

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TACOMA  
Minutes  
Faculty Assembly Academic Policy Committee (APC)  
Tuesday, April 13, 2010  
12:30-1:30 GWP 215

Attendance: Deirdre Raynor, Chair; Charles Emlet, Lisa Hoffman, Greg Noronha, Marcy Stein, Cathy Tashiro

Guest: Anne Beaufort, Bobbe Miller-Murray: Marcie Lazzari, Faculty Assembly, Vice-Chair

- 1) The minutes from March 1, 2010 were approved.
- 2) Writing Requirement Proposed Changes, Anne Beaufort
  - a. The Writing Council includes one faculty member from each program.
  - b. See attachment "A" for a draft of the Proposed Changes in Composition Requirements for UWT
  - c. The proposal impacts both freshman and transfer students
  - d. At UW Seattle an equivalent program to IAS requires students to have a 2.0 gpa to pass. Weaker writers have more extensive program than UW Tacoma.
  - e. Rationale: These proposals will establish consistency across the UWT campus and ensure student pass a minimum level writing competency.
  - f. Bobbe Miller-Murray asked that TWRT 131 be offered all three quarters. Beaufort responded that administrators will have to monitor TWRT 131 class offerings.
  - g. Greg Noronha noted that the Milgard School of Business has different writing requirements, which Beaufort acknowledged.
  - h. Regarding Proposal 3, which requires two quarters of writing, UWT will start a program to track freshman. This program will begin with the SAT and apply holistic approach. Students who score the lowest will be put into this two quarter sequence of writing program. The student will earn credit for each course and gain writing skills.
  - i. Lisa Hoffman asked whether there is faculty to staff these positions. Beaufort responded that faculty lines will permit 44 students in this stretch teaching model. Students are admitted to this program by their score. The program will address financial constraints.
  - j. Regarding Proposal 4. Include SAT Writing Sample in Admissions Requirements
  - k. Miller-Murray suggested that in the future the composition requirement might allow students to be admitted to UWT without the requirement, provided that the student passes this requirement at UWT.

Action: Deirdre Raynor asked each APC member to go back to their programs to discuss these proposals. The APC will discuss this further at the meeting on May 11, 2010.

3) Student Appeal Process, Bobbe Miller-Murray

- a. APC is concerned with the Student Appeals Process. At a recent JCEPP meeting Marcie Lazzari, Faculty Assembly Vice Chair asked if the student appeal process is in the catalog. Miller-Murray explained that this policy will be implemented on July 1, 2010 and will explain the procedure for student appeals. Miller-Murray agreed to prepare the Student Appeals Procedure for the Student Catalog and along with new form and make this available to students for next year.
- b. There was a lengthy discussion about a student appeal involving a foreign language requirement. The student appeal has gone through risk management.
- c. APC requested that Miller-Murray provide the language from the 2006 catalog, and the admission's letter. Miller-Murray will ask advisors if they have any record – emails etc.
- d. The specific case will be discussed further on May 11, 2010

4) The meeting adjourned at 1:38 p.m.

Attachment "A"

**DRAFT**

Date: April 13, 2010

To: Deirdre Raynor, Chair, Academic Policy Committee

From: UWT Writing Council\*

Re: Three Proposed Changes in Composition Requirements for UWT Undergraduates and Proposed Additional Stipulation on Freshman Admissions Regarding Writing Assessment

Cc: Derek Levy

**Proposal#1 2.0 in Composition for Graduation**

Create a uniform requirement across all UWT undergraduate programs of a *minimum of 2.0 in an academic writing course* to satisfy the existing composition requirement for graduation.

*Rationale*

This will bring consistency campus-wide to the composition requirement and will be one more step toward assuring that students achieve at least a minimum level of writing competency before graduation.

*Background*

All UWT programs except Business and IT have a 2.0 minimum as the grade required to satisfy the graduation requirement in composition. IT's minimum is 1.7 and Business has no policy.

