

MINUTES
GWAR Committee
MHB 315
1:30-3:00

Meeting Number 4
October 20th, 2017

Present: Joseph Aubele, Debra Fraser, Rebecca Lemme, Rebekha Abbuhl, Max Rosenkrantz, Lei Sun, Leeanne Bergeron, Lori Brown, Jason Moore, Henry O'Lawrence CEPC, Carol Zitzer-Comfort, Jason Deutschmann, Ken Kelly.

English Department visitors: Eileen Klink, Cynthia Pastrana, Geri Lawson, Cheryl Chapman

- 1. Approval of agenda:** M/S/P.
- 2. Minutes of meeting on October 6th, 2017:** Approved as amended M/S/P.
- 3. Announcements:**
 - a. New member** – The committee welcomes Henry O'Lawrence (Curriculum and Educational Policy Council (CEPC) Ex-Officio member), who is replacing Eugenia Kim, Director, Center for International Education.
- 4. Report from subcommittee on possible solutions for the GWAR**
 - a. A subcommittee (Lori Brown, Lori Smurthwaite, Rebecca Lemme, Leeanne Bergeron, John Scenters-Zapico and Rebekha Abbuhl) met on 10/13 to discuss possible solutions. The shortlist we develop will need to be sent to stakeholders for their feedback. The subcommittee is aware that the GPE/GWAR may not exist in the future, and is seeking alternatives for addressing upper division writing instruction and assessment.
 - b. **Possibility one (developed by the subcommittee):** Departments, at their own discretion, will be able to choose one of the following alternatives: (a) Students shall take the GWAR Placement (GPE), and their scores will place them into one of three pathways. Low scorers (7 and below) shall successfully complete (with a C or better) ENGL 301A, a GWAR portfolio course, and finally a GE capstone course in the B, C, or D category. Mid-range scorers shall successfully complete (with a C or better) a GWAR portfolio course and a GE capstone course in the B, C, or D category. High-range scorers shall successfully complete (with a C or better) a GE capstone course in the B, C, or D category. **OR** (b) Departments shall require their students to successfully complete (with a C or better) one of the following: (1) a course in the major that has been approved by the GWAR committee, with a total of 5,000 words on the various assignments and opportunities for revision; or (2) two "writing enhanced" courses in the major that have been approved by the GWAR committee, each with 2,500 words and opportunities for revision.
 - i. As part of this proposal, the subcommittee also discussed expanding resources for struggling writers, including WAC Modules, Supplemental

Instruction, LAC and WRL Tutoring. It was noted that support services would require additional resources.

1. The composition faculty noted that it's the connection to a faculty member that leads to change in writing, not additional resources layered onto classes that have 2,500 words. They expressed concern about relying on tutors.
- ii. A question was raised whether option (a) is even possible. Some departments are at 120 units, and could not add additional units (ENGL 301A and/or GWAR portfolio courses).
1. A question was raised as to whether ENGL 301A and GWAR portfolio courses are considered to be "outside" the unit cap. With the current GWAR policy, it appears that up to 6 units are allowed outside of the 120-unit cap: ENGL 301A (3 units when necessary) and GWAR portfolio course (3 units when necessary). It appears that these courses are considered *university* requirements and thus not subject to the unit cap.
 2. However, the executive order states that we cannot add anything above 120 units to major requirements. Some majors that have fewer than 120 units could have room if students needed to take ENGL 301A and/or a GWAR portfolio course, but some majors are at 120 units and some are over that limit, so how could we make possible additional writing courses that don't count towards the major a university requirement? One possibility might be to convert GWAR courses into a B, C, or D category GE capstone courses.
 3. Rebekha asked Alison Wrynn to review our current system to see if it conflicts with the executive order. Dr. Wrynn said it is fine to continue our system *if* we do not require students to take any GE capstone courses outside the B, C, or D category. According to Norbert Schurer, what we have could theoretically continue since it is a university writing requirement.
 4. The committee will need to revisit this question.
- iii. It was noted that without ENGL 301A and GWAR portfolio courses, we may be setting up students to fail, but there are logistical issues to address if we want to continue those courses.
- c. **Option two:** Develop a three-unit, upper-division course taught by composition experts that would satisfy the university writing requirement. All students would need to take this course. There would be no test that places students into the course. This option would be contingent on ultimately allowing an excess of 120 units.
- i. The composition faculty were asked whether this is a possibility. A concern was raised that students have a range of needs. Students who pass the GPE do not need the same kind of writing instruction as students who

score lower. How would we identify these struggling writers? Could directed self-placement be used?

- d. **Option three:** Develop a three-unit, upper-division course taught by composition experts that would satisfy the university writing requirement. Perhaps there could be different levels of this course (one for struggling writers, one for more advanced writers, etc.); the GPE could be used to place students into different “levels” of the course. In addition, students would need to take one additional course in the major with writing that the departments select. “With writing” is undefined. Again, this option would be contingent on the university ultimately allowing an excess of 120 units.
- e. **Option four:** If the senate wants the GPE, and we are limited strictly to 120 units, can we put the GPE back at the end (return it to a summative assessment and not a placement examination)? However, it was noted that 10% of the students won’t pass, and we will run into the old problem of students not passing and having no method for helping them.
- f. **Option five:** We abandon a university-writing requirement altogether and leave it to the departments to handle.
- g. The committee was requested to think about these possible solutions and send their feedback to Rebekha. Ultimately, we need to create on a shortlist of possible solutions that we can send out to the university for feedback. How do we keep writing at the upper division level?

5. Outreach to stakeholders to obtain feedback on possible solutions:

- a. There is a ROUGH draft of a possible survey at:
https://csulb.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ekzU2NoYCEubLo1
- b. Rebekha proposed that the committee prepare a student questionnaire and a faculty questionnaire to ask for feedback on the GPE, GVAR courses, and writing in the classrooms. Leanne pointed out that the WAC Program currently has three IRB approved Qualtrics surveys about writing- for students, faculty, and alumni. A motion was made to create GVAR committee surveys to faculty and students: M/S/P.
- c. **ThoughtExchange:** It was proposed that the committee members use <https://my.thoughtexchange.com/> to post ideas about GVAR and writing instruction alternatives in order to comply with EO 1100.
- d. **Forum:** Lori Smurthwaite, WRL, offered to organize a forum with composition instructors to discuss campus concerns and possible solutions to potential GVAR changes under EO 1100. Cheryl Chapman requested an additional forum with composition instructors and non-composition instructors who teach upper division courses with writing.

6. **Student waiver petition:** revisions and updates approved. GVAR waiver petitions will be processed by the GVAR advisor with a copy to the testing office. Amended forms approved.

7. **GVAR Coordinator’s report:** Postponed to next meeting.

8. Adjournment Next meeting 11/3/2017 at 1:30pm, location TBD.

Respectfully submitted,

Leeanne Bergeron, Secretary

(These minutes were approved on 11/3/2017).