

2013-14 FACULTY SENATE
GRADUATE STUDIES POLICIES COMMITTEE
MINUTES
15 October 2013
Approved 5 Nov 2013

Members Present: Barakatt, Blanton, Cowan, Hamilton, Heather, Kaplan, Reddick,
Sprott, Wassmer, Newsome

Members Absent: Hembree, Miller, May, Steinwert

Guests: Dan Melzer

1. **Call to order:** Called to order at approximately 8:30 a.m.
2. **Minutes of 17 September 2013:** Approved
3. **Information Items:**
 - a. Doors to this building will be locked with entry by key card only except for north doors, which will remain unlocked.
4. **Report from the Chair:**
 - a. Faculty Senate passed the Program Deletion Policy as modified by GSPC without discussion.
 - b. The resolution passed by the GSPC requesting that the GWAR be sent back to this committee was sent to the chair of Faculty Senate, Janet Hecsh.
 - c. Dan Melzer, chair of the Reading and Writing Subcommittee of the Curriculum Policies Committee (CPC) will be coming to this meeting this morning. He has sent out a cost proposal for a graduate student writing center that would be staffed by instructors from the social sciences, humanities, and STEM. This proposal estimates the cost of a center at approximately \$4,000.00/semester.
 - d. The chair noted that the paired course policy was written before the formation of the GSPC. CPC and Academic Affairs were supposed to review it but have not. GSPC has charge of it now.
5. **Report from Dean of Graduate Studies:**

- a. Sac State will be participating in a graduate and professional information day on 23 October, 2013. Sac State will also be hosting a table to promote the university on 26 October, 2013 at St. Mary's College.
- b. More information on Title V dealing with the percentage of courses that will count towards graduation for students who transfer in to the CSU system. Currently, it is required that students complete 50% of the necessary units to graduate in residence. The Chancellor is looking to change that to 70% in order to guard the quality of university programs.
- c. Returning to the subject of the paired course policy: The goal of this policy was to set boundaries for departments offering these courses to guard the level of academic requirements, quality control, but there was no mechanism to measure student performance in these classes so their efficacy hasn't been assessed. Possible solutions are to determine how assessment can take place and/or to limit paired courses to 100/200 levels, disallowing the pairing of graduate and undergraduate courses. Issues are:
 - i. How to determine that different levels of instruction are being provided and establishing criteria for measuring this.
 - ii. Nothing in CMS prevents a student from registering for both levels.
 - iii. There is currently no way to identify paired courses.

Some programs don't offer paired courses because it would weaken their grad programs. Some universities allow students to take paired courses at both levels. Discussion led to the committee agreeing that assessment of paired courses should focus on the depth to which topics are explored at the different levels.
- d. The Graduate Council discussed concerns about student preparation in those courses, particularly the issue of student writing competency. The Graduate Coordinators would perhaps be interested in a graduate writing center. Barakatt noted that a writing center does not address concerns about the requirements for a Graduate Writing Intensive (GWI) course, especially for program-specific writing. Dean Newsome responded with the information that the grad coordinators don't want their programs to teach writing grammar. What grad coordinators might be interested in is 'directed self-placement' – some sort of test or measure that, in conjunction with a program's GWI course, would require any given student to participate in remedial work with a graduate writing center. Another idea is to have a course offered through CCE. However, students may not be charged double fees, stateside and CCE, so another idea is a writing workshop that would be offered after the first month of any given semester.
- e. The final issue discussed on this topic was identifying paired courses, as mentioned above. Academic councils have to approve paired courses, but

apparently the courses are not being presented or approved as such. Departments are going rogue. A way to find paired courses might be searching the schedule data base to find classes at the same time in the same space. Solutions might be to give paired courses the same number so they can be identified in the system. Another could be to deny paired courses in core classes.

6. New Business

- a. Dan Melzer – came to discuss the process for the GVAR. Does GSPC want collaboration or to lead the discussion?
- b. Issues:
 - i. English 20 was meant to be the comprehensive writing program. But changing English 20 resulted in a lack of symmetry between the undergrad and graduate programs for writing remediation.
 - ii. Without the WPG as a diagnostic tool, grad coordinators feel at sea.
 - iii. The undergrad program no longer has the freshman English placement test. They are using directed self-placement. Considering using the same at the grad level.
 - iv. Chair Hamilton explained that the GSPC is not opposed to the ideas being exchanged on policy/coursework changes, but that GSPC is responsible for graduate policy and will not be handed a *fait accompli*.
 - v. If changes are made in writing policy for undergrad requirements and presented to the senate, it would be beneficial for changes in grad requirements to accompany them to present as a collaborative package, rather than piecemeal.
 - vi. Writing intensive courses that have already been approved are not subject to the GVAR policy. GSPC needs to look at GVI courses and particularly at program-specific writing.
 - vii. Does GSPC want a single course that meets writing requirements, like a technical or grammar writing course, or a series of courses developed by programs? Integrating writing throughout a curriculum, embedded writing, or a program declaring itself a GVI major.
 - viii. Dr. Melzer and his faculty are a resource for programs if GSPC decides on embedded writing.
 - ix. However, no policy will be made without consultation and feedback on preferred method of addressing writing competency. Keep the WPG in place until a new policy is ready.
 - x. The timeline may be that a draft is ready at the end of this semester with GE, CPC and GSPC participating. However, it would be better to take more time, if needed.

7. Other Business:

- a. GSPC discussed TurnItIn.com. It has serious limitations as it has specificity issues.

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

Ann Blanton, Vice-Chair, GSPC