University Writing Committee: Report to the Academic Senate, Spring 2018
Submitted by Siskanna Naynaha, University Writing Committee Chair

Item 1

Last fall 2017 at the Academic Senate retreat University Writing Committee (UWC) Chair Siskanna Naynaha worked at a round table with Senators Pong, Bono, and Peyton to discuss the development of a student writing survey. The proposed student writing survey, much like the WAC (Writing Across the Curriculum) Student Writing Survey administered across campus in 2016, would ask students to fill out a questionnaire regarding their writing experiences and common writing practices during each year of their educational careers at CSUDH. The plan is to administer the new student writing survey annually in order to gather longitudinal data about student writing at CSUDH. The data will be used to decrease reliance upon anecdotal evidence related to student writing, which tends to emphasize students’ composing weaknesses, and move the campus toward data driven interpretation and analysis of students’ strengths and challenges. Ultimately the data will be used to improve both the teaching and learning about writing throughout the entire CSUDH curriculum and help better support student writers as they begin to inhabit emergent identities as disciplinary professionals.

The round table reviewed a variety of models for college student writing surveys, including drafts of faculty-developed surveys related to student writing as well as the NSSE Writing Module, the latter of which includes a pair of two fairly robust questions. The round table also examined the 2016 CSUDH WAC Student Survey, which was administered at Dominguez Hills in the spring of 2016 as part of the WSCUC Written Communication Task Force efforts. The round table used those models to develop a very rough preliminary draft of a new survey on student writing to be administered annually to all students at Dominguez Hills, asking students to respond based on their year of study (frosh, sophomore, junior, etc.). The survey will give the campus community a picture not only of student writing experiences and practices but also if their abilities, attitudes, and beliefs, first starting at the beginning of their time at Dominguez Hills, then allowing us to see how those change or evolve over time. Eventually the survey will provide longitudinal data that can help inform departmental and programmatic decisions regarding curricular and co-curricular writing instruction, support, and interventions.

Chair Naynaha took the draft survey developed at the retreat back to the UWC where it was finalized for input from the Graduate Council specifically on those questions designed for DH graduate students. At the end of fall semester (2017), Chair Naynaha presented the survey to Graduate Council where several items were added or amended upon the recommendation of the GC. The survey was revised over the course of spring semester and are now slated for review by the UWC at our final meeting of the spring (2018) term and by the Graduate Council at the beginning of fall 2018. The target date for initial administration of the campus-wide survey through Campus Labs is spring 2019.
When the draft is complete, Chair Naynaha will bring the survey back to the Academic Senate for feedback and input from the campus community prior to ultimate finalization.

**Item 2**

Last academic year (2016-2017), the UWC reviewed the Writing Intensive (WI) course policy that is currently in place. The study revealed that due to both labor and budgetary capacity, it is not possible to implement CSUDH’s existing WI graduation requirement (i.e., that every student take 2 WI courses in the major or a closely related field prior to graduation). Given that fact, at the beginning of the current academic year (in fall 2017) the UWC began preliminary work toward revision the WI course policy to make it implementable as well as to bring it into alignment with current research and best practices related to Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), WI courses, and disciplinary programs in U.S. higher education.

To that end, throughout the fall term (2017), the UWC worked to develop a faculty survey regarding WI programs and policy, a complete draft of which was finalized at the beginning of spring term (2018). The draft was then submitted to Campus Labs for administration through the CL survey platform. After several previews of the survey by the UWC and Campus Labs survey specialists, then review by Senate Exec, the survey has been finalized and is ready to launch. Due to the timing of the finalization, administration of the survey is likely to take place at the outset of fall semester 2018, though the final determination will be made at the last UWC meeting of the academic year (May 7, 2018). The survey explains the existing WI policy, describes alternative WI models that could be implemented at Dominguez Hills, and asks faculty for input on various details that might be implemented in the new CSUDH WI policy. The target date for completion of the administration of the survey is October 1, 2018.

**Item 3**

In preparation for the administration of the new CSUDH Student Writing Survey (Item 1), the UWC undertook analysis of the 2016 WAC Student Writing Survey. Although the WAC Student Writing Survey was used to inform the WSCUC Written Communication Task Force’s final report to the campus, it was never analyzed in depth or detail. The UWC has begun to prepare a full, detailed report and analysis of those survey results, which will be used as a baseline for understanding results of the new CSUDH Student Writing Survey to be administered annually beginning spring 2019.