

Review of the University of Washington Tacoma Writing Program

Submitted on behalf of the
Council of Writing Program Administrators

By

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I. Introduction and Background

At the invitation of Alison Cardinal, we (Council of Writing Program Evaluators Dr. Joyce Kinkead and Dr. Dominic DelliCarpini) conducted a review of the ways that writing instruction is delivered at the University of Washington Tacoma on November 3-5, 2013. This visit was prompted by a number of exigencies which are detailed below. The precipitating event, however, was the formation of a Writing Fellows committee by the Faculty Assembly, which Alison Cardinal was invited to chair. The team was informed in advance that this committee was commissioned in winter of 2012 with the task of assessing writing and writing practices across campus. In response to this assessment, the committee was also asked to propose a list of recommendations for programs, resources, and support that would strengthen student writing across the UWT campus. Because the task was wide reaching, the Writing Fellows committee agreed that bringing in the WPA Consultant-Evaluators (C-E) was necessary to help with the campus-wide assessment and recommendation process. According to its self-study, the committee saw the C-E's visit as an opportunity to identify the campus's strengths and also to assess what the campus can do to improve student writing across the curriculum. The C-E team was asked to examine the ways that writing is implemented across campus. In line with this macro view of writing, the C-Es were asked to examine UW Tacoma's writing requirements and their current implementation. More specifically, the team was asked to do the following:

- 1) to provide an evaluation of graduation writing requirements, disciplinary and interdisciplinary-specific writing requirements, and the freshman Core writing requirements, which include first year composition and new basic courses for basic writers;
- 2) to evaluate the resources available for units and individual faculty members and suggest additional resources UW Tacoma could offer faculty for the teaching of writing; and
- 3) to examine current resources available to students and help UW Tacoma strategically offer support to them, no matter their major or writing ability.

In sum, the Writing Fellows Committed noted that the C-E team "can best help UW Tacoma by helping the institution identify UWT's most pressing needs and strategically plan in a time of rapid change."

Before the site visit, we received and reviewed the self-study along with supplementary information that detailed the various ways and places in which writing instruction is delivered at UWT. We also reviewed background information about the University's demographics, rapid growth, and change from offering exclusively upper-division offerings for transfer students to a four-year institution that accepted first-year students for the first time in 2006. We also had access to information about the University's catalog as well as retention, curriculum, and other data via the University's website and a Dropbox folder arranged specifically for this visit.

As detailed on the visit schedule (Appendix A), we were provided appropriate and generous access to key administrators at the College, including the University Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, as well as to a range of stakeholders from the University including the Writing Fellows Committee members (see Appendix B), the Writing Studies coordinator and faculty, leaders from the Office of Undergraduate Education and the Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences division, leadership and tutors from the Teaching and Learning Center (which houses the Writing Center), undergraduate students in a technical writing class, and a wide swath of faculty members who deliver writing and writing-intensive courses in Core courses as well as across the curriculum.

In all cases, those who participated offered frank and open assessments of the strengths and challenges of writing and writing instruction at the University. We were impressed by the clear commitment to improving writing instruction on campus that was shared by all participants in our conversation. We also were impressed by the respect and latitude offered to lecturers in the program, who were clearly integrated into the faculty. Indeed, the Chair of the Writing Fellows Committee was a FT lecturer. After our visit, we understand why that appointment was made, as Alison Cardinal exhibited a strong knowledge of the discipline, its best practices, and the necessary resources for writing instruction to succeed. She should be commended for the work she is doing.

Clearly writing is being addressed in many places on campus, and there is real commitment to writing instruction. Faculty are trying to meet the needs of underprepared students through initiatives such as the new Basic writing courses, TCORE 100 and TWRIT111 (a studio course that is linked with the mainstream required writing course, TCORE 101). On the other hand, rapid growth and change has unsettled many members of the campus community who are involved in the delivery of writing instruction, and has led to a lack of programmatic consistency.

In the report and recommendations that follow, we have taken into account the mission and priorities of UWT, which values access, diversity, and community engagement. The University of Washington Tacoma is a branch campus of the University of Washington whose mission includes a commitment to “educating diverse learners and transforming communities by expanding the boundaries of knowledge and discovery”; more specifically UWT “seeks out and supports individuals who may experience barriers in gaining access to college.” There are seven academic units that are faculty homes: Education, Foster School of Business, Institute of Technology, Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences, Nursing, Social Work, and Urban Studies. Two additional academic units have undergraduate curricula: Global Honors and Undergraduate Education.

Among the exigencies faced by the University in relation to the delivery of quality writing instruction that were reported to us were the following key demographics:

- In the autumn of 2012, there were a total of 3,919 students.
- 389 of those students were incoming freshmen and 547 were graduate students.
- Of the undergraduate student population, 1,768 of undergraduate students are transfer students, largely from surrounding community colleges, making transfer students about 52% of all undergraduate students.
- Many UWT students are first-generation college students, including 32% of all incoming freshmen in 2011
- approximately a third of incoming freshmen in 2012 spoke a language other than English in the home.

According to the Self-Study, the diverse population is greatly valued, but “also offers a set of challenges for faculty, particularly when it comes to assigning, evaluating, and teaching academic writing.” The Self-Study noted that “the institution is in a state of rapid change,” with controlled growth of approximately 7.5% per year. The Self-Study also notes that “this rapid growth has required the need for more faculty, particularly lecturers and part-time instructors. In Writing Studies alone, three new full-time lecturers were hired for the upcoming academic year mostly to teach first-year composition and writing support courses.”

Our visit also confirmed the Self-Study’s suggestion that faculty perceive “an increasing number of higher risk students, specifically non-native English speakers. This growth has led to numerous governance

challenges to the Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences division (where Writing Studies is housed), putting the “supervision and oversight of the writing program . . . in flux.”

