2013-14 FACULTY SENATE
GRADUATES STUDIES POLICIES COMMITTEE
MINUTES
18 February 2014
Approved 3/4/14

Members Present: Ed Barakatt, Ann Blanton, Geni Cowan, Tracy, Hamilton, Julian Heather, Sheri Hembree, Jonathan Kaplan, Christine Miller, May Reddick, Ken Sprott, Rob Wassmer

Members Absent:

Guests: Chevelle Newsome, Lori May

1. **Call to order:** Called to order at approximately 8:30 a.m.

2. **Minutes of 04 February 2014:** Approved 02/18/14

3. **Information Items:** Credit hour definition on the Executive Committee agenda today. Pia Wong, chair of CPSP, approved the small changes and thanked the GSPC for continuing to examine the language.

4. **Report from Dean of Graduate Studies:** Nothing to report at this time.

5. **Report from Statewide Senator Chris Miller:**

   Statewide – In regards to Title V changes to Master's degree language: The Asst. Vice Chancellor asked that it not be discussed until the deans had met. Deans met and approved language changes to blended course requirements. Grad uate deans said that 60% of the coursework needs to be graduate level work in blended (undergrad/grad) courses. As an FYI, statewide senate used to sit on items of business if they were in draft form. Now, they're trying to disseminate information on what's being considered for campuses to discuss. Business items come to the senate executive committee, then exec sends them to other committees to consider. Because the language is still in draft form, it's likely that faculty senates voting on them is problematic, so items of business going to committees is probably the best way for them to be considered. There are 2 more statewide meetings in this academic year and if things don't pass, they die. So we'll see what comes forward by the April meeting.

6. **New Business**

   Tracy: GWAR – San Marcos model. Added line 2 with a Title V reference. Sections 3 and 4 put together by Geni describing the first part of the 2-step process,

taking out the culminating experience. Diagnosis, then paper or GWI or another equivalency. Section 5 hasn't changed from before. The rubric from San Marcos included for purposes of discussion. Took out the remediation plan.

Chris: Maybe it should include a date for when programs need to comply with policy so implementation doesn't drag on.

Jonathan: Question on item 4, early assessment should be done no later than the end of second semester. Half-way through their program? The idea is to address writing early to save the student and state from supporting half a program.

Tracy: Some of the options are to have it done before they start the program. 2nd week of semester is what I'd want.

Geni: I put it in because I saw it some place else and because we have a GWI course in the second semester.

Tracy: But GWI is the second step.

Julian: Second semester doesn't give enough time to diagnose, and 'remediate'. It doesn't give enough time to complete this kind of process within 2 years.

Tracy: It could be done by the end of student's first semester of classified status.

Julian: For classified status, you can't submit the forms until the end of the first semester. Timing is an issue.

Jonathan: Sometimes the form for classified status and advancement to candidacy go in at the same time.

Geni: For us, the GWI is what's submitted and we don't have that done until end of second semester.

Tracy: Then you would need to do a writing sample.

Geni: I could suggest it. By doing that, we would require the writing sample to receive more attention.

Tracy: We do a writing assessment.

Jonathan: A writing sample must have some bearing on how students are judged as ready or that they have potential to succeed. This is all administrative, there's a policy, but you must have a process.

Tracy: That's the end result, that everyone has a process.

Chris: Each department will provide data on what their numbers are, but this speaks to Jonathan's question. The issue is what do you do with what you learn about a student? What is the result?

Jonathan: That's what WASC wants to see. What happens?

Chris: Can write their way out of a paper bag, can't write their way out of a paper bag, is not the point. It may or may not affect admission, it's just what does the department do next.

Jonathan: We think of the assessment as a key part of our process, we find out where they are, then we work with them.

Chris: In our Ddepartment, bad writing that means we won't admit them. We have candidates who can write. That's what our initial step tells us.

Tracy: My initial reading is that the first step is very loose, something that makes sense in the department. Step 2 is where we hold everyone to a more specific standard. It's still within the discipline, but there's more of a universal standard.

Julian: Why don't we leave the date out? What we get form the department is the whole plan.

Julian: We set the steps and say that it needs to be finished early in a student's program.

Geni: My concern is that some departments will interpret it as doing the steps early if they do it before graduation. Without some parameters, it's too loose.

Jonathan: Why don't we just require a writing sample?

Geni: But then we're using the writing sample as an admissions criteria.

Ed: We could use the GRE.

