

Writing Task Force Report  
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**Summary**

In the short time available to us, the Writing Task Force attempted to learn as much as we could about writing at the University of California at Davis and to engage in some cursory online research into peer institutions. While we did not have the time or resources to collect and analyze institutional data systematically, we have been able to describe what we know about writing education at UCD, point out what isn't known, and make some recommendations for action as a result:

- Establish a robust Writing Center led by research faculty in Writing Studies and housed within an academic unit such as the University Writing Program;
- Establish a University Writing Council to coordinate writing courses across campus;
- Abolish the entry level writing course known as Workload 57, reassert responsibility for our most at-risk students, and continue to pilot alternative ways for Davis student writers to fulfill the entry level writing requirement on our campus and with our faculty;
- Create shared student learning outcomes for courses students take to fulfill a writing requirement;
- End use of timed writing exams for student placement into writing courses;
- End use of timed writing exams as a substitute for writing courses;
- Make the university website a better guide to writing requirements, expectations, courses, and resources;
- Include questions about writing on student evaluations in all courses that fulfill a writing requirement;
- Initiate the collection and assessment of data about what is happening in classes that fulfill writing requirements. We need to learn more about what is and isn't working.

Our writing curriculum has evolved over time and bears the traces of various histories and investments in its current, somewhat hodgepodge structure. We note a fascinating contrast moving up the curriculum. Whereas entry level writing instruction has been outsourced to a local community college since 1993, and lower division writing instruction is taught across four different academic units without coordination or shared learning outcomes, upper division

writing is largely taught in one academic unit, the Writing Program, formed by the Academic Senate in 2004 (see Appendix 1). The Task Force aspires to a coherent writing curriculum at the University of California at Davis, through which students move in a meaningful way that makes sense to them, with one layer of instruction building on another, and opportunities to write throughout their years in college. Achieving this need not mean ditching what we have in order to start from scratch. UCD has the foundations for this undertaking, but it will require better communications among teachers and programs to envision and articulate shared goals. It will require some systematic effort to figure out what is working and what is not.

In pursuit of these recommendations, UCD will need to:

- Open up communication.
- Consider every Aggie. Many Davis students are transfer students; many are first generation college students; many are multilingual; some are undocumented, food insecure, or homeless. Writing education should address the unique needs of different populations.
- Consider and support all faculty in making the *teaching* (not just assigning and grading) of writing a meaningful part of their courses.
- Give all students in all majors as many opportunities to write and receive feedback on their writing as possible.
- Think creatively. We propose carrots more than sticks: collaboration rather than surveillance; centralization but shared responsibility; and looking toward the future rather than being bound by the institutional past.

### **Charge to the committee**

In a letter dated August 28, 2018, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Ralph Hexter and Academic Senate Chair Rachael Goodhue appointed the Joint Academic Senate/Administration Task Force on Writing asked the task force:

to consider how UC Davis helps our students acquire the kind and quality of writing skills that will enable them to succeed during their time at Davis as well as thrive when they bring those skills to bear in the careers that they will pursue after they attain their degrees. As the literature makes clear, good writing is both essential and transformational: strong writing skills allow students to communicate effectively while also helping them to think, learn, and collaborate better.

This task force will take up the question of writing as comprehensively as possible, studying our existing commitments across campus as well as our evolving needs. It is important that we consider as fully as possible how students at UC Davis learn to write, in what contexts this learning takes place, how the university determines expectations for student writing success, whether students meet those expectations, and whether students have writing opportunities and experiences in line with the university's national reputation and future aspirations. Thus, the focus of this task force is on how we can best help students improve their writing skills throughout their time at UC Davis, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

While the work of the task force will no doubt evolve, we are hoping that the group will explore and evaluate our current state and goals. We anticipate three phases: (1) Assessment of what we have now; (2) Assessment of best practices (including consideration of strategies for writing instruction at other universities); (3) Recommendations for improving writing instruction on campus. Throughout this process, task force members should be mindful of characteristics that are unique about the UC Davis population, including specific challenges and opportunities (e.g., first-generation college students, students whose primary language is not English, international students).

We anticipate four major rubrics to guide each of these phases: expectations, effectiveness, assessment, and contexts. Some of the questions that the task force will want to consider under each of these headings include:

1. Expectations: What do we expect for every student by the time they graduate? This includes both undergraduate and graduate students.
2. Effectiveness (including both a gap and a redundancy analysis): What are we currently offering, who is offering it, what are the student experiences, where are our strengths, what are our limitations? Where do we have gaps? Are there redundancies? What is our total financial commitment to these initiatives and how has our financial commitment changed over time? Are those resources being distributed in a manner that aligns with our core assumptions about providing support and opportunities for all of our students, with particular attention to subgroups where we have identified performance gaps? How much are we focusing on entry level versus more advanced writing instruction? Which populations are we serving? Which populations are underserved?
3. Assessment: Review of historical structure/assessment of future planning. Are we teaching and providing writing support in a way that anticipates changes in who our students will be, how they will learn, and the contexts (both at Davis and in the workplace) in which they will want to write and communicate effectively? Are there creative strategies for teaching and improving writing skills outside of traditional courses?
4. Contexts: How do we align with our peers nationally? Are we providing our students with opportunities that are comparable to those that students at other top-10 public research universities or colleges might expect to have? Are we responsive to a full range of kinds of student learners? Are we moving forward in a way that ensures that our students graduate with skills that their peers are likely to have? Are we pursuing opportunities, through our curricular, through writing centers, in peer to peer tutoring and collaborative writing opportunities? How do our facilities and offerings compare to new media laboratories? Should we be contemplating integrating writing into other literacies such as data visualization competencies? How should we be thinking about the needs of the students we will have tomorrow?

The charge letter requested a report by February 1, 2019. We found the four rubrics within three phases a bit cumbersome and were quickly able to agree on streamlining our operations so as to produce a clear report in the time available to us. We bracketed these questions from the charge: “How do our facilities and offerings compare to new media laboratories? Should we be contemplating integrating writing into other literacies such as data visualization competencies?”

While we hope that a new configuration for writing at Davis, such as a Writing Center, would include space for evolving needs, we felt that writing itself demanded our full attention this quarter.

### **Members of the Task Force**

Erwin Bautista, Lecturer, Neurobiology, Physiology and Behavior, Academic Federation Representative

Frances Dolan, Distinguished Professor of English, Academic Senate Representative and Task Force Chair

Kerry Enright, Professor, Education, Academic Senate Representative

Sarah Faye, Lecturer, University Writing Program, Academic Federation Representative

Anita Oberbauer, Associate Dean, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

Trish Serviss, Assistant Professor, University Writing Program

Matthew Stratton, Associate Professor English, Academic Senate Representative

### **Meetings**

The task force held five meetings. While our work was disrupted by the campus closures, we have still been able to make our deadline. Much of our work involved one-on-one meetings and independent research.

### **Campus Community Input**

We took our constitution as “representative” for now, understanding that implementing the changes under discussion would entail future work. Each Task Force member serves or has served on related committees and/or undertook fact-finding meetings with various stakeholders, all of whom were enormously helpful to our process. Even as we sought input from members outside the task force, we also understood our charge as requiring us to set aside existing investments so as to imagine how things might work differently. What if we held stakes in a different future rather than in the status quo? Our recommendations, then, provisional as they are, are our own and have not been submitted to others for review or approval.

### **Expectations**

Our members come from very different locations on campus. Yet we were able to agree rapidly on some shared values regarding writing that guided our inquiry and that, we think, should inform writing culture on campus. In this report, we decided to avoid the acronyms that are so prevalent in discussions of writing because they exclude and baffle. If we want everyone on campus to take responsibility for writing, then we need to ditch the acronyms and share a language to articulate our shared goals.

### **What does a campus that values writing look like?**

It is a far-reaching, easy-to-navigate network with a readily identifiable hub at its center. On such a campus, it is easy for students and faculty alike to figure out where to go to fulfill a requirement, get help, enhance skills, or expand horizons.

At a university that values writing, student learning inspires the curriculum and faculty design that curriculum and oversee instruction. All faculty should commit to writing as an open-ended and ongoing process, in which every writer—from a first-year undergraduate to a distinguished

professor—is always getting better. A university that cares about writing takes responsibility for its least prepared writers, bringing them up to speed; it does not outsource that obligation. Such a university also offers possibilities for improvement and development to its strongest writers.

At a university that values writing, all students, from their first year to their last, regardless of their major, write throughout their time as students and receive meaningful feedback, thereby becoming stronger and more effective writers. Students do not fulfill some requirements with exams before arrival, select GE courses that don't actually require them to write, or take one upper division writing course just in time for graduation.

**Writing is:** a set of skills a writer can carry from one task to another and an ability to assess the specifics of a writing occasion, its purpose, and the genres useful for the task. Inseparable from learning and knowing, writing is a process and not just a product. **Writing is not:** a box to check; an exam you can pass and forget; a single course to get out of the way; a building; a word count or page limit. It is not simply the end of an intellectual or research process—the means by which one communicates results—but is instead woven into inquiry, discovery, and cognition.

### **Mapping Writing at the University of California at Davis**

The Task Force was fortunate to be able to build on the work of many other individuals and groups on campus. As the work of improving writing at Davis continues, we can draw on a wealth of talent, resources, and good will. Where change is most needed it is already afoot. But writing courses and support at Davis are so labyrinthine that simply mapping what we are doing now was a considerable undertaking. Even though all of the members of the task force were invested in writing and considered themselves knowledgeable about the UCD writing scene, we all had a lot to learn and we all found mapping the status quo to be a bit of a challenge. Here is our brief overview of the current writing requirements and resources at Davis, set in the context of the recent history of writing instruction at UCD, which informs our present situation.

### **The Recent Past**

Until 2004, responsibility for writing instruction at the University of California at Davis was spread across departments, with several units offering lower division composition courses and upper division writing taught within majors. In 2004, the University Writing Program was founded to, in the words of its charter (Appendix 1):

1. oversee the lower division composition courses that can be used to satisfy college writing requirements;
2. offer a series of courses specifically tailored to disciplines and to professions that satisfy the upper-division writing requirement;
3. provide training for graduate students teaching in writing intensive courses as well as in all courses where a composition requirement can be satisfied;
4. offer a workshop program to strengthen the teaching of writing in the disciplines;
5. develop a fully functioning Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Program;
6. support General Education Writing Experience courses by offering training in writing instruction to the faculty and graduate students teaching these courses;
7. advise the General Education Committee and the Courses Committee on criteria for Writing Experience courses;

8. evaluate the educational effectiveness of writing instruction on campus by monitoring progress in the overall quality of student writing;
9. periodically sample and analyze student writing from writing intensive GE courses, upper division composition courses, writing in the disciplines courses, papers for major courses, honors theses, portfolios, or capstone experience courses;
10. recommend, as needed, improvements in instructional approaches—and assist faculty across the disciplines in teaching writing in their classes as well through a University Writing Council.

The University Writing Program now includes seven research senate faculty in Writing Studies and 81 federation (Unit 18) faculty with diverse training including but not limited to Writing Studies, Education, Applied Linguistics, History, Anthropology, Engineering, and Literary Studies. While some of UWP's chartered responsibilities have come to fruition (see Appendix 2 for the UWP's Program Learning Outcomes), the main goal of centralizing writing culture through the leadership of senate faculty within Writing Studies remains elusive in 2019.

### **What We Know about Writing at UCD in 2019**

Currently, we ask undergraduates to fulfill four main writing requirements:

1. Entry Level Writing Requirement (taught by Sacramento City College, largely)
2. English Composition Requirement (courses in Comparative Literature, English, Native American Studies, and the University Writing Program)
3. Writing Experience (GE) Requirement (courses in more than 90 different academic units)
4. Upper Division Composition Requirement (courses in the University Writing Program)

Different colleges and the Academic Senate determine which courses fulfill these requirements. There has been very little systematic assessment of student learning in pursuit of these four writing requirements. There is a lot we don't know about what students actually learn in writing courses at UCD as a result. We know more about what students are *meant* to learn in writing courses via the articulation of student learning outcomes in the University Writing Program's lower and upper division writing courses.

### **Entry Level Writing**

All undergraduates must fulfill an entry level writing requirement to ensure that, in accord with University of California Senate Regulation 636, they will

- be able to understand and respond adequately to written material typical of reading assignments in first-year courses; and
- produce writing that communicates effectively to University faculty.

This requirement is thus a prerequisite to all other undergraduate writing courses and should lay the foundation for student success in college. While entry level writing should be the gateway to the university, it has, in the past, become a roadblock for many of the students it was designed to serve.

Because students come to us with different levels of skill and preparation, we offer four different paths to fulfilling this requirement:

1. Test scores before arrival (such as a 30 or better on the ACT);
2. A course at a Community College, passed with a grade of C or higher;
3. Passing the Analytical Writing Placement Exam (a two-hour timed test, which is administered by the University of California Office of the President);
4. Taking an entry level writing course at Davis.

Approximately 40% of incoming undergraduate students enter the University of California at Davis without having satisfied this requirement. Many of them have failed the placement exam (70% of our incoming students who take the exam do not pass it); these students then take an entry level writing course (called Workload 57) at Sacramento City College while they are enrolled at Davis. Their pass rate is low. We have abundant documentation that Workload 57 exacerbates inequities, preparing students for failure, not success (see “Workload 57 Overview” Appendix 3).

### **Overview of Writing Requirements Beyond Entry Level**

All UCD undergraduates must fulfill a two-course writing requirement by completing each course with a grade of C- (or P) or higher or by testing out of one or both courses. Each college prescribes a sequence, which can be adapted to students’ needs. The University Writing Program advises that, “to be most effective, courses should progress from introductory to intermediate or advanced writing, as students’ cognitive skills develop and they need to write more sophisticated, longer papers, for more varied audiences, and in diverse genres and formats.” In accord with this, the College of Biological Sciences, the College of Engineering, and the College of Letters and Science all require one lower division and one upper division writing course. The College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences allows students to take both of their writing requirement courses at the lower division level or to take one at the lower and one at the upper division; students in that college may also choose to take one class focusing on written expression and one on oral.

### **Lower Division Writing**

Students can fulfill their lower division writing requirement (listed in the general catalog as “English composition requirement”) before they enroll if they have Advanced Placement credit with a score of 4 or 5 or International Baccalaureate credit with a score of 5, 6, or 7. Once they have enrolled here at Davis, they can take a course to fulfill this requirement. Four different departments offer courses that fulfill this requirement: Native American Studies (NAS 5), Comparative Literature (COM 1-4), English (ENL 3), and the University Writing Program (UWP 1). Taken together, about 190 of these courses are taught in a given year. Each course carries 4 units of credit and is capped at an enrollment of 25. These courses are largely taught by advanced graduate students and lecturers; research faculty in the University Writing Program teach UWP 1 as well. Many graduate programs in Letters and Science fund their students by employing them as instructors in these courses and use the courses to train their graduate students as teachers. The training and oversight of graduate instructors appears to be uneven across units.

