

MINUTES
GWAR Committee
USU 311
1:30 – 3 PM

Meeting Number 7
December 2, 2011

Members in Attendance: Linda Sarbo, Susan Platt, Rebekha Abbuhl, Mark Wiley, Gary Griswold, Diana Hines, Lori Brown, Rick Tuveson, Colleen Dunagan, Bron Pellissier, Yu Ding.

1. Approval of agenda
 - a. MSP
2. Minutes of meeting on November 18, 2011
 - a. 2nd page paragraph #1: in bold change “communication” to “discourse”
 - b. Roman numeral 2 in discussing formatting change “exiting” to “existing”
 - c. Correct spelling of Rebekha’s last name
 - d. Correct spelling of accredited.
3. Announcements
 - a. WPE reading on 12/10/11
 - b. Our ASI representative, Lucy, is unable to attend meetings and will need to arrange for a designee. She may choose someone on her own without committee approval.
 - c. We need to have one more meeting since the Senate will be discussing the GE policy next Thursday, 12/8. Our next meeting will be at 1:30 on 12/9.
4. Policy draft
 - a. Rebekha shared the feedback she received from Cecile on our suggested change to the portion of the policy related to graduate students. Cecile liked a combination of option #2 (any graduate student who has a baccalaureate degree of higher from an accredited US institution is exempt from the GEAR; students who do not have this degree take the GPE and complete the pathways) and option #4 (same exemption, but students who do not have this degree can fulfill the GEAR through the GRE, TOEFL iBT writing test, or GPE). Cecile agrees with our exemptions, but wanted to know whether this was OK under the executive order. She also stated that Option 3 would leave too much autonomy for programs.

- b. We need to insure that our policy regarding graduate students is in compliance with the requirements of Executive Order 665, which indicates the following:
 - i. Campuses may require demonstration of writing proficiency as a condition for admission to a graduate program.
 - ii. Campuses shall require demonstration of writing proficiency prior to the award of a graduate degree. The level of proficiency shall be no less than the level required for GWAR certification at the baccalaureate level.
 - iii. Campuses may require additional demonstration of advanced-level writing proficiency as a condition for admission to a graduate program and/or award of the graduate degree.
- c. Options to consider:
 - i. Susan – we could use a version of our current exemption policy. For example: Graduate students could automatically compete the non-CSU exemption form and attach transcripts with upper-division writing courses highlighted. These could be reviewed to confirm that students have done upper division writing at the undergraduate level. The GWAR Coordinator would need to evaluate these applications for exemption.
 - 1. Susan has provided a chart showing graduate student fail rates according to testing dates in 2010, native vs. non-native English speakers, and where they took freshmen composition.
 - 2. If we decided to use this approach, the GWAR Coordinator would have to review approximately 600 exemption applications, which is a lot to add to her workload.
 - 3. Linda currently reviews 30 a month, two-thirds of which are approved. With the approval rate that high, the likelihood is that if students have a baccalaureate degree, they would pass the WPE.
 - 4. A suggestion was made that we maintain a list of institutions from which previous well-prepared students have come. However, writing requirements vary considerably by major (e.g., the sciences).
 - ii. We think Option #2 will meet resistance in the Senate, because it may be viewed by faculty as not holding graduate students to the same requirements as our undergraduate students. However, graduate students think it is odd that they are being asked to take an undergraduate level test.
 - iii. Option 3 really allows the departments and colleges to take responsibility for graduate students' writing. However, a concern was raised that if departments are left on their own, writing problems might not be noticed until later in the student's degree progress. Another possible objection is that option 3 would not be a university-wide policy.

- iv. One argument in support of combining 2 and 4 is that it would give graduate students options.
 - v. We could do a combination of 3 and 4. For example: "Graduate Departments and programs shall establish their own criteria for fulfilling the GVAR. These criteria may include a baccalaureate degree from an accredited US institution, a 4 or higher on the GVAR, a 4 or higher on the GRE, a 4 or higher on the TOEFL, a GVAR course, or another course pathway. These criteria must be included in the catalogue program requirements." The default would be exemption. The GVAR committee could periodically check on the requirements departments have. It could also be made clear that the requirements are not set in stone, and departments could change them.
 - vi. Susan and Linda will draft possible wording of the idea expressed in 4.v.
- d. The first page of policy currently states "the AWATF identified the following student learning outcomes that CSULB upper division writing-intensive courses should teach and assess." A suggestion was made to revise the wording here to "the AWATF identified the following student learning outcomes that CSULB students should achieve by the end of their upper-division writing courses." Susan will revise the wording in this section and send it to the committee.
 - e. Chris Brazier had recommended deleting the opening overview section, but committee members feel strongly about including it.
 - f. We may need to remove the discussion of graduate students at end of the first paragraph of Section 2.
 - g. A suggestion was made that when there is only one item in a list, remove the number (1).
5. GVAR Coordinator's report
- a. Curricular changes to IS 301L
 - i. Summary of changes:
 - 1. Course name, noting that "Writing" has always been in the name.
 - 2. Lori had asked to use W instead of L, but we may end up using the W for writing intensive capstones, which would be confusing, and we have been working to get students aware of the course and its purposes, so the L will stay.
 - 3. The course is being changed from 2 units to 3 units.
 - 4. There is a new catalogue description that no longer says it is a remedial course.
 - 5. The grading is changing. The course is no available for credit/no credit in addition to for a letter grade. It is repeatable for a maximum of 6 units.

6. The outline of subject matter has been modified to remove the subject areas titled Grammar I, Grammar II, Grammar III to better reflect emphasis on overall writing process.
 7. Linked up the text to be concurrent with the text used in IS 301.
 8. Streamlined portfolio policy language.
 9. The three people (Carol Nader, Lori Brown, and D. McElroy) who worked on the revision should be given credit for doing an excellent job with the revision.
- ii. Some discussion of the revisions and the name of the course.
 1. Currently, it looks like there are only three assignments required of the course. Committee members request that the department makes it clearer how many assignments must be required in order to meet the GVAR portfolio policy and the required revision process.
 2. Discussion of ways to modify the title or the number to remove the L, but at this time we are unable to come up with a good option, so it will remain for now.
 - iii. Motion to approve the revised course outline: MSP
- b. Petitions for Exemptions:
 - i. Exemption #1 – Graduate student petition: The GVAR Committee has agreed to deny the petition.
 - ii. Exemption #2 – special circumstances petition (medical): The GVAR Committee has agreed to deny the petition at this time.
 - c. GVAR instructors have asked if they can deny the submission of portfolios based on absences. Linda has consistently told them that submitting the portfolio can't be contingent on other course requirements. What exactly is the policy regarding the submission of the portfolio? We will revisit this issue at the next meeting.

6. Adjournment: 3:05 pm

Submitted by,

Colleen Dunagan
Secretary

(These minutes were approved on 12/9/11.)