**Proposal #2 Composition Requirement Completed in Timely Manner**

Any UWT student who has not completed a composition course with 2.0 or better, will be *required to complete TWRT 131, Introduction to Academic Writing II or an equivalent course, within the first two quarters at UWT*. If the student does not achieve a 2.0 or better in the course, s/he will need to repeat the course by the end of the following quarter before s/he can register for additional coursework at UWT. *An exception would be made if the needed course was not offered in the quarter the student needs to take it.*

*Rationale:* Writing skills--and the commensurate skills in critical thinking and close reading of texts--are *essential skills* for all other academic course work. Writing is not just a tool for communicating. It is also a tool for reasoned thinking. With these skills, students will be able to develop skills and content knowledge to a greater degree in all of their other course work.

Note: *essential skills* include ability to write a report or essay with minimal assistance 1) that has an *overarching claim* 2) with *supporting evidence* from reliable sources, accurately documented 3) using *logical paragraph structure* and 4) with at most *a few patterns of grammatical error* that do not impede meaning.

( Non-native speakers should be able to achieve subject-verb agreement, correct pronoun usage, correct word sequencing in sentences. They should not be expected to achieve correctness in idiosyncratic grammar, such as use of “an,” “the,” or “a” or idiosyncratic usage rules for prepositions.)

We cannot assure that students who take composition courses at other institutions will be required to achieve these essential skills. However, in TCORE 101 and TWRT 131 at UWT, these learning outcomes are what guide both curriculum and evaluation of student learning.

### *Background*

If a UWT student (freshman or transfer) has below a 2.0 in a beginning academic writing course, there is no institutional mechanism in place to require further writing courses in a *timely* manner. Some students wait until their final quarter to complete the composition requirement for graduation.

### **Proposal #3 Apportion Existing Resources to Better Serve Weaker Writers**

Require a *two- course “stretch” model of freshman composition* for entering freshmen below designated percentiles in Critical Reading or Writing SAT scores—as funding will allow.\* Institutional data will be utilized by Enrollment Services, in collaboration with the Writing Council and General Education, to annually review and adjust the percentiles to reflect the most current data trends. The students will receive 10 units of writing credits for completing the two-course sequence.

Note: SAT scores are not “perfect” indicators of students writing skills. But they are the most reliable indicators we have, short of the cost and time of a proctored and human-scored exam on campus. There may be a few cases in which adjustments in placement may be made no later than the first week of the quarter at the discretion of the General Education Director, the Writing-Across-the-Curriculum coordinator, or the professor teaching the stretch course.

\* We will determine the number of students we can give two-quarters of freshman composition to based on the balancing of student need and existing faculty resources. For example, if we can fund two cohorts in the stretch model (44 students), we will select the lowest 44 students for those cohorts.

### *Rationale*

By giving the students in the lowest percentiles on writing and reading skills 20 weeks instead of 10 weeks of instruction on these fundamentals, we give them a greater opportunity to achieve competencies that will give them success in the rest of their coursework.

### *Background*

Data on freshmen at UWT for the past 3 years shows significantly lower grades in the one-quarter composition course, TCORE 101, among those freshmen whose SAT Critical Reading and Writing scores were below the present threshold of 400. The first quarter GPA and cumulative GPA for these students also lagged consistently with this threshold. This suggests students scoring in this range have significant deficiencies in fundamental reading and writing skills that they need for success in other classes. If we admit students at these levels of skill, we need to have appropriate classes to meet their needs.

**Proposal #4 Include SAT Writing Sample in Admissions Requirements**

Require, beginning with admissions for autumn 2011, that freshman applicants submit standardized test scores from the SAT Reasoning Test with Writing or ACT with Writing.

*Rationale:*

These proctored exams will provide additional data on the writing ability of freshman applicants. Requiring all students to select the standardized test with writing assessment will provide for greater consistency among applicants of available data for consideration.

*Background*

Currently, standardized tests are offered with and without the proctored writing assessment and it is the student's option which test to take and submit to UW Tacoma.

*Recommended timeline for implementation of changes:*

Proposal 3-- Autumn 2010

Proposals 1,2, 4--Autumn 2011.

\*UWT Writing Council Members: Anne Beaufort, Brian Coffey, Rich Furman Joana Morceri, Sushil Oswal, Jill Purdy, Josh Tenenbourg, Riki Thompson, Ingrid Walker