II. Organization of the Report

The report that follows first addresses the specific questions with which we were charged, and then presents a set of recommendations. We understand that the University leadership will, of course, set its own priorities, and so decide which recommendations it will prioritize. But given the exigencies and charge detailed in the Self-Study, our recommendations are ordered to suggest a possible multi-year process for implementation of those recommendations. That is, the order of the recommendations is not necessarily by importance, but to suggest a possible order of implementation. We also address some key resources necessary for implementation of continuous improvement of the writing curriculum offered to UW Tacoma students. The appendices include materials made available to us that impact our recommendations as well as other resources that may be useful for the leadership at UWT as it considers enhancements to its programs. Additionally, the appendices include information about models of writing at other institutions that may be useful to the UWT campus.

III. Discussion of Key Elements of our Charge

Charge 1: Examination of Graduation Requirements

Core Writing Requirements: The C-E team was asked to assess the Core Writing requirement. Currently, the core writing requirement includes 5 credits in a “C” (Composition) class; writing is also purported to be an important element of the other 3 required Core courses, though the degree to which that is the case seems to vary by course and instructor. The core class, TCORE101 is an “Introduction to Academic Writing” course, and is themed by the instructor. Its outcomes are fairly mainstream and traditional: the formulation of a thesis-driven argument, the ability to use research skills, clear expression, analytical and critical thinking/writing, process writing, and mechanics of standardized American English. In addition, the program has recently added two new writing support courses: A 2-credit basic Writing Course (TCORE 100) and a studio course (TWRT 111) which is offered to students concurrently with TCORE 101 as a form of supplemental support for basic writers.

As is noted in our recommendations, considering the population of UWT as well as the preparation and pathways of the diverse student body at the University, many students may not get consistent practice in writing through this current structure. This fact was reinforced in conversations with faculty and the Self-Study, both of which pointed to lack of the necessary writing skills for success. The additions of TCORE 100 and TWRT 111 are positive steps; but they seem to have been developed from a reactive posture, as was the placement mechanism used to populate these courses (which is a modified Directed Self-Placement system). Considering the needs of UWT students, and the admittedly perception-based, indirect assessments of student writing by faculty, and the lack of oversight of how writing is incorporated in other Core courses, the Core writing requirements may not be adequate in practice.

Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Writing Requirements: In addition to the CORE writing requirements, ten credits of “W” (writing intensive) courses or their equivalent are required for graduation. “W” courses must include at least two shorter writing assignments (3-5 pages each) or one longer project. The courses must also include feedback and revision as well as dedicated class time spent on writing

instruction as well as occasional low-stakes (i.e., writing to learn) writing to promote critical thinking. This definition of a writing-intensive course is also traditional, though increasingly outmoded, as it is based more on required activities than student learning outcomes for the courses.

There was also some concern about the lack of oversight for the “W” courses. Comments ranged from “W classes are a mess” to “The W is no longer as advertised; the protocol for designating W classes is difficult to find.” Faculty self-selected whether to include their course in this designation, and once it was accepted as such, there was little or no follow-up or assessment of the actual practices or substantial, direct outcomes assessment. As such, there is no clear assurance that the W courses are resulting in successful outcomes or that that students have adequate opportunities to learn to write in their own discipline. W courses may be chosen outside of their own area of study, which may undercut the assessment value of capstone portfolios to specific programs of study.

Overall, then, the graduation requirements are (at least on paper) in keeping with curricula of other institutions. Writing is being addressed in many places on campus, and there is real commitment to writing instruction. Faculty members are clearly trying to meet the needs of underprepared students through initiatives such as the TCORE 100 course and the TWRT111 (studio course). However, despite the mainstream nature of its writing curriculum, the current structure may not be adequate to address the population of students attending the University, given its access-based mission. There is also a lack of consistency and oversight of the writing requirements. Ad hoc decisions due to rapid growth and the lack of a designated “writing program” are being made that may not be serving the students. In short, there seems to be no assurance that writing is done consistently, even though there are islands of excellence. And while there are clearly many efforts by individual faculty members and major programs to serve the needs of student writers, there is little programmatic assurance that writing instruction is made evenly available or assessed across the University by direct measures. Indeed, looking at the pathways of student through the program, it may be the case that the high percentage of students that are under-prepared in writing may not get the consistent practice and support they need. Further, we might suggest that the current requirements and courses do not take full advantage of the University’s clear commitment to community engagement and the excellent physical plant that is imbedded within that community—and which provides an exceptional opportunity for an experiential learning environment.

The team notes that many of the structures and practices are artifacts of an earlier upper-division only campus that has evolved quickly to serve a four-year population.

Charge 2: Resources Available for Units and Writing Teachers

The Current Structure: Stakeholders in the Delivery of Writing Instruction: The C-E Team was also asked to evaluate the resources available for units and individual faculty members. The Self-Study noted that “Currently the “writing program” is overseen by a collective group of faculty housed in both the Writing Studies Program within IAS (a major, with both Creative and Technical Writing tracks) and in the university’s Core program housed in the Office of Undergraduate Education, which is a closely related unit to IAS.” The Self-Study also noted that the Writing Studies program’s most senior faculty member, who had led WAC/WID training across campus, retired at the end of the last academic year. The Self-Study noted that “The sum of all the changes currently taking place within IAS and UWT in general is that

the ‘writing program’ has a widely shared set of overseers, yet no clearly delineated governance/oversight structure of its own and with no corresponding faculty member(s) charged directly with serving in this role.” The C-E team concurs with this self-evaluation, as is discussed in the recommendations that follow.

