

EPAG Minutes
April 14, 2011
11:30 to 1:00
Campus Center 214

Kendrick Brown, Taren Kingser, Ann Minnick, Kathy Murray, Jayne Niemi, Sonita Sarker, Patrick Schmidt, Chad Topaz, TomVarberg

1. The minutes were approved as amended.
2. Announcement: Reminder of breakfast at the Serie Center, tomorrow 8:30 to 10, not 8 a.m.
3. EPAG next year: We reviewed our needs for sabbatical replacements. Chad will be gone in spring 2012 and Harry will be gone in fall 2011. Action on the fall replacement needs especially quick action. Also, we would like to invite the newly elected EPAG members to one of our next meetings, probably April 28th.
4. We pondered a request about distribution requirements for a 4 credit team-taught, cross-listed course. Jayne explained that departments may designate which of their courses meet distribution requirements, and that there is no history of one course meeting two different requirements. In the case of cross-listed courses that are not team-taught across divisions, the distribution is defined by the home department of the faculty member. After some discussion about double-dipping for distribution requirements, we concluded that this single four credit course may not fulfill two distribution requirements for each student in the course. We are comfortable with the notion of the students being allowed to choose which of the two distributions will be fulfilled by registering for section in the division. Jayne will notify the requestor. A note will be added to the course description, and the instructors will be requested to email the students once they are enrolled, and put it in the syllabus.
5. Writing report discussion: Tom reminded us that the origins of the Gen Eds can be found by searching for "Curricular Renewal". He read some key things about the FYC and its writing content. He also noted that since GERC does report to EPAG, any action should be initiated in EPAG. Several of the recommendations would require approval of the faculty. The idea of a Writing Director seems administrative. But maybe the whole package should be endorsed by the faculty. Does GERC have expectations about what EPAG should do? EPAG wants GERC's hard work to be acknowledged and appropriately acted upon. Tom and some other EPAG members were at the Serie Center meeting where Pete Ferderer talked about the Writing report. He noted that the attendees were comprised of many faculty from the sciences, and not many faculty who are actually teaching W courses this semester. He shared his notes, reading comments from various faculty.

We continued the conversation about what we should do next. Some of the notable points follow.

- Outcomes – is this the one, single course that achieves this outcome, or do we trust the rest of the curriculum to achieve those outcomes?

- One course might be able to achieve the outcome of flagging students who need more help.
- Recognizing bad or good writing is different than being able to teach it.
- Content versus mechanics. We talk about writing skills that cut across boundaries, but students are also writing in particular disciplines. There is a disjunct among these things: writing across the curriculum, writing within disciplines and what the W course is attempting to achieve.
- Remember that we are talking about general education requirements, and not really disciplinary writing.
- What's the relationship between grades and writing? Could we get the faculty as a whole to buy into grades reflecting writing as well as content?
- How can we get the faculty to use the outcomes – it's an awareness thing, not enforcement.
- Back to helping the students who need help the most -- we can pilot some of this with the entering class as an experiment.
- There are competing structural pressures. Faculty have a variety of reasons for offering Ws.
- The CST could offer a small group opportunity to read and discuss and work on the teaching of writing, perhaps.
- A writing assistant in a W course would be a good idea. Those assistants need training too!
- The one thing that was agreed upon was Argumentative Writing! We can start to talk about that by sending the rubric and other materials about expectations for the W courses, even though they aren't something we "enforce".
- We have a pilot plan for pre-first-semester writing samples.

Adjourned at 12:59

Respectfully submitted,
Jayne Niemi, Registrar