**Writing Across Curriculum Committee meeting minutes**

**Friday, March 4, 2022**

**Present:** Fred Bloetscher, Jamie Granger, Jason Sharples, Rina Bousalis, Juilanne Zvolensky, Jeff Galin

**Absent:** Clevis Headley, Atensia Earp-Bowen, Rachel Luria

**Writing Enriched Curriculum**

WAC has been working with the Writing Enriched Curriculum program for 10 years.

FAU gave the program enough money for WEC to work with one department a year, but this pace has not been a way to build the program very substantially.

Each department had its own set of complexities to navigate, such as changes in liaisons, pausing the implementation due to matters like faculty searches, or having difficulty getting viable data. There were also some departments who expressed interest in participating and then backed out at the last minute. Then when COVID happened, it further complicated the already complex situations.

WAC has tried twice for a writing-related QEP proposal, but neither version of the QEP proposals were accepted.

JGalin: I think that WEC is a powerful program, but it is not taking off at FAU.

**The question for the WAC committee is whether the committee thinks that WEC is worth continuing or if we should move the money to another project like developing a support program for multilingual students/second language (L2) students.**

FBloetscher: It may be an uphill battle to propose a new program; no one really knows where the direction of FAU is going; FAU and its budgets in addition to remote working makes things harder.

JSharples: It has been hard to recruit programs; he understands JGalin’s assessment of WEC being unsustainable and it seems to be the case. He is excited to discuss a multilingual/L2 program and has some thoughts on it, but for the conversation now, yes, WEC seems unsustainable

JGranger: agrees regarding WEC and that moving to a multilingual/L2 program might be a way to shift.

JGalin: We gave WEC a good try and had good things come out of it. We could potentially keep working with one department per year, but it doesn't seem to be productive.

RBousalis: Did you see the results with WEC to see how it was working? That would give you some insight.

JGalin: described the kind of work that some of the WEC departments did. For example, Sociology did a big restructure of almost its entire curriculum. Other depts did very little. Ultimately, WEC didn’t get the kind of assessment data that it needed. Even though we had great results with some depts, we had others drop out at some point during the seven year process. Maybe half of the departments that started ever finished.

**The committee members present voted and determined that WAC should no longer continue the WEC program. While it might be a program to reconsider in the future if circumstances or interests change, for now it is time to move on.**

**The discussion turned to JGalin’s proposal for the Multilingual Student Support Program (MSSP).**

Rationale: why propose this program?

JGalin: WAC does not want to lose the portion of its budget that was dedicated to WEC, so there is an opportunity to develop a new program. Even though last year’s QEP proposal was not selected, there seemed to be interest in one of its elements – a Center for Visual and Digital Learning. However, the most logical space to house such a center would have been in the library’s space that is being redeveloped for an artificial intelligence lab, but the parties involved didn’t seem interested.

In December 2021, Michelle Crow visited FAU and gave a presentation about multilingual students. Crow is the founding director of Cornell University’s English Language Support Office in its Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines. Galin and Crow met with the deans of the Graduate College and of Undergraduate Studies; the Graduate dean was excited about the prospect of a similar program at FAU. Galin has since spoken with several programs across the university, listed at the top of the [Multilingual Student Proposal Program proposal](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cfZxOW0iTE4DySmh9t76xVRdBZZIyuFV/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=115041811479791265229&rtpof=true&sd=true). The only concerns about the idea seemed to come from the Center for Global Engagement –They were concerned that it seemed too big of a program. They said they would contribute by possibly offering a GTA who could help develop a workshop or two. Since the Intensive Language Institute does not serve matriculated students and the CGE does not provide academic support for international students, there is no overlap in their programing at this time of the proposed initiative. Also, they do not work with resident multilingual students; just international.

JGalin believes that yes, it is a big project, but thinks it is doable if we can move forward and get an assistant director to run it.

JSharples Regarding hiring the assistant director – it seems like that person would be extremely important for the success of this program. My concern is that a “post doc” is like a holding pattern position, that the person might only be in the role for a short time. It seems like a serious job for an underpaid position for someone who might have other priorities.