Key resource issues addressed in the recommendations that follow flow largely from this lack of a delineated structure. Without that structure, human and physical resources may be inadequate for:

- Supporting the teaching of the composition courses, including an ongoing program of faculty development that is necessitated by the growth of the program/number of teachers of composition courses; as one interviewee noted, “it’s a very junior faculty” and “there are fewer tenure-line faculty teaching in the Core.” Another noted that “there is a small Core faculty and lots of lecturers.”
- Support the teaching of W courses, especially after the departure of the designated WAC/WID expert; several interviewees noted that the W courses do not have oversight or regular review, and that after they are accepted into the curriculum, that the amount and types of writing instruction that are included is not monitored or assessed. This retirement has also created a dearth of faculty development opportunities for teachers of writing across the curriculum.
- Support for tutoring in the writing center: The Writing Center reports that it is not able to serve many students who want a consultation during the busiest parts of the quarter. After week 4, appointments are 80% booked, and after mid quarter, the center is fully booked until the end of the semester. This lack of resourcing, given the access mission and demographics of both the undergraduate programs, is quite problematic. In addition, the use of peer tutors (both undergraduate and graduate) requires serious and consistent training in best practices as well as regular oversight. The resources for doing so may not be adequate. In addition, the special needs of ELLs may also require more resources. The current ESL expert, who has been at the University for 4 years, is doing good work; however, faculty support in ESL—given the high percentage of L2 students—would be prudent for success and retention of this large and mission-driven set of students.

Charge 3: Resources Available for University of Washington, Tacoma Students

Undergraduate Students: Lower Division

Students at the University are offered support for their success in writing in a number of ways. First, the curriculum features identifiable curricular requirements designed to offer support in writing, though as is addressed above, the delivery of those requirements can be somewhat uneven. The University has also invested in two new curricular offerings for basic writers (noted above) and a Summer Bridge Program, which features a 5-credit university course which includes writing as “an integral part.” According to the Self-Study, writing is treated holistically in this course, writing processes are addressed, and support services for writing are introduced. However, the efficacy of the Summer Bridge program, and how its students are selected, is not clear to those we interviewed, who expressed concerns about a perceived disconnect between this program and other writing support mechanisms. A few interviewees noted that the Summer Bridge was not made available to the most at-risk students. Likewise, though the Teaching and Learning Center’s writing services are important and useful, the center also seems disconnected from the work of a larger “writing program.” The availability of an ESL expert in the TLC is encouraging and important. But given the large number of L2 students at the University, a single individual in this area

(who also has other duties) also seems inadequate. Further, there is also a lack of alignment between the efforts of the TLC in helping underprepared and L2 students and those of the curricular elements.

Undergraduate Students: Upper Division

Given the history of the University as a transfer-only institution, and the continuing focus upon students from Community Colleges that are, in the estimation of those we interviewed, underprepared for their academic work, there has not been adequate attention paid to providing writing support for students transferring into UWT.

Graduate Students

The lack of support also seems to apply to students who are beginning graduate education after some time away from higher education, and so who need further support in developing academic arguments. Again, stop-gap measures are being taken; for instance, in the Institute of Technology, 1-credit workshops are being delivered to English language learners. Those interviewed noted that “The Writing Center needs help with graduate student consultation.” One opportunity for graduate level students is the 513 writing course, which has been revamped to meet better the needs of this group. Typically, graduate level writing is more difficult for people to define as they are unsure of what graduate student standards are.

Ethics

An overarching concern for the campus is the problem of plagiarism, both for native speakers and English language learners. This seems to be framed as “avoiding plagiarism.” Another approach may be emphasizing academic integrity. This frames plagiarism in the larger context of conducting response responsibly (RCR). Thus, plagiarism is folded in appropriately in the disciplines as each defines what it means to conduct inquiry: keeping accurate lab notes, protecting human subjects, and documenting sources. Some campuses have embraced integrity in academic study as a central theme.

These needs are addressed in the recommendations that follow.

IV. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: *Alignment of Mission, Curriculum, and Writing Instruction at UWT*

Perhaps the most general recommendation, but the one that drives all the others, is the need to align the writing curriculum and instruction made available to UWT students with the specific needs of those students. The commendable mission of UWT—aimed at access, diversity, and community engagement—requires not a generic or mainstream writing curriculum, but one that meets students where they are and which provides pathways to success. We recommend, then, that the Writing Fellows, in completing their charge, keep the University mission and the nature of the student body central to its decisions as they develop the curricular and co-curricular elements that will support student success. More specifically, outcomes and curricular rationales should begin from an understanding of the special needs of a large swath of this population, rather than from a generalized or idealized understanding of good writing. That is, though the ends may be based upon the ideals of strong academic and public writing, the means to achieve that need to be localized to the exigencies of UWT.

Recommendation 2: *Developing an Institutional Home for Writing:*

The most crucial, and likely one of the earliest, steps that we recommend is the development of a stronger organization for leadership of writing at UW Tacoma. The current structure is diffuse, with various levels of leadership and responsibility in the Office of Undergraduate Education, Core faculty group, IAS, the Writing Fellows, the Undergraduate Education Academic Council, and the TLC, just to name units we encountered. And while these groups all contribute to the instruction offered to students, there is no primary responsibility and authority assigned for assuring success. As several people said to the team, “Responsibility is spread across units with the result that we are inefficient organizationally and that students may not be served well.” We, therefore, recommend that writing be given an institutional home and the authority to carry out the specific charge of assuring quality writing instruction across the University. This might take the form of a Director of University Writing or Writing Program Administrator, whose main task would be to align the various units and individuals charged with improving student writing across the University toward common outcomes. This individual could be chosen from among current faculty, or the University could conduct an outside search. (The team was asked about potential models for a University Writing Program. Auburn University is one example: <https://fp.auburn.edu/writing/staff.aspx>.)

