**Spring 2014 WAC Committee meeting**

**Friday, January 31, 2014**

**GS 214B**

**Present:** Dan Murtaugh, Ellen Ryan, Allen Smith, Rachel Luria (phone), Joe Su, Julia Mason, Fred Bloetscher, Jeff Galin, Julianne Curran

**Absent:** none

**I. Update on state of the university in regards to WEC proposal**

**JG** reported that FAU will potentially be among the universities within the SUS that will lose up to 1% of next year’s budget because of underperformance, namely in terms of our 6-year graduation rate.

This will probably have implications for our WEC proposal; perhaps we might consider starting with one department for the first year instead of two.

The committee discussed whether tying the WEC initiative to student retention would be a valid connection. Points raised included whether we know the reasons *why* retention is low and whether the fact that a lot of resources are directed to helping “at-risk” students and not average or higher-level students. **JG** again brought up the possible connection to the QEP. **JS** believes that if FAU can encourage students early on to get involved in publishing their work in available forums, then students will be engaged and excited about their work at FAU and would have incentive to stay through the upper division. **JG** pointed out that ultimately such publishing opportunities or goals would be determined by an individual department, but WEC could ask the department about how it would want to get students involved. In the end, most decisions are left to the department.

**JG asked the committee if we should proceed with the proposal despite possible university-wide budget cuts or move forward unfunded, probably with just one department. The committee backs asking for support for two departments a year, although FB noted that it would be helpful to have a “success story” to show to Provost and/or other potential departments.** A one-department per year model for the first year can be a default model, in which case it would be important to pick a department that is invested and can be an example of a relatively fast success. **In the next month, JG and JC hope to meet with another 10 departments and assume that we will then be presenting the proposal to the Provost.**

**JS** reminded the committee of previous discussion about developing an advisory committee for WEC comprised of community/professional stakeholders. **JG** confirms desire to do this, but wants university buy-in first.

**II. Update on Faculty Learning Community**

**FB** shared his curriculum map for his senior design course, reiterating how the maps *must* be department-specific because of variation in goals and curriculum. **JG** explained how each department will use its existing assessment process to show a baseline of skills, collect new data with WEC, and determine as a department whether to make curricular changes. Eventually, the WEC process will be connected to university-wide assessment; members of TASL are supportive of the WEC initiative for this reason. The FLC is working on individual curriculum maps, and one of these may potentially be used to show departments and faculty what the WEC process might look like on a small scale.

**III. WEC Proposal letters to the Provost and Department Chairs and**

The committee reviewed drafts of the WEC proposal letter to the Provost and the WEC description/meeting request letter to department chairs. **[At this meeting, the bodies of the letters were virtually identical. They are now different letters with more appropriate tone for the intended audiences. These new drafts will be shared with the committee.]** Generally, the committee advised to keep the letters short and direct, attaching supplementary documents as needed. It questioned whether to try to tie WEC to retention, but is hesitant to do this since it is not sure if there is a strong correlation. Similarly, the committee is hesitant to position retention as a goal of WEC since the primary goal is the generative curricular changes within a department. The committee does not want to risk the support for or longevity of the program if it does not impact retention.

**Provost proposal letter: The committee suggested removing some of the background information and highlighting the aims of fostering student success, creating departmental curriculum maps, and possibly encouraging student retention and publication.**

**Department Chair proposal letter: The committee suggested making the letter less “WAC-centric” and including rationale for WEC.**

**Department Chair revisable letter of support: The committee suggested that the letter should be addressed to JG, not Provost. It should focus more on WEC than WAC and it should highlight the discipline-specific nature of WEC.**

Rather than create an additional description letter addressed to faculty members, **FB** suggested providing faculty members with a WEC description/process outline and an example of the products, such as a curriculum map from the FLC or a writing plan from UMN.

**IV. Revisions to WAC Assessment rubric**

**JG** explained the changes to the assessment rubric based on the 2012-2013 rating process. There are language changes and additions in some of the categories. A significant difference is that the section of “Presentation and Citation format” has been combined with “Disciplinary Conventions.” Raters have had a history of complications distinguishing what constituted “Disciplinary Conventions” if citation/format was not a criterion. The combined section is called “Disciplinary Conventions.” A rubric that shows the additions/deletions from the rubric will be shared with the committee and forwarded to UUPC for approval.