

**QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**The City University of New York**  
**ACADEMIC SENATE**

**COMMITTEE ON WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINES/  
WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM (WID/WAC)**

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**TO:** Academic Senate Steering Committee  
**FROM:** Professor C. Julian Jiménez, Chairperson for Committee on WID/WAC  
**SUBJECT:** Annual Report for Committee on WID/WAC for 2017/2018  
**DATE:** June 1, 2018

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**Membership**

Officers:

Prof. C. Julian Jiménez, Speech and Theatre, Chairperson (2018)  
Dr. Areti Tsimounis, Biological Sciences and Geology, Secretary (2019)

Members:

Elizabeth DiGiorgio, Art & Design (2020)  
Daniel Garbin, Mathematics & Computer Science (2019)  
Shenaz Georgilis, Nursing (2018)  
John Talbird, English (2020)  
Raymond Lam, Engineering Technology (2020)  
Scott Litroff, Music (2019)  
Lakersha Smith, Social Sciences (2018)

Liaisons/Designees:

Elise Denbo (Coordinator of the WID/WAC Program)  
Wentrack, Kathleen, Art and Design, (COC Liaison)  
Sandra Palmer, Academic Affairs (President's Liaison)  
Monica Soto (Student Representative)

**Committee Meetings**

The WID/WAC Committee met two times during the 2017-2018 academic year. The meetings were held on the following dates: October 18<sup>th</sup> and May 16<sup>th</sup>. The minutes for each of the meetings will be available for review on the website for the QCC Academic Senate (the minutes for the May 16<sup>th</sup> meeting will be available upon approval by the committee at its next meeting in the fall of 2018). The Committee acknowledges the service of the secretary, Dr. Areti Tsimounis, in preparing the minutes. In addition, four waiver requests were coordinated during the academic year finalized during the spring meeting and another waiver request after the final meeting finalized via an email vote. All requests were submitted to

the Committee by Sandra Palmer of Academic Affairs or directly to C. Julian Jiménez, Chair of the WID/WAC Committee.

### **Narrative Summary of the Committee Work**

Bylaw Charges and the Committee Actions:

- a. Oversee and make recommendations to the Academic Senate related to the WID/WAC Program;

The WI program seems to be a successful one on campus given that WI is the only required High Impact Practice (HIP) and that there has been an increase in the number of WI courses. The program can be further enhanced by reinforcing the application of WI within other “HIPs.

Jeff Jankowski (WI Coordinator 2016/2017) reported that the departmental Chairpersons have been responsive to the Committee’s input in regards to radically decreasing the number of WI courses taught by Non-WI certified instructors. 2016/2017 was the first year that 100% of the adjunct faculty members teaching WI courses have been officially trained or in the process of training. This percentage has continued during the current academic year (2017/2018). There have only been four requests for new WI approvals or waivers, yet these requests were due to transfer classes from other institutions and/or clerical errors – NOT DUE TO NON-TRAINED FACULTY MEMBER TEACHING WI COURSES. This indicates that the program is working well.

The committee looks forward to continuing working with WI faculty within the departments and the WID/WAC program via the directors as the college continues to implement the WID/WAC requirement as a high impact practice.

- b. Review and make recommendations to the WID/WAC Director(s) concerning the WID/WAC Professional Development Program

The committee discussed that fact that after completion of training that there is no significant follow up for the WI certified faculty. The ongoing volunteer sampling of WI faculty assignments and syllabi by the committee can serve as an initial, though admittedly partial, glimpse at how WI classes evolve post-WI training and further recommendations can be discussed after the collection of the sampled artifacts (No sample syllabi have been volunteered thus far).

During the 2016-17 academic year it was discovered that there is no easy way of contacting all faculty currently teaching WI classes. This was still the case in the 2017-2018 academic year. This hampers communication between the Committee and WI faculty and limits the Committee’s ability to effectively oversee the WID/WAC program.

A more complete e-mail list of faculty members teaching a WI class may be compiled through Kathleen Landy, given that CETL oversees all HIPs, or by requesting Writing Fellows to add the faculty member(s) that they are advising. The Committee had most success in securing these lists from Departmental Chairs, all of which have been quite cooperative this academic year. E-mail messages were sent to Department Chairpersons to identify and possibly recruit WI-trained

faculty members to serve on the WID/WAC Committee. The committee uses these email lists to send notifications to WI faculty regarding WI standards, possible follow up training opportunities, or any other relevant information pertaining to WI classes.