FBloetscher asked whether the MSSP proposal builds on the QEP proposal?

JGalin explained that it is not the same as the QEP. The MSSP will not be working with departments and will not be working with all students. It will be providing resources that did not get addressed by the QEP at all, and would be a much smaller scale of a program.

FBloetscher: how do you imagine the MSSP working?

JGalin explained that everyone with whom he has spoken seems excited about the prospect. There are multilingual students and there are also international students. Often, these students don’t have some of the cultural references for institutional things like documents, presentations, etc. A multilingual student might know what these things are and need some help with them; some international students might not be familiar with them at all.

Right now this proposal is for a one-year pilot program ***[after committee discussion, the proposal will probably be for a two-year pilot]***. Hence why the assistant director position is labeled as a postdoc position. An advantage to advertising the role as a postdoc is that ideally you would get someone fresh out of training (if they are language specialized) and that would also have training in teaching writing or oral communication. The position does not have to be a postdoc; it could be a part-time instructor. Ultimately, the MSSP is not about helping a student to “fix” language. It is about helping students be successful in their current programs. Classes in the program would initially be for graduate students. It would also develop workshops for faculty and undergraduate students. Finally, the UCEW would enhance its practices and services for this.

JGranger: how would students learn about it or sign up?

JGalin: We would market workshops. When we develop the course series, we’d have to determine whether they would be for some kind of course credit, variable credit or no credit. We would market directly to departments and colleges. For example, we may target a science course and focus the MSSP course on the sciences, etc. Or we could market to students openly, like offering a “Preparing to Write” course and invite students to sign up on a first-come, first-serve basis. Marketing might be distributed through college deans, department chairs, and word of mouth.

There seems to be some overlaps in other programs. There is a new “Workplace Readiness” mandate being considered in Florida. The Career Center is making new modules in light of it. Perhaps in the future some of those expectations from the state in terms of communication can be met through this Multilingual Student Support Program.

At FAU, the [RISE Program (Reaching Individual Success and Empowerment)](https://www.fau.edu/firstgen/rise/#riseprogram) is geared toward first generation students. Students who complete 4-6 modules get stipends for completing them. Perhaps we can integrate with them as well.

RBousalis: I support this idea – there are so many multilingual students who are training to be teachers.

JGalin: We can find out more about our students through the survey and existing data on campus.

All of the WAC committee is pointing out how support for multilingual students is limited at this time; but there are places we can tap into like workplace readiness, like RISE program, like potential donor….This could be an easy target for external funding as a named center because of so many multilingual alumni. We need to be realistic about long term costs.

JSharples raised the issue of a postdoc position being too short of a time because it seems like the person running the program would need a special knowledge set. It seems like in order to start, we really need someone who knows what they are doing.

JGalin discussed the difference between postdoc vs. ½ time instructor. This position would be a teaching/administrative position rather than research per se. The person would get half salary from the program and half from a department

JSharples withdraws concern Re: the candidate being postdoc now that he understands the proposed amount would only be half the person’s salary. Added that it seems that it would take two years to go from a conceptual pilot to an actual operating program. The job would have to be a minimum of two year commitment.

FBloetscher: how are you going to create the target audience?

JGalin: For the pilot in the summer it will be a very targeted set of students because we can’t make the program big with someone brand new running it. We would start with graduate students. And the graduate dean wants to start this summer so he would help me identify departments to contact; we’d probably start with targeting engineering and sciences.

***JGalin had to leave the meeting and invited the committee to discuss their concerns and recommendations they have about the proposal and vote whether you support it. Please be critical and honest – if you don’t think a good idea we will not pursue…but it has some potential.***

After Jeff left the meeting, the conversation continued. Jeff read the notes below and responded to the questions raised after the fact. His comments are blue.

JGranger thinks it is great idea but is concerned regarding where the students come from and the matter of the postdoc position.

