**WAC Committee Meeting September 17th, 2019**

Present:

Jeff Galin, Fred Bloetscher, Gail Chewning, Jaqueline Fewkes, Jason Sharples, Claudia Amadori

Introduction of new (and old) members of the WAC committee

New members’ introduction: Gail Chewning (Social Work), Jason Sharples (History), Clevis Headley (Philosophy), and Jaqueline Fewkes (Honors College)

Explanation of the WAC committee’s responsibilities

JG: Re-certification process. On a rotating basis, departments undergo a 3rd year WAC re-certification review to make sure that syllabi continue to reflect WAC criteria for the appropriate course level. In 2018-19, the WAC committee undertook the re-certification of WAC syllabi for the English Department. This academic year (2019-20), the committee will re-certify miscellaneous departments (this means all departments teaching WAC courses, excluding English, History, and Philosophy). WAC will collect syllabi and distribute them among WAC committee members, who will check them for compliance to WAC guidelines. The members should use a Google Form to review each syllabus (Claudia will provide a link to the Google Form).

WAC assessment process

JG: The WAC program collects papers every year to establish benchmarks, and to help departments improve writing. JG explains the process of collecting end-of-term papers from students of randomly selected courses through WAC interface. Papers collected are reviewed by WAC raters during end-of-year norming session. The purpose of the assessment is to improve the teaching of writing, and using data collected to target faculty intervention. Departments identify traits they want to work on for the year and set slightly higher benchmarks for these traits for the following year. The WAC rubric has 11 traits across four levels. Consistency of results shows that the system is working to provide consistent feedback to departments.

WEC (Writing Enriched Curriculum) – explanation of initiative

JG: So far we have 5 departments: LLCL, Ocean and Mechanical Engineering, Sociology, Urban and Regional Planning, Political Science. When each new department starts working with WEC, they spend the first-year planning and self-assessing their students and curriculum over the course of four department-wide meetings. Initially, they collect data via different surveys of students, faculty, and external affiliates to the program. The results of the surveys are reviewed by the WEC team (Jeff, Julianne, and Claudia), and a PowerPoint is created from the results and discussed with the entire faculty at a full department meeting. This facilitates the conversation of specific writing characteristics and abilities students in the major should possess to graduate for each department. The department’s entire curriculum is assessed to identify gaps and opportunities to improve writing. The department discusses what they will do to improve writing, and the liaison drafts a proposal. Different departments do different things to implement a writing plan. The original plan is revised every two years.

This year JG was asked not to host a new department due to lack of funding.

Languages and Linguistics are in their 5th year of WEC. Their liaison resigned from the positon. A new liaison from Linguistics will take the liaison responsibilities and will work through the four steps of the WEC first year as a sub-program (6 faculty) within LLCL. The liaison is paid $3000 for his efforts, and the program will apply for up to $5000 to implement curricular changes.

Sociology, and Urban and Regional Planning are also in the process of changing liaisons.

Sustainability Indicators

Final version of Sustainability Indicators for WAC - JG reviews goals and explains how the sustainability indicators generate graphs that show if a program is independently sustainable, and what is needed to make it sustainable. FAU identified 5 goals for its mission and established SIs for each goal as well as the program overall. Each SI is operationalized on a scale of 0-6 (highest); the lowest and highest indicators are not sustainable. For a program to be fully sustainable all indicators should be in the optimum range of 2-4.

JG presented the latest revisions of the SIs, mostly focusing on a slight change in the scales from the previous draft. Jeff noted that most of the material had been previously agreed upon. JG reviews changes that were made after the previous WAC committee meeting. Committee members recommend a few additional wording changes to clarify statements. Once the SIs are finalized, they will all be posted on FAU’s WAC website. Each year the SIs will be evaluated. Summary results will be reported to the WAC committee, and selected results will be shared with the upper administration.

To gather some of the data we need to track SIs annually, we have created two surveys, one for chairs and one for faculty. Faculty questions concern specific SIs that deal with faculty perceptions. Chair questions concern issues that only a chair can determine such as what percentage of trained faculty teach WAC courses.

Need for program-wide goals:

The goals enable the program to implement the mission. They also help us determine possible gaps or problems with the current program as we operationalize each goal with SIs.

Some examples are:

* Now more WAC courses are being taught by adjuncts.
* Many departments used to teach upper division WAC courses and no longer teach them, as they are not sustainable.
* If the demographic distribution of raters is homogenous (all from a single department, it would be a problem.
* There has not yet been any formal student outcomes data from WEC departments. We anticipate such data from several departments this current semester.

Questions were answered about the SI process for new committee members.

There were also discussions about how language should change on a few SIs to better foster university-wide understanding.

JG will send out the entire document (clean from corrections) for final approval by WAC committee members. The WAC committee has approved the final version (shown during meeting) minus minor revisions. This approval is anonymous. After final approval, Claudia and JG will begin to run numbers.

In addition to explaining the SI development process for FAU, there was discussion about how this practice emerged from the recent book that Jeff and two colleagues co-wrote: *Sustainable WAC: A Whole Systems Approach to Launching and Developing Writing Across the Curriculum Programs*. Jeff explained that sustainability indicators were conceived as a process for complex systems. We apply them to WAC programs, which are not complex systems but which can benefit from the process. SIs are more useful as programs become more complex. Many small programs or programs just beginning may choose to hold off developing SIs until after they have had a chance to become more established. Virtually no WAC /WEC program is sustainable for its first 5 years because they are typically in a pilot phase during that time. JG explained that FAU has served as a case study for programs to develop SIs across the country. While we spent a little over two years developing mission, goals, and SIs, this experience has enabled Jeff to identify a strategy for future programs to spend only a semester to work through this process. Committee members agreed that a one-semester timeframe would greatly increase the likelihood that programs would undertake the formative process.