At the last Grad committee meeting I was tasked with sharing Robin and my exchange of ideas regarding the concept of an expanded writing requirement, with the idea that this could be discussed at next Wednesday’s (10/12) meeting.

Here is what Robin sent me:

Hi Liz—Here is the start of a proposal for an english offering for College of Business MBAs:

Proposed: Business Writing 5xx

Requirement: All students entering the MBA program will fulfill the requirements of the course during their initial semester at NMSU.

Alternative: This requirement will be waived if the student has completed 6 hours of English courses at the undergraduate level, with a grade of A or B. The courses must center on grammar and rhetoric, rather than literature or the history of language.

Rationale: Many students who are currently or were in the past enrolled in the MBA program have revealed a deficiency in their ability to adequately express themselves in writing through the English language, in the judgment of the MBA and other College of Business faculty.

Not much, but it is a start. Personally my bias is to have someone in the college of BA teach the course, but we are so short-handed in faculty that this is probably not a likely reality.

Robin

And here is what I wrote in response:

Hi Robin – sorry it has taken me so long to respond. And, thanks for the great start. A couple of thoughts –

1) I think proposing a course inside the college is probably a non-starter. We don’t have anyone I know of who would want to teach it, and we don’t have resources to hire (and if we did, I think faculty would prefer to hire business faculty).

2) As a diplomatic matter, I don’t think we want to approach the English dept to propose that they offer an all new course that we design – they will be offended, just as you would be if they came to us and wanted us to offer a special marketing class for English majors that they designed. Also, they would undoubtedly want/need new resources for that.

So my preference is to use a menu of courses that they already offer – I would suggest ENGL 520 (Advanced Composition), or ENGL 530 (Argument Theory and Practice), or ENGL 531 (Technical Editing). But in checking the schedule, I see that none of these classes were offered this semester, so they may not be an option. We would of course have to check with them to see if these courses would be appropriate for a non-English grad student.
Another option which came up at the meeting was simply adding English language writing skills as another background knowledge requirement:

Students must demonstrate adequate background knowledge in English language writing skills. Adequate background knowledge can be established by any one of the following
(1) completion of at least 6 credit hours in undergraduate writing courses with scores of A or B in both, or
(2) an Analytical Writing Assessment score (AWA) on the GMAT of 4.4 (21st percentile) [or 4.5 (37th percentile)] or higher, or
completion of a third writing course at either the undergraduate or graduate level. The courses must center on grammar and rhetoric, rather than literature or the history of language.

These are my thoughts. Perhaps we need more discussion at the committee level. Liz