

Office of the Chancellor

WAC Meeting Minutes for February 19, 2016

Following are the minutes for the latest WAC meeting. Please contact me with any revisions.

Meeting Called to Order: 9:29am

Attending: Ellen Bayer, Alison Cardinal, Asao Inoue, Kelvin Keown, LeAnne Laux-Bachand, Heather Porter, Riki Thompson, Justin Wadland, Ali Walker Stromdahl

Absent: Bonnie Becker, Nicole Blair, Eric Bugyis, Caitlin Carle, Barbara Endicott-Popovsky, Rich Furman, Cynthia Howson, Emily Ignacio, Margaret Lundberg, Erik McDonald, Sushil Oswal, Deirdre Raynor, Ruth Vanderpool,

Agenda Items: W-Course Guidelines Feedback

Following is a link to the survey. Please be cautious and do NOT edit it by accident. To see the responses, click on the "Responses" button/link at the top of the survey.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/17Qzca69UIII0xqaK_4307XCeaKhtJUpxpouR--pjRvw/edit?usp=sharing

The goal is to move forward with finding ways to make the W-course guidelines solid.

Most of the handwritten feedback is on the attached list in bullet points.

The survey did not ask for the respondent's unit.

Purpose Statement: Most agreed, while a couple weren't sure.

There was concern about two W-courses. Should it be in the major as opposed to out of the major? Are two W-courses required within the major?

- Add a clarification to the opening that "courses approved by their major" does not mean they have to be within their major.

Currently, faculty must elect for their course to be a W-course. Enrollment is important and some places won't be able to lower the cap on certain courses that will want to be W-courses.

People have assumptions about what 50% of the course means, thinking it means grades. Could the 50% be actual labor? For a writing-intensive course, it should be writing-intensive. Comments from Nursing show a concern about the language relating to research in the library because they don't do anything like that. Research in some fields means going out and collecting data. Disciplines further away from humanities are more difficult as they believe writing is only pencil-to-paper.

- Writing is about "instruction."

Political Science doesn't get a W-course until TPOLS when they write a seminar paper. Until this point, they haven't had a class on research. There should be a prior class on how to research.

When should the first W-course be taken around 300-level? How many places in UW lack 300-level W-courses? If the writing classes are outside their major, are they getting writing practice within

their major? Majors should be purposeful about where they're asking their students to take W-courses. Faculty in other fields believe they do research and we don't. It's different and if we took it out, they'd have trouble structuring their course.

- Leave "research" and clarify.

Many colleagues think thesis organization, content, and analysis are writing instruction. Research shows that students arrive here with a lot of grammar issues. Ten weeks won't improve that.

Question #3 Feedback: This may be a political issue. Some of the faculty believe we aren't taking grammar seriously. Editing is part of the process, though not the entire process.

- Add something in the first or last paragraph stating that the W-course is not defined by a focus on grammar and editing, worded so faculty don't feel like grammar is being ignored. Consider linking it to specific majors where it's most important.

Question #4 Feedback: They are confused about the language and how to apply it to their own disciplines and courses.

Should we remove the discipline-specific reference? There is a concern that official discipline-specific writing is graded only, losing the opportunity for low-stakes writing to be graded. Low-stakes is writing to learn and should be clarified. In some cases, journals could be the entire project. Should low-stakes be 50%? Could the two be scaffolded with one leading into the other?

- Low-stakes writing incorporates both kinds of writing.

Do students have to go into the library to check out a book? The possibilities are much broader. There are many ways for librarians to be collaborators and every W-class doesn't have to have a librarian. There are other people who can provide support.

By saying "library" we think of a building rather than people who come to a class and help students with research. An annotated bibliography is considered writing, but they may not see it as writing because it's not a paper. Nursing has to come up with a survey that requires a lot of research and analysis. Students are looking for models for their report and instructors don't see this outside the classroom.

- Justin will discuss this with Katie and offer a suggestion.
- Library as one resource could be parenthetical.
- Help students foster information literacy, collaborating with specialists on campus through writing and research.

Question #6 Feedback: Most responses are about equity issues for workload. A lot relies on institutional knowledge. How much is linked to internal politics and how can we look at and deal with it? There are equity issues around classes and within divisions. Who teaches W's and how frequently? Who is required? (Junior vs. Senior). The responses are linked to politics and this will play a part in how this is enacted. There is difficulty in addressing this with people who were here when UW Tacoma opened and don't want change. People are invested in W-courses being supported, and are exhausted by lack of support.

- A preamble should be incorporated stating how we hope this might address these institutional issues.

Rolling out the new W-course guidelines by the end of the year would be unrealistic. It is hoped that something will be in place by Autumn. Logistics like enrollment caps need to be explored and the Learning Center may be integrated to assist.

Action Items:

- Asao will update the document with notes from this meeting and post it on Google Drive.
- Asao will prompt everyone by email soon to continue the discussions about the W-course survey results once he has revised the W-course materials and sent them out via email.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:30am