

2008-09 W Board Highlights

MEMBERS

Seven UHM faculty members (each from a different unit) reviewed W proposals; they were joined by, *ex officio*, coordinators of FW programs and the MWP. As a result of their efforts, more than 1000 W classes were offered at UHM during F08 and S09.

W SEATS IN LARGEST MAJORS

The Board looked at the availability of W seats in UHM's largest majors. In many of the majors, students have ready access to 1 or 2 W courses only; they have to fulfill most of the W graduation requirement through classes outside their majors. (Business is one such major. This year the situation got worse when the Shidler faculty decided to strip BUS301 of the W rather than comply with the GEC policy on an instructor's total W-student limit.) Hilgers will contact several department chairs during summer to see if the number of W seats can be increased.

W AND ASSESSMENT

Various W assessment possibilities were discussed by the Board and the UHM Assessment Office. The tentative plan is to collect writing samples from Business, History, and Sociology and then work on developing a rubric to assess the samples in ways that allow comparing W with non-W sections.

COURSE-BASED W RENEWALS

The first course-based Focus designations were up for renewal in F09. The Board decided that renewals would require sample syllabi; the names of current and past Course Coordinators; and information about how the Course Coordinator ensures that Hallmarks are being met. The Board also recommended that MWP/GEO meet with the Course Coordinators once a year to ensure that the courses continue to meet the W Hallmarks.

W CLASS SIZE

MWP was contacted by a representative of the Prioritization team to discuss W class size. It was noted that our 500 W classes each semester involve less than 1/3 of the undergraduate classes that enroll 20 or fewer students each semester. In different circumstances, the Board worked with the College of Education to ensure that W policies on both class size and the use of Graduate Assistants could be reasonably observed in COE classes in American Samoa.

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

Members of the W Board, the MWP staff, and several administrators met frequently to ensure that the backlog of students without FW be eliminated and that all 08-09 first-year students meet the FW requirement. Success led to planning for AY10 and full implementation of a plan to make a FW seat available for each first-year student.

Thomas Lee Hilgers
MWP