While all four of the programs that teach lower division writing are committed to the effort, until very recently there was no formal mechanism for communicating and coordinating across departments and sections. The English Language and Literacy Committee within the College of

Letters and Science was formed several years ago to address this need. That is an excellent start, but the Task Force hopes for further progress. Currently, for instance, only the University Writing Program has articulated Student Learning Outcomes for lower division writing. According to their [Objectives for Lower Division Courses](#), students will:

- learn to read closely and critically and to analyze the purpose, audience, format, and conventions in varied types of writing;
- experiment with and reflect on writing processes, including techniques for researching, planning, brainstorming, drafting, revising and editing;
- improve their ability to work collaboratively in peer workshops, group work, and group projects;
- learn to name, describe, analyze and apply basic concepts and principles in varied areas of writing in the disciplines and professions;
- learn to integrate ideas, data, and evidence from written and oral sources into writing projects;
- understand how writing and citing conventions vary in different disciplines and professions.

### **Upper Division Writing**

As mentioned above, three of the four colleges require that students fulfill an upper division writing requirement. Students can do so by two routes:

**Route 1:** Successfully complete a 4-unit University Writing Program course (which might be an advanced composition, writing in a discipline, or writing in a profession course) after they have completed 84 units of degree credit. The campus offers about 300 sections (25 students) per academic year of these upper division courses. The majority of these courses are taught by Unit 18 Lecturers and focus on the genres and practices of writing in specific communities (Writing in the Biological Sciences or Writing in Health fields, as examples).

The University Writing Program articulates these [Student Learning Outcomes](#) for upper division writing courses, in which students will:

- learn to read more difficult texts closely and critically and to use them as models for writing projects;
- improve their ability to manage the writing process to suit the task and situation, including more advanced skills in planning, drafting, revising and editing;
- improve their ability to frame and analyze a topic or problem, do independent research, evaluate sources, and interpret and integrate information and ideas appropriately from oral and written sources;
- learn to conduct research in writing studies and professional writing;
- produce varied types of writing, including essays, reports, proposals, arguments, and technical documents.

**Route 2:** Passing the Upper Division Composition Challenge Exam, a timed exam which is administered by the University Writing Program. Students may choose to take the exam after they have accumulated 70 units to challenge or test out of the upper division writing requirement.



It is hard to pin down exactly what percentage of students undertake this challenge (see Appendices 4 and 5).

The University Writing Program describes the exam to students this way:

Since passing the examination fulfills the upper-division composition requirement, you must demonstrate **advanced** writing skills—beyond technical correctness to effective development and support of an analytic argument that responds directly to the question and the reading passage. Experienced writing instructors will score the exams, assessing focus on the topic question, thesis, organization, development of ideas, logic, use of specific and appropriate evidence, grammar, usage, and sentence structure.

Although the exam is tied to the upper division composition requirement (since it is the way to test “out” of the requirement), the exam itself does not reflect the kind of writing tasks students are asked to complete in upper division writing courses. This disconnect suggests that the upper division composition exam is not a valid tool that can accurately assess whether students have “advanced skills.” Some of the learning outcomes we have just quoted, for example, cannot be evaluated by a timed writing test, making the upper division composition exam, the Task Force speculates, a poor indicator of student achievement in advanced college-level writing. The Task Force suggests further study of the exam in relationship to the upper division composition requirement—and its goals.

### **General Education Writing Experience**

The two 4-unit writing courses we have just described can provide 8 of the 20 units of coursework required as part of the General Education Core Literacy with Words and Images for all undergraduates. In addition, students must take 6 more units of Writing Experience course work in their major or other departments, as well as 3 units of Oral Literacies coursework or additional Writing Experience coursework.

Many courses claim to fulfill the Writing Experience requirement. According to the Office of the Registrar’s General Education Search tool, a whopping 1,724 courses, offered by 92 departments and programs, can be used to fulfill the Writing Experience requirement (see Appendix 6). Many can be used to fulfill multiple GE requirements (although not at once). Since the Writing Experience should be time consuming—for students and teachers—it is unlikely that a course that fulfills the writing requirement as intended can also fulfill several others. Providing students with a “writing experience” cannot just be tacked on to existing courses; it requires an investment of time and labor, and the development of pedagogical expertise.

The Task Force appreciates that the General Education Committee is wrestling with how to ensure that Writing Experience courses deliver what they promise. They generously shared with us their recently produced document defining “GE Writing Experience Literacy” (Appendix 7). The document outlines the minimum elements that the Committee on Courses of Instruction and the General Education Committee expect from courses that they approve as fulfilling this requirement.

According to this “Minimum Elements Checklist,” courses in the Writing Experience Literacy must:

- Demonstrate that writing is a central component of the course;
- Show that students are trained in the writing conventions of the relevant discipline;
- Assure that model texts are provided and discussed;
- Demonstrate that the 5/10 page (1500/3000 words) writing assignment(s) requirement is met;
- Provide specific demonstration and explanation of the evaluation criteria;
- Demonstrate that individual feedback from qualified personnel is integrated into the course in a manner designed to promote improvement;
- Show that guidance on plagiarism is provided;
- Demonstrate that the learning objectives of the literacy are an integral part of the class.

How is this checklist used? The Committee on Courses of Instruction evaluates whether a new or revised course proposal submitted to them satisfies these minimum requirements. Faculty submitting a course for approval must answer questions about these requirements and submit an expanded course description including:

- the requirements for written assignments by each student in the course;
- the total number of assignments;
- the nature and expected length of each assignment;
- how students will be given feedback designed to promote improvement in writing in the course;
- and how instructors will assess student competency in this GE literacy.

Once a General Education course has been approved, the General Education Committee assesses it each seven years, by department. At present, that is the only opportunity to check whether courses that promised to fulfill these minimum requirements seem to be doing so.

### **Professional Writing Minor**

The University Writing Program offers a Professional Writing Minor to serve two populations: those who are planning careers as writers or editors and those whose academic and professional careers will demand advanced writing and editing skills. The minor requires 20 units of coursework, 12 of which must be in UWP courses and 4 of which must be in an internship.

### **Graduate Student Writing**

While helping graduate students improve their writing is a crucial part of mentoring them, much of this work is invisible to others and happens on an ad hoc basis. It depends on the mentor. The website for Graduate Studies at UCD says nothing about writing, for example. The International and Academic English website tells international students how to qualify as a Teaching Assistant or Associate Instructor and offers workshops for multilingual TAs, but does not offer support for multilingual graduate students on their academic writing.

The University Writing Program offers courses for graduate student writers, some in the disciplines (such as “Intro to Grad Writing: STEM”) and some that are more cross-disciplinary, such as “Style and Clarity for Graduate Writers” and “Writing a Research Article” (UWP 298).

We find the most sustained efforts to support and enhance graduate student writing in the Writing Across the Curriculum program. The Writing Across the Curriculum program at UC Davis is housed in the University Writing Program and consists of two core groups: 5 Writing Across the Curriculum faculty consultants and 7 graduate writing fellows. The graduate writing fellows work under the mentorship of the faculty consultants; the fellows' primary duty is to offer consultations with other graduate students on any aspect of writing related to their course work, research, or professional development. They also host writing retreats and complete a project aimed at enhancing the graduate student writing experience. The consultants, lecturers in the University Writing Program, work frequently with instructors across campus on how they might include writing assignments and activities in their undergraduate courses and with teaching assistants who evaluate student writing. Instructors may schedule consultations on any topic related to the teaching of writing. Each year the consultants lead several workshops for graduate students and postdocs as well.

The **Designated Emphasis in Writing, Rhetoric, and Composition Studies** offers PhD students from seven affiliated doctoral programs (Comparative Literature, Cultural Studies, Education, English, Linguistics, Native American Studies, and Performance Studies) the opportunity to prepare for leadership roles in writing research, teaching, and program administration. This DE requires students to complete four courses in Writing, Rhetoric, and Composition Studies before taking their qualifying exams. The courses cover these topics:

- research methods and practices;
- rhetorics and/or literacies;
- writing pedagogy; and
- writing program design and administration.

Extending this course work, the dissertation topic chosen must substantially develop an issue related to the Designated Emphasis and to the PhD program in which the student is enrolled.

### **Teaching Assistant Training and Oversight**

The Center for Educational Effectiveness, which is part of the Office of Undergraduate Education, offers an annual campus-wide orientation for all new teaching assistants and a valuable list of Teaching Assistant resources. But it does not appear to devote much time to how to evaluate writing and provide useful feedback. Most of the units that offer lower division writing require graduate student teachers to take pedagogy seminars before assuming responsibility for their own classes. Many graduate students work as Teaching Assistants in Writing Experience General Education courses, sometimes doing most of the work of providing feedback on student writing, but without any training about how to make that feedback effective. Some faculty call on the Writing Across the Curriculum consultants or staff in the Academic Assistance and Tutoring Centers to help them design and evaluate effective writing assignments. International students who are Teaching Assistants can also take courses like UWP 391 to sharpen their English communications skills for the classroom, but most need further support to evaluate and respond to Davis undergraduate writers. Overall, the training, mentoring, and oversight of Teaching Assistants depend largely on individual faculty and departments and occurs somewhat haphazardly as a result.

### Writing Support

Passing an exam or completing a sequence of courses does not mean that students no longer need help with their writing. As we have mentioned, writing should be an ongoing process of learning; the need for tutoring and support services does not mean that courses are failing but rather that learning continues. Where can a student go who is struggling with a writing assignment or has received feedback that he or she has writing problems and now needs to figure out how to address them? At Davis, these Writing Support Services are offered by the Academic Assistance and Tutoring Centers (AATC), formerly in the Student Academic Success Center (SASC). We note that while all the writing courses explained above involve senate faculty and academic units, writing assistance and tutoring are offered under the auspices of Student Affairs and provided by Staff Writing Specialists from “writing intensive disciplines” and undergraduate student tutors. **The Task Force observes that only one other UC locates tutoring under Student Affairs and places it in the hands of staff rather than faculty (UCSB). Where we locate tutoring divides us not only from other UC campuses but from most other peer institutions.**

Because Writing Support Services at Davis are overseen by Student Affairs, they only serve undergraduates. Undergraduate students seeking help can make one-on-one appointments or attend support classes or workshops offered in Dutton Hall. They can also drop in to the Writing Studio (which is open from 12pm-6pm Monday through Thursday during the regular school year), to work on their own or with friends or to consult with a tutor or specialist. Writing specialists also visit classes as requested by faculty to talk about services or help facilitate a writing workshop.

Writing Specialists and Tutors staff writing support for partner programs such as the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) and the student community centers such as the Native American Student Academic Success Center. In partnership with the Office of Educational Opportunity and Enrichment Services, 6 Writing Specialists offer 2 weeks of instruction in the summer as part of the Special Transitional Enrichment Program (STEP). These not-for-credit workshops focus on understanding university writing expectations. The Task Force understands that the Special Transitional Enrichment Program is piloting new writing programming in the summer 2019. We can’t yet know how effective the new programming will be in supporting STEP students as writers.

Students might also find writing support in their own dorms under the auspices of Student Housing and the First Year Experience program. This is provided by a Writing Skills Specialist on staff with this program and student tutors hired and overseen by The Academic Assistance and Tutoring Centers.

Members of the Task Force are concerned about how our existing structure separates writing support from academic units teaching writing. We want to argue that something more like a Writing Center, overseen by faculty in the University Writing Program, would make better sense, as you will see below. But we want to register here that some members of the Task Force have heard from students in vulnerable populations that they find the smaller, local writing services,

which come to them and are tied to culturally-grounded retention centers or their own networks, accessible and welcoming.

### **Publication outlets for students**

The campus provides various outlets for student writing done for classes. [Prized Writing](#), which publishes undergraduate writing from across the disciplines, selected through juried competition, is overseen by the University Writing Program. [Explorations](#), a multidisciplinary online undergraduate research journal, is published by the Office of Undergraduate Education. [Readings about Writing](#) is a quarterly journal of work from students in the University Writing Program's first-year composition courses. [The Aggie Transcript](#), an online journal that publishes the work of students in the life sciences, has a faculty founder and mentor (Professor Sean Burgess of Molecular and Cellular Biology) and a student editorial board. It offers a model of "[building a science writing space for students](#)."

### **Outreach**

The University Writing Program connects to K-12 teachers of writing in two ways: through its participation in the Area 3 Writing Project, a professional development network for California teachers and administrators, and through Writing Ambassadors, an internship program and class (UWP 197TC) for UC Davis undergraduates who are interested in careers in K-12 education. The Task Force applauds this and feels strongly that, as a land grant university, UCD should be addressing this public need and doing all in its power to strengthen ties to K-12 educators. We would like to see even more investment in these efforts.

### **Writing at Peer Institutions**

After we mapped out the status quo at Davis, to the best of our ability, we looked at some other campuses. We chose to look at 8 universities known for their writing instruction: Michigan State University, the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, the University of Minnesota, the University of Texas at Austin, Arizona State University, Syracuse University, George Mason University, and North Carolina State University. We hasten to say that we did not systematically evaluate these other programs. Rather, we approached our research as if we were prospective students or parents, relying on university websites to navigate the curriculum, degree requirements, and support services. We did not find any one institution we would propose as the model for what we should be doing at UCD. Instead, we looked for ideas we might borrow. We also learned a lot from our research about what we are already doing, and doing well, at UCD.

Our attempts to understand our own campus and then our research into other campuses taught us the importance of **making writing prominent—readily visible and easy to find**—both on the campus and on the university website. We admired the transparent and navigable websites at Arizona State and George Mason University, for instance. It was easy to find information about writing on the main university webpages.

Every campus we considered has a **Writing Center led by research faculty in Writing Studies and located in academic units**. Many Writing Centers have admirably clear mission statements. The University of Texas at Austin offers this [concise mission statement](#): "The University Writing Center, a unit of the Department of Rhetoric and Writing, helps UT students become more proficient, more versatile, and more confident in their writing abilities." We found a more detailed one at [George Mason](#).

At several peer institutions, we admired **a range of placement strategies** that identify and help students build on their existing writing skills, rather than allowing students to test out of a lower division writing requirement. We were also interested in the way that various universities offer multiple pathways and flexible structures for writing instruction. Arizona State, for instance, offers advanced sections of first-year writing, as well as an **extended writing experience** for students who need more support: a 2 semester, 6 credit hour course. A multilingual track is available. We liked this model of a “**stretch**” or extended course for entry level writers and wondered if there could be a version for honors students as well.