To assure the success of this Director of University Writing, we would also recommend a clear organizational reporting structure. The Director her/himself might be placed, for example, in the Office of Undergraduate Education, reporting directly to a Vice Chancellor or Dean. (Since there are concerns with graduate student writing as well, this reporting structure might also need to create a dotted line to some element of graduate studies.) The purview of the Director should include oversight of the various programs that make up university writing: Core Writing (including but not limited to Composition and Basic Writing), WAC/WID¹ (including, but not limited to W courses), ELL education, and the Writing Center. Aligning these units under a single director (and ideally, an assistant or associate director) would allow for a concomitant alignment of outcomes and assessment across the university—in effect, getting everyone rowing in the same direction. The Director should also form a Writing Advisory Committee that includes appropriate faculty, administrators, and perhaps students that can help to keep the Director apprised of the work of individual units, through which the director can disseminate information, directives, and coherent faculty development.

The Director, then, would have the following responsibilities:

- Review and development of university-wide writing outcomes and standards;
- Direct and indirect assessments to measure the degree to which those outcomes are being met;
- Review and revision of curricular elements of the Composition courses based upon outcomes assessment data;
- Review and revision of writing within other Core courses based upon outcomes assessment data;
- Review and revision of writing across the disciplines/curriculum, including W courses, based upon outcomes assessment data;

¹ Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) generally refers to learning through writing activities while Writing in the Disciplines (WID) refers to learning the discourse conventions of a particular field.

- Alignment of the work of the Writing Center with student needs as determined by outcomes assessment data
- Providing instruction and supplemental education to meet the needs of ELLs.

While some of the appointees in the construction of a clear structure for the program may be internal, it is clear that a full implementation will require additional personnel in some of the following areas: ESL, Writing Program Administration (if an appointment is not made internally), Composition pedagogy, Writing Center Administration, and/or WAC/WID. We recognize that not all these needs can be met with new positions, but it is likely that not all these needs can be met adequately through internal appointments.

Recommendation 3: *Assessment of Student Writing*

Perhaps the first task that should be taken on by a Director and an Advisory Committee is the development of clear, assessable outcomes for writing at UWT. Those outcomes might begin with an overarching sense of what graduates of UWT should be able to do and produce by the time they graduate, and then might be broken down into the responsibilities of individual units:

- By the end of FY Composition, students should be able to... ;
- by the completion of Core courses, students should be able to;
- from their work in W courses, students will be able to... ;
- and so forth.

Outcomes should be based upon a common understanding of what UWT students need to succeed as students and beyond. The outcomes should also be as direct and clear as possible, to allow for the formation of performance indicators (what a successful performance looks like) and measures (the instrument or artifact that will allow for the direct assessment).

Once these outcomes are in place, a regular cycle of data collection and review can be established. As a rule of thumb, the Director might consider ways to collect data regularly, but to analyze that data periodically, based upon the specific outcomes being measured in any given assessment cycle. Then, data can be funneled through the advisory committee for appropriate actions by each of the units.

Writing assessment is a complex endeavor. However, the assessment of writing breeds a wealth of information about the success of students in both lower order and higher order learning. We recommend that the University consider bringing in an expert on writing assessment for a workshop/consultation in order to develop an initial comprehensive assessment plan; or, as an alternative, the University might provide support for a group of faculty to attend an outcomes assessment workshop. (For a good source of outcomes assessment rubric, see the AAC&U LEAP and VALUE projects that include rubrics for its recommended learning outcomes: <http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/pdf/WrittenCommunication.pdf>.)

One final note: one of the most effective measures of student writing is completed via student portfolios. Given that many of the programs at UWT already require and collect student portfolios, it would be worthwhile to examine these portfolios with a few specific goals: 1) to see what immediate information they may provide about the quality of student writing as benchmarked against the outcomes developed; 2) to consider if the University might consider using portfolio assessment as a primary measure of student

writing going forward and 3) to consider, if #2 is answered in the affirmative, how the contents of portfolios might be somewhat standardized and how reflective (metacognitive) pieces might provide further information.

A strong assessment plan should include student writing from each level of the curriculum: composition, Core, W courses, and other majors courses. Given concerns about graduate student writing, it may also include outcomes and assessment of writing from those students. A task force might investigate ways in which to accomplish this.

The team also notes that the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) may be a good route for assessment on the UWT campus. By this we mean that lecturers and faculty in Writing Studies may engage in program assessment that contributes to their research and service roles.

Recommendation 4: *Development of a Vertical Curriculum*

While specifics of curricular revision will naturally follow assessments, we also recommend that the University, through its Director of University Writing, move expeditiously toward providing a pathway to success that addresses underprepared students and the College mission. Given the perceived needs of students that were expressed to us at nearly every interview, as well as the common belief that the current structure lacks coherence and oversight, we would suggest that the process of writing curriculum alignment begin as soon as possible, led by the Director of University Writing. The overall goal should be the creation of a vertical writing curriculum to supports UWT students at key moments in their academic career, to lessen the risk of students falling through the cracks. This suggestion is meant to address the needs of both students who enter UWT as freshmen, as well as the majority of students who transfer to UWT as juniors or seniors. Both the self-study and our interviews made it clear that the many of the transfer students were underprepared for the tasks of college writing, especially developing research-based academic arguments. This also held true for perceptions of graduate school writing. So, while better assessment data are needed, there does seem to be enough anecdotal—yet actionable—concerns to suggest that delaying some curricular form may be inadvisable.

