

April 8, 2008

Memorandum

To: Tamara Machmut-Jhashi
Secretary of the University Senate

From: Susan Awbrey
Chair of the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction

Re: WRT New Program Proposal

The University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction (UCUI) met twice to discuss the Proposal for a New Major and Minor in Writing and Rhetoric. During the first meeting, the Committee identified several strengths within the proposed programs including: inclusion of a service learning opportunity, many career opportunities for graduates, a focus on new media, and the assumption that OU would be at the forefront by offering a major in writing and rhetoric while other institutions only have certificate programs. UCUI also had a number of questions and recommendations. The Committee voted to ask the department to respond to the questions and to revise the proposal before making a recommendation to the Senate. At the second meeting UCUI's questions were addressed by the department and a revised proposal was presented. *After consideration of the department's responses, UCUI voted unanimously to recommend approval of the WRT proposal to the Senate.*

UCUI Questions and Recommendations Regarding the WRT Proposal

Service learning: Confusion if this is requirement or optional. Is service learning connected only with a course offered every other semester? Clarification of the difference between service learning, internship and capstone courses? Proposal states that faculty are well connected in the community however on pg. 14 only internship opportunities within the university setting are listed. It would be helpful if examples were used to distinguish between the three internship opportunities, *Writing for the Professions*, *Writing for New Media* and *Writing as a Discipline*.

Definitions: Clarification and distinction between the terms rhetoric and writing would be helpful at the beginning of the proposal.

New Media: Track does not require courses on use of web tools.

Career Opportunities: Most emphasis in the proposal is on graduates with specific technical skills who can also write. Question was raised as to whether the graduate with a writing major would find employment opportunities without the matching technical skills.

K-12: Question was raised about the K-12 employment opportunities mentioned in the proposal. The committee suggested dropping the K-12 component of the proposal since more coursework would be required to prepare graduates for the K-12 opportunities.

Prerequisites: The committee identified several required courses on the POS that have prerequisites, increasing the total number of credits for the major. Also, the proposal needs clarification as to what specific courses are required of all students and what courses are selected from a list of course that would support the major. Suggestion was made that the prerequisites could also be listed so a student could select a set of courses to support the major and still be within the required total number of credits for the major.

Tracks: How many track courses are necessary in order for a student to claim a specialization in a particular track. Needs clarification

Advising: Which advisors will be approving the POSs and POEs for these students? Needs clarification.

WRT 150: Confusion about WRT 160 listed in the proposal but the prerequisite of WRT 150 not listed in the proposal.

Certificate: Suggestion was made that faculty may want to propose a certificate option as part of the proposal to help increase enrollment with students in other majors.

Surveys: Clarification needed on results of the survey of the number of students interested in the writing major. Data could support two different conclusions. Also, survey of students in other disciplines who may be interested in a minor could be informative.

Faculty: The need for two new faculty with an increase of only 25 students was questioned.

Full-time faculty: Question about whether or not full-time faculty would continue to teach 150 and 160 or be moved to the new upper division courses. Concern was that if full-time faculty moved to new courses the lower division courses would continue to be taught by part-time faculty and quality and consistency may become issues.