Some universities handle upper division writing requirements through majors (George Mason, University of Texas at Austin, University of Michigan, the University of Minnesota, and North Carolina State) as UCD once did. Syracuse University offers both upper division writing courses taught within the Writing Department and upper division writing courses within disciplines so that students can choose. Some Task Force members consider this a potential model for us. Other members fear that writing courses in the majors would not be comparable in terms of writing instruction to upper division writing courses focused entirely on writing currently taught by University Writing Program faculty.

At the University of Minnesota, we particularly admired the **well-defined criteria for writing intensive courses**, as well as the existence of a **Campus Writing Board** that reviews courses to see if they meet those guidelines—and has the resources to award budgets to faculty to enrich the writing in their courses. We were interested in this **combination of review and motivating resources**. Another model that interests us is having Writing Studies research faculty work closely for a sustained period of time with faculty in other disciplines who want to develop writing classes in their major. Some Task Force members would like to consider designating one faculty member in a department as a writing consultant who would help other faculty develop Writing Experience and upper division writing courses, should they be interested in doing so.

Some other universities do a better job than we do of **supporting writing at every level** of the campus community. For example, the University of Minnesota sponsors summer faculty writing retreats. Syracuse University serves undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty equally. They have cleverly named their graduate student writing center an “Editing Center.” They also offer the option of submitting a draft as an email attachment and receiving feedback. North Carolina State focuses on faculty development and offers faculty feedback on assignment design, from both students and writing experts.

## **Recommendations**

**1. Establish a Writing Center** led by research faculty in Writing Studies in an academic unit so that all writers, students, and faculty know where to find guidance. This Writing Center would bring together and enhance all of the facets of writing at UCD that we have tried to map here. If we want a healthy writing culture that is driven by student need but includes all writers and potential writing teachers on campus, then we need a physical, conceptual, and virtual hub where

we can find each other, communicate, and collaborate.<sup>1</sup> **We want to state as strongly as possible that this Center would gather together and replace the existing archipelago. We do not recommend adding yet another unit to the hodgepodge we've got.**

A Writing Center would centralize and coordinate what we are now doing well, create meaningful collaborations for the good of students, reduce some of the balkanization, redundancies, gaps, and failed connections we see now, and create an infrastructure for the changes we will need to undertake in the future. A Writing Center would include:

- **support for writing instruction** so that faculty find training to teach (and not just evaluate) writing in their classes; graduate students learn to write and teach writing across different contexts; undergraduates learn how to provide peer mentorship in designated writing spaces (like the writing center) but also in other curricular spaces; and all writing teachers learn how to assess and develop their students' writing, providing effective feedback and creating opportunities for writers to respond to that feedback.
- **writer support** for undergraduates, graduate students, staff, and faculty. For example, faculty might find support for different kinds of writing situations, including learning to write collaboratively with graduate students, and help with vital but mystifying genres such as the book proposal or merit statement. This support should extend into new media literacies, including creating data visualization for publication, conference posters and presentations, webtext, and multimodal writing.

**2. Create a University Writing Council led by senate faculty who conduct research in Writing Studies** to coordinate the writing instruction and support that now occur across departments with no articulation of shared goals and little communication among those involved.

**3. At the entry level, abolish Workload 57 and the use of the Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE) at UCD.** Best practices suggest that one-shot timed writing tests that place students into college courses have a “weak” to “moderate” ability to predict. High school grades are actually a much better predictor of success in a college writing class than tests like the AWPE. For example, the [National Council of Teachers of English/Writing Program Administrators White Paper on Writing Assessment in Colleges and Universities](#) states unequivocally that: “**A single off-the-shelf or standardized test should never be used to make important decisions about students, teachers, or curriculum.**” While the English Language Placement Exam (ELPE) has helped us assess where multilingual students should begin their college level writing instruction, evidence demonstrates that the Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE) is not a valid or predictive tool for assessing writing. The Task Force further recommends that UCD:

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<sup>1</sup> Establishing such a center might begin with the University Leadership Council/Educational Advisory Board research brief on *Developing an Effective Writing Center: Service and Assessment Models* and *Writing Program Architecture: Thirty Cases for Reference and Research*, ed. Bryna Siegel Finer and Jamie White-Farnham (Utah State UP, 2017).

- develop a single, inclusive writing placement mechanism that could be administered to all incoming UCD students; the single placement tool would be both a pathway for fulfilling the Entry Level Writing requirement and a means for collecting data that would enable more accurate student placement.
- support the assessment of the UCD entry level writing courses (UWP 7 and A co-courses) that are being piloted now in Winter and Spring 2019 (see Appendix 8). The Task Force stresses that resources will be required to facilitate assessing the pilot and institutionalizing new paths to fulfilling this requirement at Davis.

**4. At the lower division level, coordinate the work of the four departments that teach lower division writing.** At the very least, these four departments should develop shared outcomes for courses that fulfill the lower division English composition requirement and meet occasionally to discuss their goals and methods. The English Language and Literacy committee is starting to attend to this, but there need to be more opportunities to discuss shared goals and teacher training across these courses. We recommend the Council of Writing Program Administrator’s [Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition](#) as a guide for thinking about what such courses should achieve and as a model for what all lower division writing courses should have in common.

**5. At the “Writing Experience” level, we need to know more about what is happening.** We view the Writing Experience classes themselves, and more in-depth inquiry into them, as an enormous—as yet underutilized—opportunity to insure that students write and receive meaningful feedback they can use to become more flexible writers throughout their years in college. UCD needs to determine the learning goals of these courses and the criteria for WE courses that facilitate this learning. More faculty support needs to be developed to help faculty teach Writing Experience courses with confidence and expertise. The Task Force proposes the description of [Writing Flag](#) courses at the University of Texas at Austin as a potential model for us to consider. We might look to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges assessment guidelines, particularly the General Education Rubric, for guidance in this as well (Appendix 9). Rather than focusing on oversight of those teaching the courses, we propose thinking instead about ways to provide more resources, guidance, and incentive for faculty who want to incorporate writing in their courses.

**6. At the upper division level, reconsider the upper division composition exam.** The current upper division composition exam, designed decades ago as an opportunity for students to challenge (test out) of the upper division composition requirement, needs to address the more advanced writing challenges that the upper division composition requirement is meant to prepare students to navigate (sustained research projects, writing within disciplinary-specific genres and styles, etc.). The Task Force recommends this effort be coordinated with the development of a single writing placement mechanism for incoming students.

Some members of the Task Force would also like to consider the possibility of allowing some courses taught within majors to fulfill the upper division composition requirement. We might pursue this by means of deeper inquiry into peer institutions that house upper division writing in different ways, including in majors. At such institutions: who teaches these courses? what training in writing in the disciplines do they have? how effectively do they prepare their students in this model compared to models that locate upper division instruction in writing programs?



Because upper division instruction at Davis is centralized and coherent, some task force members are concerned about opening up the upper division to the inconsistencies we see at the lower division. We don't want to lose a commitment to upper division writing or foreclose the option that some departments and students will prefer to continue fulfilling this requirement via existing upper division University Writing Program courses. We wonder if an outside study specifically focused on upper division writing—in both Writing Experience and Upper Division Composition courses— might be useful.

**7. At the graduate level**, we would like to see better training for Teaching Assistants that supports them in teaching and responding to, not just grading, student writing.

**8. Present writing requirements and resources more clearly on the university webpage.** This will become easier to do as we centralize our operations. But we should not wait for that to happen. We should be able to provide a **writing tile** on Myucdavis, for instance, that would make it easier to find information about all writing programs and resources in one place.

**9. Include questions about writing on student evaluations in all courses that fulfill a writing requirement.** We require all instructors in all courses at the university to administer student evaluations. Including questions about writing would be a concrete step toward making sure these courses actually focus on writing, whether they are lower division courses or Writing Experience courses. We might borrow questions like these from University Writing Program evaluations: “The instructor clearly explained the grading standards for written work; The instructor graded the written work according to the stated standards; The instructor’s comments on my papers helped me understand how to improve; The instructor returned papers quickly enough for me to benefit; and This course gave me a greater understanding of what effective writing is.” From this menu, we might choose several questions that all evaluations for writing classes should ask.

**10. Charge and support the University Writing Program to work with assessment professionals in Undergraduate Education to gather data from required writing courses in preparation for inviting a Writing Program Administrator Consultant-Evaluator to evaluate writing instruction at all the levels (entry-level, lower division, Writing Experience, upper division) on our campus.** We also need to engage faculty in this process; faculty are most likely to participate in data gathering when they see clearly how that process could benefit them and their students. What data would help and inspire faculty? What kinds of information would help them teach writing more effectively?

### **Open Questions**

- 1) Many faculty members are acutely aware that they are teaching larger and larger classes. Many of us are interested in learning more about the best practices for incorporating writing into large lecture courses, and we think our colleagues would be, too. But we would also like to imagine ways to make writing-intensive courses with relatively small enrollment caps possible across departments and divisions.
- 2) While our focus has been on concrete issues of tests, courses, and buildings, administration and staffing, we are also interested in concerns that are less tangible but equally pressing. The Task Force would like to see UCD bolster our campus’ writing

culture even further, empowering faculty across campus to embrace their shared responsibilities, and articulating explicit shared norms, values, and practices. For example, how might we convince science students that writing matters and is worth their effort? How might a more visible and focused institutional commitment to writing help to advance the status of writing and command the respect of busy students?

- 3) Faculty governance and faculty control of the curriculum are UC values. Many faculty members respond to outcomes assessment as an intrusion, a burthen, and even a form of policing. How might we gather meaningful data about what is working and what is not without creating more work or encroaching on what teachers understand as academic freedom?

### **List of Appendices:**

- 1 Charter for the University Writing Program
- 2 University Writing Program Learning Outcomes
- 3 Workload 57 Overview
- 4 Passrates for Upper Division Composition Challenge Exam
- 5 2005 external review of Upper Division Composition Exam
- 6 List of courses that fulfill Writing Experience
- 7 General Education Committee definition of Writing Experience
- 8 Entry Level Writing Multiple Pathways Proposal
- 9 Western Association of Schools and Colleges Assessment Rubrics

**Proposal for a University Writing Program**  
**Undergraduate Council**  
May 31, 2004

**University Vision and Undergraduate Education**

The first of the UC Davis Educational Objectives for students states "Develop effective communication skills: written, oral, interpersonal, and group." Achieving campus educational objectives is central to the learning goal of the UC Davis Strategic Plan (<http://strategicplan.ucdavis.edu>). When the 2003 Chancellor's Fall Conference considered implementation of the learning goal, it identified increased attention to student writing skills and investment in a writing center as high priorities. ([http://strategicplan.ucdavis.edu/2003\\_fall\\_conference\\_report.pdf](http://strategicplan.ucdavis.edu/2003_fall_conference_report.pdf)) This campus vision for excellence in student writing guides the following proposal for a University Writing Program that will be of high quality, stable structure, and well-positioned for future development. It builds upon our current program, initiatives already begun by Elizabeth Langland, Dean of Humanities, Arts, and Cultural Studies (HArCS), recommendations from the Academic Senate Undergraduate Council ([http://www.physics.ucdavis.edu/kiskis/ug\\_council/ugc\\_writing\\_html.html](http://www.physics.ucdavis.edu/kiskis/ug_council/ugc_writing_html.html)), and broad discussions this academic year.

The writing program at UC Davis established a strong curriculum in the 1980s. Through writing instruction, support for writing instruction across the campus, and research in composition, the writing program furthers the campus-wide educational objective to graduate students who are proficient and effective in written communication. It is one of the most important undergraduate programs at the University, and one that provides the skills whereby a student may succeed or fail, not just at the university but in later careers and in graduate school.

In the last twenty-five years in the United States, we have witnessed an astounding shift in attitudes towards what was once simply designated the composition program. "Rhetoric and Composition" as a new discipline, or as a discipline reborn over the last thirty years, represents an emerging area of scholarship. Strengthening the writing program by having a research faculty directing and staffing it will achieve five important goals: 1) improve the teaching and assessment of writing as well as the pedagogical training of graduate students as writing instructors by adding a research component to the writing program; 2) reevaluate, develop, and expand the writing curriculum on the campus and thus further improve the quality of undergraduate education; 3) enhance post-baccalaureate career and educational opportunities for UC Davis students; 4) provide graduate students opportunities for research in the field of composition; 5) monitor and assess the educational achievements of the writing program.

## **Proposal**

**Therefore, to achieve these declared goals of the University, it is proposed that the University Writing Program (UWP) be established as an independent unit housed within the HArCS division of the College of Letters and Science and separate from the Department of English.**

## **Academic Charge of the University Writing Program**

Following current approaches to cognitive development, the program is designed to foster the intellectual maturation of undergraduate students from their first to fourth year. The Program oversees the lower division composition courses that can be used to satisfy college writing requirements. In addition to an upper-division composition course, the program also offers a series of courses specifically tailored to disciplines and to professions that satisfy the upper-division writing requirement. Besides these academic courses, the University Writing Program provides training for graduate students teaching in writing intensive courses as well as in all courses where a composition requirement can be satisfied. Presently offering a workshop program to strengthen the teaching of writing in the disciplines, a major goal of the program is to develop a fully functioning Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Program.

Through its writing across the curriculum program, the UWP will support General Education Writing Experience courses by offering training in writing instruction to the faculty and graduate students teaching these courses. Further, the UWP will advise the General Education Committee and the Courses Committee on criteria for writing experience courses.

The UWP will supervise the Computer Aided Instruction Program and the mentoring of its instructors.

The UWP will evaluate the educational effectiveness of writing instruction on campus by monitoring progress in the overall quality of student writing. Assessment and evaluation of the program's curriculum will be based on Writing Program Administration established guidelines for learning outcomes in university writing programs. The UWP may periodically sample and analyze student writing from writing intensive GE courses, upper division composition courses, writing in the disciplines courses, papers for major courses, honors theses, portfolios, or capstone experience courses. The resulting overall view will be the basis for recommending, as needed, improvements in instructional approaches

## **Administration**

The University Writing Program will become an independent academic program administered within the HArCS division of the College of Letters and Science and led by a Senate faculty director. The internal operations of the program will be the

responsibility of the Director and of a program committee. The program committee will be constituted according to the procedures of the College of Letters and Science. The program committee will be composed of faculty with expertise in composition and writing instruction and drawn from various campus departments. The new Senate faculty referred to later in this proposal will become members of the program committee. When the procedures of the University call for an Academic Senate faculty vote on academic personnel or curricular recommendations, the Senate members of the program committee will provide that service.

In consultation with the UWP program committee, the Provost, the English Department, and the University Writing Council (see below), the Dean of HArCS shall appoint the Director of the UWP. The Director shall report to the Dean of HArCS. In matters related to the campus-wide programs (such as writing in the disciplines and support for writing intensive courses across the campus) of the UWP, the director shall also report to the Provost or her designee.

