Minutes of the Writing Panel for SUNY
Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment

February 23, 2005

Attending: Professor Patricia Belanoff, Stony Brook University; Professor Aniko Constantine, Alfred State College; Professor Wayne Fulks, Sullivan County Community College; Professor Jake Holden, Fulton-Montgomery Community College; Professor Kathleen McCoy, Adirondack Community College; Professor Robert Moore, SUNY Oswego; Professor Maria Palmara, Hudson Valley Community College.
Via Conference Call: Professor Melanie Vainder, and Professor Tina Good, SUNY GEAR Committee.

Chair. Pat Belanoff agreed to chair the Writing Panel.

Secretary. Kathleen McCoy agreed to take notes.

Purpose/Role of Panel. The panel discussed the purpose of convening, to establish a set of rubrics against which the GEAR committee can approve individual campuses’ assessment of Basic Communication/Writing as a part of Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment. We hope these rubrics will serve as guidelines for individual campuses as they revise their original plans. We will use the established four-point rubric of standards, which states that student work “exceeds,” “meets,” “approaches,” or “does not meet” the established outcomes. We will flesh out a chart that clarifies each standard for each outcome. We will also need to revisit our own rubrics later, in the spirit of the purpose of assessment. We also decided to assemble a list of suggestions for campuses regarding implementation of Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment in Basic Communication/Writing and agreed to suggest names of national experts from which SUNY can invite speakers to the assessment conference in April.

Learning Outcomes. The panel discussed the learning outcomes established by the GEAR group. For Basic Communication (Written) [composition], these include:

- Produce coherent texts within common college-level written forms;
- Demonstrate the ability to revise and improve such texts; and
- Research a topic, develop an argument, and organize supporting details.

The panel noted that there is no nationally normed instrument that can assess revision; therefore, it should be assessed on campuses. However, the SUNY-approved companies offering nationally-normed standardized tests as an option for Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment do offer to process revisions, and SUNY is offering such tests as one option, though the writing panel recommends in-house assessment. Campuses will be free to decide whether to use a single paper, a portfolio, or nationally normed, standardized tests. The panel also noted that the most cost-effective measure, however, is in-house assessment.

Student Sample. We will need 20% of students in assessed courses represented in our samples. We discussed that sometimes 20% of sections are chosen, but it might be
preferable to assess 20% of students in all sections.

**Authenticity of Sample.** We discussed that writing assignments for Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment of writing should be embedded in the courses that campuses have earmarked as suitable for assessment.

**Available Resources.** Available resources include Web Write at the SUNY-COW website: [http://depthome.sunysuffolk.edu/webwrite](http://depthome.sunysuffolk.edu/webwrite). This site includes the rubrics approved by GEAR. Other sites include NAEP, the CCCC Position Statement, and web-published work from Washington and Ed White. In addition, Patricia Francis is expected to distribute sample rubrics for our use.

**Level of Writing to be Assessed.** The writing assessed needs to be at a level achievable within the first two years, to accommodate community colleges. The panel plans to recommend that campuses clearly delineate the level of students being assessed (first-semester, second year, rising junior, etc.) This delineation would also clarify the level of assessed students if results of assessment should be “FOIL”ed or sought under the Freedom of Information Law.

**Value of Assessment.** We discussed the value of assessment for program evaluation and professional development.

**SUNY Funding.** SUNY is promising funding for Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment. This development may enhance participation in assessment.

**Procedures for Assessment.** We discussed the need for inter-rater reliability, established by norming sessions, as the proven and necessary method for assessing writing. We debated whether the professor should be included in the panel, but agreed that norming is essential. We also noted that it is important to black out student names so that no names appear on the work being assessed.

**Writing Panel Groups.** We divided into three subgroups. Each subgroup will draw up draft rubrics for one of the objectives in written communication.

- **Coherent Texts:** Jake and Maria
- **Revision:** Pat, Kathleen, Wayne
- **Research:** Annie, Robert, Mili

**Timeline for Writing Panel.**
- Tuesday, March 8—have mini-rubrics with which to work.
- Thursday, March 24—assemble an entire rubric for GEAR; then determine what workshops and presentations we would like to prepare for the assessment conference in April.
- Thursday, April 14—finish our report.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen McCoy