

office of the chancellor

RE: WAC Meeting Minutes for Feb 13, 2015

Hello Colleagues,

Thank you all for your good work on Friday.

Here are the minutes for our last WAC meeting. If there are corrections, please let me know. Our next meeting is on **Friday, Feb 20 at 10 am in WCG 322.**

Attending: Caitlin Carle, Cynthia Howson, Kelvin Keown, LeAnne Laux Bachand, Sushil Oswal, Justin Wadland, Ali W. Stromdahl, Nicole Blair, Emma Rose, Asao B. Inoue

Absent: Alison Cardinal, Ruth Vanderpool, Rich Furman, Erica Cline, Emily Ignacio, Eric Madfis, Deirdre Raynor

In absentia, Ruth and Alison sent separate remarks concerning the documents circulated for this meeting. Ruth says:

Regarding pages 7-8 of UWP's philosophy:

- What is the reasoning behind requiring W courses to be 5 credits?
- Assuming 5 credits is a minimal requirement, we might change the requirement to "a course must minimally be 5 credits". Note: many science courses are 6 credits because of labs...
- The bullet specifying that 50% of the course should be writing: why are exams explicitly excluded? In math, the quality of the proof writing is easily half the points when marking proofs in many classes....
- The bullet specifying that students revise most of the DSW in the course seems excessive. Keep in mind that math classes need to still cover new material and most math teachers can't regrade homework proofs from previous sections multiple times. Instead, the same proof technique can be employed in a different situations. For example, learning how to write an induction proof is used throughout the proofs course-with graph theory, combinatorics, tiling puzzles, etc. The content changes, but the writing structure that we'd be working with (induction) doesn't!

How about instead of saying that most DSW be revised, we say that revision is emphasized in the course?

Notes:

- I like that you identified two different kinds of writing: DSW & Writing-to-learn. The Writing-to-learn is a technique that I think would be good to focus on when trying to train faculty who are preparing to offer a W course.

Regarding your three questions/agenda:

- (1) What are our w course writing-related requirements now and what should they be in the future?
- (2) I think the draft you sent out is a good start and my comments are above.

What is the best way to train faculty and provide meaningful oversight of all w courses? There was a year long writing fellows program that used to be run that was immensely helpful to me. The long exposure to the writing ideas forced me to revisit the ideas throughout the year, and I could come back to the writing group to report/get suggestions/reflect on what happened. The environment was very supportive and convinced me to work a great deal more "Writing-to-learn" activities into my courses.

I don't think such a program should be required for W teachers, but going through something like that once seems like a good idea for those of us who have had no formal training in teaching writing...

Maybe getting all the W course instructors together twice a term would be a good idea? Getting everyone together in a room could help build community and with a little facilitation/cookies some good pedagogical conversations could happen. Social pressure is a good way to create the illusion of oversight...

- (3) How should we assess the w courses?
Carefully?

Alison sent this for us to consider:

My one question is about faculty development and support for the W courses. I'm not sure it's an appropriate place to put it in this document, but it might be nice to include something about faculty teaching support for writing and what that will look like (Piggybacking on what Ruth said in her response). I was also thinking it would be cool to have some sort of initiative for faculty to do research into writing so they can improve their teaching of writing and publish towards tenure (again, not sure if this is the place for that).

During the meeting, the committee discussed the issue of some students taking TWRT 112 as a W course instead of a true upper division writing intensive course in their majors, and the use of the course as a way for transfer students to meet their first-year writing requirement when their previous writing courses do not transfer for such credit. Several issues came up:

- Is TCORE 101 repeatable? It used to not be, but it appears to be now, as several students are currently retaking it after failing.
- Some of the problem with some students taking 101 as a W course may be with advising
- Do we want first-year and transfer students intermingled in TCORE 101 (if we get rid of TWRT 112)? It seemed the will of those attending was yes, than can intermingle.
- Some were concerned with the level of competency in any writing class (like 101)
- Could we change the 112 to a C course and not a W course?
- May want to check on the repeatability of 101
- Talk to advisors about how they fill 101 and 112 (or how they should)
- If a transfer student needs the 101 then why would they not be okay in the course?
- Talk to Bonnie about the deadlines for canceling the TWRT 112
- Have an online vote if possible

Action Items:

- Asao will begin checking articulation agreements and curricula with surrounding schools to see what is transferring as first-year writing credit and what is not.

- Asao will check repeatability of TCORE 101
- Asao will check with advising on how they fill 101 and 112
- Asao will talk to Bonnie about deadlines for possibility of cancelling TWRT 112 for Fall 2015 and beyond.
- Asao will bring this matter up with the UEAC as well.

The rest of our time was spent discussing the draft of the W course guidelines that was circulated before the meeting. This was just an initial discussion. The brief notes I took were as follows:

- change to "at least 5 units"
- the 24 student cap?
- talk to the UEAC about the mandatory 24 student cap on all W course
- training model of W course teachers
- can we ask W course teachers get together in some meaningful fashion every once in a while
- add in the description a mention that all W courses acknowledge "process based" pedagogies.
- add a philosophy about response and its importance to student learning to write
- in the discipline-specific courses the pages of writing will be different (minimum page requirement)
- the 50% work load: may need a qualifier to math classes?
- do W courses tend to assign research writing?
- what kind of writing is assigned to W courses most?
- move last paragraph above one paragraph
- add creative writing genres in list of DSW
- take out "specific" audience in creative writing ("a discipline and its readers")

Action Items:

- Asao will discuss with UEAC about the mandatory 24 student cap on all W courses
- Asao MAY conduct a study of the kinds of writing assigned in W courses at UWT
- Asao will update the UWP's W course description and resend.

The meeting ending by considering an online vote over the 112/101 issue after Asao asks Bonnie Becker about deadlines and logistics.

Peace

-- Asao B. Inoue

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