



Meeting Minutes
Monday, 21 October 2024
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Leadership present: Chair Edward Dauterich, Secretaries Therese E. Tillett, Joanna Liedel, Jennifer S. Kellogg, Amy Nuesch, Christa N. Ord, Kristi M. Kamis

Administrators present: Interim Associate Provost Scott C. Sheridan; Deans Peggy Shadduck, Deborah F. Spake

Faculty present: Professors Alan A. Brandyberry, Karen Gracy, Robert D. Jewell, Steven N. Rugare, Athena Salaba, J Vick; Associate Professors Brian R. Barber, Vanessa J. Earp, Michael J. Ensley, Michael R. Fisch, Kwangtaek (Samuel), Kim, Bethany G. Lanese, Abe G. Osbourne, JD Ponder, Pamela L. Stephenson, Jonathan F. Swoboda; Assistant Professors Stephanie G. Fussell, Tinyuan Guan, Christopher W. Totten; Senior Lecturer Tracy A. Laux; Associate Lecturer Shelley K. Marshall; Lecturer Olivia B. Krise

Faculty not present: Professor Athena Salaba; Lecturer Lisa M. Davis

Students present: Lisa Onyao

Guests: Sonia Alemagno, Donna Alexander, Scott Bunge, Frank Congin, Alicia Crowe, Chris Dorsten, Susan Emens, James Hannon, Amirhossein Jabbari, Dirk Remley, Hollie Simpson, Alison Smith, Kathy Spicer, Deirdre Warren, Sharon Wohl, Cathy Zingrone

Chair Dauterich called the meeting to order at 3:20p.m., on Monday, 21 October 2024, via Microsoft Teams.

I. Approval of Minutes

A. Meeting on 16 September 2024

Dean Shadduck made a motion to approve the minutes, and Associate Professor Barber seconded.

With no comments or corrections, the minutes passed unanimously.

II. Presentations

A. Writing-Intensive Course Report—[LINK TO REPORT](#)

[VIEW THE PRESENTATION](#)

Dean Smith stated that last May, the URCC finished its review of the writing intensive course requirement. It was submitted to EPC with recommendations. The WIC is an upper division course in a major. It is designated to provide writing assignments and writing experience. Those assignments need to involve revision opportunities on themes pertinent to the major and is a

program requirement with at least 50% of the grade in the course based on writing. Enrollment is capped at 25 students. The instructor is to be a full-time faculty member. To obtain WIC designation on their transcripts and meet that qualification, the student must earn a C or higher. Kent State has had the WIC requirement since the mid 1980's when there was a national academic movement referred to as writing in the discipline. The Writing Skills Committee at Kent State at that time formed and reported to EPC. By 1987, there was a subcommittee of EPC on writing and that culminated in a proposal to require a writing course in the majors. This proposal was approved by EPC and Senate and was up and running by 1994. Since then, URCC has reviewed the WIC from 2007 to 2014 and now in 2024. When URCC did the review of the state universities in Ohio, they found that at one time they also had their version of WIC. Kent State is now almost unique in offering a third writing requirement. Putting a lot of weight and distinctiveness on the value that Kent State places on writing skills. URCC did a faculty survey and data from IR. The survey showed that about 75% of the WIC courses are taught by full-time instructors, 16% by part-time faculty, 5% by graduate students and 5% by others which are administrators. The courses are 93% still capped at 25 students or less. There are a few that have very large sections. After looking at the peer institutions, faculty surveys and IR data, URCC voted to continue support of the WIC requirement while developing some new and previously recommended initiatives that had never quite happened. The recommendations from URCC are:

1. Faculty workshops or access to useful tools
2. Department/school level development and monitoring
3. Kent Core English requirements should be standard prerequisites for all WIC courses
4. Integrating AI policies and related instruction specific to disciplinary uses of AI tools to create texts into the WIC courses
5. WIC checklist on the URCC website to remind WIC instructors of course requirements

Secretary Tillett asked why the recommendation for monitoring the 50% course grade was put that the school/department level rather than the URCC continuing to monitor.

Dean Smith said that URCC sees these after the fact. URCC is not in a position to know what is happening on the ground each semester for these courses. Since the departments are, URCC thought it would be useful for the departments to remind their faculty of the 50% requirement.

Secretary Tillett asked if there is a post-assessment the URCC does where after a new WIC is approved.

Dean Smith said that it is not something the URCC does but is something to consider.

Senior Lecturer Laux asked for confirmation that the 25-student cap is a requirement.

Dean Smith replied, yes.

Professor Remley added that the course is really hard to teach, so that is why it is set at 25. The department or school might be able to monitor that much more closely and frequently than URCC has to this point.

Dean Smith said the data shows 93% are kept within the 25 students or less requirement. However, there might be instructional or curricular reasons why some have had more students, or it might be an occasional occurrence.

Senior Lecturer Laux asked about the large sections that were mentioned.

Dean Smith clarified that “large sections” meant more than 25.

Associate Professor Barber stated that a URCC handbook was mentioned and asked where that could be found.

Dean Smith clarified that the recommendation was to put some WIC guidelines on the URCC website, but it has not been done yet.

Associate Dean Wohl said due to capping the size of the class to 25, it puts a large burden on colleges, like Architecture, as many of their faculty have to teach WIC. Associate Dean Wohl gave concern for all colleges, departments and schools being able to accommodate the 25-student cap.

Dean Smith said that, when reviewing other universities, the WIC used to be a requirement that everyone did. However, now they have moved onto writing courses.

Professor Remley added that some universities they saw had moved a writing course into upper division, so students were still integrating some kind of discipline specific writing requirement. Looking at skills desired by employers, they value written communication skills which are among the top five. That reinforces the desire to have that kind of instruction in that practice. There are some English faculty very willing to develop training materials as resources for colleges that might be interested in understanding more about how to teach writing in the discipline.