- c. Consult with the Committee on Course and Standing on waiver requests from students on any writing intensive (WI) degree requirements that the Committee on Course and Standing may be called upon to decide;

There were three petitions from students. Of the three petitions, two were granted (details listed below).

1. The committee received a Petition for a Waiver of WI Requirement (2/6/18) looking to have a course taught at Hofstra substitute for a WI class. Upon looking at the materials provide (the course outline to the class) there was no clear indication as to the course satisfying the requirements of a WI class. The petition waiver was denied for the following reasons:

- WI courses have very specific tasks. The course offered at Hofstra University as a substitution does not comply with these tasks.
- The syllabus mentions explicitly that there will be no writing assignments outside of exams. This disagrees with one of the main objectives of WI, to provide scaffolding opportunities for developing better writing skills and/or reflecting upon course material through various writing assignments. Many courses have writing components. WI components necessary for the requirement are intricate and do not apply to any class involving writing.
- There was no outlining of a revision process or low stakes assignments in order to prepare for the assignment, which is the backbone of the WI course.

2. The committee received a Petition for a Waiver of WI Requirement (3/28/18) looking to have a course taught at CityTech substitute for a WI class. The petition waiver was granted for the following reasons:

- The committee found the materials provided of the class at CityTech indicate that the student engaged in activities that can be considered scaffolded and reflective on course topics through writing in the way that the WID/WAC curriculum was designed.

3. The committee received a Petition for a Waiver of WI Requirement (5/2/18) looking to have a course taught at CityTech substitute for a WI class. The petition waiver was granted for the following reasons:

- The course taken at CityTech had a writing intensive designation. QCC made an error when transferring information. The WI designation from CityTech should have carried over and it did not.

- d. Make the final decision on the designation and recertification of any course or section as WI;

The committee received a Petition for a Waiver from the Dance program to convert a DAN 111 Introduction to the Art of Dance course switched to a WI designation. The course DAN 111 section D2 in Spring of 2018 was supposed to be designated as WI but due to a clerical error, the designation did not go through. The professor teaching DAN 111 has been teaching the course as writing intensive for years, according to the petition. The petition went on to explain that the students in the class have done the same work as in the DAN 111 Writing Intensive sections. The professor also took a vote from the students before submitting the petition to ask if they wanted the designation. The vote was not unanimous. The petition waiver was denied for the following reasons:

- The clerical error is unclear.
- The clerical error wasn't caught until the end of the semester, not giving students agency over the type of class they have registered to take. Transparency to the students at the beginning of the semester is vital.
- The course outline makes no mention that DAN 111-D2 being taught as a WI course. It is a requirement for all WI classes that the course outline makes the WI designation clear with language such as " This is a Writing Intensive course. "In WI classes, students will be expected to complete a series of short papers as part of the course requirements. Students will be encouraged to submit drafts of their writing and will receive feedback in order to make revisions. The writing component of the course will be evaluated as a significant portion of the overall grade."
- The vote of students was not unanimous (We also ask that students not be brought into this decision via a vote. The committee should be notified first as to what steps should be taken. The students are not a part of this decision making process).

Given that the Committee receives the list of posted WI courses after the beginning of the semester, the approval of the list has become a formality. Copies of the current list of WI-approved classes were available for our fall meeting well after the beginning of the semester. Ways to more accurately state the true role of the Committee in this process were discussed. It was noted that changing the Bylaws is a complicated process, but might need to be addressed in the coming years.

A list of WI certified classes for the 2017-18 academic year was presented to the Committee, discussed and approved. However, the committee is limited in this charge by the following fact: The list represents classes that the Chairs have sanctioned as meeting WI requirements. It is likely that the Chairs will always have more direct knowledge about the nature of these classes and the qualifications of the faculty who teach them than the committee. However, the list provided to the committee prior to the beginning of the semester often unavoidably and quickly changes in the days prior to the start of the semester. This has resulted in the list being approved retroactively after the classes have already begun running, but this is not ideal.

Changes can occur as a result of class cancelations or sudden additions to meet student demand complicated by issues of available faculty. This sometimes creates instances of WI classes being taught by those currently in training or by those who may not yet have had the training or other

'unforeseen circumstances'. This concern has been addressed head on and seems to be working as stated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph of (a).

Another idea proposed was to have two votes, one 'preliminary' and the other as a final vote after the semester. Though this doesn't solve the problem, it does give the committee a potential chance to voice concerns prior to the start of the semester (see **New Recommendations**).

- e. Coordinate with the Curriculum Committee on issues concerning curriculum.

The committee will continue to observe how the above may impact issues concerning curriculum.

