TO: The Committee on Curriculum and Instruction (CIC)
The Executive Committee
The Academic Senate

FROM: The Writing Skills Subcommittee of CIC

SUBJECT: 14-15 CIC 41: Policy on Graduate Courses to Fulfill the University Writing Skills Requirement

PURPOSE: For Action by the Academic Senate

ACTION REQUESTED
That the Academic Senate approve the policy below for approving graduate courses to assess student writing and potentially fulfill the University Writing Skills Requirement.

Policy for Filling the University Writing Skills Requirement with Graduate Courses
Graduate programs at CSUEB may request that one of their courses be approved to assess student writing, as mandated in EO 665. Consistent with established assessment procedures, students who demonstrate writing proficiency in these courses--receiving an equivalent of CC, or clear competence--will have fulfilled the University Writing Skills Requirement. Those who do not demonstrate proficiency will have the option of taking the WST or a first-tier course, and they will fulfill the University Writing Skills Requirement when they have completed the necessary steps indicated by those results.

The Writing Skills Subcommittee of CIC shall be charged with reviewing all courses proposed to fulfill the graduation writing assessment requirement (GWAR). Given the recent approval of 14-15 CIC 12, placing a hold on students filing for graduation if they have not attempted the GWAR, proposed courses should be those ideally taken in the first term of the program. In order for a course to receive GWAR certification, students must individually produce a minimum of 4,000 – 5,000 words (15-20 pages) of prose. This may be accomplished in a combination of assignments, but must include at least one substantial piece of final draft, revised quality writing. While writing assignments should be an integral part of the course, the GWAR component will be evaluated separately, i.e. students will receive a course grade and a separate CR/NC evaluation of their writing competency. Students who receive an NC on the writing component must then take the WST or a first-tier writing course.
**Requesting GWAR Certification**

Programs or departments requesting GWAR certification for a course shall provide the following documents for the Writing Skills Subcommittee, sending electronic copies of all materials to the Office of Academic Programs and Graduate Studies. Materials shall include:

- a brief statement for the Writing Skills Subcommittee about writing expectations in the program under consideration, including the kinds of writing typically produced in the discipline
- a course syllabus with a clear statement of how students will fulfill the GWAR
- an explanation of steps that will be taken to prevent academic dishonesty, including plagiarism
- specific directions for writing assignments that will be included in the assessment
- clearly articulated criteria for the writing assignments, such as rubrics that address form, content, language, and editing
- samples of student writing identified as "passing," "marginal," and "failing" proficiency.

The Writing Skills Subcommittee will review the application documents and will make its recommendations to CIC and the Academic Senate.

**Initial Approval**

Courses that receive Senate approval can evaluate student writing for the purpose of satisfying the GWAR for one academic year. During that time, instructors will report student results to the registrar, and they will collect samples of passing, borderline, and failing student work, as well as data on the number of students who met the GWAR as a result of the course. This information will be presented to the Writing Skills Subcommittee after the first delivery of the course. On the basis of the submitted documentation, the Writing Skills Subcommittee will recommend that the Academic Senate renew or rescind approval of the course for the purpose of fulfilling the GWAR.

**Renewal Process**

After the first year, courses that have been approved for the GWAR will be reviewed every three years. When requesting renewal, statistics on the pass/fail rates for the preceding years must be provided, as well as current syllabi, writing assignments, evaluation criteria, and samples of passing, borderline, and failing assignments. Programs that provide evidence of effectively evaluating student writing will continue as approved courses. If there is evidence that the course cannot responsibly or adequately assess student writing, the Academic Senate will withdraw GWAR certification. (See addendum below for information on pilot courses.)

**Communicating USWR Results to the University**

The results of the writing assessment in approved courses shall be conveyed by the instructor as part of the end of term grading process.

Addendum: Currently, we have four courses approved during the pilot: Music 6000, MGMT 6120, EDLD 6400, and EDLD 8083, all of which are due for renewal should this proposal be approved. (PUAD 6850, approved in the pilot, has been withdrawn at the request of the program director.)