

**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:** Dr. Joel Kuszai, Secretary, Academic Senate Steering Committee  
**FROM:** Professor C. Julian Jiménez, Chairperson for Committee on WID/WAC  
**SUBJECT:** **Annual Report for Committee on WID/WAC for 2016/2017**  
**DATE:** **August 29, 2017**

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**Membership**

Officers:

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

Members:

Daniel Garbin, Mathematics & Computer Science (2019)  
Scott Litroff, Music (2019)  
Shenaz Georgilis, Nursing (2018)  
Lakersha Smith, Social Sciences (2018)  
Elizabeth DiGiorgio, Art & Design (2020)  
Marvin Gayle, Engineering Technology (2017)  
James David Nichols, History (2017)  
Dr. Robert Becker, Dr. Johannes Burgers, and Dr. Jeff Jankowski (Coordinators of the WID/WAC Program)

Liaisons/Designees:

Wentrack, Kathleen, Art and Design, COC Liaison  
Wenli Guo, Physics, Steering Committee Designee  
Sandra Palmer, Academic Affairs, President's Liaison  
Monica Soto (Student Representative)

**Committee Meetings**

The WID/WAC Committee met two times during the 2016-2017 academic year. The meetings were held on the following dates: October 19 and April 26. The minutes for each of the meetings will be available for review on the website for the QCC Academic Senate (the minutes for the April 26 meeting

will be available upon approval by the committee at its next meeting). The Committee acknowledges the service of the secretary, Dr. Areti Tsimounis, in preparing the minutes. In addition, one waiver request was coordinated during the academic year (finalized during the Spring meeting) and another waiver request at the beginning of the summer session of 2017 (finalized via email vote). All requests were submitted to the Committee by Dr. Glenn Burdi of Academic Affairs.

### **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) 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. This year is the first year that 100% of the adjunct faculty members teaching WI courses have been officially trained or in the process of training. In addition, thus far during the current academic year there have only been two requests for new WI approvals or waivers (from previous semesters), indicating that the program is working well.

There has been an increase in the number of Writing Fellows at QCC this year. Different options/interfaces for Fellows to work with their corresponding faculty members remotely were discussed, such as Skype, Google Drive, and Submittable. This issue will be re-visited if there is a lack of Writing Fellows willing to work with QCC faculty members.

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.

During the 2016-17 academic year it was discovered that there is no easy way of contacting all faculty currently teaching WI classes. 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;

A letter from the Chair of the Business Department was emailed to the WID/WAC Chair about a confusion regarding the WI designation of a section of BU-301. Section H1 of the course was incorrectly listed during registration as WI. The student registered in the particular section thinking that it would fulfill WI requirements. When professor Francis, who is teaching the course, became aware of this misunderstanding he assigned WI coursework to the particular student. A motion was made that the student not be given WI credit because a WI class is taught as a group experience. The committee did however make a motion to be given a WI waiver at the suggestion of WI coordinator Jeffrey Jankowski. The motion was approved by the Committee by a show of hands.

There were two petitions, including one over the summer break. Of the two petitions, both were granted. The two petitions involved WI classes changing to non-WI status in the days before the semester's start and without the knowledge of the students. In both cases compelling letters of support were included from the faculty and it was clear the students had made a good faith effort to try and satisfy the requirement.

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

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. One of the Nursing courses one section was listed three times and two other sections were missing from the list. The committee voted on the assumption that this was a typographical error. The list was approved unanimously, with no abstentions. 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 2015-16 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. Develop ways of minimizing situations such as the BU-301 where we needed to certify a class as WI after the start of the semester due to a designation error.

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

The Committee addressed the 11 recommendations from the Academic Senate as follows:

1. Receive reports of assessments conducted on WI courses by the Office of Academic Affairs (distinct from conduct of assessments) as well as the WI program more broadly conceived. This would include any evaluations of the effect of Writing Intensive courses as implementation of high-impact activities from the Office of Institutional Research

This recommendation has been covered in detail under Charge a in the narrative portion of the report.

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 2016-17 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 full nine members.

7. Edit and update committee website

With the change in the QCC website, The WID/WAC committee website is missing documents including a year's worth of minutes. We will update this ASAP.

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

One waiver came during the annual leave period, but no meetings needed to be called during the summer session.

9. Revise committee guide, as needed

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

10. Contribute comment on the impact of WID/WAC for Queensborough's meeting of revised 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.*

With the completion of CETL's initial evaluation of the WID/WAC program, 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.

#### **Matters of Interest**

- As of 2016-17 the WID/WAC program had three co-directors: Dr. Jeffrey Jankowski, Dr. Johannes Burgers, and Dr. Robert Becker.
- Dr. Areti Tsimounis was unanimously elected as Committee Secretary to replace Dr. Peter Gray who has since left QCC.
- Dr. Shenaz Georgilis and Dr. Elizabeth DiGiorgio were both inducted to the WID/WAC program to replace Dr. Peter Gray and Dr. Kimberly Ambruso who have both since left QCC.
- The Committee acknowledges the time spent by Dr. Glenn Burdi 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, 2015-2017