

University of Hawai'i
Standing Committee on Written Communication
April 28, 2006 Minutes

Present (via polycom):

Eric Chock (UHWO)	Thomas Hilgers (UHM)	Kay Porter (LeeCC)
Steve Dawson (UHM)	Rebecca Lee (UHWO)	Rick Randolph (KauCC)
Charlene Gima (MCC)	Donna Matsumoto (LeeCC)	Jean Shibuya (WCC)
Gail Harada (KapCC)	Donna Moore (HawCC)	Ida Yoshinaga (LeeCC)
Karla Hayashi (UHH)	Barry Nakamura (LeeCC)	

Absent: Dolores Donovan (HonCC), Wayne Iwaoka (UHM), Todd Sammons (UHM), Kathryn Wolfe-Quintero (UHM)

Invited guests: Gail Levy (LeeCC), Joanne Itano (UH System), Nara Takakawa (UHM)

The meeting was called to order by Tom Hilgers at 1:00 pm in Bachman Hall 113.

1. Announcements

Rick Randolph announced that he is the new WI Director at KauCC.

2. Approval of April 1, 2005 minutes

The minutes were approved as submitted.

3. Review of campus writing-intensive self assessments and decisions on extension of articulation agreements

The annual self-reports will be on file at the UHM Mānoa Writing Program Office.

Hilgers noted that a list of "Good Practices," compiled at this group's request by Monica Stitt-Bergh and sent with documents for this meeting, contains hints for keeping a WI program lively. Dawson commented that it is useful to know what's being done across campuses (e.g., number of WI students and WI class size). He suggested that we collect information and then follow up to see if information is useful and helpful for each of our campuses. Such data might also be useful for future accreditation.

UH West O'ahu

Rebecca Lee is retiring June 1; Interim Director of Writing is Eric Chock. Director receives 3-credit release time each semester. A vibrant writing and learning center exists; technology support is also good. Regarding WI course minimums, 22 are registered with the expectation that a few will drop. Whether this procedure is good or bad is unknown. It is challenging for the Director to find instructors to teach WI courses. UHWO got lax about approval periods; approvals have been perpetual in the past. The WI proposal form has been revised and the Curriculum Committee is currently working to "tighten up" procedures."

Discussion:

- Should campuses have term limits for WI designations and require renewal after the set term?
- Is there any system-wide data regarding attrition rates and end-of-course enrollment?
- What are the learning outcomes? Are students really learning? Do data exist?
- At UHWO, students take a placement exam at end of course to see how well WI is functioning.

- Accrediting agency is not interested in curricula, but outcomes. Are there assessments for students as they complete WI classes?
- For the next accreditation in 2007, WASC will be requiring learning outcomes, so assessment and the measurement instruments will become important.
- At WCC, students took a writing ability assessment after 27 credits (3 years and 2 WI courses). While cumbersome, the assessment proved insightful. WCC is willing to share data.

Kaua'i Community College

Rick Randolph has now been appointed WI coordinator. The curriculum committee still is not in favor of a AA. WI requirement because too few WI courses are being offered across the curriculum (WI offerings are primarily in English): some faculty are reluctant to do the extra work involved, and some (particularly in the natural sciences) do not see the value of writing. Could the process be made easier to encourage more instructors who are not in Humanities and Social Science to teach WI courses? Rick sees need for training for instructors, so they can understand the value of writing. He doesn't want WI viewed as another burden for students to graduate.

WI course offerings vary between 4-8 courses per semester, though he would like to increase number. Approval period is for 2 years with 20-student cap.

Discussion:

- Perhaps MWP could visit KauCC to do recruitment and offer workshops; internet resources of MWP were also offered.
- After UHM made WI a Bachelor's degree requirement, students demanded more courses; today, approximately 450 WI courses are offered at UHM.
- Other campuses shared that KauCC's predicament is not unique.

Leeward Community College

Writing Committee is in transition right now due to retirements, so they have taken this opportunity to reflect and assess WI policies. The 2-year approval period is not being enforced, so faculty are offering WI courses without active approval. The challenge is to enforce standards without discouraging teachers. The committee has extended the approval period to four years, as an incentive, and will offer writing-across-the-curriculum workshops. The committee conducted assessments every year for past 5 years to determine students' achievement. (Teachers are anonymous to reassure faculty that assessment is not a faculty evaluation, but degree assessment for students.) In Fall 2005, the campus began an online writing interactive webpage project where students submit papers online and instructors give feedback. LCC is willing to share technology with other campuses.

Discussion:

- UHM has no end-of-semester course-evaluation procedure, to some extent due to UHPA's objections.
- It was suggested that at next year's meeting, LCC report on its assessment process.
- Can Banner handle WI approval-period limits?

Kapi'olani Community College

A two-year approval period is too short for KapCC; representative will inform writing committee of longer periods on other campuses. KapCC has had difficulty tracking approval periods as well, so there has also been "slippage." Latest achievement: identifying WI courses online instead of just in the printed SOC.