### **New Recommendations**

1. Develop improved procedures for certifying the list of approved WI classes. This could include:
  - Having a preliminary vote prior to the start of the semester and a post semester final vote
  - Continued monitoring of non-certified faculty teaching WI classes
2. Develop an email list that reaches all faculty who are teaching a WI class to better facilitate communication generated by Departmental Chairs
3. Eliminate retroactive WI designation requests by developing a system with instructors/department chairs/registrar to catch clerical errors earlier in the semester.
4. Continue transparency to students by imploring WI faculty to make WI course status clear to students at the beginning of the semester.

### **Recommendations from the Academic Senate**

The Committee addressed the 4 recommendations from the Academic Senate as follows:

1. Create a 2-4 page narrative, considering how this Committee contributes to the realization of Queensborough's Mission Statement and Middle States Accreditation Standard 3:
  - *an institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.*
 As well as revised Middle States Accreditation Standard 5:
  - *Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.*

This recommendation is still in process. The committee is happy to contribute comment with our perspective, but the committee would find it helpful for direction in terms of scope and timing of such comments upon the completion of CETL's initial evaluation of the WID/WAC program.

2. Evaluate impact of integration of WID/WAC into the High Impact Activities across campus; consider the possibility of modifying the purview of the WID/WAC committee to incorporate all High Impact Activities;

The committee discussed the unique role of WI within the High Impact Practices. It is the only one that is required, and thus there is a need for the committee to resolve issues regarding student fulfillment of that requirement. Complicating the WI as a High Impact Practice is that several entities take part including the committee, the program itself with its coordinators, the faculty trained to teach WI and the Chairs who initially approve of the classes being offered as WI.

The committee believes the first issue to resolve is the previously mentioned improvement in communication between the committee and the WI faculty. Once that can be settled, the committee's involvement in other High Impact Practices can be examined.

3. Evaluate impact of WID/WAC certification for upper-level English courses, and consider the possibility of certifying upper level electives in other subjects, if they meet various writing intensive criteria.

The committee is happy to consider all upper level classes in any subject.

4. Report on any procedural changes in the approval of WID/WAC courses or certification of WID/WAC faculty as a result of new CETL leadership

There are no new problems, but please reference the issue covered under Charged in the narrative section of the report.

5. Explore possibility of creating a voluntary "brush up" course for faculty in regards to changes in the WID/WAC curriculum, which has been modified over the years since its inception.

A concern surfaced as the committee discussed whether post-certification WI practices are actually being taught and/or updated.

6. Work with the Committee on Committees to identify WI trained faculty in each department who can serve on the WID/WAC committee

The committee had nine full members representing a broad range of departments during the 2017-18 academic year after adding two additional qualifying members to replace faculty members whom have since left QCC. The committee thanks Dr. Christine Mooney, Chair of the Committee on Committees for her work on replacing two of our members.

7. Respond to questions related to the need for working during annual leave period

We have not received any waivers during the annual leave period, but if one occurs, the committee will review and vote via email.

8. Revise committee guide, as needed

The committee will continue to monitor the committee guide and revise as needed

#### **Matters of Interest**

- As of 2017-18 the WID/WAC program had co-directors: Dr. Jeffrey Jankowski, Dr. Elise Denbo, and Robert Donley
- Dr. John Talbird was unanimously elected as Committee Chair for the 2018/2019 academic year, replacing C. Julian Jiménez whose committee tenure ended this year.
- Dr. Raymond Lam was unanimously elected as Committee Secretary for the 2018/2019 academic year.
- Dr. Jeff Hall, Dr. Chris Mooney, and Dr. Ian Schanning were inducted to the WID/WAC program to replace C. Julian Jiménez, Dr. Lakersha Smith, and Dr. Shenaz Georgilis.
- Dr. Daniel Garbin was instrumental in researching and gathering details from registrar in order to make petition waiver decisions accurate and timely.
- The committee acknowledges the tremendous effort Dave Moretti has made to get our minutes and annual reports updated on our website.
- The committee would like to acknowledge the exceptional work Dr. Areti Tsimounis has prepared as secretary for the past two academic years.
- The committee acknowledges the hard work Dr. Lakersha Smith, Dr. Shenaz Georgilis, and C. Julian Jiménez have done during their time serving the QCC community on the WID/WAC Committee.
- The Committee acknowledges the time spent by Dr. Sandra Palmer in preparing the cases for the committee's consideration.
- The Chairperson would like to thank all members who served on the Committee throughout the academic year.

Respectfully submitted,

Prof. C. Julian Jiménez  
Chair, 2017-2018