

December 21, 2015

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing on behalf of the WASC Core Competencies Working Group to request your assistance in a key component of our WASC review.

As you are aware, we are preparing for WASC (WSCUC) reaccreditation. One of the key components in this cycle of review is evidence of student attainment of core competencies. WASC has identified five core competencies, and our campus is required to review three of the five. In consultation with campus constituencies, the WASC Steering Committee and Core Competencies Working Group have identified the three: Writing, Critical Thinking, and Information Literacy.

As you also know, the CSU has a policy regarding the GVAR (Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement) that at minimum requires each campus to determine and certify a standard of proficiency prior to awarding a baccalaureate degree.

During Spring 2015 we collected essays from Writing Intensive Courses taught that semester; this fall, we conducted a reading of those essays and are currently assembling and analyzing the data. WASC prefers, however, at least two sets of data. So, I am now writing to you to request your assistance in collecting a second set of essays during Spring 2016 which will be read early in the summer.

We need to collect a random sample of approximately 400 3-5 page pieces of student written work in any genre (e.g. essay, report, literature review, etc.) written towards the latter half of the semester in Writing Intensive (WI) courses. These essays will then be read by faculty readers from across the curriculum, using a process similar to the WPJ readings. We will be piloting a rubric created by the Reading and Writing Subcommittee (see attached).

We have based our request on the WI distribution of courses; if your department provided samples in Spring 2015, you may either send us samples from the same course during Spring 2016 or from another Writing Intensive course offered in Spring 2016. We only need essays from one section of a multi-section course (approximately 30 essays). With each packet submitted to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, please include:

- One copy of the original assignment description/handout. If you did not provide a written description of the assignment to students, please provide a short description of the assignment so that our readers understand the context, criteria and parameters for the essays they are assessing.
- “Clean” Copies of all students’ papers: typed, without grade or instructor’s name or comments.
- All student work should be identified by student ID numbers.

Please assure both students and faculty that the purpose of this activity is not to review individual student or faculty performance! We are not judging assignments; nor are we judging the grade or assessment given by the instructor. The purpose of this activity is to examine whether or not our GVAR certification is reflective of a level of standardized proficiency for our graduates and to provide evidence to WASC of our students’ achievement.

Copies of student work are due to the Office of Undergraduate Studies **no later than Friday, May 23, 2016**; they may be submitted electronically or in hard copy.

If you have any questions or concerns, or if you do not think that your assignments will yield appropriate samples for this assessment, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your assistance,

Sheree

Sheree L. Meyer, Ph.D.

Dean for Undergraduate Studies