As writing instruction is crucial to the mission of the university and the UWP serves the needs of all undergraduate students, providing funds to support the UWP is a central campus responsibility. The Director shall make a UWP budget request to the Dean of HArCS. The annual budget for the UWP will then be determined in a consultation among the Dean of HArCS, the Provost, and the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies. The budget will include funds for periodic evaluation of the educational effectiveness of the program. The budget shall be reported to the UWP and the Writing Council when other campus units receive their budgets.

The UWP will be a priority in the Comprehensive Campaign.

### **University Writing Council**

A University Writing Council, which is independent of the University Writing Program, will enhance the campus-wide mission of the Program. The primary role of the Council will be to maintain and strengthen the connections of the UWP with the rest of the campus. The Council will also work to enhance the quality and stability of the program. Through campus-wide representation and communication, it will bring a perspective that will be helpful in ensuring that the program plays its proper role as a unit with campus-wide responsibilities. As a part of that role, the Council may also advise on broad plans for assuring that the Program serves the needs of the campus and thereby maintains a strong base of support. To be effective in that role, the Council must be independent of the University Writing Program. Thus while it is important that there be some representation on the Council from the Program so that Council members are well informed about the Program, it is crucial that a majority of the Council members be independent of the Program.

### *Membership of the University Writing Council:*

Six Senate faculty members broadly representative of the undergraduate colleges (appointed by the Chair of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate in consultation with the faculties of the undergraduate colleges),  
Director of the UWP,  
Chair of the Department of English,  
Two undergraduate students (appointed by ASUCD),  
One graduate student who teaches lower-division composition (appointed by GSA),  
Two Academic Federation members who teach in the UWP (appointed by the Academic Federation),  
Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies or her designee,  
One undergraduate dean (rotating through the undergraduate colleges and appointed by the Provost),  
One associate dean (rotating through the undergraduate colleges, appointed by the Provost, and with the dean and associate dean not from the same college),  
One representative from the Undergraduate Council (appointed by the Chair of the Undergraduate Council).

The six faculty, the students, the Federation members, the dean, the associate dean, and the UGC representative shall serve two year staggered terms.

The Chair of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate shall select one of the six Senate faculty members (and not the Director of the UWP) to serve as chair of the Council.

The Council shall meet at least quarterly for consultation with the Director. The Council shall make an annual report on the activities of the UWP and submit it to the Provost, the Chair of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate, the Dean of HArCS, and the Director or the UWP no later than June 30. The report will give statistics on courses taught and the availability of required courses, review the reports on the educational effectiveness of the program, assess the adequacy of the program's resources for meeting the needs of students, and make recommendations for the budget and for adjustments in courses offerings for the following year. While it is hoped that this independent perspective of the Council will be valuable, it will in no way replace any aspects of prescribed campus administrative, personnel, or program review procedures.

### **Faculty**

Three further goals of the UC Davis Vision and Strategic Plan would be enhanced by the creation of an independent writing program. These include, "Improvement in the ranking of UC Davis programs in national surveys that are based on research visibility and excellence," "Growth in the level of extramural funding across all disciplines," and an "Increase of the proportion of undergraduate classes taught by tenure-track faculty."

To strengthen the Writing Program and give it national prominence, the program will recruit a director with a national reputation in Rhetoric and Composition. In developing the program, the Director will recruit tenure-track faculty who engage in research in the field of composition and who maintain research programs linked to the University Writing Program. They will be engaged in grant writing and involved in assessment and in developing a Writing-across-the-Disciplines Program. They will be able to represent the Program to the faculty at large, to the UC system, and outside the institution.

Therefore, it is proposed that one Senate faculty FTE be allocated for a Director of the UWP, that a search for the Director begin as soon as possible, and that four additional Senate faculty FTE be allocated for the UWP. They may have joint appointments in departments and colleges across the campus.

Departments that host new faculty associated with UWP through full or joint appointments will give their recommendations for these academic personnel actions according to the established procedures for new faculty appointments.

In addition, the program will have Academic Federation faculty. All continuing lecturers presently housed in the Department of English will be transferred to the UWP. All lecturers with one-year contracts hired as a result of a search will be transferred from English to the UWP.

For additional instructors, the UWP will assign courses to English Department graduate students, postdoctoral lecturers, and postdoctoral teaching fellows on the basis of an MOU agreed upon by the Department of English, the Dean of HArCS, and the UWP.

## **Staff**

UWP staff will continue to be housed with English staff. Some of this staff may have overlapping responsibilities to be determined by the MSO in collaboration with the director of the UWP, the chair of English, and the staff in the administrative unit.

## **Course transfer**

In accordance with the procedures of the Academic Senate, the following English courses are to be decertified as ENL courses and recertified as UWP courses:

- ENL 1
- ENL 18
- ENL 19
- ENL 101
- ENL 102
- ENL 104
- ENL 390 and 392

The following lower division English courses will remain ENL courses:

ENL 3  
ENL 4  
ENL 5

The following graduate courses will remain ENL courses:

ENL 391, 393, & 396

### **Courses that Satisfy Composition Requirements**

Each college on the Davis campus establishes its own mandatory writing requirements. Within the larger governance context provided by the Academic Senate, the UWP program committee can advise departments, colleges, and the Committee on Courses of Instruction on new and existing courses best suited to satisfy composition requirements.

### **Program Review**

During the transition period as the UWP shifts from being part of the English department to being an independent program, there will be an initial (2004-06) internal review to examine the effectiveness of the MOU. This will take into account changing enrollment patterns (of undergraduates and of graduate students in English), the educational goals of the UWP that might emerge as the program becomes independent and develops a different curriculum, and changes the Department of English might initiate due to changes in its graduate student mentoring. The director of the UWP in collaboration with the Program Committee and the chair of English in consultation with the Graduate Adviser of English will be responsible for this review.

In later years, the appropriate bodies of the College of Letters and Science and of the Academic Senate will review the program following the established review periods and policies of the College (TPPRC) and the Senate.

### **Supporting documents**

See [http://www.physics.ucdavis.edu/kiskis/ug\\_council/uwp.html](http://www.physics.ucdavis.edu/kiskis/ug_council/uwp.html)



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## Programmatic Learning Outcomes

### Writing Process

1.1 Deploy various strategies for engaging in writing as an iterative and social process that involves self-reflection, metacognition, and respectful collaboration

### Rhetorical Situation

2.1 Compose texts in a variety of modes (print, visual, digital, multimodal) driven by the exigencies and constraints of rhetorical situations and in response to the demands of public, private, and academic contexts

### Information Literacy

3.1 Gather and use information in rhetorically and ethically motivated ways through various mechanisms such as: identifying, analyzing, and contextualizing scholarly resources; interpreting visual and physical texts; activating schema; collaborating with peers or experts; conducting qualitative and quantitative primary research

### Critical Thinking

4.1 Compose texts that demonstrate students' abilities to read, contextualize, analyze, and synthesize diverse and increasingly complex texts and ideas

### Engaging with Theory

5.1 Compose texts that demonstrate an understanding of significant generic and theoretical framework

### Knowledge of Conventions

6.1 Compose texts that demonstrate an understanding of and meet the expectations of form, language, and format that are shaped by discourse communities, genres, and composers

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## Workload 57 Overview

Trish Serviss, Director of ELW, Fall 2018

**1993:** “Subject A,” now called Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) outsourced to Sacramento City College English department. UCD academic senate deeply opposes the change.

**1993-2006:** WLD 57 is a 4.5 unit (worth no credits toward graduation) **test prep course** that is Pass/No Pass based *solely* upon student performance on the [AWPE \(Analytical Writing Placement Exam\)](#) designed via UCOP as final exam. No value for student work done in the course itself. Test format (2 hours total) requires students to read an unfamiliar passage (500-700 words long) and write an essay response to a particular prompt about the passage. There are many concerns about the AWPE expressed by writing studies scholars throughout the UC system including:

- 1) timed writing experiences do not access or foster student’s transferable literacy skills (the purpose of the ELWR in the first place)
- 2) the holistic scoring guide, designed in 1983, is not a valid assessment tool
- 3) cultural literacy is not considered
- 4) reading level of passage is not considered
- 5) the AWPE is not predictive of student success (less than the SAT, etc.); “E” reads have no criteria other than reader impression of language errors

**2006-2018:** Senate Regulation 521 dictates that WLD 57 fulfills ELWR & must culminate in the AWPE as the final exam. SCC implements new student learning outcomes (below) and creates different kinds of WLD 57 sections (below). Course becomes graded with a C or better required for ELWR fulfillment. WLD 57 instructors transpose student grades, reporting Cs as Ds. Fail rates are high and inconsistent across sections and instructors. [See supporting data compiled by CEE.]

<p>WLD 57E (for everyone) = 25 cap  WLD 57P (EOP students) = 18 cap  WLD 57S (ESL students) = 18 cap</p> <hr/> <p>* ~120 courses/year typically  * No curricular or instructor qualification differences across sections.  * Fail rates highest in 57S.  * UCD pays SCC between \$1.7m-\$890k/year  * UCD has no oversight over hiring of instructors, review of instructors, etc.</p>	<p>Student Learning Outcomes for WLD 57</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Composing fully developed, structured, and unified essays.</li> <li>2. Demonstrating knowledge of the writing process through prewriting, drafting, and revision.</li> <li>3. Applying critical reading and reasoning skills.</li> <li>4. Analyzing and responding to readings and incorporating the ideas of others into writing.</li> <li>5. Supporting main points using appropriate evidence.</li> <li>6. Demonstrating ability to use varied sentence structures and types.</li> <li>7. Constructing sentences with precise and appropriate words.</li> <li>8. Examining and evaluating writing for errors.</li> </ol>
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### Student Impact

- Up to 40% of incoming undergraduate students enter UCD **without ELWR satisfied**.
- Attrition rates for students who take WLD 57 are **3x higher** than non-57 students.
- Time to graduation is extended for those who take WLD 57 (on average 1-2 quarters).
- Partnership with Los Rios Community College district is premised upon eventuality of ELWR student disenrollment and community college attendance.
- Underprepared student writers *remain* underprepared and disadvantaged.

## Workload 57 Overview

Trish Serviss, Director of ELW, Fall 2018

### Data analysis revelations and challenges for ELW Program:

- Multilingual students in WLD 57 earn lower grades disproportionately to native English speakers
- Grades vary greatly per instructor; no WLD 57 faculty consensus about writing assessment values and practices
- Grades in WLD 57 are poor predictors of grades in other classes at UC Davis.
- WLD 57 disrupts the vertical writing curriculum we have/are building at UC Davis. The curriculum isn't focused on transferable literacy skills necessary for UCD undergraduates.
- WLD 57 faculty (96% adjunct community college instructors) are not prepared to teach ELWR fulfilling at UCD.
- UCD faculty have a responsibility to ensure that entry level writing education is a gateway and equity-builder rather than perpetuation of educational injustice.

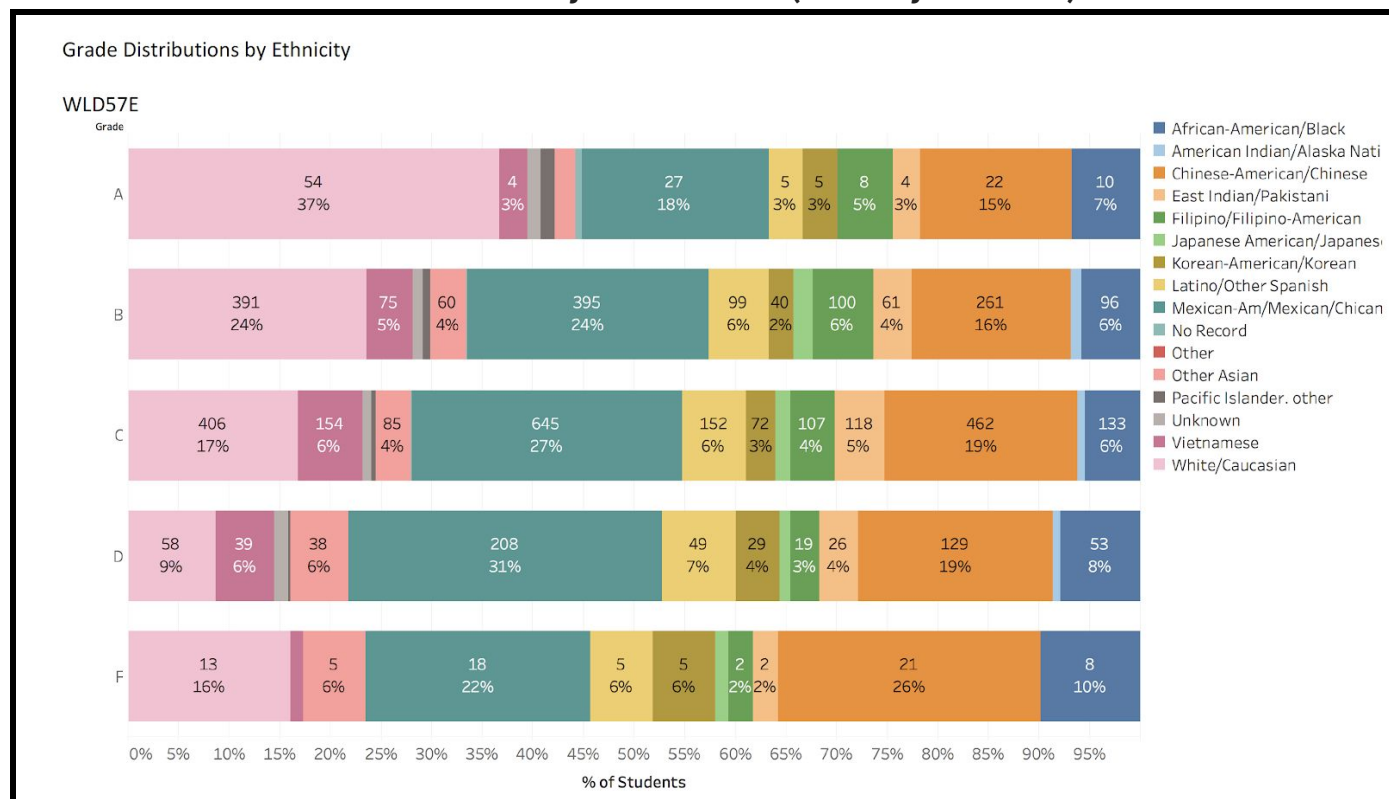
### Data Samples

#### Excerpt from WLD 57 Grading Guidelines

Shared leadership teams from SCC and UCD (under direction of Cynthia Bates) created a **culture of failure for WLD 57**. One key document offered to WLD 57 faculty explained:

