portfolio courses. What is the source of this concern?
    - i. One source is from the External Review by Fiona Glade. She noted that there was a difference in assignments for History 301, which is discipline specific, and those for English 301B, which is not discipline specific and involves more formulaic essays. In her response to question 5 (what new or different problems have been identified during the present review), Glade noted: "While criteria for GWAR course approval are clear and consistent, the Course Syllabi and Portfolios I reviewed revealed that students' experiences in these equivalent courses are not consistent across courses. For example, students in the stellar History 301 earned their four units of credit by drafting, revising, and editing several discipline-appropriate research writing genres .... By contrast, students in the 3-unit English 301B created passing portfolios in which their essays responded rather formulaically to journalistic reading assignments. The extant Portfolio Rubric **does** allow for documents created for the purposes of various disciplines" (emphasis added).
    - ii. The committee noted, however, that it is not possible to do discipline-specific writing in ENGL 301B, as that course has students from many different disciplines. One suggestion was perhaps to have the instructors of ENGL 301B develop more challenging prompts. Linda will ask for the GWAR instructors' input regarding this matter during the GWAR Instructors' workshop on May 11<sup>th</sup>.
    - iii. Another source appears to be the PARC review, which stated that "the reviewer [Glade] expressed concern that the experience in portfolio courses varies in rigor and variety of genres and that the portfolio rubric did not account for disciplinary difference". The GWAR committee noted that this last statement concerning the

rubric is not an accurate representation of what Glade stated in her report (she said that it **did** allow for disciplinary differences).

- iv. Previously, the committee had asked whether the writers of the MOU were aware of existing quality control measures. Linda stated that they should be aware, as that was covered in the PARC report. However, perhaps the writers of the MOU did not fully understand the role of the GVAR committee in this process.

7. Process of insuring consistency in standards

- a. To address the concerns raised in the MOU about quality control, a GVAR subcommittee (scheduled after this meeting) will look at portfolios from a number of different portfolio courses (for example, number of writings, number of in-class writings, amount of feedback, level of analysis required in the writing assignments).

8. Adjournment

- a. 2:24 pm

These minutes were submitted by Colleen Dunagan.  
(These minutes were approved on 9/6/13.)