

**Minutes  
GWAR Committee  
USU 311  
1:30-3:00 pm**

**Meeting Number 1  
September 7, 2012**

In attendance: Susan Platt, Leslie Anderson, Rick Tuveson, Rebekha Abbuhl, Linda Sarbo, and Colleen Dunagan

1. Approval of Agenda as amended (addition of Susan's data on WPE and portfolio pass rates). MSP.
2. Approval minutes of meeting May 18, 2012 as amended. MSP.
3. Approval of minutes of organizational meeting on August 31, 2012 – MSP.
4. Announcements:
  - a. We have a new member, Simon Kim, from the College of Education.
  - b. Gary Griswold and Diana Hines are no longer able to continue on the committee. In addition, the bylaws have changed, so Enrollment Services will be replaced by the Center for International Education. For this reason, Donna Green (from Enrollment Services) has stated that she will no longer be able to continue on the committee. We also need a student representative. Susan will contact the ASI president and vice-president about finding a student representative; Rebekha contacted Dan O'Connor so the senate can solicit replacements for Gary.
  - c. Rebekha is no longer able to distribute copies; the handouts will be emailed to committee members prior to the meetings and posted on beachboard so members can print them out.
  - d. The testing office will be administering the Collegiate Learning Assessment again this semester. Susan will set dates for committee members to view a demo of the assessment.
  - e. Rebekha will contact Maryam to see if she wants to be reappointed or if she has suggestions for who can take her place.
5. Election of Vice-Chair
  - a. Susan nominated and elected (MSP).
6. Semester Plans
  - a. Our revised policy is going forward to the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate on Tuesday, September 11 – time certain at 2:10 pm.
  - b. The priorities for the semester were discussed. Our main priorities are developing the new writing assessment (the GPE) and piloting it. It would also be good if we could create on demand computer testing in addition to the paper tests. Susan already has a staff member working on this issue, but the committee can use this semester to assist in problem solving.
7. WPE pass rates September 2011-July 2012
  - a. Susan distributed a chart (which also appears on the Student Assessment website) showing WPE and portfolio pass rates for native and non-native speakers and by college. The WPE pass rate for native speakers is 95.7% and 70.7% for nonnative speakers (NNS). The pass rate for NNS has increased a bit since we are limiting students to one attempt at the test.
8. GMAT/GRE cut-off scores for the GWAR
  - a. Concerns had been raised previously about using the GMAT for the GWAR (since there is a question concerning the validity of the test). In addition, the committee had proposed changing the GRE cut-off score from 4 to 5. However, students are still coming in with

scores of a 4 on the GRE and that is the currently published acceptable score online, so we cannot reject that score yet.

- b. This issue is controversial, because certain departments have a GRE score of 4 set for both admissions and satisfying the GVAR (very streamlined). The College of Business also uses the GMAT.
  - c. The best thing to do might be to wait to see what feedback we receive from the executive committee on the policy and also until more GVAR committee members are present at our own meeting. We will revisit this issue at the next meeting.
9. WPE cut-off scores for entering ENGL 301A
- a. Currently, students who receive a 9 or 10 must take a GVAR portfolio course, and students who receive 8 or lower must take ENGL 301 A. There is a proposal to change the cut-off scores, so that students who receive an 8, 9 or 10 take a GVAR portfolio course and students who receive 7 or lower take 301 A.
  - b. We had 100 students who scored 8 or lower on the WPE. If we applied the new proposal, then only 79 students from last year would have been held to enrolling in 301A.
  - c. Making this change might be best handled by discussing it with Lynn Mahoney and if she supports it, she could then ask Tom Enders to make this change.
  - d. Since we have limited members here today, we have a motion to approve the new cut-off scores, but we will defer the vote to the next meeting.
10. Sample CLA prompt for discussion
- a. A sample CLA prompt was given to the committee. The instructions say that students must use the accompanying documents (e.g., letters, statistics, newspaper articles, etc.) to support their arguments, not personal opinion. The test asks three questions of students and is completed in 60-90 minutes.
  - b. A suggestion was made that we could simply use the CLA and employ a staggered testing system over a period of two weeks, but it was noted that the CLA is copyright protected and that we are limited by number of secure computer student computer terminals.
  - c. Council for Aid to Education produces this test and they run workshops in cities nationally where faculty can attend and learn how to write this kind of assessment. We could develop our own questions.
  - d. Other ideas for the future include buying laptops that are reserved for the GPE and decentralizing the testing so that Departments can set up testing days in their computer labs and run smaller on-demand testing.
  - e. We can't use the full-scale CLA for the GPE, so we need to think about what characteristics the GPE should have:
    - i. Multiple documents that students must refer to.
    - ii. Questions that require them to use critical thinking and analysis rather than personal anecdotes or opinion to analyze the documents and answer the questions.
    - iii. Sac State has developed a version of this that is double-sided and includes 1 or 2 documents.
    - iv. We would keep 10-15 prompts in the bank.
    - v. At the next meeting, we will look at some possible GPE test questions and accompanying documents. We also need to bring in any additional criteria we want.
    - vi. Susan and Linda will bring a copy of the rubric that the CLA uses so that we can also begin drafting an example of the rubric we would use.
11. GVAR Coordinator's Report
- a. There is nothing new going on in the GVAR program this Fall.

- b. It seems like we have more students trying to get into 301B. We have eight sections (we started with 6 but those were filled by July 4). There is one section of COTA and one of IS301L, but those are the same number of sections as last fall, so Linda thinks maybe the reason there is an increase in students trying to enroll is that current students are trying to enroll in 301B immediately after taking the WPE and so are in competition for courses with students who have delayed taking the class and are taking it now.
- c. Writing intensive capstone courses:
  - i. At the beginning of the summer Lynn Mahoney sent an email to deans and department chairs listing existing capstone courses that have enrollments of 35 or lower and suggested that the courses become writing intensive capstones. She offered Linda Sarbo's assistance with converting those courses. Linda has received some responses from departments sending SCOs and syllabi to get approval or suggestions. Two things have typically been missing: no mention of writing in student outcomes and no formalized opportunities for revision.
  - ii. In order to get courses approved for status as writing intensive capstone Departments need to do the following:
    - 1. There is a sheet of information on writing intensive guidelines at [www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/ge/faculty/documents/SuggestedGuidelinesforWICourseProposals.pdf](http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/ge/faculty/documents/SuggestedGuidelinesforWICourseProposals.pdf). The action request form can be found at <http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/ge/faculty/>.
    - 2. If the SCO only needs to be revised to incorporate the writing intensive objectives, then it doesn't need to go through curriculum committees. A more substantive change would need to go through department and college committees.
  - iii. Sue Stanley contacted Linda and wants to address the creation of writing intensive courses on a strategic, department-by-department basis. She wants to talk about faculty development the instructors of writing intensive classes (e.g., strategies for writing assignments and assessments). Linda is working to develop a workshop for this set of instructors. Rebekha will present on teaching writing to non-native English speakers and a Criminal Justice instructor will address incorporating disciplinary perspectives into assignments. Linda will address the writing process. Together, they will draft a rubric for the writing intensive instructors. Linda is going to work with Terre Allen to find a way of creating a video of the workshop to allow it to be distributed more broadly.

## 12. Adjournment

- a. 3:00 PM

Submitted by  
Colleen Dunagan, Secretary  
(These minutes were approved on 9/18/12.)