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Writing Implementation Committee, Illinois Wesleyan University

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Writing Committee Minutes 9.10.2013

Present: C. Myscowski, M.A. Bushman, E. Kelahan, K. Schmidt, C. Sweet, J. Haefner, D. Mendez-Carbajo

Convened at: 4:02 p.m.

First Agenda Item: We opened by discussing the Best Gateway Contest. Writing Center tutors have culled 18 submissions to the top 5; the committee will now select a winner and two runners-up from that group. Joel circulated the essays and scoring sheets.

Second Agenda Item: The committee then turned to consideration of a letter to Mary Ann from Provost Green dated 12 June asking the committee to review relevant sections of the 2007 Strategic Plan. Specifically, the Provost posed three questions:

1. Should the role of advising groups tied to Gateways continue?
2. Should we expand and/or standardize departmental peer tutoring?
3. Should we rethink how we use tutoring facilities in Buck and Ames Library?

After discussion, the committee consensus was that we did not have enough information to make a recommendation and that this question was not directly related to the purview of the committee—that is, writing.

Committee members also felt that point two was not relevant to the charge of the committee; Chris also commented that he thought it unlikely that standardized training in the tutoring of writing for specific departments (like Philosophy, as Emily noted) would not meet with an enthusiastic reception. Karen suggested that tutor training across campus might build on CRLA certification, which the Writing Center now has. Joel commented that he conducted a survey of departmental tutoring for an unsuccessful application for a Cooke Foundation grant several years ago.

As per the issue of tutoring facilities, Chris noted that a combined skills/academic support center especially in proximity to libraries, was a common model, and cited the location of the skills center by the library at Heartland Community College. Karen observed that the library was, this year, trying to assess exactly how library aides are used by the student population through focus groups and other data gathering.

Third Agenda Item: The committee then turned its attention to Mary Ann's draft of a response to a request from the SBPC work group on revising the Strategic Plan's statement about the Writing Program. Mary Ann observed that the Plan was published in 2007, relying on 2006 data, and that there had been significant changes and advances in the Program since then. While the weakness of the Gateway remain largely unresolved, she noted, assessment and the subsequent faculty development efforts had definitely strengthened the Program. She felt, and committee members concurred, that any response should include future goals and extrapolations of current initiatives,

particularly the co-development of writing and information literacy, specifically the training of tutors in both writing and IL (now underway) , and the assessment of information literacy in student writing (planned for the coming May).

Fourth Agenda Item: The committee discussed plans and ideas for faculty development events in the spring term. Mary Ann noted that events planned so far include a non-org panel of Mellon grant curriculum stipend recipients, a workshop on Nov. 11 on grading student papers, a visit by librarian Char Booth on Oct. 23rd, and the early January pedagogical symposium which will feature compositionist Joseph Bizup. Karen brought up Megan Oakleaf at Syracuse, a librarian who is part of a national project on developing rubrics to assess information literacy, as a possibility for helping us develop assessment of IL in student writing. Karen also suggested Mellon grant money might be well spent in sending faculty to different conferences connected with writing and/or information literacy; the two co-PIs for the grant, Mary Ann and Karen, are meeting soon with Shireen Schrock, the on-campus budget manager for the grant, and will report back to the writing committee. Carole commented that we need to do a better job in informing faculty of the Mellon grant opportunities, and suggested announcements at faculty meetings and chairs meetings, as well as a general faculty memo.

Adjourned at 4:54 p.m.

Submitted by: J. Haefner