

Curric Affairs Committee Weds 1 October 2014 Agenda 3-4 pm Reich 300

audio conference information: [1-800-893-8850](tel:1-800-893-8850) Participants' PIN: 1109306 Chair's PIN: 1109371

invited: Brian Cook, Catherine Hanks, Cindy Hardy, Dennis Moser, Joan Hornig, Ken Abramowicz, Rainer Newberry, Rob Duke Todd Radenbaugh (remote), Doug Goering, Jayne Harvie, Alex Fitts, Carol Gering, Caty Oering, Casey Byrne, Holly Sherouse, Libby Eddy, Linda Hapsmith, Stacey Howdeshell

I. Approve revised minutes of Sept 17 meeting

II. Old business: what to do about C/O/W??

A. Progress Report from O/W/C subcommittee

Problems with current O/W: no consistent outcomes assessments

W regulations are relatively complicated and subject to interpretation; O regulations are more flexible but very complicated (2+ pages to cover a variety of possibilities)

Proposed C: only writing is assessed

Proposed C regulations are both complex and vague

We met with several GERC members and discussed the O/W/C issues.

The GERC members attending agreed that 'C' proposal was left in an undeveloped state, and that it isn't ready to go forward as a motion to the faculty senate. We also discussed that the bulk of the C dealt with writing instruction and written outcomes assessment (the signature assignment). The regulations for 'C' classes are still quite nebulous relative to the existing W and O requirements. **However, it would appear that an existing 'W' class could qualify for a 'C' designator with a small amount of tweaking.** Conversely, an existing 'O' class would need to be extensively modified to qualify as 'C'. One GERC member stated 'that wasn't what we had in mind!'.

We were unhappy with the proposed mechanism for assessment ('write an essay concerning your C class') because it (a) wasn't necessarily the best sort of essay to judge writing for all students in all majors and (b) writing about non-written communication doesn't assess non-written communication abilities. We agreed that assessment of writing ability could be of the sort proposed ('write an essay..') and agreed to ask Vice Provost Alex Fitts for her comments and suggestions.

We all agreed that the C is not ready to go forward as a motion to the Senate. If we do nothing, the W/O stand as they are. **At a minimum, however, we need to generate an assessment mechanism for student communication skills.** We present to CAC several options for moving forward:

1. Ask GERC to either propose modifications to the current W/O or to add detail to the C proposal to come up with a more fleshed-out version that can be considered for faculty senate action.
2. Do **something** by revising the W/O to take out indefinite language ("instructors should" or "are encouraged to") and to add clear methods of assessment and "enforcement."
3. A learning community is supposedly discussing the W (and O?) requirements. Wait for that Learning Community to come up with something.

In both meetings, we all agreed that students need work on writing consistently throughout their degree programs. It's less clear that students need oral communication instruction beyond the 131/141 class, however. Our experience is that students in O classes do receive adequate training in oral communication, and indeed, the 'C' – as currently proposed--is essentially a glorified 'W' but with vague guidelines.

Courtesy would suggest that we ask GERC to take another look at the proposed C and to provide a clearer set of proposed regulations to replace the existing O and W OR to think about modifications in the existing O and W. Many of us on the COW subcommittee think that fixing the model that we're already using--recycling, as it were--is a more productive way to go than trying to reinvent upper division writing across the curriculum from scratch. If we go this route, we need to come up with some language as the request to GERC their further consideration of the O/W/C requirement.

- A. General guidelines for 3-credit course with "W" designator
 - 1. The lower-division writing sequence **will be** a prerequisite for all "W"- designated courses.
 - 2. Instructors **are encouraged** to have students write an ungraded diagnostic composition on or near the first day of class to help assess writing ability and general competence in the discipline. [If diagnostic tests indicate that remedial work may be needed, teachers can set up specialized tutoring for their students with UAF Writing Center tutors.]
 - 3. Teachers regularly evaluate students' writing and inform students of their progress. If a major written project (research project) is part of the course, the project **should be** supervised in stages. **If possible**, a writing activity should comprise a major portion of the final examination.
 - 4. At least **one personal conference should be devoted** to the student's writing per term and drafts of papers should receive evaluation from the teacher and/or peers.
 - 5. Written material **should** comprise a majority of the graded work in the course for it to be designated "intensive." "Written material" can consist of quizzes and exams with short answers or essay sections, journals, field notes, informal responses to reading or class lectures, structured essays, research projects, performance reviews, lab reports, or any forms suitable to the discipline being taught.