Associate Professor Ponder asked if there were reasons some sections exceeded the course cap requirement.

Professor Remley said the URCC tried to do the survey and research in the way that it had been done previously, but a few dynamics prevented that from happening. The committee surveyed the instructors directly rather than going through certain administration paths. Exceeding the cap was not among the questions as it was not anticipated. The URCC was evaluating if the cap requirement was held. It is a good follow-up survey. The class caps were 97% still below 30 students which is okay depending on the kind of writing going on.

Associate Professor Ponder said that if the pressures to exceed the 25 cap are coming from administrators, then it is not a requirement. For future iterations, Associate Professor Ponder suggested understanding and pressing on this question to where they see a potential to exceed the cap and where those pressures are coming from to understand what is causing things to fluctuate.

Associate Professor Totten expressed support for workshops to help with implementing writing intensive in specific courses such as capstone courses.

Dean Smith said that there are more colleges now than when the WIC started. So, that is also an aspect that changes the landscape.

Secretary Tillett asked if the committee discussed or saw in the survey anything about requiring the minimum C grade for the WIC.

Dean Smith said the URCC asked if the grade was reflective of the writing or what it is reflecting. A substantial number of the faculty thought the grade did reflect the writing. Some did not think that it was reflective. There were not any responses that made the committee think there would be difficulty maintaining a C, but there were questions that came up about what the C means.

Professor Remley added that in writing studies, there is some debate regarding how to grade certain kinds of writing assignments and on what to base the most weight on. There is an approach where you base considerable amount of weighting on the skills demonstrated. Another approach that emphasizes the labor that the student puts into writing including drafts and revisions. This is an active debate within writing studies. At the same time, there are some instructors who will emphasize more of the labor, because it places a bit less stress on their own grading labor and removes some of the emphasis on the spelling, grammar and punctuation elements.

Secretary Tillett replied that this information comes from experts in writing studies and Kent State is enforcing a writing requirement on disciplines and on faculty who are not experts in writing studies.

Professor Remley said that there are three in the writing studies program in the Department of English that have discussed that issue and possible support for faculty and other disciplines on how to design decent, effective kinds of writing assignments while being able to manage the labor of grading, writing assignments and going beyond teaching just the content material. There is a group of people that are ready to respond to a call for action regarding developing various workshops and support materials to be placed online.

Secretary Tillett asked if the WIC requirements were reviewed for relevance since the requirement was created so long ago.

Dean Smith said the committee did review the requirements. The fundamental aspect is that someone has to grade all of this which is where the 25-student cap came from. The modern issue is that there are not enough faculty in a department to cover everything and also handle these small classes. If a WIC is going to be offered, everyone felt that it should be a meaningful course which is one that the faculty member actually gets to review what the student has done and give them feedback.

Professor Rugare said the biggest constraint that makes WIC difficult to deal with is that it can only be one course in the program. There are many electives offered that could be WIC courses. If students could take a WIC course at some point in their curriculum, that is an elective would be so much easier in terms of budget and staffing.

Dean Smith said Professor Rugare could do that and gave an example of the Department of Philosophy which offers all of their upper division courses as WIC's.

Associate Professor Ponder asked what the range of credit hours that Kent State currently has for WIC's.

Dean Smith said it depends, because if it is a one credit add on, then it is just that one credit it put onto a three-credit course.

Associate Professor Ponder asked if there is a minimum number of hours for a WIC.

Dean Smith replied that there are one credit courses that have been attached to another course.

Secretary Tillett added that typically one credit course WIC courses tend to be internship courses. Outside of the one credit psych or biology course, they tend to be ranges where they are internship courses.

Associate Professor Totten asked, depending on where things land for T28, if there is some opportunity for schools and colleges to get together to talk about their own implementation of the WIC.

Dean Smith agreed that it would be a good idea.

Professor Remley added that they could do a follow-up survey asking for college-specific feedback related to what each college perceives to be value designs of the WIC and how they might be able to implement the WIC beyond the parameters that the university has set so far.

Secretary Tillett asked what URCC is asking for EPC to do with this report.

Dean Smith said EPC may need to decide if the requirement is going to continue. It is a good requirement, but it is expensive, has a cap and all of the other features which are difficult. The URCC felt strongly that the WIC is valuable and should continue. The committee would like to know how EPC feels about it.

Chair Dauterich asked if CTL or FPDC has been approached about any of this. Also, if moving forward with the requirement, how does the university reach out to those developing AI and discuss this with writing experts?

Dean Smith said those conversations should happen before there is a decision about WIC. As a result of this report, the question then becomes what could be adjusted here or could it be adjusted? This would be to accommodate the current needs of the colleges and departments.

Chair Dauterich asked about the classifications at the end of the report as some seem concerning.

Dean Smith replied that is what was reported.

Professor Remley added that the report is from IR, so that is just the numbers they got.

Chair Dauterich suggested asking how the courses are assigned.

Interim Associate Provost Sheridan said that if this is going to move forward to look at the cost of instruction. If this does go forward, it should be kept in mind with all the changes going on and considerations of curricular efficiencies.

Dean Smith agreed that the expense is clear and that is what happens with capped classes. Looking across the landscape of the state, one of the things that is seen is that the formal WIC has disappeared. Universities have turned to those two writing courses.

Assistant Professor Fussell asked of the sample of 72 faculty members, how many teach the WIC course?

Dean Smith said 142 WIC-teaching faculty were invited to the survey. Of the 142, 72 responded.

With no further questions or comments on the WIC or other agenda items, Chair Dauterich concluded the meeting at 4:42pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Christa N. Ord

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Operations and Special Projects Coordinator, Curriculum Services
Office of the Provost