Members present: David Fencsik, Julie Marty-Pearson, Sally Murphy, Sarah Nielsen, Sue Opp, Margaret Rustick, Nancy White, John Whitman, Donna Wiley, Andrew Wong

Guests: Tamra Donnelly

1. Follow-up on piloting new WST prompts

The new prompt was piloted, results have been reviewed and are being sent to Sally Cooperman for evaluation and input. There are other new prompts ready to pilot, and some prompts are ready to use without piloting. Piloting would be best accomplished by testing in ENGL 1002 first. New prompts are needed by the Testing Office as soon as possible.

2. Review of first-tier portfolio policies

It is possible for a student to pass the required courses but not attain a satisfactory assessment of the portfolio. The new structure, which does not use course fees to recover the cost of portfolio assessment, is problematic. Current rules prohibit a student from re-enrolling in a course that was passed as CR, so there is no easy mechanism to resubmit a portfolio for assessment.

Communicating the process to students is very important; therefore, instructors must be well acquainted with it. Murphy can and will approve retaking the course, but this will only increase the backlog of interested students for ENGL 3001.

Alternative methods of satisfying the GWAR were discussed, including writing in the major. The WST and UWSR are seen as formidable blocks to graduation by many students, and it is a university-wide problem. However, departments can view it as a problem outside of their major, so are not interested in working toward a solution to the backlog.

One suggestion was to hire graduate writing assistants to work in writing intensive major courses. A pilot/transitional roll out of this solution should be considered. It would be cost effective and offer more support to students.

There is norming of portfolio evaluations, but not of classes, which could be the reason for some of the discrepancy between CR in the class and LC on the portfolio. Faculty inconsistency in grading does not help students improve their writing skills. The portfolio was developed as an alternative to an in seat test.

The committee recommends that the course be made repeatable for credit. Margaret will prepare the course modification paperwork and discuss with English Department Chair Dennis Chester.
Students sometimes submit payment before they know if their portfolio will receive a passing grade. Instructors must communicate with students, let them know that they should not submit payment until the 6th week due date, so that they do not pay for an unnecessary assessment.

Whitman suggested a writing center on campus would be an asset to students.

Rustick, Murphy and Whitman will meet to discuss structural changes that could improve student writing, that could be made with funding through A2E2.

Minutes prepared by Tamra Donnelly

Respectfully submitted,

David Fencsik, Secretary