CUNY ESL Discipline Council
Notes on the December 9, 2011 Meeting
12:30 pm – 2:30 pm

Present: Representatives from Baruch, BCC, BMCC, Brooklyn, John Jay, Kingsborough, LaGuardia, Queens, and York

At the beginning of the meeting, Len Fox shared the information that Brooklyn College (BC) has found a way of dealing with the problem of not correctly identifying and admitting ESL applicants to the CUNY four-year colleges. In the past, certain students were admitted as "conditional students" and retested. If BC found, through looking at their writing tests that they were ESL, and they had passed the math test, they were then no longer considered conditional and could then be admitted. Since the senior colleges are no longer admitting conditional students, BC is failing to admit a significant number of ESL applicants who should be labeled ESL, should not be considered conditional, and should be admitted. At Brooklyn College, their Testing Director, Penny Terry, has informed Len that they can test students without admitting them and can then admit those that they identify as ESL. So BC is testing rejected students who passed the math test and who have obtained the high school GPA that we require for admission. They can then admit those that they identify as ESL through reading their writing test.

Following this explanation, we brainstormed as a group a list of categories of questions to include on an electronic survey of our various ESL programs including ESL/EAP, FYC, and CLIP Program information. The following is a list of those categories.

- How students exit and/or are promoted in ESL programs
- What are the administrative structures of ESL programs? (e.g., who teaches F/T, P/T, where programs are housed, etc.)
- Structure/use of writing center/ESL lab on each campus (e.g., who tutors, training/methodology, etc.)
- ESL/FYC: articulation between Eng and ESL? Designated sections?
- Are there upper level writing courses for ESL/how does WAC address ESL?
- ESL student placement and advisement
- Professional development amongst ESL/EAP faculty and for the wider college community
- How CATW scores are used on various campuses (e.g., placement use, Diagnostic uses, etc.)
- Demographic information of survey taker (i.e., who is providing the information)
· Program make-up and program structure/levels (including acronyms) at community colleges, senior colleges, CLIP, CAPs, BLISS
· Demographic profile of ESL students
· How is technology used with ESL students? What access to technology do students have on various campuses (e.g., online classes, smart classrooms, ePortfolios, software/platforms, etc.)
· Classroom hours/hours/credits for both students and faculty

After the list was generated, there was a lengthy discussion regarding who should fill out the survey. There was a consensus that it should go to the ESL DC campus reps who will either fill out the survey themselves or forward the survey to the relevant people on his/her campus. There was a discussion that a letter should go out to the program chairs explaining the intention and importance of having the survey completed in a timely manner. The co-chairs (Kim and Maria) can provide such a letter to the ESL DC rep, who will use that letter as needed. The co-chairs will draft the survey in collaboration with other ESL DC members.

Through a vote, we next prioritized a list of ESL DC proposed objectives for 2012 and 2013 that were generated during the October meeting. The results were collapsed into four objectives:

1. Raise the profile of multilingual language learners at CUNY (e.g., educate the CUNY community about the heterogeneity of our “ESL” student population, the resources they bring to CUNY, and best teaching practices to address their learning needs with conferences and/or workshops; address the influx of “1.5 generation” students at CUNY, etc.)
2. Investigate and address placement issues (e.g., how to use CAT-W scores for placement, etc.)
3. Discuss and resolve whether to rename the ESL Discipline Council by replacing “ESL” with a title that more accurately (a) reflects the linguistic backgrounds and future aspirations of our students, (b) reflects the rich resources our student population brings to CUNY, and (c) emphasizes their linguistic powers, rather than their so-called deficiencies.
4. Identify and disseminate CUNY best practices for teaching multilingual learners at all levels: ESL/EAP, CLIP, FYC WAC/WID, graduate and professoriate.

Working groups will form around objectives 1, 2, and 4. Objective 2 will be discussed at our upcoming meetings.

Respectfully submitted,
Maria Jerskey and Kim Helmer