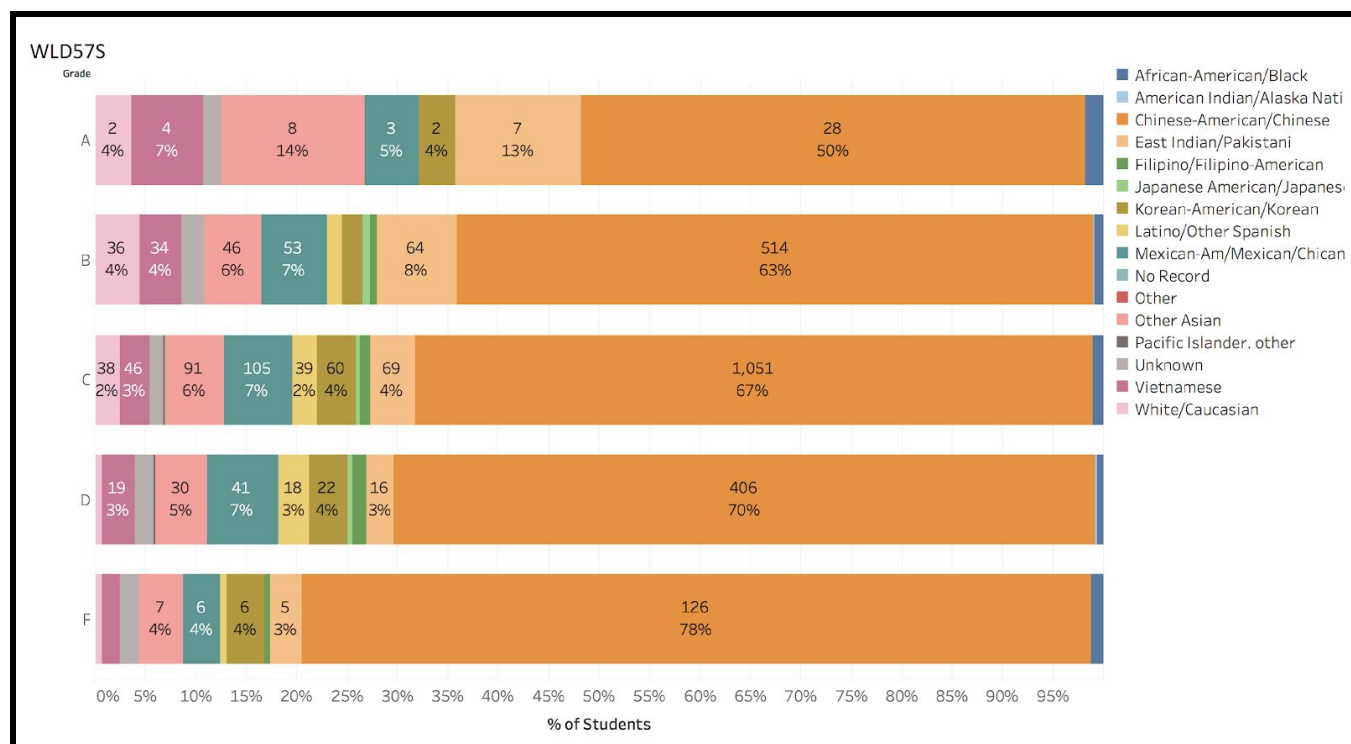
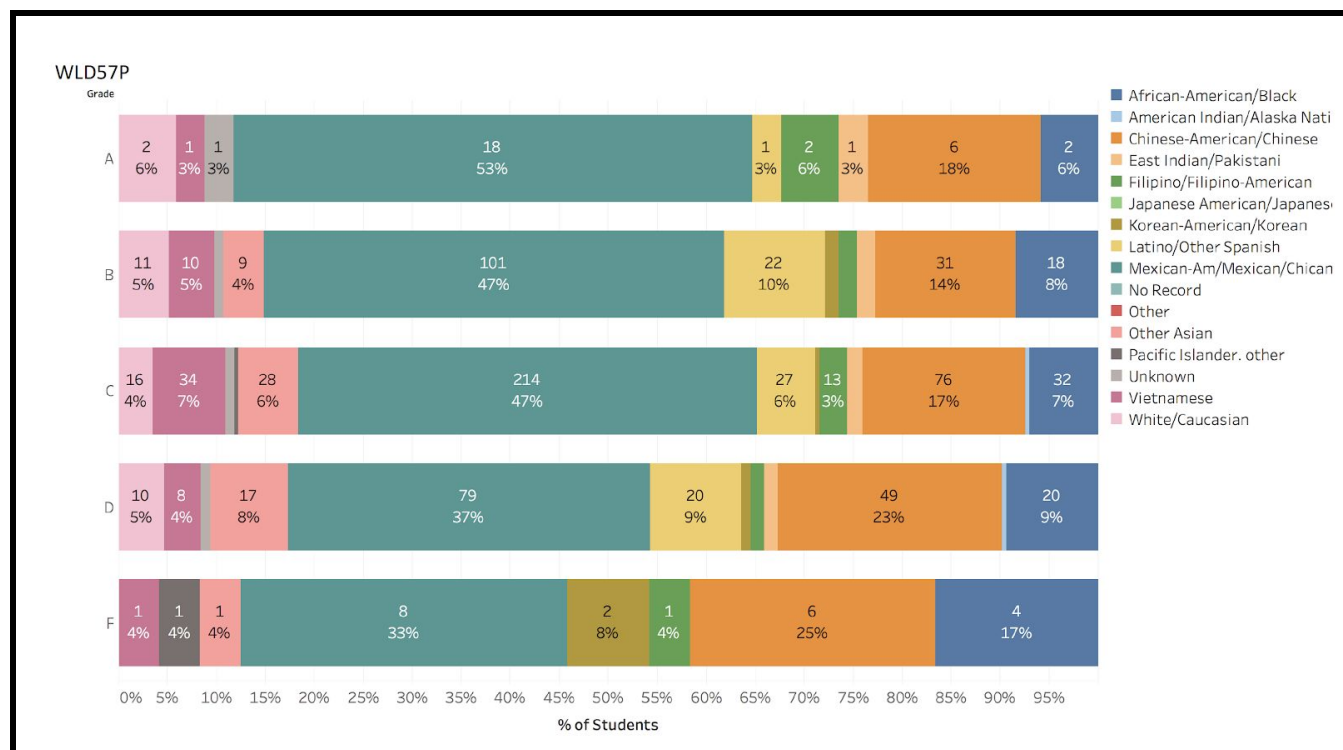
Students take WLD 57 because they were unable to demonstrate adequate/passing basic writing skills on at least one of several different tests, including the AWPE; it thus makes sense that your students are likely to start out with grades in the D range. You can reassure students that this is perfectly normal and that you have seen many students start off in the D range and make sufficient progress over the 10 weeks to pass the course.

### Center for Educational Excellence Analysis of WLD 57 (Ethnicity & Grades)



## Workload 57 Overview

Trish Serviss, Director of ELW, Fall 2018



## GENERAL INFORMATION RE: COMPOSITION EXAMINATION 2010-2018

Year	Quarter	Exams Read	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate	L&S	Pass Rate	Engineering	Pass Rate	A&ES	Pass Rate	Bio Sci
<b>2010-11</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1734</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>823</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>1182</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>104</b>
	Fall	557	273	284	49%	425	52%	60	40%	38	37%	34
	Winter	648	371	277	57%	425	60%	112	48%	74	54%	37
	Spring	529	267	262	50%	332	55%	115	31%	49	61%	33

Year	Quarter	Exams Read	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate	L&S	Pass Rate	Engineering	Pass Rate	A&ES	Pass Rate	Bio Sci
<b>2011-12</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1842</b>	<b>1027</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>1322</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>111</b>
	Fall	579	365	214	63%	430	66%	82	51%	37	65%	30
	Winter	674	352	322	52%	483	52%	93	48%	59	54%	39
	Spring	589	310	279	53%	409	54%	81	41%	57	56%	42

Year	Quarter	Exams Read	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate	L&S	Pass Rate	Engineering	Pass Rate	A&ES	Pass Rate	Bio Sci
<b>2012-13</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1905</b>	<b>932</b>	<b>973</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>1254</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>138</b>
	Fall	<b>595</b>	279	316	47%	400	47%	89	51%	62	47%	44
	Winter	<b>697</b>	306	391	44%	462	47%	120	41%	70	39%	45
	Spring	<b>613</b>	347	266	57%	392	57%	93	58%	79	48%	49

Year	Quarter	Exams Read	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate	L&S	Pass Rate	Engineering	Pass Rate	A&ES	Pass Rate	Bio Sci
<b>2013-14</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1952</b>	<b>971</b>	<b>981</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>1161</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>169</b>
	Fall	<b>651</b>	309	342	47%	406	46%	133	48%	60	52%	52
	Winter	<b>698</b>	362	336	52%	386	51%	170	54%	76	49%	66
	Spring	<b>603</b>	300	303	50%	369	50%	127	49%	56	50%	51

Year	Quarter	Exams Read	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate	L&S	Pass Rate	Engineering	Pass Rate	A&ES	Pass Rate	Bio Sci
<b>2014-15</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1796</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>1159</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>967</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>177</b>
	Fall	<b>645</b>	299	346	46%	345	46%	171	43%	75	48%	54
	Winter	<b>691</b>	198	493	29%	368	28%	169	31%	86	30%	68
	Spring	<b>460</b>	140	320	30%	254	31%	111	20%	39	41%	55

Year	Quarter	Exams Read	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate	L&S	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate	Engineering	Passed	Failed
<b>2015-16</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1366</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>926</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>758</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>222</b>
	Fall	<b>451</b>	171	280	38%	273	106	167	39%	103	36	67
	Winter	<b>554</b>	165	389	30%	300	94	206	31%	122	27	95
	Spring	<b>361</b>	104	257	29%	185	55	130	30%	87	27	60

Year	Quarter	Exams Read	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate	L&S	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate	Engineering	Passed	Failed
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## GENERAL INFORMATION RE: COMPOSITION EXAMINATION 2010-2018

<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1254</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>244</b>
	Fall	367	144	223	39%	214	92	122	43%	89	33	56
	Winter	492	168	324	34%	237	80	157	34%	152	50	102
	Spring	395	147	248	37%	192	70	122	36%	129	43	86

Year	Quarter	Exams Read	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate	L&S	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate	Engineering	Passed	Failed
<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1206</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>855</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>649</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>252</b>
Coordinator: Karma W	Fall	437	106	331	24%	233	62	171	27%	124	21	103
	Winter	421	151	270	36%	220	90	130	41%	113	38	75
	Spring	348	94	254	27%	196	50	146	26%	99	25	74

cc: Director, Assoc Director-L. Div, Asst Director-L. Div, Asst Director-U. Div, Asst Director WATC, Program Coordinator, Exam Coordinator

## GENERAL INFORMATION RE: COMPOSITION EXAMINATION 2010-2018

Pass Rate
<b>50%</b>
44%
54%
52%

Pass Rate
<b>56%</b>
53%
59%
55%

Pass Rate
<b>56%</b>
43%
36%
63%

Pass Rate
<b>56%</b>
52%
44%
47%

Pass Rate
<b>40%</b>
56%
26%
40%

Pass Rate	A&ES	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate	Bio Sci	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate
<b>29%</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>33%</b>
35%	38	16	22	42%	37	13	24	35%
22%	74	24	50	32%	58	20	38	34%
31%	49	11	38	22%	40	11	29	28%

Pass Rate	A&ES	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate	Bio Sci	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate
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## GENERAL INFORMATION RE: COMPOSITION EXAMINATION 2010-2018

<b>34%</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>41%</b>
37%	38	11	27	29%	26	8	18	31%
33%	60	20	40	33%	43	18	25	42%
33%	39	15	24	38%	28	14	14	50%

Pass Rate	A&ES	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate	Bio Sci	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate
<b>25%</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>28%</b>
17%	45	14	31	31%	29	8	21	28%
34%	53	15	38	28%	31	7	24	23%
25%	35	12	23	34%	18	7	11	39%



**Review of the English Composition Examination  
at the University of California, Davis**

for

Brenda Deen Schildgen  
Interim Director of the University Writing Program  
University of California, Davis

by

Richard H. Haswell  
Haas Professor of English  
Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi

February 22, 2005

## Review of the English Composition Examination at the University of California, Davis

### Executive summary

- The English Composition Examination at UC Davis is a unique and well run program, designed and administered on solid assessment principles, and a program with many positive qualities, the most commendable perhaps being its service and accommodation for students
- Although the Examination is achieving its objectives in a functional and valid way, there are some points of concern. Most salient are examinee procrastination in taking the test, comparative performance of Engineering students, incompleteness of data collecting, lack of topic choice and topic validation, match between scoring method and exam outcome, and possible perceptions of conflict of interest in the administration of the test.
- Most important recommendations include reducing the window of opportunity to take the examination, conducting a study of the past performance and current practice of Engineering students, expanding the collection of data for purposes of test validation, offering a choice of topic on which to write, revising the scoring rubric, considering the feasibility of shifting responsibility for the Examination to a different academic office, and establishing a clear route for student complaints.

## Introduction

The English Composition Examination at University of California, Davis allows undergraduate students an opportunity to exempt out of the University's upper-division communications requirement. It is a challenge test, not a placement, barrier, or exit test—voluntary, not obligatory. Between 1,250 and 1,600 students a year avail themselves of the examination.

Professor Brenda Deen Schildgen, Interim Director of the University Writing Program, asked me to review the Examination. This would be an evaluation of the construction and administration of the test, not a validation of it.

Professor Schildgen did not establish any specific need for the review, other than the fact that the examination had been in place for a number of years and could use the appraisal of an outside evaluator. I understood that there have been some student complaints (it would be surprising had there been none, given the nature and of the test and its implications for students), but I do not know the number, substance, or consistency of the complaints.

The office of the University Writing Program provided me ample materials and data: the General Catalog description of the English composition requirement for all three colleges, the quarterly outcomes of the English Composition Examination for the past five years, detailed reader by reader records of the scoring of essays, results of an examinee questionnaire providing demographic and curricular background, the itemized expenses for administering the Examination 2003-2004, a chronology of topics used in prompts since 1997, and the actual prompts and essay sets for five examinations. Through several telephone calls and emails, the office has generously answered all my questions and requests for further data.

## Positive aspects of the Examination

The English Composition Examination at UC Davis is unique in many ways, at least in my experience, and a number of its aspects are deserving of praise. The following list is not arranged in any particular order.

- Although in most universities the opportunity for students to challenge courses is written into the undergraduate curricula, usually the information is not widely advertised and in others way the procedure is discouraged. UC Davis deserves commendation for bringing the procedure out into the open, and for sanctioning and encouraging it on such a large scale.
- Rationale for this particular challenge of required coursework in upper-division communication skills lies in the assumption, amply supported by common experience, that student writing skills vary widely at the mid-point of the undergraduate four years. This fact seems to have been embraced by the original designers of the English Composition Examination, and they constructed a

procedure that is nonpunitive. It is a challenge examination that does not incriminate students and should not delay their graduation. It has been created for their benefit, not the institution's, and it does not label any student as remedial. It is the choice of students whether to take the test or not, and they are given three opportunities a year to do so.