In the development of a vertical curriculum, we suggest that the following elements be considered:

- Basic writing course for under-prepared students (and perhaps different versions for native speakers and non-native speakers); the current TCORE 100 and TWRIT 111 form a solid basis that can later be assessed.
- A first-year writing course based upon the current TCORE 101; that curriculum could be revised after assessment data are made available; in the meantime, teachers of TCORE 101 could meet to discuss common elements and outcomes, using the WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Writing as a guide.
- Second-year writing course (to fill the “sophomore gap”) in writing. If a new and more standardized version of TCORE 211, for example, was developed and required, that could focus upon the perceived needs of students in writing academic arguments, freeing up TCORE 101 to focus more upon other outcomes: invention, genre, mechanics, critical/analytical reading, etc.
- Writing in the discipline courses; developing a series of courses designed to offer students guided practice in the genre conventions of disciplines (humanities, natural science, social sciences, technical/business writing, writing the arts, etc.) could serve two purposes: 1) it could be the introductory writing course for transfer students, helping to

orient them to the writing skills needed for success at UWT, and 2) serve to help all students to transfer the generic writing skills from previous courses to disciplinary writing. For some guidance on developing such a course, we might recommend the WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Writing, which details the outcomes that can be reinforced by “faculty in all disciplines” after each plank of the Statement.

- W courses to reinforce writing in the discipline; the development of a Writing in the Disciplines course (see previous bullet point) could also then guide a revision of the W course guidelines that are based more upon 1) student learning outcomes and 2) discipline specific elements of each field. For the latter, we would suggest faculty development activities during which those key elements might be discussed and better defined.
- Capstone portfolio to inform the curriculum; as noted above, consideration should be given to developing a portfolio program through which students might trace and reflect upon their own growth as writers. These portfolios would then also serve as an important assessment point for university-wide writing as well as to discipline-specific writing.

Currently, those teaching writing courses may choose to use a theme for the course as an organizing principle. We heard that “students see the theme as the content of the course and sometimes do not realize that it is a writing course.” Although we will not advocate any one approach, we do note that some writing programs use writing as the content of the course (e.g., classic rhetoric; writer case studies; technology and writing).

Recommendation 5: Develop a Coherent Program of Faculty Development

One of the most encouraging facets of our visit to UWT was the great energy and commitment of the faculty we encountered. Without exception, each of the interviews we conducted, while pointing out perceived weaknesses in student preparation, demonstrated the positive attitude of the faculty. We believe that they are primed for a coherent and rigorous program of faculty development.

One of the flaws in many faculty development programs is that workshops are offered in a somewhat ad hoc, once-and-done way. The most successful faculty development programming features series of linked events or faculty learning communities—groups of faculty who gather regularly to discuss a pedagogical problem or technique, read and talk about best practices, sometimes travel together to focused conferences, and report out to the larger community.

We recommend that within the organization of the writing program described in recommendation 2 above, that faculty development opportunities be prioritized, and that adequate resources be allocated to both the development of leaders in the program and to the wider dissemination of these area of expertise to other faculty who teach writing at various levels. This should include the TLC, which in fact might take the lead—given more resources—in developing faculty learning communities and other development events. In doing so, it would also help to make the TLC more visible within the overall structure of university-wide writing. To do this, we recommend that TLC staff be resourced to attend appropriate conferences and/or workshops.

Faculty development should also be regularly offered to faculty teaching in the Core, W Courses, and Writing in the Disciplines courses. Once a clear structure for oversight of writing is in place, and once outcomes and curriculum is in place, the next natural step is this series of faculty development exercises that are tied together by those common ends.

It is crucial that these opportunities are not only made available to adjunct faculty, but that they are encouraged and incentivized to attend. We would also recommend that all new faculty members are provided with mentoring and faculty development opportunities so that the program has consistency. Given the growth of the University, and the related spurt of hiring, this is especially important.

Finally, it should be noted that the former Writing Fellows Program, while flawed in some ways and not wholly aligned to a programmatic effort, produced real advocates and practitioners for writing instruction. Some sort of faculty development should continue to fill this gap. In doing so, the expertise of the Writing Studies faculty should be further utilized, and in turn, their sharing of expertise should be recognized as intellectual work in issues of merit, tenure, and promotion. (For a complete description of how the intellectual work of writing program administration may be described and evaluated, see this comprehensive statement by Writing Program Administration: <http://wpacouncil.org/positions/intellectualwork.html>.)

Recommendation 6: *Linking Class Sizes to Writing Curriculum and Assessment*

One of the problematic elements of the lack of consistency and oversight of W courses is in the allocation of resources. In our interviews, a consistent refrain was the linkage of class size to what the faculty member was able to offer to students in terms of writing pedagogy, feedback, and so forth. This of course, is no surprise. And we should note that in no case was this presented as complaining. To the contrary, discussions about class size were really about how much more the faculty members would like to do with writing instruction, given a reasonable class size. Indeed, best practices suggest that writing and writing intensive courses carry a lower class size—ideally 20 to 25 students.

While determining class size is a complex decision with significant financial consequences, we do recommend that among the factors in this decision is the amount of writing required as well as the pedagogies employed. As outcomes and assessment of W courses are sharpened, we believe that decisions about how to best determine course sizes will also come into focus. At present, there seems to be little correlation between efforts to incorporate labor-intensive pedagogies and class size.

Recommendation 7: *Provide further alignment of, and resources for, student support in the TLC*

As was discussed above, given student demographics and the University mission, assessing the impact of the TLC and Writing Center's work in providing student support, and then providing further appropriate resources to that unit, is a crucial part of an overall improvement plan. As an organization for university writing is created, and initial assessments are completed, we would expect that the following resources will become necessary:

- Additional tutoring for ESL students
- Enhanced training for tutors; we recommend that the Writing Center course be limited to potential tutors only and that it—and regular workshops—be required.

- More regular communication from the Writing Center to the faculty: 1) reports to faculty on tutorial sessions; 2) communication about development activities, teaching tips, assessment data, etc.;
- Explore the possibility of a Writing Fellows Program in which tutors are embedded in writing and/or writing-intensive courses. This serves both the at-risk students, and also tends to increase engagement and retention among the tutors themselves.
- Yet another support structure for faculty is an Undergraduate Teaching Fellows program. Likewise, Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a proven program that provides faculty with additional support and provides students with meaningful academic employment.

