

MINUTES OF THE WRITING COMPETENCY SUBCOMMITTEE
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO
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Fresno, California 93740-8027

Office of the Academic Senate
Ext. 8-2743

February 17, 2017

Attending: V. Crisco (chair), J. Chen, D. Hart, E. Hughes, K. Machoian,
J. Wahleithner

Visiting: T. McNamara, D. Melzer

Missing: M. Brady

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM by chair Crisco in HML room 4150C.

I. Minutes from 2-12-2016 Approved. Agenda Approved

II. New Business

A. Visit with Dr. Dan Melzer, Director of First-Year Writing at UC Davis, Former WAC Director at CSU Sacramento, author of *Assignments Across the Curriculum*. The committee wanted his feedback about how to move forward with our WAC program, get information about what made his WAC program at CSUS successful.

1. WAC program at CSUS was successful and sustainable: It was sustainable because he was given enough release time to do WAC: 9 units course release per semester (for transformative and sustainable effect). Purpose: have an effect on institutional culture: ideology, way people taught writing, structural support system, and how they assessed writing
2. It's important to have enough release time to avoid burn out. According to Chris Taiss's WAC/WID mapping project, there is a strong correlation between the amount of assigned time, how much gets done, and the success of a WAC program.

3. At CSUS, Dan had a long term strategic plan (both a 5 year and 10 year plan). He had 9 units of release time and a budget, and no one expected sustainable, systemic change to happen overnight. It is unrealistic to have an effect in 2 years or in a short-term period of time.
4. Part of Dan's strategy was to built a grassroots group of supporters and then start to change university policy in regard to writing. He had regular, signature events: a faculty development workshop before every semester, a spring learning community, a writing conference for the whole Sacramento region every other year. He also went to department meetings to do workshops and retreats. He built alliances with a lot of different campus entities and maintained a WAC listserv. He facilitated relationships between the WAC program and the Writing Center which made the writing center successful.
5. After 6 years of grassroots work, he and colleagues on the university reading and writing committee started to change policies: got rid of the culture of timed writing, made all faculty responsible for writing, encouraged every major to do curriculum mapping to see how reading and writing were taught in each major, GWAR became a placement test for a 3, 4, or 6 unit course or set of courses, proposed a longitudinal career portfolio to use for placement, got rid of the W requirement and replaced it with a writing in the disciplines model (this was done in about 12 years).
6. After hearing Dan's overview of his work, the committee decided that our WAC program needs a 5-10 year plan to come out of the committee to the provost. We also discussed how the Writing Center and Learning Center are a problem on our campus, so we need to focus on that piece next.

MSC to adjourn at 4:00 PM

Next Meeting: March 3, 2017