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November 6, 2013

Writing Implementation Committee, Illinois Wesleyan University

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Writing Committee Minutes 11.6.2013

Present: Lynda Duke, Chris Sweet, Carole Myscofski, Mary Ann Bushman, Emily Kelahan, Joel Haefner

Convened at: 4:04 p.m.

The meeting opened with a discussion of the statistical analysis of our outcomes-based assessment data, kindly performed by Diego Mendez-Carbajo. His conclusions, briefly, are that student writing continues to be evaluated as “developing”, according to our rubric; that the robustness and validity of our readings have increased with the increase in our data sets; that readers are increasingly interpreting a holistic score as a sum of all other dimension scores; that [most interestingly] the three dimensions that have the most impact on the holistic score are “Context,” “Audience”, and “Implications;” and finally that the three dimensions which have the least impact on the holistic score are “Citation conventions,” “Language conventions,” and “Engagement.”

A brief discussion followed as to the viability of continuing indefinitely the quantitative assessment we have been following for (as of this year) six years. Mary Ann pointed out that we may have to make an argument for changing the scheduling of writing assessment as suggested by the university-wide assessment committee. Various permutations were also suggested: Chris suggested just collecting from seniors each year; Carole suggested scoring only Writing Intensive papers. Lynda also asked about the feasibility of portfolio assessment, and various members provided historical background on the most recent (mid-2000s) effort to put into place an electronic portfolio. The committee generally expressed interest in investigating portfolios further, and Mary Ann suggested we might be able to use some grant money to bring in a speaker from Grand Valley State University, which has one of the most extensive, innovative, and curriculum-embedded electronic portfolio systems in the country.

We also noted that the Mellon grant PIs are interested in Information Literacy assessment, probably using papers which have been or will be collected for writing assessment; Chris noted that an Information Literacy rubric has been developed and plans are to test the rubric in a May assessment session.

An application for a grant to create a new course in Hispanic Studies was approved.

Mary Ann noted that there was still considerable monies in our Mellon grant for new courses or course revisions; she also announced that Joe Bizup, an authority on the rhetorical use of evidence, will be coming to campus in late January.

The committee agreed to allow individuals to become eligible for second course revision/new course grants in the 2014 calendar year.

Other suggestions for dispensing grant money included: offering \$2000 new course grants without a librarian; streamlining and simplifying the grant application instructions; creating more categories for grants; posting model grant applications; creating special incentives for new faculty; compensation for teaching Writing Intensive classes; travel money for faculty attending or presenting at relevant conferences; grants/workshops on quantitative data in writing; restructuring the Gateway Symposium; a faculty visit to Carleton to observe the portfolio process.

Adjourned at: 4:59 p.m.

Submitted by: J. Haefner