

English Department

MEETING MINUTES
September 14, 2015
Room 2721 12:50pm

PRESENT

Baukholt, Robert
Dorantes, Kathleen
Howell, Kevin
Rapp, Frank
Tirado, Xochitl

Bemis, Roberta
Garcia, Olivia
Lay, Nancy
Rowley, Deirdre

Cormier, Judy
Heumann, Michael
Morris, Audrey
Simpson, Scott

ABSENT

Patterson, James

Shaner, Christina

GUEST

Dorsey, Tanya

I. Call to Order (Kathleen Dorantes)

The meeting was called to order at 12:57pm

II. Welcome

Kathleen welcomed everyone.

III. Approval of Minutes – August 14, 2015

The minutes of August 14, 2015 were approved as submitted.

IV. Action Item

1. Common Final in English 008

(M/S/to discuss-R. Bemis/K. Howell)

Kathleen started up the conversation on the Common Final by saying that she reached out to teachers at other colleges. She mentioned Tina Ramsey who used to teach for us and is now at Yuba College. Ms. Ramsey says that there they use the common final for every level of composition that they teach. Kathleen asked if any one reached out to any other colleges for more information on the common final. No one did.

Deirdre shared that she knew there was some concern with some people that they felt it wasn't fair because of different things being taught in different classes. She wondered if teaching in composition classes could be more uniform.

Audrey said that common finals can be helpful when assessing SLOs.

Kathleen mentioned that we do have the Standards Committee and they did adopt a grading rubric for ENGL 110 so maybe it's something they can bring up to the Standards Committee. The committee is working on an English 9 and an English 8 grading rubric.

Kevin said he read the article that David sent out and he read that only one CSU school still does it. So if the CSU's are doing away with it, why are we still doing it? Roberta thinks that the reason the CSU's "threw it out," is because they also threw out developmental English which is where we are. She said that since the CSU's don't have so many differentiated levels of developmental English, maybe it's less necessary to use common finals and rubrics.

Kathleen mentioned that we have a lot of adjunct instructors teaching ENGL 009. Part of the reason we instituted the common final was that adjuncts needed to become more standardized in their teaching and grading.

Audrey thinks that if we are going to have a common final, it's important that they know what our purpose is, why are we having one, what is it we are we trying to do.

Michael said that he wants to make sure that we know that there's a difference between standards in grading and standards of teaching. He said that since everyone has to be on the same page of grading, it doesn't mean that everyone has to teach the same way.

Xochitl wanted to know if having the common final has made a difference in the students when they go in to 110. Are they better prepared?

Opinions:

- Kathleen feels that there was a dramatic change, for the better.
- Michael said he thinks so, but he feels the bigger change came when the prerequisites were added, he feels that was a more significant change.
- Robert said that the common final was started right when he first started working here so he doesn't have the pre-common final experience to base his opinion on.
- Deirdre agreed with Michael that the prerequisite made a huge change, but the common final bumped it up. Now it's at the point where for most of the students that she sees in 110, the only thing that prevents them from passing the class is doing the work.
- Frank said he sat in a meeting once where there was pre and post data and the data was that there was really absolutely no difference at all in terms of success.

- Roberta said that in Reading it made a tremendous difference. In Writing it got people together more and they saw the standards more clearly. She thinks it did a great deal of good. She heard from 110 teachers that it seemed to make a tremendous difference.
- Kevin said that he's just going by what David said in the email he sent out, that the data person, Jose said that between ENGL 009 and 010 going in to 110, there really was no difference.
- Olivia asked if the final exam has to be given the way it's being given. Olivia said what tends to see happen with a lot of her students regardless of the level, there's generally a big project that they're working on towards the end and then there's the common final at the end that at that point is kind of like just an afterthought.
- Michael said that common finals are common. They're used at all levels all over the place, including the UC's. They're done differently though. Some of them are used as an exit exam so the students have to pass them in order to go on to the next level. Others, it's almost an afterthought like Olivia was saying. Teacher planning is key so that it doesn't become just an afterthought. Michael added that one of the dangers with common finals is teaching-to-the-test so instructors spend too much time teaching them how to do well on the common final and they forget to teach students how to write. Michael thinks that's something that is easy to fall into. He said there are benefits to common finals, but there are also drawbacks that have to be watched for.
- Frank stated that beyond student success, if these other things can't be done, like faculty working together without a common final, then to him it says a pretty sad thing about that faculty.
- Frank shared an idea of something that could be used instead of the common final. It could be something that is similar to a research paper/portfolio. Instructors would share their work and have other instructors grade that.
- Audrey said she doesn't have enough data to vote either way.

(M/S/to table the motion-A. Morris/X. Tirado)

After a lengthy discussion, the group decided that more time was needed to discuss reasons why we should have the common final in ENGL 008 and get more statistics.

Kathleen said we are having the common final in 008 this semester because it's on everyone's syllabi.

V. Discussion Items

1. 2016/2017 Schedule

Kathleen said Melody is going to repeat the 2015/16 schedule and then we will tweak it as we see fit. We might lose three or four classes that meet MWF and they'll be scheduled to meet twice a week because it

was discovered that English and math had the most classes that meet in the MWF time blocks.

2. Class Meeting Frequency Report

Kathleen said some English faculty have wondered if our student success is going down because we have MWF classes. Jose Carrillo ran the figures for four semesters worth of MWF versus two day a week versus one day a week. The success rate for once a week was the highest, 56%. Three times a week was close with 55% and twice a week was third with 51%. Kathleen said she thought the greater success for once a week was because most adjuncts taught those classes, and they are more lenient graders. Most full-time faculty choose twice-per-week classes.

Kathleen asked the department if she had their support because she has to write this up for Program Review. No one objected.

VI. Reports

1. Chair's Report

a. Canvas Update

Kathleen said she was impressed with the Canvas presentation. Deirdre said she is happy with Canvas because it has a mega database, so if you have a problem they fix it right away. Canvas is more responsive to their customers.

b. Curricunet Search

With the new version of Curricunet, go to Curricunet Search to find a course outline.

2. Reading Task Force

Audrey reported that the task force met last Thursday and is looking at two different strategies to try to increase the number of students that are getting Reading instruction. Nancy and Audrey are going to the CRLA conference in November. They're hoping to find out more on what people are doing at other colleges. The next meeting is Monday, October 26th.

3. Academic Senate Report

Michael said that they're going to talk about Canvas at the next day's meeting.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:51pm.