DePaul University Academic Program Review

Cycle 6: Spring 2003--Spring 2004

Memorandum of Agreement -- November 2004

First Year Writing Program

As a result of the sixth cycle of DePaul University's Academic Program Review Process (Cycle 6), the participants in the process enter into the following agreements. The participants understand that this document will be available to be made public once all the signatures are in place.

Common items for the Liberal Studies Program:

Domain goals and learning outcomes:

Each Advisory Committee will articulate its specific goals, consistent with the DePaul Learning Goals, and will then derive from them assessable expected student-learning outcomes which are to be included in all unit syllabi. This task is to be completed according to a schedule to be provided by the LSC and/or its chair so that the LSC can approve these goals and outcomes by June 2005.

Writing standards:

Each Advisory Committee will determine the acceptable amount and type of writing to be required in its courses, taking into consideration the variety of courses offered in that domain, and being sure that such assignments are sensitive to and consistent with the students’ prior and/or concurrent writing experience and preparation, including the first year writing course(s). This task is to be completed according to a schedule to be provided by the LSC and/or its chair so that the LSC can approve these standards by June 2005.

Quality control:

During the coming year, Liberal Studies Council will establish a sub-committee to consider ways to ensure the academic quality of LSP courses. While it remains the responsibility of Liberal Studies Council to set standards for rigor and challenge, this subcommittee will make recommendations to the LSC about mechanisms and processes to ensure those standards are maintained. As part of its recommendations, this committee will identify distinct roles for the advisory committees and contributing departments in carrying out their responsibilities in maintaining the quality of Liberal Studies courses. Once the Liberal Studies Council approves these recommendations, it will be the responsibility of the advisory committees to carry out the tasks assigned to them.

Actions agreed upon by the First Year Writing Program for the coming academic year (2004 – 2005):

1. Staffing and Support:

   After carefully examining the action items identified by the unit’s Self-Study Report, those attending the MOA meeting strongly supported the following priority items.

   a. The First Year Writing Program will submit a proposal to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences to be the basis of discussions with the Dean of the College and the EVP for Academic Affairs about seeking additional release time/support for program administration. Currently, with the exception of administrators, all faculty within the Writing Program are adjunct and cannot be expected to assist in administrative duties,
such as, creating faculty development opportunities, monitoring course quality, conducting annual assessments, and making program innovations.

b. The First Year Writing Program will develop a “white paper” investigating possible ways to increase/retain in the program faculty experience and expertise that are now lost because many faculty in the program currently work under contracts renewable for a maximum of three years, creating a need constantly to develop new faculty in the program. The paper, which will serve as the basis of a discussion with the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences and the EVP for Academic Affairs, will examine the various ways this problem might be solved, including designating such persons as long-term teaching professionals, and will consider the costs of and obstacles to such options potentially arising from AAUP guidelines, DePaul/Faculty Council policies, cost constraints, etc. The paper will also include ways in which comparable institutions have addressed this problem.

2. Diversifying Advisory Committee.
   a. Seek to expand First Year Writing Committee to include non-English Department and non-College of Liberal Arts and Sciences faculty as members by first approaching the Liberal Studies Council and English Department regarding changing the existing bylaws.
   b. The Director of the First Year Writing Program will develop ways, once the committee by-laws are changed—see 2a, to include faculty from outside of the English Department and outside of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences on the Advisory Committee.

3. Writing at DePaul:
   a. The First Year Writing Program Administrators will create a comprehensive document, to be located on their website, about writing in the Liberal Studies Program in order to assist faculty in understanding and building on the outcomes of the First Year Writing sequence.
   b. Administrators of the First Year Writing Program will work with departments and domains to assist in the design of assignments that build on students’ freshman writing skills.
   c. During the Autumn Advisory Committee meeting, standards for writing will be reviewed in terms of their stringency and consistency.

4. Syllabi Enhancement:
   a. Seek to have instructors enhance syllabi through increased attention to: articulation of program learning outcomes; articulation between syllabus and course calendar; articulation between assigned activities and specific learning outcomes; improved visual presentation of syllabi; improved statement of writing expectations and types of writing assignments; and clearer indication of the differences and relationships between FYW 103 and 104.

5. Assessment:
   a. Give more attention to the assessibility of what occurs in the classroom possibly including a shift from assessing syllabi to assessing teaching portfolios (this will be more feasible if 1a and 1b are successful).
Signed:

Advisory Committee Chair: ______________________________

APRC Subcommittee: ______________________________

Chair of APRC: ______________________________

Associate Dean, Liberal Arts and Sciences: ______________________________

Dean of the College: ______________________________

Associate V.P. for Academic Affairs: ______________________________

Executive V.P. for Academic Affairs: ______________________________