Discussion:

- Most KapCC WI offerings are in English, Humanities, Business, and Health Sciences; very few in Culinary Arts, Math, and Science.

Hawai'i Community College

Campus is working on renewals of courses that were approved as WI five years ago. Requires syllabus and asks questions to determine if instructor is meeting WI guidelines. Inactive instructors must reapply for approval if they now want a WI class. Eight courses were offered in Fall 2005; in Spring 2006, 3 were offered in English and 4 in Social Sciences and Humanities.

Discussion:

- UHM informs faculty that approval periods are expiring and that they need to reapply.
- Benefits of renewal: assurance that instructors are aware of Hallmarks.
- At UHM, the renewal process is an opportunity for self-assessment, not an assessment of the instructor.
- At UHM, attaching Focus designations to a course greatly increases enrollment.
- Pending questions: what should the renewal mechanism be and should it be consistent across all campuses?
- Renewal process should be looked at as information-gathering (what worked well, what didn't, what will improve).

Maui Community College

Approval is for 2 years; for renewal, a syllabus is required. Some faculty don't want to turn in any paperwork. There aren't many WI courses outside of English, though new WI courses exist in Hawaiian Studies, Agriculture, Early Childhood Education. Science and Math tend to be overworked and lab facilities are poor, so there are no WI courses in those areas. Two WI courses are required for AA degree. MCC received letter of complaint last semester from student who needed WI course to graduate, but there were no appropriate courses offered. In the past 10 years, MCC has lost Math courses due to GenEd revision.

Windward Community College

WCC has offered WI courses for 13 years. This summer, 6 new hires will go to KapCC's writing-across-the-curriculum seminar. On average, 16 WI courses are offered each semester with at least one science course (labs are very popular). Most WCC students take more than the 2-course minimum. WCC is also having recruitment challenges.

Discussion:

- Can Banner track approval periods?

UH Hilo

Concerns include evaluation procedures and discussion of better assessment of writing skills in general. College of Business and Economics (COBE) is developing an assessment program of its own which will include information about how students are doing in WI courses. The project will begin in summer 2006. Recently, the director saw a demonstration of a student-created database to track WI courses, which will start with Spring 2006 courses.

Discussion:

- UHH was asked to keep committee abreast of database project and informed of procedures.
- Difficulty of tracking data was acknowledged.
- Community college students who transfer to UHH still need to take 2 WI courses (only 1 for seniors). Anyone else must take 3 WI courses, with at least one being upper division. UHM requires 2 at upper division and a total of 5 WI courses overall.
- Business college and Gen Ed can be strong allies, especially for Ethics Focus designation. Their accrediting body requires writing.

Honolulu Community College

Written report was submitted by Marcia Roberts-Deutsch to be presented by Dolores Donovan, who could not attend the meeting due to illness. The Committee reviewed the written report and had no questions.

UH Mānoa

Faculty receive a 3-year WI approval for a course; however, some discussion continues about extending approval period to 5 years (to match Foundation and Diversification approval periods). Some proposals were rejected last year, mostly because instructors were not clear on how they met criteria. Some departments want course-based approval, especially English. Any course with “Writing” in the title was likely to get course-based WI approval. English 270-273 Intro to Lit courses also received course approval on the condition that the catalogue description makes clear reference to the writing component by October 2006. Course-based approval periods are also for 3 years.

Discussion:

- GEO will remind department chairs about expiring course approvals; department will be required to reapply.

After reviewing each campus’s annual report and discussing each campus’s policies and procedures, a motion was made and seconded to extend the articulation of writing-intensive courses across the UH system for another academic year; the motion carried unanimously.

4. Special Report from composition subcommittee: Gail Levy’s research on teacher responses to essays

Gail Levy presented the conclusions from her research on how writing assignments are graded. She provided a 2-page handout “What Really Matters to Community College Instructors When They Grade Freshman English Compositions?” She concluded that teachers paid attention to product (thesis statement, unity, organization, supporting sentences, grammar), content, and research (proper MLA/APA citations). The writing process expectations of teachers are varied between 4 to 11 steps. Some required multiple drafts, feedback from teacher or peer or both, and completion. Levy noted that if instructors are serious about checking sources, then articles should be submitted as well. Levy recommended collecting longitudinal data on English 100 students.

The committee thanked Dr. Levy and requested that she give 5- to 50-minute follow up report at the 2007 meeting.

5. New Business: SAT score as placement into English 100

Tom asked for questions or comments on the UHM vice chancellor's memo on UHM's pro-tem placement procedures. A concern was whether CCs should individually or collectively adopt or reject this placement policy. Banner is still being programmed to accept the minimum scores for SAT (550) or ACT (24). Decisions were deferred until New Business.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Minutes prepared by Nara Takakawa.