

INSTRUCTION COUNCIL
September 11, 2009
204 Whitehurst
MINUTES

Present: Raj Basu, Celeste Campbell, Bruce Crauder, Bob Davis, Bavette Miller, Ed Miller, Shiretta Ownbey, Mark Payton, Jeremy Penn, Chris Ross, David Thompson, Mark Weiser, Chris Ray, Carol Moder, Gordon Emslie, Gene Halleck, and Gail Gates.

1. ITA/SPEAK Exam – Gail Gates

The ITA/Speak exams have been administered by the English Department since 1992. Recently the TOEFL added a speaking portion. The Graduate College proposed using the speaking portion of the TOEFL to replace the SPEAK and ITA tests for students who score a 26 or higher. The proposal indicated that if a graduate student receives a 22-24 on the speaking portion of the iBT they would be required to pass the ITA; and students with a score of 20 or lower would be required to take the SPEAK testing followed by ITA (if their SPEAK scores are 45 or better). The Graduate College agreed to work with departments to ensure that they are aware of the implications of the iBT speaking scores for the likely employment of graduate students as GTAs. The proposal also recommends assigning administration of the SPEAK and ITA testing to University Assessment and Testing (UAT). UAT would take over scheduling of the rooms, collecting the fees, and communicating results to test takers and departments and the English Department would provide technical expertise and train graders. Dr. Moder proposed eliminating the SPEAK test and using only the iBT scores. She proposed developing a new version of the ITA for lab assistants. It was noted that some countries do not have the capability to administer the iBT exam. Presently it takes 15 days to get the TOEFL results. Members asked if students in countries that do not have the capability to administer the iBT could take the IELTS test. Members also asked if there were any other exams available and it was noted that it would have to be investigated. Members asked if there was any hope for those students scoring a 20 or below on the exam becoming eligible to take the ITA exam and it was noted that it would depend on the help the student received to improve their English skills. Should the English Department or ELI provide a class to help students improve their skills before they retake the iBT? Dr. Gates asked that members take this proposal back to their colleges and consider if the university should do away with the SPEAK test, require iBT scores, and create a separate test for lab assistants.

2. Textbook Cancellation – Gail Gates

Dr. Gates noted that the textbook policy does not allow departments to cancel or change book orders unless the class has been cancelled. It is being proposed that department be allowed to cancel a book order if they agree to pay the restocking fee and return costs. Members suggested it would be more appropriate to require approval from the Dean and Provost if departments intend to cancel/change textbook orders. Dr. Gates asked members to share the proposal with their colleges.

3. Retention – Gail Gates

Institutional Research and Information Management (IRIM) will provide a retention chart to your Dean and the information provided will include 2008-09 data. The data will reflect retention and graduation rates of the students who started in your college. Dr. Gates provided the spreadsheet of retention initiatives provided by the colleges and asked members to review the spreadsheet and advise of errors.

4. Other

Members asked Dr. Emslie to elaborate on communications regarding the "Responsible Conduct of Research" (RCR) policy. Dr. Emslie noted that initially all graduate students will have a hold placed on enrollment for Spring of 2010 and it will be up to the departments to ensure that their graduate students complete a CITI module (a research ethics tutorial) and clear the students to enroll. This is a one time process for current graduate students and this will be required for incoming graduate students. It was noted that some undergraduate students would be required take the module if they are conducting research.

Members commented that this will create a dilemma with such programs as distance education and would like to work on an abbreviated version for professional and undergraduate students. A subcommittee of members will bring recommended changes to the policy to the next IC meeting.

Adjourn: 10:20 a.m.