We wish to acknowledge that tutors have opportunities for professional development and presentations at conferences and applaud that involvement for pre-professional training. Writing tutors have many opportunities for dissemination, both orally and in print.

Recommendation 8: *Stretch Goals: Consider Program/Mission Alignment in Areas Such as Experiential Learning, Authentic Community-Based Writing, Multi-modal composing, etc.*

While the items above are clearly the most pressing needs for university writing during this time of growth and change, we also recommend that those immediate needs do not preclude attention to wider, more visionary perspectives on the program. Such programmatic initiatives can keep the program from becoming stagnant, can align the program with the University mission, and can provide areas of distinction and student engagement. We provide three examples; but there are clearly others that could be considered:

- 1) *Experiential Learning*: Given the close and positive relationships of UWT with the community, we recommend that initiatives be developed that allow for various forms of experiential learning that feature writing. For example: service projects that put students out into the community to complete writing projects for area organizations and social service agencies, or which imagine college/community collaborations. To do this well, it would be useful to draw upon or create an office of volunteer services. Service learning is a recognized approach to engagement with community and can be connected to the state and national Campus Compact movement. Community-based research (CBR) is the linkage of service learning and undergraduate research.
- 2) *Authentic Community-Based Writing*: Related to experiential learning, authentic writing opportunities might be offered to students. This could include community writing celebrations, activist causes, poetry readings, student blogs, etc. (The creative writing faculty provides some community services already.) By making writing an instrument of engaging the community, the University's mission can be furthered while also giving students the motivation to hone writing skills. Given the fact that so many UWT students are local, this kind of writing is especially likely to motivate them. (Some institutions such as Salt Lake Community College have developed award-winning community-based writing centers.)
- 3) *Multi-Modal Composing*: While there is no doubt that focusing upon traditional, alphabetic texts should be of primary concern, it may be shortsighted to focus only upon that form of composing, given the rapid pace of change in how we communicate. Further, given the existence of the Institute of Technology and the expertise of some of the writing faculty, it would be reasonable to consider where in the curriculum that multi-modal composing and visual literacies be included.

For example: academic research could be supplemented by a multi-modal, community-based project for a different audience; the Disciplinary Writing courses could feature multi-modal styles used within the field; and/or portfolios could include or even require multi-modal texts.

In sum, as the program develops its focus upon traditional academic and written literacies, it is important that it not lose sight of the ways that communication modes continue to expand. (The National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE] has developed Frameworks for Twenty-first Century Digital Literacy.)

Recommendation 11: *Develop a Long Range Strategy for Prioritizing and Implementing Recommendations,*

While we have presented ten relatively distinct recommendations for improving UWT's delivery of writing instruction, it also clear that they are interrelated. We also recognize that the implementation of these recommendations will take time and other resources. As such, it is crucial that after the recommendations are reviewed and vetted, that a long-range (3-5 years, perhaps as a perpetual planning cycle) be put into place to accomplish the key goals.

While long-range planning is always important, we find that it is especially important in the current environment. With the rapid growth and change experienced by UWT, the community seems to be feeling somewhat unsettled. Many of the interviews seemed unsure of the direction of the program in the face of changes, or which of the many committees or task forces would take responsibility for specific tasks. Thus, because the growth of UWT and the population it serves provides both great challenges and great opportunities, having a plan that accounts for planned growth will have many benefits:

- It would provide a clear set of benchmarks through which success can be measured;
- It can help to prioritize the various initiatives;
- It can stem impatience by demonstrating progress along the way through periodic reports;
- It can make the whole of the plan transparent and demonstrate both the ultimate goals and the relationship of each initiative to the larger goal.

Developing a clear, focused, prioritized plan with chronological and assessment benchmarks will both breed the buy-in of the academic community and help to make them patient as each incremental step is taken. This should include action plans, similar to the kind of work being done in Enrollment Services. In short, if you develop and share a road map, the community will know where you are going.

We recommend that the Writing Fellows Committee's next step, then, is to read, vet, discuss this set of recommendations, and develop short, medium, and long range plans to be shared with the administration and wider academic community.

V. Final Comments

We wish to thank everyone at the University of Washington, Tacoma who participated in the self-study process and in the numerous opportunities to meet with us during our visit. Let us reiterate how impressed we were—and are—with the dedicated colleagues who add to writing instruction in the many locations it is delivered at UWT.

We were so very impressed by the spirit of the faculty, the beauty and innovation of the setting, and the ambition of the college mission. We also note that the administrative support for making the visit arrangements was handled masterfully. Most of all, we are grateful for your time.

Many people whom we talked to noted that the campus is at a crossroads, and they are excited about future directions. They seek a roadmap to clarity. We believe that given the spirit of this community, coupled with the expertise and energy of the faculty and administrators, that the program will continue to develop. We were particularly impressed by the work of Alison Cardinal in providing a solid and collaborative self-study and the rich supplemental data that accompanied it—as well as by the work she has already accomplished for the program. This is especially impressive given her status as a year-to-year contract lecturer.

Please contact us if there is additional information we can provide. We thank you all again for your time and for your warm welcome during our campus visit.

Appendix A: External Reviewer Schedule

ITINERARY FOR WPA CONSULTANT-EVALUATORS

University of Washington, Tacoma

NOVEMBER 3rd-NOVEMBER 5th

Sunday, November 3rd

6 p.m.-8pm *Dinner at Indochine* with JW Harrington, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs; Alison Cardinal, Full-time Lecturer, Chair of Writing Fellows Committee; Riki Thompson, Assistant Professor, Writing Studies Coordinator; Nicole Blair, Assistant Director of OUE and Full-time Lecturer; and Katie Baird, Assistant Professor in Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences.

