California State University, East Bay  
Committee on Instruction and Curriculum  
Subcommittee on Writing Skills  
Minutes February 26, 2014 12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.

Members present: Tamra Donnelly (staff), David Fencsik, Sweety Law (by phone), James Murray, Sarah Nielsen, Amy June Rowley, Margaret Rustick, Donna Wiley  
Guests: Sally Murphy, Rick Owen, Andres Campos

Approval of the minutes of 1/22/2014 M/S P (Fencsik/Nielsen) with acronyms expanded. 3 ayes, 3 abstentions

Approval of the minutes of 12/3/2013 M/S/P (Rustick/Fencsik) with acronyms expanded. 4 ayes, 4 abstentions

1. Update on new Writing Skills Test (WST) questions
   a. The new writing prompts are almost ready to be deployed. Sally Baxter, Sarah Nielsen and Margaret Rustick have reviewed and all endorse them. Rustick will send them out to the Writing Skills Subcommittee (WSS) for approval. If there are any that raise concerns they will be put on the next agenda for discussion. The membership will vote by email whether or not to approve those that do not raise concerns. Members discussed the number of questions available, suggested that a larger bank of questions would help alleviate the apparent pre-knowledge of question topics. If more questions are adopted it would increase the time spent norming and preparing readers for scoring.
   b. It was suggested that the general instructions be enhanced to include a reminder that no outside sources should be included in the essay. SAT coaches encourage students to make up facts for that test’s essay, and this is not something we encourage on the WST.

2. Discuss proctoring exams for first-tier portfolios
   a. There appears to be plagiarism and other kinds of cheating (e.g., student hiring someone to take the class for him/her) in the online English 3000 portfolio course by some, but it is not possible to prove with our current technology. Wiley and Rustick have been exploring various solutions, including Proctor U and Respondus/LockDown. Proctor U has presented a contract that requires competitive bidding.
   b. Nielsen distributed sample syllabus language for English 3000 online course. Rowley urged that the language be more forceful. Wiley mentioned that the CSU is considering a system-wide solution. The members agreed that there is a need for a university-wide solution, and a recommendation to CIC should request development of a policy for offsite proctoring.

3. Follow up on procedures to request graduate courses to satisfy GWAR (Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement)
   a. The policy for a graduate level course to satisfy the UWSR (University Writing Skills Requirement) [which is equivalent to the GWAR, and required for any graduate of CSU, whether for a bachelor’s level or a master’s level degree] needs to be developed. 9-10 CIC 32 approved a pilot program, which took some time to get off the ground. There are currently three courses that are in the first pilot: Music 6000, MGMT 6120, and PUAD 6850. Rustick will send reminders that the departments must submit the information requested including number of students enrolled and
copies of student work. The WSS will review submissions in Spring 2014. EDLD 6400 and EDLD 8083 have been approved effective Winter 2014, and are expected to submit follow-up information in Fall 2014. PUAD 6850 expected to be discontinued as a method to satisfy the UWSR.

4. Review request from CIC to place hold on application for graduation

5. Review data from Student Retention and Graduation Subcommittee
   a. Agenda items combined into one discussion. Rustick reviewed the content of Bliss’s report on advising efforts to encourage students to complete the WST, which is perceived to be a barrier to graduation. Advising, tutoring and fee waiver were offered. The success rate did not change among those who took advantage of the offer. It was also noted that the “WST barrier” could be significantly reduced by developing programs to improve students’ academic writing, such as WAC (writing across the curriculum) and WID (writing in the disciplines) programs.
   b. Members discussed placing a hold on filing for graduation until students make a good faith effort to satisfy the UWSR, whether by enrolling in the appropriate course or signing up for a WST administration.
   c. The possibility of offering a fee waiver to students with junior standing was discussed. Policy considerations are number of units, number of free sittings, tracking and technology options. Murphy will discuss with Glen Perry the capabilities of PeopleSoft and what would be feasible.

End of meeting was reached, so item 6 will be carried over to next meeting. Nielsen will create Doodle poll to determine member availability in Spring 2014.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30.

Minutes prepared by Tamra Donnelly

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Nielsen, Secretary