Minutes of Core Review Committee
April 24, 2007

The Core Review Committee met April 24, 2007 in Kirby 108. In attendance were Brian Whitman, Philip Simon, Andrew Miller, Ernie Trujillo, Gina Morrison, Agnes Cardoni, Amy Patton, Carl Santana (student representative), and Diane Wenger. The meeting was called to order at 11:07 a.m.

Minutes: The minutes of March 13, and April 12 were approved as written.

Chemistry WAC proposal: Professor Trujillo moved (second by Professor Wenger) that the Chemistry Department WAC proposal be approved. He explained that chemistry has always had a lot of writing in the lab component; currently there are two WI courses and a capstone. The major is hierarchical; students take courses in pre-determined order, and receive feedback along the way. Assessing is done according to rubrics that vary from course to course. The capstone is the final gatekeeper. There is also a portfolio component that allows for assessment of student work and the program itself.

Professor Whitman asked if there is much chance for revision and reflection in the writing process; Professor Trujillo explained that students build on earlier reports and combine them in a later product. They write in drafts in the sophomore year and get the opportunity to receive guidance on re-writes. Professor Simon asked how the writing in chemistry builds on ability to write across curriculum. Professor Trujillo responded that there is a difference in style, but students must show evidence of clear thinking, correct mechanics and write in clear prose. Professor Cardoni asked about a mid-point assessment to avoid repeating the capstone; Professor Trujillo noted that there is no formal plan for mid-point assessment but it could be done; a proposed junior level seminar would be a good place to do it. He emphasized that students cannot pass a chemistry lab class if they cannot write.

Ms. Patton questioned the amount of writing in the on-line CHM 113; Professor Trujillo responded that these classes require on line and paper reports; at that level writing is short paragraphs.

Professors Cardoni and Miller both expressed concern about students who get to capstone level and then fail the capstone because they cannot write. Professor Cardoni expressed her willingness to work with isolated students who may need extra help. Professor Whitman argued that we can trust the chemistry faculty to weed out students who cannot write and pointed out that we have not rejected any other proposals for lack of a mid-point assessment. Rather, he suggested that chemistry be commended and encouraged for considering the junior level seminar. The WAC proposal in chemistry was approved unanimously.

History WAC Proposal. Professor Wenger moved (second by Professor Miller) that the History Program WAC proposal be approved. Discussion: Professor Wenger explained that the history faculty has recently revised the curriculum to add a sophomore level course in methods; all history courses require writing, building up to a senior capstone in which students do a lengthy research and writing project. There is an on-going program of assessment.

Professor Whitman noted his concern with the negative tone and rhetoric of the proposal, though he agreed that the proposal itself is solid. Ms. Patton echoed this concern. After some
additional discussion on the appropriateness of the rhetoric in the proposal, the committee voted **unanimously to approve the history program WAC proposal.**

**WAC Proposal for International Studies.** There was a motion by Professor Morrison, seconded by Professor Wenger to approve the WAC proposal in International Studies. **Discussion:** Professor Miller explained that the interdisciplinary nature of this major makes it slightly different; students take 75 percent of their classes outside international studies, and he cannot dictate what is being taught in history, etc. However, students will compile a portfolio of non political science writing by their sophomore, with the capstone course representing the culmination of their work, and Professor Miller will keep in contact with other faculty members to monitor students’ work. There are lots of opportunities for students to do re-writes to polish their work.

Professor Whitman asked if there is buy-in from political science and sociology for the international studies major, and Professor Miller responded that it is clear this proposal is acceptable to those departments, and that they support the major, but the reality is that if he (Dr. Miller) were to leave Wilkes, the program would likely not continue.

**The WAC proposal for International Studies was approved unanimously.**

**Old Business:**

**Remaining WAC Proposals.** Professor Whitman noted there are still departments that have not submitted proposals; these will be dealt with in the Fall. The possibility of departments NOT submitting anything was discussed; students will have to appeal to the Academic Standards Committee for a waiver on the “WI” requirement.

**Multicultural/Global Awareness:** Professor Morrison asked if we are ready to take anything to the faculty for approval since the Multicultural Task Force is under pressure to show some progress. Professor Whitman said he will make a report to the faculty, but suggested we are not yet ready for a vote since feedback suggested we have to add global/geographic awareness to the package. Professor Wenger concurred that it would be better to present a complete proposal to the faculty.

Professor Simon proposed forming a subcommittee to work on the issue over the summer; he noted there will be pressure to have this in place in fall because of the Middle States review. After some discussion, it was agreed that rather than forming a subcommittee, the present committee will continue its work, and keep in touch by e-mail over the summer.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Wenger