- In other ways the design of the Examination rests on current knowledge about the testing of writing proficiency. Prompts are based on the reading of a whole essay, not a snippet. Essays are read via a holistic rubric that evaluates writing systematically through a spread of criteria, not just one or two facets of writing (e.g., surface mistakes and conventional form). Students are allowed a second try, after counseling, a policy that assumes, correctly, that exam writing performance varies from trial to trial and that it is easy for an examinee to misconstrue exam objectives.
- The apparatus of the Examination is student friendly. Workshops are available before the test, accommodations are made for students with learning disabilities, and counseling is available after the test. These means of helping examinees gain exemption are openly advertised. All in all, one will look a long time before finding another institution running a junior-level writing examination with equal accommodation for the examinees.
- Unusually facilitative is the system for re-testing. Research on the assessment of writing shows that about a quarter of students significantly change the rated quality of their writing performance with a second essay (even one written a few hours later), and when re-testing is allowed in formal writing settings in college, students who elect to take the test over record a high rate of success. But rarely do institutions allow re-testing of an examination administered on such a large scale.
- Topics for the writing prompts have been chosen carefully and, in my opinion, chosen well. The difficulty is in finding unbiased topics, equally familiar and equally understood by different student groups. The task is not easy, nor is predicting the actual response from different sexes, different nationalities, different social or language backgrounds. Judging from past topics set for the English Composition Examination, the test designers are well aware of the problems.
- The system used to score exam essays is designed in accordance with current assessment practices. Raters are teachers of the course from which the examinee may be exempted. Readers are not forced to do the work, nor asked to do it free. Rater training looks very professional, and the use of "range finders" (more exactly prototype essays for each scale category) accords with standard holistic scoring methodology. The use of a six-point scale is also standard. Discrepant readings are resolved by the person with the most experience.

- The rater reliability of scoring for the past five years appears acceptable. Apparently rater training has paid off. The rate of discrepant readings averages around 15 percent, which is easily within the normal range for holistic evaluation of an impromptu essay and with a scale of six points.
- The over-all exemption rate (around 12 percent) also seems reasonable. Admittedly the figure is difficult to qualify, since as I have said comparable challenge examinations are hard to find, at least those conducted on a large enough scale to make outcomes reliable. In the past, however, when *placement* tests have allowed exemption from the target course as an outcome, exemption rates between 5 to 15 percent are customary.
- Record keeping has been maintained, of student name, college, and examination outcome (pass or fail).

} still not clear

### Concerns

The first four items here are the most pressing in my judgment. The rest follow in an order of importance that might be harder to defend. The University Writing Program is well aware of most of these concerns—certainly of the first five. Addressing them may involve additional expense, an issue I will return to in my recommendations for action. This is certainly the case with the first two items since they involve problems that are best solved through research initiatives.

- 1 Engineering students seem to be doing worse than Letters & Science and Agriculture & Environmental Science students, and doing worse very consistently, quarter after quarter (roughly at around a 45 percent pass rate as contrasted with about a 60 percent pass rate for L & S students and A & ES students). I would hazard that this difference is statistically significant. If so, are topics biased against the discipline? Are raters judging essays from an evaluative set biased against the style of writing encouraged in Engineering courses? Or do Engineering students just write weaker essays, and are there explanations for it (e.g., larger majority of second-language writers)? The puzzle grows, because the University Writing Program has just determined that SAT verbal scores show little difference between Engineering students and L & S students.
- 2 Data collection and entry doesn't allow post-hoc testing for topic equivalency, in terms of sex, major, or second-language status. This is a concern because topics are sometimes re-used. Outcomes from the first administration of a topic can be used to validate a topic, to see if there may be reasons why it should be scrapped and not used again. With such data, possible differences in examinee group outcomes can also be tested (as with the Engineering students discussed in Item 1).
- 3 Students cannot take the examination before they have earned 70 hours, but there is no stated point beyond which they cannot take it. They have a terminus ad quo

but not ad quem. As a result there is no official way to keep students from procrastinating until the examination may add time to degree.

- 4 The examination does not offer students a choice of topics on which to write. A forced topic with little time to explore it may lead to invalid results. Some students can be handicapped by a topic about which they have little knowledge and in which they have little interest—with subsequent effects on the quality of their exam essay that are not connected with writing ability.
- 5 The institutional body running the examination (the University Writing Program) is also the body teaching the courses from which students may be exempted by the examination. This gives the appearance of conflict of interest. I stress appearance. The test may be run in a perfectly fair and valid way—and I have no information before me suggesting that it is not—but that will not stop the perception, for instance, that the examiners (who teach the courses) might benefit by keeping the exemption rate low, or might be unfavorably biased against writing by non-humanities majors.
- 6 The rating method does not appear synchronized with the rating decision. Why rate essays on a six-point scale when the decision is merely dichotomous, pass or fail?
- 7 The University Writing Program may not be emphasizing the nature of the examination well enough for students. In actuality the English Composition Examination is an opportunity of which UC Davis students freely take advantage, in which outcomes may be beneficial and cannot be unbeneficial since (from their perspective) they cannot worsen their communications requirement by taking the test. But once students take the test, that actuality may be conveniently forgotten. It is easy for students to convert “did not exempt” to “failed,” and then to imagine that they have been unfairly judged against all other students. (They are not being judged against all other students, of course, just against other students also trying to exempt.)

## Recommendations

With my numbering of items I am matching the concerns listed above with recommendations for action. The first two items may be the most costly to implement, since the Item 1 would require some formal investigation and Item 2 would add to the time spent entering data after every examination session. Other actions (Items 3-7) are matters of practice, and in some case might actually lower the running expenses of the examinations.

- 1 Look into the situation with the Engineering students. Possible causes are multiple, so a set of coordinated studies seems called for. (a) To inquire into possible rater bias, a small set of scored essays could be chosen at random—say 20 by Engineering students (10 passing, 10 failing) and 20 by Letters and Science

students (10 passing, 10 failing). They would be independently read by two faculty from Engineering and two from other colleges. Comparison of scores and open discussion among readers could locate bias in the original readings, if any occurred. (b) To inquire into possible influence of topic, pass/fail rate (or essay score of 1-6) of Engineering students and L& S students on various past examinations with unique topics could be tested for significant differences. If any group stood out, comparison of the topics set might be insightful. (c) To inquire into the possible influence of examinee psychology or test strategy, interviews with a randomly chosen failing students, an equal number from Engineering and L & S, would be appropriate. In any case, inquiry into the Engineering students' anomalous performance on the Examination should start with the information on the issue that the testing office has already gathered, information that is considerable.

- 2 Expand data collection to include test topic, academic major, writer's sex, and second-language status. MANOVAs run with these factors as dependent variables and test score (rate of 1-6) as criterion variable would locate statistically significant differences among the variables. The main objective would be to test for topic equivalency, but it would also allow detection of significant differences on exam success for sex, academic major, college, and language status.
- 3 Set a limit, in hours earned, past which a student has lost the opportunity that this examination affords to exempt from the course requirement. The terminus might be 135 hours, leaving a year to complete the required coursework in case the student did not earn exemption.
- 4 Consider offering a choice of topics (successful ones from past exams can continue to be used, if rotated at long intervals). Or perhaps make a single-choice topic public 24 hours before the exam takes place. At the very least, extend the examination to two hours. Other schools have had good experience handing the topic out and letting groups of students discuss it for 15-20 minutes before they then each write their own essay.
- 5 Consider switching the responsibility for the examination to another academic office. This move should not necessarily mean that the readers be changed. There are very good reasons, for instance, why teachers of the courses impacted should constitute the majority of exam readers—although a broader selection of readers from across colleges would be valuable, for rater training and for outside perception of the examination's validity. Whatever office ultimately has authority over the Examination, there should be a detailed procedure in place for student complaints that go beyond that office—a procedure agreed on by the bodies involved.
- 6 Revise the scoring rubric to reflect a dichotomous decision: pass or fail. This does not mean that the criteria for making that decision would be simplified. As is currently the case, the rubric could include a broad spectrum of essay

accomplishments (organization, sentence structure, etc.), but each one would be scaled to pass or fail rather than to 1 through 6. There would be fewer prototype essays ("rangefinders"). The decision would still entail a holistic synthesizing of the traits, but that task would be easier. Probably many decisions would be made more quickly and thereby reading sessions as a whole would be shortened. A possible outcome might be higher hourly pay for raters, which in turn might attract teachers from across campus.

- 7 Explain better to students, before they take the examination, that the outcome will not worsen their current academic requirements. Perhaps add that they need to show a level of writing at least equivalent to that of students who are leaving the upper-division writing courses—not a level of writing that shows whether they "need" to take the courses.



**RESPONSE TO**  
**TASK FORCE REPORT on THE L & S COMPOSITION REQUIREMENT**  
**RE: THE ENGLISH COMPOSITION EXAMINATION**

The task force report suggests that there are three main concerns with regard to the English Composition Examination: 1) the number of students choosing to take the exam, 2) the lack of preparation offered to those students, and 3) the possibility of a "humanities bias" in the choice of topics for the exam.

1) The report asserts that "the past eight years have seen a 32% decline in the number of students taking the ECE." (p.15) However, another way to look at the statistics is that during the years 1990-93, there was an increase in the number of test takers and that since then, there has not been a steady decline but an approximation of the same number who took the test before 1990. Last year (1999-00), for example, the number of test takers was higher than it has been since 1995.

The report suggests that "many students who could be exempted from the requirement are not taking the examination, perhaps because they are not given adequate preparation or because the exam is not sufficiently publicized." (p.15) The experience of composition teachers over the past 20 years at UCD is that the majority of students in their upper-division courses report they knew about the exam option, but either wanted further training in writing to be competitive in today's job market and feel more confident as they graduate, or felt they did not have the skills necessary to pass such an exam.

The exam is referred to in the requirements for each college in the General Catalog, posted on the English department web page, advertised with flyers that are sent to advisors in each college, given to all incoming students in their "Welcome Packets," and advertised each quarter in The Aggie. If there were a serious problem with students not knowing of the existence of the exam, we would see many students complaining about that lack of knowledge, but the average is one such complaint per year to the office for the exam. If we are seeing fewer test takers as a percentage of enrolled students at UCD, it could be tied to those lower SAT scores of entering students (referred to in the report) and a decrease in their preparation for college-level work.

2) As for preparing students to take the exam, the report states that "students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate competence by examination." (p.11) Because the English Composition Exam is a "challenge exam," students who choose to take it are asserting that they have gained the necessary competence to pass it in prior composition courses. They are allowed to take it twice, so if they fail it the first time, they are given the option to see a counselor to discuss their exams, so they will have all the information they need to be better prepared the second time.

The report brings up the suggestion of reviewer Briggs that we distribute materials in the same manner as the university-wide Subject A exam that sends a booklet of information to high school students who will be taking the exam. The exams serve two different purposes so are not parallel in the following ways: The Subject A exam is a university requirement rather than a challenge exam. Because the population of test takers are high school students whose preparation for writing is not uniform, the booklet is used to introduce them to university standards and to reach out to high school teachers and help them obtain a realistic sense of what will be expected of their students as they enter college. When

college students who have already taken a lower-division composition course choose to take the ECE, it is because they are confident about their writing abilities so feel they do not need further instruction. Even if we were to go against standard testing practice and prepare students to take this challenge exam, we would have to hold enough sessions at enough times to accommodate the needs of hundreds of students. We would also open the door to many students protesting their scores because they were not able to attend a preparation session as well as angry students who did attend the session but still did not pass the exam. The cost and logistics of running such sessions would also be prohibitive.

3) As for the possible "humanities bias" of the exam: Over the past 15 years, it has been typical that every three years or so, a student in The College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences or Engineering who has failed the ECE contacts an administrator and protests that the exam was not fair to him or her. The administrator then contacts the English department and questions whether there is a bias. In such discussions, we point out that one of the criteria for picking an exam topic is that it does not give an advantage to any particular major. Therefore, our topics are always on general interest subjects accessible to any college student, such as cell phone use, college drinking, or noise pollution. The history has been that when administrators see that our purpose in constructing the exam is to elicit a competent essay on a non-specialized topic, they agree that it is fair to ask all students at UCD to be able to do that, regardless of major. When administrators have asked about the possibility of different topics for each college, we explain that the focus of the exam is to test literacy rather than specialized knowledge and using more than one topic would raise the question of equity among them. A more likely reason for the lower pass rates for students outside the College of Letters and Science is that they are asked to write fewer papers than L & S students are outside of composition courses (by their own report).

4) While the report mentions reviewer Tinkle's suggestion that the difficulty level of the exam and alternatives to it (such as portfolio reviews) should be looked into, it fails to mention Tinkle's accurate warning that determining who wrote submitted papers in a portfolio would be impossible and the time and money required would be serious impediments. The report also fails to mention that, unlike Briggs, Tinkle not only does not suggest preparing students to take the exam, but goes further to propose that the whole idea of exemption should be reviewed. She states that "an exemption from a writing requirement sends students the message that minimal competence is all they need aim for. I think students deserve for us to set higher standards than that for them, in order to prepare them realistically for the challenges they will encounter during and after their degree programs."

We agree with Tinkle that the English Composition Exam should be either maintained as a true challenge exam or eliminated as an option. Attempting to "train" students to take such an exam to exempt more of them from the requirement and, thereby, save money for the university would do a disservice to our students and to the standards of UCD.

