**WAC Committee Meeting: November 12, 2019**

In attendance: Jeff Galin, Claudia Amadori, Fred Bloetscher, Gail Chewing, Jason Sharples, Jamie Granger, Jaqueline Fewkes.

**Jeff Galin: Review of WAC program**

WAC program is doing well.

FAU celebrated NDOW on Oct 16. We had a great turnout for the Kossoff Award (Pen to Paper Contest). We had a total of 135 entries (last year: 43). The donors were very happy, and attended the event. Both winners (grad and undergrad) read their essays at the evening event, which was well-attended. During the day we had tables in the breezeways and activities for NDOW.

**Jeff Galin: Sustainability Indicators (SIs)**

JG made some edits on the SI.

JG created a small representations (graphs) of complete data we have collected so far and showed it to the committee.

We have only three goals that we can be graphed at this time (see charts that JG presented at the meeting). We are still awaiting complete results from Faculty and Chairs surveys.

So far administrative time and university support are sustainable, which enables us to see the WAC program overall is in a good position to sustain at this time. Jeff demonstrated with radar charts showing traits for this overall goal.

The WEC initiative is facing a few challenges:

* The School of Urban and Regional Planning (SURP) lost its liaison and decided as a department not to continue participating in WEC. They paid back the money that was allocated to their department for WEC implementation.
* Ocean and Mechanical Engineering has been trying to work with two courses to increase student engagement in writing. There has not been assessment data developed yet. Since the liaison has left the department to serve as Associate Dean, less faculty engagement has resulted.
* And, as noted, previously, the WEC initiative was asked not to initiate a new department this year because of a tough funding year.
* The liaison for Sociology went on sabbatical
* The liaison for LLCL resigned

There are some signs of success as well:

* While the department of Languages, Linguistics, and Comparative Literatures had just finished the sixth year of their program, their linguistics faculty decided to participate as a separate entity. Since they had not participated in the larger departmental discussions, we invited them to participate as if they were a new department, but with a slightly lower budget. With the return of SURP money, we can fund Linguistics at near typical levels.
* A new liaison for Sociology was appointed
* A new liaison for LLCL was appointed and is leading the new focus on linguistics as well as following through with previous departmental commitments.
* Money was recovered from (SURP) that could be reallocated to Linguistics faculty

 All the other WEC departments are doing very well.

Goal 3 is generally strong except for issues of assessment. We do not yet have data on WAC benchmarking. However, three of four departments have submitted benchmark goals. The fourth should be forthcoming. Typically, departments take the means of two years of data to establish baseline scores to benchmark each trait. Then they select one or more traits to target for improvement and increase those scores by at least .2 points on a 4-point scale to achieve statistical significance and account for differences among pools of students evaluated. Furthermore, departments set percentages of students they hope will meet or exceed these benchmark scores. If they are unsure how to set these parameters in a given year, they are set to 50% by default. Often departments set these percentages based on the importance of each trait to their curricular needs. The departments setting up benchmarks are ones that receive sufficient data each year for specific courses to benefit from using the benchmarking system to improve targeted traits from the WAC rubric. Once targeted, they enhance teaching practices in their programs to improve those traits for upcoming years.

The figure below represents an example of History’s attempt to focus on two traits for the upcoming year. They set Question 2 (Organizational Frameworks) and Question 6 (implications and consequences) as their target traits for emphasis in HIS 3150. While the benchmark scores for all other traits were set by taking the mean of scores for the past two years of student papers evaluated from sections of this course, these two were increased to raise the bar for next term. After pedagogical interventions this coming Spring, they will reexamine benchmarks to see if the interventions have had a significant impact.



* Raters distribution is about 60% English, which is appropriate because of the outsized role English plays in the WAC curriculum. Student participation in WAC assessment has improved (65% return versus previous 40%) due to multiple reminders.

Goal Five: Faculty and Student Recognition:

* Last year we did very well in recognizing faculty. We hosted a WEC Recognition Ceremony alongside the Student Publication Ceremony. During this event, five WEC faculty were recognized. In the future, we need to come up with different ways of recognizing faculty, as the faculty who have been recognized in 2018 will probably not attend the same event. A long term goal for our WAC program is to acknowledge efforts to teach WAC courses through recognition in the tenure and promotion process like OURI has established for undergraduate research.

