

Minutes of November 27, 2007

WID/WAC Committee, Queensborough Community College Academic Senate

In Attendance:

Jeffrey Jankowski, Chair

Margot Small, Secretary

Linda Stanley, Co-Director, QCC WID/WAC Program

Michelle Cuomo, Administration Liaison

Peter Grey

Sandra Marcus

Julian Stark

Gilmar Visoni, History Department Head, Guest

1. The committee met at 3 PM and adjourned the meeting at 5 PM.
2. Professor Gilmar Visoni of the History Department was a guest at the meeting to explain a proposal for making all History courses WI. He included the following points concerning the proposal and the nature of WI, as well as non-WI sections, in his department.
  - a. In terms of training faculty to teach WI sections, the History department was willing to handle faculty training. This was proposed only to assist the QCC WI program. However, the department had no problem working with the WI program to do the training.
  - b. The current WI courses in History include tests that are 50% essay and at least one long term paper. Some WI courses have daily assignments. All WI courses provide an opportunity for the student to speak with the faculty on a one-to-one basis.
  - c. Currently, in History classes that are not WI, there is no low stakes writing done nor is there a requirement to include time for revisions. The department would be willing to consider shorter papers that would accumulate to a term paper allowing for revisions. Because of the extensive material covered in these classes, the classes would continue to be lecture style.
  - d. Professor Visoni said that restricting WI sections to elective courses would not work. There were not enough seats in these sections to include all Liberal Arts students. Also, there was insufficient interest among students for additional sections.
  - e. For reasons of time management, Professor Visoni would like the limit of the History WI classes to be raised from 25 to 30 and the number of courses faculty members would be asked to teach be reduced from 9 to 8. In doing so, the number of students taught by faculty would increase from 225 students to 240 students.

Professor Visoni did not believe that the increase in class size would affect faculty member's ability to provide individual attention.

- f. Professor Visoni suggested that QCC would benefit from these changes. All students in the Liberal Arts track would be able to fulfill their WI requirements when fulfilling their two History course requirements. It would also make it easier for night and weekend students to find WI courses. It was his belief that the administration would favor this change.
  - g. He was also under the false impression that Mathematics and the science departments did not provide WI course.
3. The WID WAC committee unanimously voted against this proposal. The reasons cited included the following:
- a. The members of the committee opposed the increase in class size. Jeffrey Jankowski noted that at most other colleges and universities, among them Cornell, class size in WI sections is limited to 17 to 20 students. At CUNY, the policy is to limit class size to 25. In addition, he was worried about the precedent it would set, namely it could lead to all WI classes having their limit set at 30.
  - b. All members of the committee felt that the increase in class size would diminish the faculty member's ability to provide individual attention to students and reduce the effectiveness of the classes. This issue had also been discussed at the previous committee meeting. At that time, the committee also opposed the increase.
  - c. The committee members also felt that by enabling students to fulfill the WI requirements in one department, it would eliminate the cross-discipline feature of the WI program. There would be little motivation for students to take WI sections in other disciplines, nor for departments, other than History, to offer such courses.
- Linda Stanley noted that the WI approach to teaching was a way of improving pedagogy in all departments. A loss of WI classes in other departments would hurt the students.
- Linda Stanley mentioned that Business, Mathematics, Biology and Physics all have active WI courses and are eager to participate in this program. Chemistry provides WI sections, but there is minimal student interest in them.
- d. Michelle Cuomo noted that the Administration had not expressed an opinion favoring the proposal.
4. The following students were granted waivers of the WI requirements:
- David Chen  
Sandra P. Franco  
Min Jung Kang

5. The following students were not granted waivers:

John Hilario

Louis Corradino Jr.

Brittany Purcell

Navjot Laur

The case of Brittany Purcell would be reconsidered with more documentation.

6. The committee approved the current list of WI courses and staff.