**WAC Committee meeting
Thursday, November 6, 2014
2:00-4:00 in GS 214B**

**Present**: Daniel Murtaugh, Fred Bloetscher, Allen Smith, Joe Su, Jeff Galin, Julianne Curran
**Absent**: Julia Mason, Joy McClellan, Rachel Luria

**1. Update on PHI 2010 Re-Certification**

**JG** summarized an email message from Mike Harris (**MH**) updating the committee regarding a particular instructor’s PHI 2010 syllabus. At the last meeting, **MH** spoke about committee concerns surrounding the syllabus. The WAC committee made it clear at the last meeting that all students must revise their written work, which was not made clear by the syllabus. Since then, **MH** has spoken to the faculty member about matters of revision. In the email to **JG**, **MH** said that conversations indicate that the response to this request is not mechanical and there appears to be revision taking place in the writing in these courses.

**JG will ask MH to please have the faculty member submit a revised syllabus for committee review in advance of the spring 2015 semester.**

**2. Writing-Enriched Curriculum update in Languages, Linguistics, and Comparative Literatures**

**JG and JC** have learned a lot about how this process works and how we may need to adjust our strategies. **JG** showed the committee some of the M1 data presentation and described the “M” conversations thus far.

To date, the LLCL department has drafted a list of “Characteristics” of writing in that discipline as well as a list of “Desired Writing Abilities” for its majors. Currently, we are asking LLCL faculty to fill out worksheets for each of their courses that identify what Abilities that course addresses and at what level (Exposure/Skill-Building/Intensive). **The committee looked at the drafted lists and curriculum worksheet.**

**JG** sent the LLCL faculty an example departmental curriculum map from the QEP materials to show them how the process of curriculum mapping can help identify abilities that are unsupported at various places in the curriculum.

After the curriculum mapping process, the LLCL department liaison will draft the writing plan narrative, which will be submitted to and reviewed and approved by the WAC Committee in advance of its implementation in 2015-16.

**The WAC Committee will need to determine an approximate deadline for the proposal near the end of the Spring term so that the committee can review/approve it and the department can make plans for the following fall of 2015.**

**JG** explained the WEC initiative to the President and Provost when they visited the English department, suggesting it as a potential pillar of the president’s “pillar or platform” approach to strategic planning. If we proceed with WEC, **JG** would like to approach an Engineering department next, seeing the value in presenting the administration with models of two different kinds of disciplines.

**FB** said that his department was not looking to make big curricular changes, but would be interested in learning ways to strengthen the scaffolding of the existing curriculum. **JS** also expressed that his chair would be interested in this since ABET [professional credentialing] is completed, but is currently traveling.

**JG sought input from the committee about procedures for moving forward with WEC. He will contact the chairs from Civil and Ocean/Mechanical Engineering to re-initiate the WEC conversation and see if they are interested in being the next pilots in fall 2015.**

**3. Follow up Re: required TA training for TAs who teach WAC courses.**

The committee revisited the idea for a mandated training program for TAs who teach WAC courses, which had been brought up in Spring 2012 and Fall 2013.

**JG asked the committee if it still wanted to pursue this, and if so, how and when.**

Discussion among the committee ensued. **FB** suggested framing the idea as something that the department will do that will be useful for both the TAs and the department. **AS** asked what would happen if the TAs do not participate in training and highlighted the idea that if the TAs have the responsibility to grade something, then they should understand how to do it. **JG** explained that thus far there have been no consequences for TAs who do not participate in the semester-ly WAC training. **JS** raised the question of the Graduate College’s TA training, but it may no longer be running and **JG** expects that material covered in it would be broader than what WAC is interested in.

**The previously drafted training criteria include the following: (material from Spring 2012 in italics)**

***The committee discussed what elements should be included or required as part of a training program. The following were agreed upon with relevant considerations (when applicable):***

***TAs must have:***

* ***Commenting and Grade norming***
* ***Validated working knowledge/understanding of grammar****.* ***Training and support must be provided when needed.*** *(WAC guidelines for 2000-4000 level courses need to be amended to require a system for students to track their patterns of error in their writing.)*
* ***Working knowledge/understanding of a rubric****. WAC**is hesitant to mandate developing rubrics. WAC’s rubric is a starting place, but departments need to adjust for their needs/goals.*
* ***Ability to read academic texts/discourse******as a window into writing.*** *TAs need to be able to map a text’s argument in their discipline to help students use texts to respond thoughtfully and begin to engage in disciplinary conversations. “Reading skills” as a content requirement could be perceived as diluting writing, so “Reading and Writing Argument and Analysis” is better phrasing, since not all writing includes argument. Reading, analyzing, and writing field notes and data are more relevant than argument in some disciplines.*
* ***Classroom management training to deal with difficult students or situations.***

**Nov. 2014 The Committee determined that this issue is still worth pursuing. Before finalizing a list of training subjects from WAC, JG will contact the main departments affected, solicit their input as to what TA support is offered at the departmental level, whether they are satisfied with it, and what material should such a TA WAC-training workshop should encompass. He will report back to the committee in the spring.**