Geni: If we had a parameter, it puts an endpoint to shoot for and all the programs would know that, regardless of what they chose to do, they have 'til then to do it.

Jonathan: Alternatively, a department could admit someone conditionally until they satisfy that the writing has come up to standard.

Mary: Doesn't it change the nature of the requirements, if each department can decide what the sample is? Some could have paragraphs, some could have a major paper.

Gani: I'm still concerned about writing as a condition for admission. I think we're better off letting the programs define their own assessment. As long as it's done by this date, they get to decide their own process.

Tracy: But earlier provosts have objected to admitting students who were not able to do the work and remediation is expensive.

Ken: The early assessment cannot be used as the only criteria for judging admissions.

Ed: It's a part of the process but not a criterion for admission.

Chris: Then in the first course of the program, the students have to take an hour out of the class and they write.

Tracy: That's what I would do. One of the first core classes has to have time out for writing. A program can do step 1 early. However they want to do it, just done by this time. The rubric is for step 2. Step 1 is not a pass-fail. You do it and the department decides what to do with the results.

Chris: Step 1 is baseline. Step 2 is assessment.

Tracy: We want to keep those writing samples to compare them, and that's the data for WASC, the results.

Sheri: Essentially, you're taking the place of the WPG. The faculty is taking the place of the qualifying test.

Tracy: That's how we present it, that the departments can control what they do. How about in terms of timing? By the end of the first semester?

Chris: The semester idea assumes the students are taking a full load. I like the unit idea. If you take more time to get through, it accounts for that.

Tracy: You really want it the first semester they're here.

Jonathan: I still see my department requiring the writing sample, then needing the students to got to a class since we don't have a GWI course. We're going to have to arrange our schedule differently to account for that.

Julian: What't the earliest you can advance to candidacy?

Tracy: At 40% completion of the program units.

Ken: Then you have to have assessment done before 20% of the units are completed.

Tracy: In a 30 unit program, that's 6 units.

Ken: Right, for some students that's before the end of the first semester. It could be 3 units of coursework and 3 units of remediation. Can we also add some language that says if students have been shown to satisfy the requirements in step 2, they skip step 1?

Tracy: That could be one of the equivalencies, like the GRE score.

Jonathan: Or something form a U.S. accredited foreign university.

Mary: So at the end, the departments send their data to the grad dean.

Jonathan: Who will then give feedback on how to approve the assessment.

Chris: That feedback should include something like 'departments are encouraged to use this data as part of the data a program puts in its program review'. But I'm not sure we want this in program review. On the other hand, to satisfy WASC, we need to show progress toward a doctoral culture, but grad programs aren't doing program review.

Mary: We're not going to pass this program and people will automatically send this information. So it should go in policy language.

Chevelle: If you put it in policy, that's what we'll do.

Chris: Hate to put more work on grad coordinators as they no longer receive assigned time, but there should be a way to keep this data that could be easy to gather.

Jonathan: Some kind of data that gives them a hint as to how they need to change the way they assess the early writing sample. Some people may not satisfy any of the equivalencies but they still know how to write. A writing sample would prove that.

(Silence falls over the room)

Tracy: The rubric probably needs a lot of discussion. (Nodding heads.)

Jonathan: Since we have 2 steps, lets get the first step. We don't want the writing to stop admission. We want programs to do what they want, but we need departments to have some direction. Departments need to come up with a policy to assess writing early, but some departments will be upset with this in terms of workload. We need to give them direction as to why they need to assess and do it early.

Chevelle: Do we have some examples as to how departments can do this?

Geni: Provide alternatives that people can choose from. Maybe a peer consultation from departments who have a way to do it.

Chris: We may need to provide some of this information as background when it goes to Faculty Senate.

Jonathan: A GRE score below a 1 is a red flag.

Sheri: Some justification of the policy in the preamble to the policy.

Geni: The meaning of the graduate degree from this institution.

Tracy: Meaning, quality, integrity.

Chris: And the assessment requirement that we need to meet for WASC.

Chevelle: And it's submitted someplace?

Tracy: To your office.

Tracy: I like the idea that a student would have completed step 1 of the process by the time they've completed 20% of the program units.

Jonathan: 20% toward completion of the program.

Agreed: 20% rather than completion of a set number of units since some programs are long.

Ken: (Specific changes in language.) A. Divide into bullets.

Tracy: Need to be sure there are examples.

Jonathan: But also include the language to go along with the examples "includes, but not limited to." So departments don't panic that what they want to do isn't included in the examples.