- B. Guidelines for the "W" designator in Technical courses
 - 6. In order to ensure that technical disciplines can meet the goals of the writing intensive requirements without compromising the technical quality of their courses, such disciplines may substitute longer courses or a series of courses (typically 1-credit labs) for each of the two necessary 3-credit writing intensive or "W"-designated courses. Courses meeting all the general guidelines will, of course, also be acceptable.
 - 7. The longer course option allows the "W" designator for a 4- or 5-credit course in which written material comprises a portion of the grade equivalent to "a majority" of a 3-credit course. The course must also meet the other general guidelines.
 - 8. The series option allows a student to replace one or both 3- credit "W" courses with a series of courses, each of which may be less than three credits--e.g., a series of 1-credit or 1-credit-equivalent laboratories. Each series, however, must sum to the equivalent of at least one 3-credit "W"- designated course. The initial course in the series will be designated "**W1**" and, while less than three credits, will fulfill all the other general requirements for a "W." The subsequent courses will base a majority of the grade on written material. Students must take the "W1" course before taking the other courses in the series.

Requirements for O and O/2 courses are two pages long. They include variations on public speaking vs. discussions and large class vs. small class

Syllabus Statement Regarding the Oral-Intensive (O) Requirement:

This statement, or a statement similar to it, MUST appear in the syllabus of each "O" or "O/2" course. Courses failing to provide this information jeopardize their continuing status as "O" or "O/2" courses.

This course is designated as Oral-Intensive (O). This designation means that the "O" or "O/2" is evident in the course number on the syllabus (e.g., Education F452 O). The designation applies to upper-division courses.

ORAL ACTIVITIES IN THIS COURSE WILL FOLLOW THESE RULES:

- A minimum of 15 percent of the graded work in the O course (7.5 percent for "O/2") will be based on effectiveness of oral communications.
- Students will receive intermediate instructor assistance in developing presentational competency.
- Students will utilize their communication competency across the semester, not just in a final project.
- Students will receive instructor feedback on the success of their efforts at each stage of preparing their presentations.

Excerpts from the original GERC proposal regarding the “C” requirement:

Sample signature assignment guidelines for C courses:

A signature “C” assignment would be one that asks the student to reflect in writing on the choices behind a “C” paper, presentation, or project. The assignment should be a 750-1000 word reflective paper, written in edited U.S. English, that asks students to do one of the following:

- Select at least one moment in a critical or creative process where a decision was made and discuss its relevance to the final product (presentation, paper, or project).
- Imagine a different audience or medium for the paper, presentation, or project and ask students to discuss what they would change about it in order to make the paper, project, or presentation successful in this new situation.
- Compare two different papers, presentations or projects and explain how certain features of these examples reflect audience, purpose and context.

Instructional objectives for C courses

- Students will be able to revise written work in response to instructor and peer feedback. (W)
- Students will be able to write effectively for diverse audiences. (W)
- Students will be able to recognize and navigate the concepts, genres, and conventions of the course discipline. (what exactly does this mean?? W)
- Students will be able to select appropriate writing technologies to collaborate in personal, professional and civic relationships. (W)
- Students will be able to listen effectively and respond effectively to communication practices in the course. (**receive oral instructions (lectures); respond oral or W**)

Minimum criteria for course approval:

- Explicitly address at least three of the objectives listed above
- **At least 50% of the grade** must come from assignments utilizing the types of **writing** and combination of written and non-written forms of communication most appropriate to disciplinary needs and standards and course content.
- Provide guided and prompt feedback and opportunities for student revision on student projects, presentations, and papers.
- In addition to written and spoken communication, address other forms of communication in the course discipline, such as **reading and listening** and multimodal, digital, or visual communication. [**WHAT EXACTLY DOES THIS REQUIRE??**]
- Address and practice accurate and ethical referencing/citation practices of source material as it pertains to source authority, academic honesty, and personal credibility.
- **Faculty must have attended a training workshop, to be offered every semester.** [**How is this a criteria for Course APPROVAL?**]