WAC web page: Changes were made by JG (Shown during the meeting).

JG describes changes to SI that have been made to the WAC website.

This formative assessment process of using Sustainability Indicators was developed as part of a book that Jeff and two colleagues wrote and published in March of 2018. Since the publication of that book and a follow-up article, several schools across the country are beginning to implement this same process. In addition, Jeff co-led an international WAC institute this past summer in Denver on building sustainable WAC programs, will help facilitate the same institute this coming summer, and will co-lead a follow-up workshop for graduates of the institutes at the International WAC conference. Finally, Jeff is a co-PI on a grant from the National Council of Teachers of English with his co-authors with representatives from six universities/colleges across the country that are working to implement the Whole Systems Approach advocated in the book, *Sustainable WAC: A Whole Systems Approach to Developing and Sustaining Writing Across the Curriculum Programs*. This consortium of programs will be presenting on their first year of collaboration at the upcoming IWAC conference this summer.

In explain the SI charts to the committee, Jeff noted that some reviewers and institute participants asked why not use bar graphs rather than the radar charts? The concept of SI comes from ecology. They are typically used to track indicator species in environments that are under heavy human use to show if the species are maintaining sustainable levels. The two circles in the charts show the Band of Equilibrium (donut shape) within acceptable sustainability boundaries. Such charts work better than bar graphs to show how multiple traits together paint a picture of sustainability or not. If more than one or two traits are on a border or outside sustainable range, then changes need to be made in the system to increase projected program longevity. One can also cluster traits together to better reorganize how related traits are impacted by each other. By placing explanations of these practices on FAU’s website, with templates, and explanations, others working on this kind of analysis can more easily make use of this set of practices.

JG has also been involved in establishing the Association of Writing across the Curriculum (AWAC) for the past several years. It was officially incorporated as a non-profit last year and currently has aprox. 300 members. FAU paid for an institutional membership last year and will do so again this year, which provides memberships for 6 FAU faculty, an Instructor, and a graduate student. The WAC committee has first dibs and then other faculty members across campus can assume the other slots remaining. Individual membership is $50 per person, or $250 for institutional membership. JG would like to include some faculty and asks who might be interested.

The writing fellows program for last year was a wash for several reasons. A graduate student was eager to create the program and test its viability, but she was not really prepared to manage it sufficiently. In addition, tutors were hired too late to get students from the selected courses, so match-ups were not strong. We have identified one department – political science- and we have a dedicated political science writing center consultant. We previously had a Languages consultant in the UCEW. We will track how well these consultants do with the disciplines that pay for their positions.

JG asked what happened to the WAC certification for courses in Lingua? (Jacqueline). It has not affected many students for now/not a high priority issue. JG: this is something that is worth addressing.

All WAC courses are also Gordon Rule and as such they have to be certified by the State as Gordon Rule. Do we want to vote on having thesis courses in lingua be accepted as WAC classes at FAU? Should we designate them as WAC? The committee decided more information was warranted before a vote was taken.

JG will follow up with the State before deciding/voting on this. If the State says ok to it, we must figure out a way to assess them. We assess the syllabi and papers.

Questions?

Claudia Amadori shows committee the new (revised) Google Form for the re-certification process of miscellaneous departments (all department except English, History and Philosophy). The questions have been streamlined. Committee wants to move “Approved/ Approved with Revisions” to the end of the form and eliminate “Not Approved.” The committee discusses reasons for discrepancies in the results of last year English syllabi re-certification (i.e. different members reading the same syllabus and marking different issues); part of this is due to syllabi being very different in the location of information. The committee discussed how to improve the process: it was suggested that we could send a copy of the WAC checklist to faculty when we request syllabi. This would give them an opportunity to review their syllabi before sending them to the WAC committee. We also discussed reading the entire syllabus versus searching for specific key words.

After the discussion the committee had a norming session of three syllabi from last year’s re-certification. We read the syllabi and discussed our finding. We agreed on the results. JG will follow-up with faculty who could not attend this norming process to help them prepare for the recertification process.

CA will send the quota of syllabi to committee members as soon as she has everyone’s syllabi and before the end of the semester.