Cynthia Bates, Director of Subject A  
Mary Bly, Coordinator, English Composition Exam

# Chart of Writing Experience Classes

Total WE classes as of this data collection = 1,724

School	Code	Unit	# of LD	# of UD	Total	Faculty	WE/Faculty
L&S—Harcs	AAS	African & African American Studies	4	12	16	Faculty = 4	4
	ABT	Applied Biological Systems Tech	0	2	2		
L&S—Harcs	AHI	Art History	1	48	49		
L&S—Harcs	AMS	American Studies	11	12	33	Faculty = 8	4.12
	ANS	Animal Science	5	16	21		
L&S—SocSci	ANT	Anthropology	12	66	78	Faculty = 19	4.1
	ARB	Arabic	0	2	2		
	ARE	Ag & Resource Economics	1	2	3		
L&S—Harcs	ART	Art	1	2	3		
L&S—Harcs	ASA	Asian American Studies	3	13	16		
	AVS	Avian Sciences	0	1	1		
	BIM	Biomedical Engineering	0	2	2		
	BIS	Biological Sciences	2	6	8		
	BIT	Biotechnology	0	3	3		
L&S—Harcs	CDM	Cinema & Digital Media	1	3	4		
L&S—Sciences	CHE	Chemistry	0	2	2		
L&S—Harcs	CHI	Chicanx Studies	11	40	51		
L&S—Harcs	CLA, GRK, & LAT	Classics (including Greek & Latin)	10	64	74	Faculty = 6	10.6
L&S—SocSci	CMN	Communication	2	16	18		
	CNS	Consumer Sciences	0	1	1		
L&S—Harcs	COM	Comparative Literature	20	51	71	Faculty = 7	7.1
	CRD	Community and Regional Development	3	17	20		

	CRI	Critical Theory	0	1	1		
L&S—Harcs	CTS	Cinema & Technocultural Studies	4	5	9		
L&S—Harcs	DES	Design	2	3	5		
L&S—Harcs	DRA	Dramatic Art	3	16	19		
	EAE	Engineering Aerospace Science	0	1	1		
	EBS	Engineering Biological Systems	1	13	14		
	ECH	Chemical Engineering	0	6	6		
	ECI	Civil & Environmental Engineering	0	9	9		
School of Ed	EDU	Education	1	10	11		
	EME	Mechanical Engineering	0	3	3		
	EMS	Materials Science Engineering	1	8	9		
	ENH	Environmental Horticulture	0	2	2		
L&S—Harcs	ENL	English	18	70	88	Faculty = 32	2.75
	ENT	Entomology	2	10	12		
	ESM	Environmental Science & Management	1	2	3		
	ESP	Environmental Science & Policy	1	5	6		
	ETX	Environmental Toxicology	0	7	7		
	EVE	Evolution & Ecology	2	14	16		
	EXB	Exercise Biology	0	3	3		
L&S—Harcs	FMS	Film Studies	2	13	15		
	FPS	Fiber and Polymer Science	0	6	6		
L&S—Harcs	FRE & ITA	French & Italian	11	67	88	Faculty = 5	17.6
	FST	Food Science & Technology	1	0	1		
L&S—Sciences	GEL	Geology	8	16	24		
L&S—Harcs	GER & RUS	German & Russian	9	51	60	Faculty = 6	10
	HDE	Human Development	0	5	5		
L&S—ScoSci	HIS	History	25	157	182	Faculty = 35	5.2

	HMR	Human Rights	1	6	7		
	HNR	Honors	1	0	1		
L&S—Harcs	HUM	Humanities	13	1	14		
	HYD	Hydrology	0	1	1		
	IAD	International Ag Development	1	2	3		
	IRE	International Relations	1	5	5		
L&S—Harcs	JPN	Japanese	2	13	15		
L&S—Harcs	JST	Jewish Studies	1	6	7		
	LDA	Landscape Architecture	5	4	9		
L&S—SocSci	LIN	Linguistics	1	5	6		
L&S—Sciences	MAT	Math	0	1	1		
	MCB	Molecular Biology	1	7	8		
	MIC	Microbiology	0	3	3		
L&S—Harcs	MSA	Middle Eastern Studies	0	13	13		
L&S—Harcs	MST	Medieval Studies	3	4	7		
L&S—Harcs	MUS	Music	4	20	24		
L&S—Harcs	NAS	Native American Studies	6	25	31	Faculty = 7	4.4
	NEM	Nematology	1	0	1		
	NPB	Neurobiology, Physiology, & Behavior	0	6	6		
	NUT	Nutrition	1	5	6		
	PER	Persian	0	1	1		
L&S—SocSci	PHI	Philosophy	15	47	62	Faculty = 14	4.43
L&S—Science	PHY	Physics	0	4	4		
	PLB	Plant Biology	0	2	2		
	PLP	Plant Pathology	0	1	1		
	PLS	Plants and Society	2	3	5		
L&S—SocSci	POL	Political Science	13	89	102	Faculty = 26	3.9

L&S—Harcs	POR	Portuguese	1	6	7		
L&S—SocSci	PUBLIC SCIENCE COMMUNICATION	Psychology	0	12	12		
L&S—Harcs	RST	Religious Studies	30	36	66	Faculty = 8	8.25
	SAS	Science and Society	15	0	15		
L&S—SocSci	SOC	Sociology	0	3	3		
L&S—Harcs	SPA	Spanish	9	25	34		
	SPH	Health Policy?	0	1	1		
	SSC	Soil Science	0	3	3		
L&S—Harcs?	STS	Science & Technology Studies	8	19	27		
L&S—Harcs?	TCS	Technocultural Studies	5	4	9		
L&S—Harcs	TXC	Textiles (now part of Design)	1	5	6		
L&S—Harcs	UWP	University Writing Program	15	35	50		
	VEN	Viticulture & Enology	0	7	7		
	WAS	Washington Center	0	2	2		
	WFC	Wildlife, Fish, & Conservation Biology	2	7	9		
L&S—Harcs	WMS	Gender, Sexuality, & Womens Studies	6	36	42	Faculty = 6	7

## **GE Writing Experience Literacy**

### **I. Regulations**

Davis Division Regulation 522 sets forth the Baccalaureate Degree Requirements in General Education. Literacy with Words and Images (522.C.1) is a component of Core Literacies and requires 20 units of work in specified categories. A minimum of 6 units of courses that provide writing experience is required; in lieu of an oral skills course, a student may elect to take 3 or more additional units with writing experience.

Regulation 523.C.1 states: “A course providing writing experience promotes the student’s ability to think clearly and communicate effectively about the course material through guided writing assignments completed in stages. Guidance may take the form of class discussions, peer feedback, individual or small group conferences, or written (including online) feedback. Students must be given feedback designed to promote improvement in writing in the course. Feedback may occur in the context of one or more successive, refined submissions of a single assignment, or over a series of multiple assignments.

Students receive the current version of the handout on plagiarism from the Office of Student Support and Judicial Affairs. Grading criteria are articulated in advance of the due date. The writing is evaluated for content, clarity, organization, and logic. A 1-unit course requires a minimum of 5 pages of writing; a course of 2 or more units requires a minimum of 10 pages, possibly in a series of staged tasks or shorter assignments. Approval may be sought for shorter assignments that total fewer than 5 or 10 pages when they are appropriate and clearly justified.”

### **II. Interpretation**

The objective of Writing Experience Literacy is to ensure that all students become proficient writers across a range of academic and real-world contexts. Courses that meet the writing literacy must place significant emphasis on developing a complex written work within a given academic discipline. As important as the page quantities specified below is the integration of writing assignments that progressively develop critical thinking and that model effective writing strategies such as transferring feedback on one piece of writing to the next; developing a longer work through a series of shorter pieces; or drafting, getting feedback, and revising.

Departments and programs are encouraged to incorporate writing experience units within existing courses and to develop courses that emphasize the department’s or program’s distinctive disciplinary uses of formal writing.

### **Minimum Elements Checklist**

#### **Courses in the Writing Experience Literacy must:**

ME1) Demonstrate that writing is a central component of the course.

ME2) Show that students are trained in the writing conventions of the relevant discipline.

ME3) Assure that model texts are provided and discussed.

ME4) Demonstrate that the 5/10 page (1500/3000 words) writing assignment(s) requirement is met.

ME5) Provide specific demonstration and explanation of the evaluation criteria.

ME6) Demonstrate that individual feedback from qualified personnel is integrated into the course in a manner designed to promote improvement.

ME7) Show that guidance on plagiarism is provided.

ME8) Demonstrate that the learning objectives of the literacy are an integral part of the class.

### **III. ICMS Submission requirements**

The Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI) evaluates whether the course proposal satisfies the minimum elements checklist above. COCI uses the information provided in the answers to the General Education literacy justification questions and the Expanded Course Description. Departments requesting that a course be approved for this GE literacy must answer the following questions in the Integrated Curriculum Management System (ICMS).

For this literacy, COCI evaluates the minimum elements as follows:

- ME1: ICMS literacy question 1 and the Expanded Course Description
  - ME2: ICMS literacy question 1 and the Expanded Course Description
  - ME3: Expanded Course Description
  - ME4: ICMS literacy question 1
  - ME5: ICMS literacy question 2
  - ME6: ICMS literacy question 3
  - ME7: ICMS literacy question 2
  - ME8: Expanded Course Description
1. Briefly describe the requirements for written assignments by each student in the course, including the total number of assignments and the nature and expected length of each assignment.
  2. Briefly describe the grading criteria that will be provided to students (along with the current version of the handout on plagiarism from the Office of Student Support and Judicial Affairs) in advance of the due date.
  3. Briefly describe how students will be given feedback designed to promote improvement in writing in the course.



4. How will the instructors assess student competency in this GE literacy?

Departments may leave the “ICMS Justification” field blank, or use it to provide any additional information about the GE literacy for this course that may be helpful as COCI reviews the request.

## **Proposal for Multiple Pathways for Satisfying the Entry-Level Writing Requirement at UC Davis**

### **Executive Summary**

The following proposal by the L&S English Language and Literacy Committee argues that the remedial writing course currently outsourced to Sacramento City College and known as Workload 57 (WLD 57) be replaced by an in-house UCD-provided model that emphasizes mainstreaming plus supplemental instruction. UC Davis is the only remaining UC campus that outsources remediation, and data show that students who take Workload 57 fail at a high rate (15-25% in most sections) and experience a curriculum that is at odds with the writing instruction in lower-division UWP, ENL, NAS, and COM courses. We argue for a mainstreaming alternative to Workload 57 that is based on current best practices in the field of Basic Writing and has the support of the Entry-Level Writing (ELWR) Director and the departments and programs that offer the courses that meet the lower-division writing requirement: Comparative Literature, the English Department, Native American Studies, and the University Writing Program. Both the 2016-17 English Language and Literacy Committee and the 2016-17 L&S FEC voted unanimously in favor of discontinuing outsourcing to Sacramento City College.

We propose a multiple pathways approach focused on supplemental instruction that would offer students who score a six or below on the Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE) multiple options for getting the support they need to succeed in lower-division writing, without labeling them remedial and placing them in an outsourced non-credit bearing course. This move away from non-credit bearing remedial courses has already been adopted by other UCs and the entire CSU system, as well as by institutions across the U.S., and is supported by several decades of research. The multiple pathways approach will improve ELWR writing pedagogy, will improve the sequencing and continuity of lower-division writing courses, will decrease time to degree, and will be equivalent in cost to Workload 57. Implementing the multiple pathways approach will move UC Davis from an institution that is behind the curve in Basic Writing instruction in the UC and nationwide to a leader and innovator.

### **Background**

The Entry-Level Writing Requirement (ELWR) is a UC System-wide requirement that is supposed to be satisfied prior to matriculation at a UC campus. There are several ways to satisfy the ELWR prior to matriculation, including minimum scores on SAT or ACT exams, or minimum scores in AP English or International Baccalaureate classes [<http://elw.ucdavis.edu/>]. Students can also transfer credit of an equivalent course from another university or community college. However, the most common method for satisfying the ELWR is through the Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE) offered by UCOP [ <http://www.ucop.edu/elwr/>]. The AWPE

is a timed writing exam in the five-paragraph (1000 word) essay format which tests the ability of high school seniors to analyze a passage and respond to that passage via an essay question prompt.

A student can matriculate to a UC campus without having satisfied the ELWR but must satisfy the requirement within 3 academic quarters of arrival [Davis Division Regulation 521.D]. In such cases, individual campuses are given significant autonomy as to the details of implementation of Systemwide Senate Regulation 636.C and 761.B. There are three options used by UCD students to satisfy ELWR after matriculation: Workload 57, UC Online 39A, and disenrollment to register at a community college and take an equivalent course [Davis Division regulation 521.C]. The latter two avenues are extremely rarely employed, and the focus of this proposal is the first option, the course Workload 57 offered in three different forms: 57S (ESL--English as a Second Language) section with student cap of 18; 57P (EOP--Educational Opportunity Program) section with student cap of 18; 57E (no designation) section with student cap of 25.

In the early 1990s, primarily for budgetary reasons, the UCD's version of the ELWR-satisfying course (then known as English A) was outsourced to a local community college, Sacramento City College (SCC). Under a contractual arrangement with the UCD Provost's office, SCC offers over 100 sections per year of its course, known as Workload 57, to UCD students who have not yet satisfied the ELWR upon admission to the UC. SCC controls the curriculum, including final assessments of students, as well as hiring and supervision of instructors, who are employed by SCC.

Until recently, UC San Diego also had outsourced its ELWR-satisfying course to a local community college. However, due to problems and dissatisfaction with how the course was implemented, UCSD brought the course back onto their own campus, beginning in the 2015-16 academic year. Thus, UCD is now the only campus in the UC system that outsources its own students for the ELWR-satisfying course.

## **Rationale for Bringing Entry-Level Writing Back to UC Davis**

### *Retention and Progress to Degree Issues*

There are significant problems with Workload 57: from the pedagogical perspective, for the morale of the students, for the students' time to degree, and for the additional cost to UCD.

- Student failure rates are significantly higher in Workload 57 than in ESL courses (UWP 21-23) and UWP 1. Fifteen to twenty-five percent of Workload 57 students typically fail the course, and in some sections the failure rate is 60% or higher.

- A significantly high percentage of students (50-80%) fail the final exam for Workload 57, which is always an old version of the AWPE per UCD Senate Regulation 521D that mandates that the final exam be the AWPE. Requiring AWPE as a final exam in an ELW course is unique to UCD; other UC campuses use the AWPE as a placement exam as it was originally intended. High failure rates on the AWPE final exam in Workload 57 indicate that the curriculum and instruction offered in the course are not in alignment with this assessment practice.
- Workload 57 instructors are told by SCC leadership that they (and their students) should consider Workload 57 to be a “three-quarter course” (i.e., many/most students should expect to repeat the course several times).
- In ESL sections of WLD 57 (WLD 57S) there are systematic, interannual differences in pass rates depending solely on the course instructor. These differences cannot be attributed to random variation in the student population since they are averaged over several sections. Some instructors yield mean GPAs of as low as 1.0.
- Student grades are also significantly lower in Workload 57S sections than in UCD ESL courses (UWP 21-23) and UWP 1. In many Workload 57 courses no students receive above a “C” grade.

This disparity in grading between the SCC course and UCD courses suggests that the programs are not well aligned, and it certainly sends a demoralizing message to students at the beginning of their college years.

In addition, UC Davis students who place into the ESL sequence (UWP 21-23) currently need to complete up to four courses to satisfy the Entry Level Writing Requirement, while most UCs have a two- or three-course sequence that allows ESL students to complete the ELWR. UC Davis ESL students begin their university careers with a credit-bearing writing course(s) at UC Davis (as all of UWP 21, 22, 23 are) and are then required to take a *non-credit bearing* course outside of the university in order to complete the ELWR via WLD 57 at SCC. We have begun to call this the curricular “doughnut hole” with which many international students have to contend, and it creates a further lack of continuity in their writing education.

