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Writing Implementation Committee, Illinois Wesleyan University

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MINUTES Writing Implementation Committee 2.17.2010

Present: Bushman, chair; Nadeau, Davis-Kahl, Quinn, Haefner (ex officio)

Called to order: 3:36 p.m.

Joel reported on the SLAC WPA conference, held at Occidental College in early January. Roughly 25 schools were represented. Results of a survey of 80 SLAC writing programs were presented at the conference. Of those schools, a little over one-third had a first year seminar similar to Wesleyan's; another 40% had a first year composition course that focused solely on writing. Nearly half had a writing intensive requirement like ours.

Mary Ann then commented on the list of sophomore-level writing intensive courses that she has been working on, in collaboration with Bekah Fehr and Registrar Jeff Frick. Roughly 780 seats are forecast for sophomores by J. Frick, and although this appears to be a sufficient number of seats at first glance, several difficulties appear on closer examination. The list does not account for multiple sections of some classes, such as foreign language classes, as Carolyn pointed out. Mary Ann observed that English and Religion will bear the brunt of many sophomore-level WI courses, and that Business and Music will not be able to accommodate their sophomores in meeting the end-of-sophomore-year WI requirement. There was some discussion about difficulties Music has in offering WI courses. Stephanie observed that a petition process was needed (with an appropriate form) for students who find it difficult to take a WI course before the middle of their junior year. Tom pointed out that some students will naturally take more than two WI courses, and he wondered about the effect of that fact on the number of seats available. Mary Ann, Carolyn, and others noted that the list of courses needs to be published in a variety of outlets, such as the advising handbook, in an email to advisors, on the writing program web page, etc.

We then moved on to a brief discussion of whether the current policy of exempting students who score 4 or 5 on the AP language or literature exam from a writing intensive requirement should stand. The possibility of exempting such students from the Gateway had come up in the faculty spring conference. The sentiment of the committee was to retain the current policy of granting one WI credit for AP exams above 4.

Our last topic of discussion was a draft of a comprehensive learning outcomes statement for writing on campus, a draft which amalgamated three sections sub-committees had previously generated. Mary Ann suggested that there should be some brief history of the genesis of the document in its Introduction, as well as a statement that no single course would address all the criteria. Other changes were suggested, including striking the phrase "pleasure in writing." The committee also urged the library faculty to draft a brief paragraph on information literacy to also appear in the introductory paragraphs.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Submitted by: J. Haefner