JG Like the programs at Toronto, University of WIsconsin, and Cornell, the students would be self-selecting. The program would emphasize international and multilingual graduate students to start, offering short courses that would help them complete their coursework more effectively and better prepare them for job readiness when they are done. If we extend the pilot to 2 years as Fred recommended, we are likely to find a strong postdoc to commit, but if not, I am pretty certain we can find an instructor to work ½ with the Multilingual Student Support Program and ½ with a department like Languages and Linguistics, English, or other.

FBloetscher: How many students are we going to try to serve – answering this question may drive determination of what college or department to start with. How many students are we trying to serve at one time?

For the summer, very few, just a small class of about 12-15 and a few workshops; if you look at the bottom of the proposal, you will see the timeline for rolling out larger support resources. Ultimately, we would like to support as many students and there is a need, but for the pilot, it will be limited.

If we are only focusing on one demographic, how many will we serve?

Once we have the data on the number of multilingual students at FAU at the graduate and undergraduate levels and gather the data from the surveys, we will have more information on the potential numbers. The key here is that these programs cannot scale to serve all students on campus because multilingual students have special needs and goals that will not serve the larger population. If we get an external donation to fund the program long term, we can scale the program.

What is the metric? The outcome that we are going to try to measure?

Some possible metrics are:

* 4- year graduation rate
* 6-year graduation rate
* Bachelors Degrees Awarded to Minorities
* DFW rates
* Median wages of bachelors graduates employed full-time 1-year after graduation
* Percentage of degrees without excess hours
* University access rate?
* Percent of Bachelor’s Enrolled in the U.S. 1 year after Graduation
* 4-year New Florida AA Transfers Graduation Rate

JGranger: micro vs macro level of outcomes

Assessing the program itself will come from student and faculty evaluations of courses/workshops, impact on student progress and success in programs, and faculty perceptions of impact on their students.

What other suggestions do you have?

RBousalis: the proposal does not explain what it is going to do for students? Better at writing emails? That is not enough info. More explaining in proposal like what is House Bill #X? What will it do for the students?

It will enable students to gain more confidence in their written and oral communications as well as improve the quality of their scholarly work to enable them to gain access to the jobs and higher levels of education they desire.

FBloetscher: There are basic communication issues dealing with graduate students…. Biggest challenge = ability to put together thesis is lacking….

Trying to figure out if there is a mechanism trying to address writing issues and ability to do research and peer review journals….

Is this a mechanism to get buy-in from faculty? It is not as much the international but the multilingual?

Buy in from faculty will come from discussion with chairs and departments as well as the faculty survey. There are already many departments that are struggling with this issue and are eager to get more support: Engineering (most programs), Social Work, School of Education, several sciences, Languages and Linguistics, Business, etc.

It is for both international and multilingual students at all levels and across all nationalities/ethinic identities whose first language is not English.

JSharples: It seems like what is crucial is doing the surveys and getting feedback from faculty.

**We need info from Fac Re: which aspects are in most need of being addressed**

Perspective on multilingual will depend on college/faculty colleagues and how they perceive the matter.

JGranger concurs with JSharples. Survey would be a good component.

JSharples was concerned that survey is coming too late after we hired a postdoc. Proposed to do a survey first then get a postdoc hired; have the potential postdoc candidate look at survey results. Ideally, take things slower.

The surveys come first. I have most of a draft of the student survey ready and the faculty survey should be ready for your review by next week. The committee will see them both and offer feedback before they go out. Please note that the schedule for the pilot rollout is provided at the bottom of the proposal.

FBloetscher – is there info about how many L2 use UCEW – i.e. how will this be different from what is already offered?

There are several major differences in what the new services would offer that we do not currently have.

* First of all, our consistent previous policies for working with multilingual students need to be revamped. We have treated all students the same way, not taking into consideration the different needs of international and multilingual students.
* We need to develop new policies, new practices, and new training for all staff as well as train specifically qualified staff to work with multilingual students, particularly graduate students
* We have no additional training at all for international students nor specific support for the kinds of special concerns they have from the general population. We need specialists in second language acquisition who are working on or have acquired their PhDs to work with graduate students. More importantly, we need graduate student consultants in the sciences, social sciences, business, arts and letters, and for several departments, including one or more engineering departments.
* We currently see a range of multilingual students at the UCEW. I provide below the data from August to today. However, we could significantly increase these numbers with dedicated and specially trained consultants. Note that 22% of our clients are currently multilingual based on the data just from this current academic year.



