TO: The Academic Senate

FROM: Committee on Instruction and Curriculum

SUBJECT: Pilot Revision of the University Writing Skills Requirement for Graduate Programs

PURPOSE: For Action by the Academic Senate

ACTION REQUESTED: That the Academic Senate approve the following Pilot Revision of University Writing Skills Requirement for Graduate Programs; effective Fall 2010:

This pilot program would allow APGS to invite graduate programs to identify existing courses in which student writing is required and which could, consequently, satisfy the University Writing Skills Requirement (UWSR). Courses will be certified for participation by the Director of Composition (or designee). Faculty teaching these participating courses would not be expected to instruct students with deficient skills, but rather would assess competency on the basis of assignments students complete as part of their regular coursework. Graduate students who demonstrated competence as determined by faculty participating in this pilot project would have the UWSR satisfied. Students who were unable to demonstrate competence in these courses would be required to either pass the WST and/or to complete the writing courses specified in existing policies.

Results of this pilot proposal will be analyzed by the Writing Skills Subcommittee in Spring 2011 and, if successful, a new policy will be submitted to CIC and the Senate. If faculty in the pilot program request it, composition faculty would be available to consult with them about writing assignments and rubrics for assessing competence.

The purpose of this pilot program is to expand opportunities for students to satisfy the UWSR while acknowledging that writing produced over time and meeting disciplinary expectations can be a more effective measure of competence than a single on-demand sample written in response to a generic prompt. The WSS saw this pilot, which would last for one year, as providing valuable information for the reassessment and possible modification of the UWSR in the future. The WSS will provide an analysis of the pilot program to CIC in Spring 2011.

Link to 03-04 CIC 7amended:
http://www20.csueastbay.edu/faculty/senate/files/minutes/03-04-minutes/03-04%20CIC%207.UWSR%20revised%20-with%20all%20attachm.pdf

Link to Revisions for catalog copy, 2004-5, proposed by the Writing Skills Subcommittee
http://www20.csueastbay.edu/faculty/senate/files/minutes/03-04-minutes/03-04%20CIC%207.new%20WST%20Policy%202003-4.pdf

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

At its meeting on April 26, 2010, the Writing Skills Subcommittee discussed, and later voted via email to allow graduate programs to identify existing courses in which student writing is required and which could, consequently, satisfy the University Writing Skills Requirement (UWSR). At this meeting, Dianne Rush Woods, Chair of Social Work (discussant at the WSS meeting) and Ginny Lee, Graduate Coordinator of Educational Leadership (WSS member), indicated their programs’ interest in participating in this pilot.

At its meeting on May 3, 2010, CIC voted 6/1/1 to recommend this pilot program for graduate programs to identify courses within their programs to satisfy the University Writing Skills Requirement.