Monday, November 4th

7:00-7:45a.m. *Breakfast meeting*

Dr. Mark Pendras, Urban Studies, Associate Professor, also teaches in the Freshman Core

Breakfast meeting at the Holiday Inn Express breakfast area

8-8:45 a.m. Bill Kunz, Associate Professor, Director of IAS and former Assistant Director and former head of Writing Studies

Alison Cardinal, Full-Time Lecturer, Writing Studies

Location: Tacoma Room

9-9:45 a.m. Dr. Karen Landenburger, Professor and Director of Education; Dr. Jill Purdy, Business, Associate Professor and Chair of Faculty Assembly; Dr. Divya McMillan, Director of Global Honors, Dr. Christine Abrass, Nursing and Health Education

Location: Tacoma Room

9:45-10:00 a.m. Short Break

10:00-10:45 a.m. Meeting with the Office of Undergraduate Education

Director: Deirdre Raynor, Associate Professor

Assistant Director: Nicole Blair, Full-time Lecturer

Location: Tacoma Room

Dr. Deirdre Raynor, Director; Associate Professor

Dr. Linda Blair, Assistant Director; Full-time Lecturer

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11-11:45 a.m. Meeting with Teaching and Learning Center Staff

Beckie Etheridge, M.A. Ed.; Director of the Teaching and Learning Center (professional staff)

Jeff Fitzgerald, M.A.; Writing Coordinator (professional staff, lecturer in Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences)

Kelvin Keown, M.A. TESOL; English Language Consultant (professional staff)

Jeanne Jacobsen, Professional Consultant

Location: Teaching and Learning Center

11:45 a.m.-12:20 p.m Meeting with writing center peer consultants

Location: Teaching and Learning Center

12:30-1:30 p.m. -- *Lunch* with Writing Studies

2:00-2:25 p.m. Meet with Emma Rose's Technical and Professional Writing students.

(The students come from a variety of writing experiences, and she has a variety of majors and has both transfer students and those who spent all their time at UWT from freshman on. We thought it would be a good way to interact with UWT students.)

Location: BHS 106

2:30-3:30 p.m. Dr. Diane Young, Professor, Social Work; Dr. Rob Friedman, Professor, Institute of Technology

Location: GWP 215

3:30-3:45 Break

3:45-4:30 Meeting with Core faculty: Tanya Valasquez, Full-time Lecturer, Ethnic, Gender and Labor Studies (IAS); Leanne Laux-Bachand, Full-time Lecturer in Writing Studies, Sushil Oswal, Assistant Professor; Caitlin Carle, Full-time Lecturer in Writing Studies; Alison Walker Stromdahl, Full-time Lecturer in Writing Studies

GWP 215

4:30-5:30 p.m. Dr. Cheryl Greengrove, Professor, Environmental Studies (IAS), Dr. Bonnie Becker, Assistant Professor, Environmental Studies (IAS); Dr. Chris Demaske, Associate Professor, Division Chair of CAC (Culture, Arts and Community); Sushil Oswal, Assistant Professor, Writing Studies;

GWP 215

Evening: Team on its own for dinner and preliminary drafting of tentative recommendations for discussion on Tuesday

Tuesday, November 5th

8-9 a.m. Closed meeting with Vice Chancellor JW Harrington and the Chancellor, Dr. Deborah Friedman

GWP 215

9:00-10:00 a.m. Meeting with Writing Fellows Committee

Alison Cardinal, chair and Nicole Blair

GWP 215

10:30 am Departure

Appendix B: The Writing Fellows Committee of UWT

Alison Cardinal (chair)

Nicole Blair

Michael Kula

Deirdre Raynor

Appendix C: The WPA Outcomes Statement

WPA Outcomes Statement for First Year Composition

Adopted by the Council of Writing Program Administrators, April 2000; amended July 2008.

For further information about the development of the Outcomes Statement, please see <http://comppile.org/archives/WPAoutcomes/continue.html>

Introduction

This statement describes the common knowledge, skills, and attitudes sought by first

-year composition programs in American postsecondary education. To some extent, we seek to regularize what can be expected to be taught in first-year composition; to this end the document is not merely a compilation or summary of what currently takes place. Rather, the following statement articulates what composition teachers nationwide have learned from practice, research, and theory. This document intentionally defines only "outcomes," or types of results, and not "standards," or precise levels of achievement. The setting of standards should be left to specific institutions or specific groups of institutions.

Learning to write is a complex process, both individual and social, that takes place over time with continued practice and informed guidance. Therefore, it is important that teachers, administrators, and a concerned public do not imagine that these outcomes can be taught in reduced or simple ways. Helping students demonstrate these outcomes requires expert understanding of how students actually learn to write. For this reason we expect the primary audience for this document to be well-prepared college writing teachers and college writing program administrators. In some places, we have chosen to write in their professional language. Among such readers, terms such as "rhetorical" and "genre" convey a rich meaning that is not easily simplified. While we have also aimed at writing a document that the general public can understand, in limited cases we have aimed first at communicating effectively with expert writing teachers and writing program administrators.

These statements describe only what we expect to find at the end of first-year composition, at most schools a required general education course or sequence of courses. As writers move beyond first-year composition, their writing abilities do not merely improve. Rather, students' abilities not only diversify along disciplinary and professional lines but also move into whole new levels where expected outcomes expand, multiply, and diverge. For this reason, each statement of outcomes for first

year composition is followed by suggestions for further work that builds on these outcomes.