JGranger – what kind of data is collected at the UCEW?

I am not sure how to answer this question. We have lots of kinds of data. Perhaps the data above is the most pertinent

JZvolensky – idk if L2 ino is specifically collected…potentially self-reported by students

IEA will be able to tell me this. I put in a ticket last week, but they need me to separate it into three tickets once I have the surveys complete. So, I hope to do that next week.

JSharples: Questions surrounding funding… 10K? Where is the money coming from? How would it be split across college?

10k is the cost of half-time GTA from the college or specific department who wants to have one of their graduate students trained to work with written or oral communication with their graduate students. This costs covers 10 hours a week for three terms, Fall, Spring, and Summer. It will vary from college to college. Some colleges may choose to provide more than one. Some departments may choose to do so as well. Several have done this during the WEC initiative.

Ie – equitable contributions from college? Ie how many international students in College A vs College B? Or How big is College A budget vs College B?

This is not really a concern because only those colleges and departments who have needs will want to participate. There is no mandate to participate

FBloetscher – buy in – how do you help faculty – vs let us help your students – here is how it helps faculty by helping students…

As the proposal suggests, there will be workshops specifically designed for faculty, course materials, assignment strategies, and a range of handouts available from other institutions across the country. Faculty will NOT be able to mandate that students participate in the courses that are provided but can refer students to consulting services in writing and oral communication.

JGranger – and this can follow the survey info.

***FBloetscher: the four committee members present agree that the MSSP proposal is a good thing; the consensus is that we like the idea but the proposal needs some questions answered that will help with buy-in from deans. This idea has legs; the questions aren’t monstrous and seem straightforward.***

**FBloetscher: There are only 8 weeks until summer… perhaps the best way is to trickle through the summer to get it started and really hit a full launch in the fall ….**

**At least 2 academic years; 5 semesters / 2 AY with a summer in middle**

**I will extend the pilot in the proposal to two years. The graduate Dean was hoping for a pilot this summer. I would like to be able to give that to him if possible, even if it is only a small start.**

***The meeting essentially ended but a couple members stayed behind to discuss the Recertification process of English syllabi:***

FBloetscher’s main observation is that some syllabi are more standard than they have been in the past, but some are NOT WAC/do not reflect the WAC criteria.

***Discussion about WAC’s decision to only give reviewers two choices: Approved or Approved with revisions.***

JZvolensky explained this was born out of the challenges that she and Claudia Amadori have faced in interpreting the reviews – what would be the “threshold” for the difference between “Approved” and “Approved with Revisions”? Or between “Approved with Revisions” and “Not Approved”? A certain number of missing criteria? A certain type of missing criteria? What happens when one reviewer says “Approved with Revisions and the other says “Not Approved”? *The three options left too much guesswork for us, though perhaps our new “single review/team review” approach might resolve this problem.*

JZvolensky explained that she did not know whether there was a summary report sent to the English department in the last review or whether the results were just sent to individual faculty. ***It may be that she will need to write such a summary to the department and call attention to the patterns that the committee is noticing across a majority of syllabi so that the department can address it as a program rather than by each faculty member.***

FBloetscher: commented that the shift to E-learning and the general visual optics/format of syllabi has improved a lot of syllabi.

Example of a WAC item that is difficult to interpret: the feedback item – either A: WAC gives more guidance on how we want something like feedback to be represented in the syllabus or B: WAC needs to adjust the language of item/criteria.

Especially in summer/6 week courses there seem to be questions about the number of assignments – do the revisions count as a new assignment? What are the requirements for summer term? Is it the same or different requirements as WAC?

Point out to faculty that we are not trying to make your syllabus harder to build with the WAC language. Rather, WAC criteria help give language for the course expectations thus enabling faculty to put more of their focus on building the course schedule and assignments.