

**2007-08 W Board Highlights**  
*Thomas Hilgers*  
*Director, Mānoa Writing Program*  
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NEW MEMBERS

- Lynne Higa, Arts & Sciences Student Academic Services (liaison from GEC)
- Sterling Keeley, Botany (NS representative)
- Trina Kudlacek, Student-Athlete Academic Services (advising representative)
- Rikki Mitsunaga, Shidler Student Academic Services (professional school representative)
- Nobuko Ochner, East Asian Languages and Literature (LLL representative)

The W Board said farewell to Andrew Crislip (AH) and Puakea Nogelmeier (LLL), who resigned at the end of F07.

ASSESSMENT

Guided by a September workshop offered by WASC-nominated assessment specialist Mary Allen, W Board members Henry, Harsh, and Hilgers worked with the English and ELI faculties to devise pilot FW assessments. As a result, the ENG 100/101 faculty and the ELI faculty will assess a sample of essays written by students during S08. The focus for the assessment will be student proficiency at writing for a specific audience.

The W Board also discussed assessment of the Writing Intensive Focus requirement. Because W Student Learning Outcomes focus on the Writing Intensive *program*, not on individual W classes, assessments of writing should occur at the end of students' fifth and final W class. The Board considered several ways that this might be accomplished. MWP currently has writing samples from W classes that can be used to create a scoring guide/rubric. A key question is, should the scoring guide cut across disciplines, or should it be discipline specific? The Board will continue this discussion in AY 2008-09.

The W Board, along with other General Education committees, approved a statement of policy to govern assessment of the General Education Program. The statement will be offered to the administration.

ELIMINATING THE FOUNDATIONS/WRITING PLACEMENT EXAM

W Board members supported the English faculty's vote to eliminate the placement exam for General Education Foundations-Written Communication (FW) courses, effective December 2007. The decision was informed by the slow erosion of first-year writing-course options as well as repeated requests from the UHM Admissions staff to "even the playing field" for incoming freshmen from the Mainland. For most native speakers of English, placement will henceforth be determined by standardized test scores. Native speakers without scores place themselves using information provided by the English Department and the MWP. Non-native speakers will continue to be placed by the English Language Institute (ELI).

MAKING FOUNDATIONS-WRITTEN COMMUNICATION (FW) A TRUE FIRST-YEAR REQUIREMENT

Ever since it was established in the late 1980s, the W Board has urged that students be required to satisfy the FW requirement during their first year at UHM. Hence, the Board

supported the 2008 General Education Committee's efforts to secure policies and budget to really make this possible.

W Board members, the English and ELI departments, and UHM administration worked intensively during S08 to draft policies around this initiative. An implementation plan was drafted and adopted, and funding for the next academic year was secured. The plan should allow both returning students and F08 first-year students to fulfill their FW requirement before F09. If funding then becomes permanent, introductory FW classes offered from F09 on will be designed as "first-year experience" courses.

#### CLARIFYING BOARD PROCEDURES

The Board clarified its own review procedures regarding W and written examinations (they "count" only if guided revision is part of students' writing process) and W renewals (applicants are required to answer renewal questions and provide requested course information either by answering specific questions or including requested information in submitted syllabi). The Board also consulted the General Education Committee when it had to deal with complex issues.

#### INSTRUCTOR TEACHING LOAD AND W CLASSES

Consideration of certain proposals led to the Board's awareness that in some instances, lecturers are being assigned 120 or more W students per semester. The Board, the GEC, and the Faculty Senate's Executive Committee were all troubled by this situation and will consider possible policy next year.

#### W COURSE AVAILABILITY

The UHM faculty offered more than 500 approved W classes in S08 and will offer 500+ W classes in F08 as well. In addition, over 100 Summer 2008 sections fulfill the W Focus requirement.

#### UH SYSTEM W COOPERATION

The Mānoa Writing Program staff, with input from the W Board, arranged three meetings to discuss FW and W courses across the System campuses. All campuses continue to offer W classes. Many campuses report that the preponderance of W classes involves English and other humanities departments, an imbalance given the broad goals of the W requirement. All campuses have been informed of changes in UHM's FW placement policies and will adjust local policies to reflect UHM's new practices. MWP is supporting UH West Oahu's efforts to develop articulatable courses as it develops its full undergraduate program. All campuses welcomed the news that Kauai Community College's faculty is working on a proposal to make W classes a required part of the KauCC AA degree.