Ken: In section 3, the purpose of this early assessment is to determine the student's ability or potential to successfully complete step 2.

(Discussion about formatting steps.)

Chris: When you're going to do it, what standards are used, what are you then going to do with the results?

Tracy: Alternatives for students who don't satisfy the standard. Applications iare what we're doing with the data.

Chevelle: Whether or not we have enough students who need a grad writing center could be one use of the data.

Jonathan: Or data that suggests a program has a way of teaching the students to meet the standards.

Ken: What you do with students' success, what you do for students' failure.

Julian: How do we communicate a purpose for this? We don't, we make the programs communicate how students achieve success.

Geni: The standards are the criteria. The definition of success is where along the continuum that we define a student has met the standards.

Chris: When, how, what then? The 'what then' is that if the student has a success, this happens, if the student has a failure, that happens.

Tracy: When step 1 is done and how it's done. So, reformat, bullet points, a purpose statement in section 3. I have a lot of notes that I'll pull out when I get to my office.

Jonathan: A laptop projector would help.

Tracy: I'll get one next time.

Julian: Does this apply to credential programs?

Chevelle: They have a different GWAR and this committee approved it, as it had to go through here. Deidre (Sessoms) did it and it's done.

Rob: In the second step, what happens when students don't succeed in their first attempt at the second step?

Tracy: Yes, departments need to have a policy in place for that.

Rob: But a grad writing program probably won't have the support of the provost, who would ask why we're admitting students to grad programs who can't write.

Tracy: The minimum requirement for admit into a grad program has always been that a student has a bachelor's degree.

Rob: But now we're going to have another requirement, writing. But the original intent was that everybody have a GWI course.

Tracy: But we don't have that requirement, not everybody has a GWI course.

Jonathan: Some programs don't have the resources to create one or they can't get it approved because it doesn't meet the standards. We have so many different programs with so many different needs.

Ken: The pushback was that there were alternatives, originally it meant taking the test and remediation outside of program units.

Rob: If they fail assessment, what do they do to meet the standards?

Ken: They have to assess early and then decide either to keep the student or invite them out.

Jonathan: The limit is they can't advance to candidacy until this is met.

Ed: The limit is they have to write a paper but you haven't taught them how to write a paper.

Jonathan: Students don't pass the WPG, we can't get a GWI class approved, now what?

Julian: There are resources on campus to help programs set up their writing course or writing requirement. In a way, this is making use of the resources we have rather than requiring new resources.

Rob: I'm very suspect of departments being able to police themselves. This was imposed from above because departments weren't doing this in the first place. It's too easy to just give everyone 3s.

Chris: But that's why we're doing what we're doing, because imposed from above was that GWAR was the culminating experience. We're now putting this other stuff in because that didn't work.

Tracy: I would hope that departments would hold to these standards.

Jonathan: It would be hard to imagine that departments could do the extra work on a continuing basis that lets students roll right through. They would want to have students who can meet standards.

Chris: Could Dan or someone in writing work with mechanics for writing? Some on-line program that doesn't take units out of the department? Departments could have this as a resource.

Ken: The result needs to be that, in the end, a student can meet the standard in the discipline. Maybe what we need to do is some language in the policy that each program has to show as part of their program review that they're meeting quality standards.

Jonathan: Probably need that anyway because WASC is looking to require this.

Sheri: It's not about assessment, it's about placement. What do we need to do to see that they can meet the second step?

Jonathan: Are we supposed to provide all the resources for the student to meet the standard, or does the student have to take responsibility?

Julian: The rubric's all about writing in the discipline.

Ken: The students have to place themselves in a situation that will help them to achieve the second step.

Jonathan: I watched that first episode of American Idol and a lot of people think they can sing. These students need someone to tell them that they can't write and they need to do what it takes to pick it up.

Chris: The issue was raised about the GWI approvals. I think there's a problem there and we need to solve that problem. The GWI course proposals probably need to come through this committee and then we are advisory to the curriculum subcommittee to help programs get their GWI courses approved. Build into this policy that someone is helping with these plans.

Sheri: Then we need to be somewhat specific on what qualifies as a minimum.

Tracy: San Marcus assumes that the writing in question is a research paper.

Jonathan: But there can be a significant amount of writing that isn't research.

Tracy will bring back a policy draft that takes into account today's discussion.

7. **Other Business**: There was no other business.

8. **Adjourn:** Meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:15

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Ann Blanton, Vice Chair, GSPC