Rhetorical Knowledge

By the end of first year composition, students should

- Focus on a purpose
- Respond to the needs of different audiences

- Respond appropriately to different kinds of rhetorical situations
- Use conventions of format and structure appropriate to the rhetorical situation
- Adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality
- Understand how genres shape reading and writing
- Write in several genres

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- The main features of writing in their fields
- The main uses of writing in their fields
- The expectations of readers in their fields

Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing

By the end of first year composition, students should

- Use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating
- Understand a writing assignment as a series of tasks, including finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing appropriate primary and secondary sources
- Integrate their own ideas with those of others
- Understand the relationships among language, knowledge, and power

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation

by helping students learn

- The uses of writing as a critical thinking method
- The interactions among critical thinking, critical reading, and writing
- The relationships among language, knowledge, and power in their fields

Processes

By the end of first year composition, students should

- Be aware that it usually takes multiple drafts to create and complete a successful text
- Develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proof-reading
- Understand writing as an open process that permits writers to use later invention and re-thinking to revise their work
- Understand the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes
- Learn to critique their own and others' works
- Learn to balance the advantages of relying on others with the responsibility of doing their part
- Use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- To build final results in stages
- To review work-in-progress in collaborative peer groups for purposes other than editing
- To save extensive editing for later parts of the writing process
- To apply the technologies commonly used to research and communicate within their fields

Knowledge of Conventions

By the end of firstyear composition, students should

- Learn common formats for different kinds of texts
- Develop knowledge of genre conventions ranging from structure and paragraphing to tone and mechanics
- Practice appropriate means of documenting their work
- Control such surface features as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- The conventions of usage, specialized vocabulary, format, and documentation in their fields
- Strategies through which better control of conventions can be achieved

Composing in Electronic Environments

As has become clear over the last twenty years, writing in the 21st century involves the use of digital technologies for several purposes, from drafting to peer reviewing to editing. Therefore, although the kinds of composing processes and texts expected from students vary across programs and institutions, there are nonetheless common expectations.

By the end of first year composition, students should:

- Use electronic environments for drafting, reviewing, revising, editing, and sharing texts
- Locate, evaluate, organize, and use research material collected from electronic sources, including scholarly library databases; other official databases (e.g., federal government databases); and informal electronic networks and internet sources
- Understand and exploit the differences in the rhetorical strategies and in the affordances available for both print and electronic composing processes and texts

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- How to engage in the electronic research and composing processes common in their fields
- How to disseminate texts in both print and electronic forms in their fields

Appendix D: Sample Department Style Sheets (to consider for developing Writing in the Disciplines standard)

<http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/CLAS/Departments/history/Students/Pages/DepartmentStyleSheet.aspx>

<http://www.princeton.edu/artandarchaeology/undergrad/stylesheet.pdf>

<http://www.wheaton.edu/Academics/Graduate-School/~media/Files/Academics/Graduate-School/Academic-Services/grad-mat-thesis.pdf>

<http://www.shorter.edu/academics/history/PaperStyle.pdf>

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~ugar/undergrad/grants/finalreports.html>

<http://people.eecs.ku.edu/~saiedian/teaching/Common/term-paper-guidelines.pdf>

http://cobe.boisestate.edu/files/2009/05/writingstylesv12_0.pdf

<http://jour.sc.edu/resources/locstyle.pdf>

Graduate Student Level:

<https://cms.bsu.edu/academics/collegesanddepartments/gradschool/preparingforgraduation/writingguidelines>

Graduate Student Writing Studio (aka Writing Center) at CSU Fresno:

<http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/gradstudies/thesis/graduatewritingstudio.html>

Appendix E: Information about the Evaluators and about WPA

The Council of Writing Program Administrators is a national association of several hundred college and university faculty with professional responsibilities or interests as directors of writing programs. Members include directors of first year composition or undergraduate writing, WAC coordinators, writing center directors, department chairs, deans, and so on. The Council is led by an elected Executive Board. Its web site is <http://www.wpacouncil.org>.

The WPA Consultant-Evaluator Service helps colleges and universities develop and assess their writing programs. Operating on a method similar to regional accreditation agencies, WPA evaluations have several stages. WPA requests a written program self-study, sends a team of two trained consultant-evaluators to campus for interviews and on-site evaluation, and then compiles a final report. A follow-up report from the campus completes the process. The select panel of WPA consultant-evaluators comprises leaders in the field of composition. They come from four-year colleges, two colleges, and universities. All are experienced writing program administrators with a national perspective. As evaluators, their primary goal is to determine a program's unique strengths and weaknesses, in the context of their campus settings, not to transform all writing programs into clones of their own. They recognize that every program must retain its individual character, serve a particular community, and solve special problems. The coordinators of this service are Charles I. Schuster, Professor of English and Director of Honors, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Doug Hesse, University of Denver.

Dominic DelliCarpini is Dean of Academic Affairs and Professor of English at York College of Pennsylvania.

He can be reached at dcarpini@ycp.edu.

Joyce Kinkead, formerly Associate Vice President for Research, is Professor of English at Utah State University. As an administrator in the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, she developed a number of programs over her ten-year tenure in the college: Writing Fellows, Undergraduate Teaching Fellows, Faculty Development in Teaching, Research, and Outreach. She has also served as director of the Writing Program and the Writing Center. She is the author or editor of a number of books: *Undergraduate Research in English Studies* with Laurie Grobman (NCTE, 2010); *Undergraduate Research Offices & Programs* (CUR, 2012); *Advancing Undergraduate Research: Marketing, Communications, and Fund-raising* (CUR, 2011); *Valuing and Supporting Undergraduate Research; A Schoolmarm All My Life: Personal Narratives from Early Utah*; Houghton-Mifflin *English* (4 volumes); *Writing Centers in Context*; *Literary Utah: A Bibliographic Guide*; *Collaborative Writing: Essays in Process*; *The Center Will Hold*. In 2014, *Farm: A Multi-modal Reader* will appear, and she has completed a manuscript, *Researching Writing: An Introduction to Research Methods in Writing Studies*. With Jeanette Harris, she edited *The Writing Center Journal* for six years, and she is a founding board member of the National Writing Centers Association. She can be reached at Joyce.Kinkead@usu.edu.