UHM General Education’s Writing Focus Board: 2010-11 Report

April 2011

The W Board is appointed by the UHM Faculty Senate in accord with Senate by-laws. This year’s committee members were:

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The full Board met approximately every other week for most of each semester. Most of the Board’s deliberations revolved around faculty proposals for new W courses and for renewals of existing W designations.

In the course of its meetings and discussions with course proposers, the Board

- Reviewed 264 new and renewal proposals.
- Networked with course proposers and in some cases new department Chairs and/or Focus coordinators (as well as the new director of Honors) to apprise them of important procedures and dates. In some cases, Jim Henry and Lisa Fujikawa scheduled meetings with individual instructors new to W courses to help orient them and to discuss questions raised by Board members.
- Identified courses in each department that would be likely candidates for course-based approvals as a W course and contacted the departments to urge them to make them course-based. In some cases, (for example, COM 490) these efforts resulted in the positive step forward of more course-based designations. The course-based proposal form was also revised and refined as a result of discussions by the Board.
- Received an update from outgoing director Tom Hilgers on a workshop with faculty working in the Samoa program out of the College of Education (with incoming director Jim Henry in attendance), as a follow-up to W Board discussions about concerns of those instructors' familiarity with writing intensive pedagogies.
- Improved the existing web site for the Mānoa Writing Program. Jim Henry solicited comments for incorporating Web 2.0 and other features from people subscribed to the national WAC-L discussion list, then forwarded ideas sent by them to the W Board. Board members reviewed these comments and conducted analyses of their own, adding further suggestions. Henry and Lisa Fujikawa then met with successive new hires in the Vice Chancellor's office to
present their ideas and provide the necessary files to design a new site. As of
the end of April, the site was in development-and-review stage with the office
of the Mānoa Writing Program using the web tool Drupal. The new site
includes the major categories of Home, Faculty, Students, (Inter)National,
and Resources, with a projected section of Community to be developed in
2012-13. Henry, Fujikawa, and two student workers who will subsequently
maintain the site attended a training session in late April with Ryan Bungard,
from the Vice Chancellor’s office. The implementation will come in stages,
with the next step being that of developing a file management system
accessible through the site for new proposals of W courses. Once this system
is in place and has been vetted, the lessons learned will be used to revise the
current General Education site and facilitate online focus applications for the
other focus areas.

• Instituted new orientations and workshops. Two are offered in mid-
  semester: one orientation to provide instructors with ideas for designing
  writing activities and syllabi for their newly-approved course, and a workshop
  for those currently teaching a W course to troubleshoot and share ideas. The
  third is offered at the beginning of the semester to follow up on the earlier
  mid-semester orientation and to enable recently-assigned staff to receive
  orientation. These workshops will be significantly aided by the revamped
  Mānoa Writing Program web site. The Board also suggested some focused
  workshops on such issues as handling the workload, teaching online W
  courses, providing discipline-specific workshops, providing tips for TAs
  teaching a W course, and providing some theme-based workshops. Once the
  vacant APT position in the Mānoa Writing Program has been filled, the
  possibility of conducting such workshops will be evaluated. (Henry provided
  a workshop for TAs in January at the request of the Center for Teaching
  Excellence’s weeklong orientation for new TAs.)

• Saw 1,319 W (Writing-intensive) classes in 93 subjects offered by the UHM
  faculty during F10-SS11.