

Minutes

Tuesday, January 7, 2014

HBC 411

4:00-7:00 p.m.

Faculty absent: Patti Dungan, Donna McLemore, Carrie Nance, Hilda Ollmann, Joy Hetherington, and Lorena Knight.

Speech/DEVW Learning community

Frank Cronin started the meeting off by sharing a proposal with the department. He and Mark Butland, speech professor, will be offering a learning community of Writing Skills 3 and Public Speaking SPCH 1315. The LC will first be offered in the fall 2014 and will be piloted for three semesters. Students will be required to be TSI complete in reading, and the class limit will be 16. It will be offered at the NRG campus and they are exploring a variety of ways to employ adjunct faculty as tutors. Frank will keep the department informed of the progress of this LC.

Chair's Report

Stacey then discussed the low enrollment in many DEVW classes resulted in classes being killed and adjuncts being bumped. The official kill session will be Thursday, and more classes may be killed, so Stacey urged all faculty to check their emails and the online schedule for updates.

Because the department is offering 12-week classes with an earlier start date, the semester will also end earlier, which means these student essays cannot be graded at the end of semester grading session. Fortunately, there are only four Writing Skills 3 classes offered at CYP, PIN, RGC, and SAC. Adjuncts will contact the campus DWA and coordinate with them to review the student essays for the second reading. If their schedules do not permit, adjuncts will contact the department chair.

The new TSI test is in effect, and Stacey shared with the faculty a new placement verification chart to determine if students are accurately placed according to the new placement chart, which is posted on Blackboard. Faculty will be able to access students' TSI essay score and objective score, but not their diagnostic score. Thus, students must bring their test receipt to the second class day so faculty can verify that they are accurately placed. Students can get this receipt from any counselor or advisor.

Lastly, Stacey has shared with the department that she will not be running for department chair for a third term. Laura Ore has said that she is interested in running, but no one else has expressed an interest. If there is no opposition, there will be no election. If two or more faculty members decided to run, the election will be in March.

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WS1 discussion/topic sentence discussion

Frank suggested that WS1 students be given the same opportunity to know about their departmental essay topic beforehand like our other students, so he has opened up the question for the department to consider. Generally, faculty felt that this was a good idea, and some of their suggestions included introducing students to blogs, websites, class discussions, and/or videos. “Room for Debate” is one option that was specifically noted. For this semester and the summer, Frank will pilot this with concept with his class and anyone else who would like to participate should let Frank know. We will then discuss offering this to all WS1 students in fall 2014.

Frank also proposed that students be required to underline their topic sentence on the departmental essay. Some felt that this lets us know what the students know, and others felt that this underlining stifles the fluidity of the writing process. The department compromised. Underlining the topic sentences will be included in the instructions for both the midterm and departmental essays, but points will not be granted or deducted.

Departmental essay suggestions

Brian noticed that at our calibration session, the essays that are brought to the grading session are a lot of time “off the mark” because we are not calibrated. He suggested that we bring the essays to the grading session ungraded and then grade them ourselves the second time, when we are calibrated and “on the same page.” This is a great idea, but the logistics and time constraints concerned some folks. This led to the discussion that we all really need another way of calibrating during the semester. As a result, each faculty is asked to submit one typed student departmental essay from fall 2013 (that has already been graded) to Stacey no later than Friday, February 28th with the subject line: Calibration Essays. Please delete the student name when you submit these essays. She will number these essays, post them on Blackboard, and post the scores separately. Faculty can then download the essays, grade them, and then check to see if they are calibrated or not. Before our April department meeting, Caryn will send out an essay for us to grade, and we will use some time discussing the essay scores during our meeting. We will continue to explore Brian’s suggestion as well.

Caryn has asked faculty to review/update the commonly confused word list and bring suggestions to the April meeting. A faculty member requested and it was agreed that “sentence sense” will be put back on the grading scale, “awkward” would be deleted, and “om” will be used for omitted words. If there are any other suggestions, feel free to bring them to the next meeting. Lastly, we were all reminded that a third reader should be used when there is a three-point difference in scoring.

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CRAFT

Anne Fletcher gave us a review of a project she has worked on called CRAFT— College Readiness Assignments Field Testing. You can go to CRAFTX.org for student assignments and new and innovative ways to teach.

Behavior clause for departmental syllabus

Jenifer discussed her concern with unruly students and ways faculty can be proactive. We were advised that documenting student behavior is the first step and communicating with the department chair and dean of students is critical. Faculty also need to be prepared to submit an official report, the Student Discipline form, through the appropriate channels. Faculty concurred that student behavior is serious and agreed that a statement does need to be included in the departmental syllabus. Jenifer will use language from the student handbook and bring something back to our next meeting so we can discuss, edit, and approve for inclusion for the summer. Faculty are encouraged to work with Jenifer in crafting this behavior clause.

Survey

Deanna gave us an update on her student survey that measures persistence. She is putting together a “Survival Packet” for students which will include information regarding computer literacy skills workshops, orientation opportunities for faculty, registration reminders for students, and library resources for students. Please send Deanna any ideas you might have that will assist our students in their success.

Faculty were reminded of Thursday’s calibration session and Friday’s general assembly workshops. The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.