If the purpose of a course like Workload 57 is to provide support and instruction for students who have been identified as needing some extra time and support to succeed in their academic literacy tasks—rather than as a gatekeeping function to screen out students who have already been accepted to UC Davis—the higher failure rate in the SCC course and the burden created by excessive course requirements are unreasonable and harmful to students.

### *Structural and Curricular Issues*

It is time to bring Workload 57 writing instruction back under the oversight of UCD academic units and faculty offering lower-division writing instruction. UCD currently provides our students with robust lower division writing education (to satisfy the University Writing Requirement) for our students via collaboration between UWP, English, Comparative Literature, and Native American Studies. These writing education stakeholders at UCD can create a seamless and sequenced writing program that is informed by modern best practices in the teaching of reading and writing, bringing greater coherence to our lower division writing education across units at UCD. Indeed, while the lower division writing curriculum at UCD has been regularly updated to reflect research-based changes in national best practices in writing instruction, the Workload 57 curriculum has, by contrast, stayed static for over twenty years. Because the current curriculum of Workload 57 and its instructors are overseen by SCC, we are unable to pilot innovations in sequencing writing instruction for underprepared students that have been in existence at other UCs and other institutions across the country for decades.

In addition, the curriculum of Workload 57 does not align with the curriculum in UWP ESL courses and lower-division writing requirement courses, creating a curricular “doughnut hole.” Workload 57 curriculum focuses on timed writing and the outdated five-paragraph theme, but the curriculum of ESL courses and lower-division writing courses focuses on developing an effective writing process, becoming rhetorically aware, engaging with complex academic readings, integrating secondary research, and writing sophisticated academic genres.

UCD students taking entry level writing courses, arguably the most in need of high quality writing instruction, also deserve our collective attention. It is time to bring this final piece of undergraduate writing instruction back under the oversight of UCD academic units and faculty offering lower-division writing instruction.

### *Student and Labor Equity Issues*

Our current approach to Workload 57 disregards WASC recommendations against the outsourcing of teaching. UC Davis is now the only UC campus that outsources writing instruction for underprepared writers. It is time to ask why UC Davis, alone among UC writing programs, outsources its own new students who find themselves enrolled in a non-credit bearing community college course that typically thwarts their progress toward a degree. Outsourcing our college writing courses to a community college may send a discouraging message to students that we don’t think they’re good enough to take UC Davis classes and that we don’t believe in their ability to succeed.

In addition to student equity issues, outsourcing Workload 57 to a community college has created labor equity issues for instructors. None of the Workload 57 instructors have an office on the UCD campus, and as contingent faculty at a community college, they lack the job security of UC Davis lecturers. Most instructors teaching the ESL sections of Workload 57 lack a degree or certificate in teaching ESL, whereas all UWP ESL teachers have at minimum a Master's degree in teaching ESL or applied linguistics. There is also no quality assurance of instructors teaching non-ESL Workload 57 courses, as UC Davis has no oversight over hiring. The adverse labor conditions also result in few professionalization opportunities for the Workload 57 faculty, who are currently working with curricula developed in 1993 that do not reflect current research-based practices in writing studies.

## Implementation of the Multiple Pathways Approach

National best practices have moved away from non-credit bearing remedial courses to accelerated models such as mainstreaming with supplemental instruction: that is, with a regular course augmented by a co-course that offers intensive help. Research has shown that these models improve retention, time to degree, and student writing performance. Grego and Thompson (1995) report that replacing a remedial course with a small-group writing workshop co-course resulted in a 94-96% First-Year Composition pass rate at the University of South Carolina. Rigolino and Feel (2007) implemented a co-course at SUNY New Paltz that resulted in pass rates for students enrolled in the co-course equaling the pass rates for mainstream students at 91%. Davila and Elder (2017) report that students enrolled in a co-course passed first-year composition at an average rate of 90%. Rodby and Fox (2000) describe the implementation of a similar co-course at CSU Chico which resulted in an 87-88% pass rate. An assessment of the co-course at CSU Sacramento indicated pass rates similar to Chico's.

The following plan for addressing the curricular and ethical issues raised by the outsourcing of Workload 57: 1) eliminates outsourcing without eliminating support for underprepared students, 2) offers students a more equitable and cohesive first-year writing experience, and 3) brings UCD writing placement and curriculum into alignment with national best practices based on scholarly research and the practices of other UCs and the CSU.

The new model for ELWR at UCD offers students three ways to fulfill ELWR via placement mechanisms listed below:

### 1. AWPE-Placed Student Pathway

- a) Students who pass the AWPE satisfy ELWR and take one of the courses that satisfy the Lower-Division Writing Requirement (UWP 1/NAS 5/ENL 3/COMP 1-4).
- b) Students who fail the AWPE *place into one of two options* based upon AWPE scores:

- 1) Students scoring a combined score of 4 or lower on the AWPE will be advised to enroll in a new **UCD ELW course (UWP7) or to enroll in the UC online writing course 39A to fulfill the ELWR**, followed by one of the courses that satisfy the Lower-Division Writing Requirement.
- 2) Students scoring a 5 or 6 will enroll in one of the courses that satisfy the Lower-Division Writing Requirement (UWP 1/NAS 5/ENL 3) + **UWP 1A/NAS 5A/ENL 3A (a 2 unit co-course designed to support underprepared writers in these courses and coordinated by the director of Entry Level Writing)**. UWP 1A/NAS 5A/ENL 3A fulfills the ELWR. Comparative Literature will retain satisfaction of the ELWR as a prerequisite and will not be offering a co-course.

## 2. ELPE-Placed Student Pathway

This pathway requires incoming students whose first language isn't English to take the English Language Placement Exam (ELPE) and be placed into UWP 21, 22, or 23<sup>[1]</sup> as follows:

- 70 and below into UWP 21
- 74-80 into UWP 22
- 84 and above into UWP 23

UWP 23 curriculum will be revised to more fully articulate with other lower-division writing courses that follow (UWP 1/NAS 5/ENL 3/COMP 1-4). Students successfully completing UWP 23 with a grade of B or higher will satisfy ELWR and go into a lower-division courses (UWP 1/NAS 5/ENL 3/COMP 1-4). Students who complete UWP 23 with a grade of B- to C- will be required to enroll in a co-course (UWP 1A/NAS 5A/ENL 3A) to fulfill the Lower Division Writing Requirement (LDWR).

The co-courses will be taught by a mix of lecturers and graduate students who have received training by the ELWR director in basic writing pedagogy. Preferences will be given to graduate students who have taught UWP1, but graduate students from any discipline may apply. The focus of the co-courses will be development of writing and revision strategies, with feedback from peers and the instructor with weekly instruction on a variety of writing topics and individualized feedback.

A regulation change would need to be made to implement the Multiple Pathways approach.

## Multiple Pathway Approach Benefits

- All courses fulfilling ELWR enact best practices in writing studies, grounded in evidence-based outcomes. This will enhance student learning, retention rates, and preparation levels for writing across the curriculum.

- Students engaged in the ELW program move through a coherent, vertical writing curriculum via coordination of the component courses/co-courses by the associate director of ELW.
- Students earn credit for all writing courses they successfully complete.
- Faculty teaching international students as they fulfill the ELWR are specialists in teaching ESL students.
- Faculty teaching the four-unit ELWR course are specialists in composition and basic writing.
- ESL students move through a strategic sequence of UCD courses (UWP 21/22/23), fulfilling the ELWR with a maximum of three courses rather than four.
- Advising of students (and therefore the success of students) who need to complete ELWR becomes more streamlined.

## Financial and Contractual Implications

The proposed multiple pathways model will not only give students better quality instruction and more ethical options but will also be equivalent in cost to Workload 57. With the assistance of Ian Blake in the SSH Dean's Office we created financial estimates, which are in the appendix of this proposal. The current contract with SCC is up for renewal in March of 2018. Based on the terms of the current contract, as long as UC Davis notifies SCC that we intend to change the contract by March 1st, 2018, and then that we submit a notice of termination to SCC by March 31, the existing contract will be modified as of July 1, 2018.

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## English Language and Literacy Committee Response to L&S FEC Questions

*Do we have the resources in place to take over administration of the entire ELWR?*



We feel that most of the resources to administer this proposed change to the ELWR are currently in place. Within the University Writing Program, we have three Senate faculty directors with release time for administering the Writing Programs that involve this proposal: an ELWR director, and ESL director, and a UWP 1 director. Each of these directors has a Federation faculty assistant director with release time (including four assistant directors for ESL), as well as graduate student administrative assistants. The UWP has a full-time staff person dedicated to ELWR, a full-time staff person dedicated to ESL, and a full-time staff person for the UWP in general. The UWP also has a practicum course in place for UWP1 teachers, UWP392, and we could create an additional section of UWP392 for ELWR co-course teachers. ENL 393 is a practicum course for ENL 3 and it will also cover the co-course ENL 3A. Instructors of NAS 5+5A will also take one of these practicum courses. We also have an L&S Committee, English Language and Literacies, that meets regularly to coordinate efforts among the departments and programs involved in lower-division writing. The primary additional resources we are asking for is: 1) a 50% administrative assistant for ELW and 2) support for a second assistant director of ELW tasks specifically with assisting the ELW director to coordinate A co-courses across units.

*Do we have the faculty needed to staff the new ELWR course and co-courses?*

Because the 4-unit ELWR course will target students who most need the help (students scoring a 4 or below on the AWPE), we will only need 5-7 sections of 4-unit ELW courses each academic year. The majority of the courses that need to be staffed will be the A co-courses (UWP 1A, ENG 3A, NAS 5A), and we plan to staff the co-courses primarily with graduate students (following the model that is most typically used by other institutions that have developed a supplemental instruction co-course model). We currently have a large cadre of graduate students who have taken UWP 390, the teaching college writing seminar that prepares graduate students to teach UWP 1. These graduate students are in English, the WRACs Education PhD program, and NAS. Other departments might also be interested in providing this opportunity to teach for their graduate students (for example, Education or Linguistics). We are sensitive to the concern that we don't want to overload graduate students, and so we will try to spread out the teaching of the A co-courses among many graduate students. We are also planning on the possibility of a blended model, with some of the A co-courses taught by lecturers. This proposal could potentially necessitate additional office space in the various departments/units to accommodate a handful of additional graduate students teaching A (co-) courses. However, it is also possible that most of these sections will be taught by graduate students who already have office space due to their other teaching assignments.

*Can we be certain that the budget projections are accurate?*

While we are confident that our replacement proposal is at worst cost-neutral compared with the current outsourcing model, we met with Associate Dean Ian Blake to review the budget

projections, and we plan to continue to work closely with him and with Dean Spiller and the UWP CAO, Darla Tafoya, to be as precise and realistic as possible. We anticipate that more support for students will be necessary during the first year of the multiple pathways approach; resources and support will likely be slightly adjusted after the first year to reflect student need.

*Can we have these changes ready for Fall 18?*

We have all the needed administration, staff, and teachers in place to implement this revised ELWR model. We also have examples of similar supplemental instruction models at other institutions, so we don't need to reinvent the wheel regarding curriculum or training. The biggest timeline challenge will be approval of the two new types of ELWR courses (the 4 unit ELWR course and the A co-course) in time for Fall 18. The UWP 7 and UWP 1A course proposals as well as the ENG 3A proposal were submitted at the end of Fall 2017. The NAS 5A course proposal was submitted in January 2018.

*What if the new model turns out not to be a success?*

Because of the published data from institutions that have implemented the co-course model over many decades, we are confident that this model will be an improvement over our current model, which has created a curricular doughnut hole in our sequence and has resulted in failure rates that are far too high for a preparatory course meant to help students make the transition to college writing and not a gatekeeping course meant to weed students out. However, we plan to track students' performance in the new model and assess the multiple pathways approach, making adjustments if needed. Because SCC controls the hiring and curriculum for Workload 57, it is very difficult to make adjustments to the current ELWR, even though we know there are deep problems. The revised ELWR will be under the control of UC Davis faculty, it will be assessed by the Academic Senate, and we will be able to make revisions to the program much more easily than we can now. If needed, we could adjust the AWPE placement numbers and/or the advising we give students if we feel that more students need to take the 4-unit course, and we could also adjust the curriculum in the A co-courses if we feel, for example, that students need more one-on-one help.

## Appendix: Financial Estimates of the Multiple Pathways Proposal

Following is a brief narrative outlining how the multiple pathways model can be offered at little additional cost, with an illustrative table based upon 2016-17 costs.

**1. Eliminating need for WLD 57S sections.** The biggest savings come from eliminating the need for Workload 57S (ESL) sections. Because of the surcharge for international students, UCD

pays SCC **\$14,700 per section of WLD 57S**. This is **more** than it would cost for a UCD lecturer or graduate student to teach the same course! It is also more than four times what it costs for SCC to offer a section of WLD 57E (general population) or WLD 57P (for EOP students).

As noted above, we propose that instead of these extremely expensive WLD 57S sections, ESL students take a revised version of UWP 23 that will satisfy the ELWR. In this way, international students also receive their ELWR instruction from trained ESL professionals, which is not the case in WLD 57S.

**2. Reducing need for other ELWR sections (i.e., current Workload 57E and 57P).** Only about 6% of students taking the AWPE receive scores of 4 or lower, meaning that the number of students required/strongly advised to take a stand-alone 4-unit ELWR course offered by UCD could be drastically reduced. Our proposal recommends that students who receive scores higher than 4 on the AWPE be offered the opportunity to take one of three of the courses that satisfy the Lower-Division Writing Requirement (UWP 1, ENL 3, NAS 5) simultaneously with a supporting 2 unit A co-course satisfying ELWR. These A co-courses would be cheaper than separate 4-unit ELWR courses. Data from other universities who have adopted this model suggest that it works: As a recent local illustration, California State University, Sacramento changed its program a few years ago from a remedial course sequence to mainstreaming with adjunct support, and found that 60-70% of students who would have previously been required to take a remedial writing course self-placed into the mainstream composition course with a one-unit co-course and **achieved the same success rates in the mainstream composition course as the students who were not required to take additional writing support** (i.e., in our context, students in first-year composition who satisfied ELWR prior to matriculation).

**3. Reducing administrative costs.** Additional savings will be realized from **eliminating the \$111,000 annually paid to SCC to administer the program**. The UWP already has a full-time staff person, a Senate faculty member, and a unit 18 lecturer dedicated to administering the ELWR. They will be able to administer the revised ELWR program with some additional funding in the form of a 50% administrative assistant position and a course equivalency for an additional Federation lecturer.

**4. Reducing cost created by excessively high student failure rates.** We expect that with the combination of a better coordinated and designed ELWR program and better qualified instructors, the excessively high failure rate now seen in WLD 57 (15-25%) will drop substantially. When UCSD brought their ELWR program in-house in 2015, they found that the previous community college failure rate of as high as 79% in 2012 dropped to 6% by spring 2017 once the course was redesigned and staffed by UCSD faculty.

The numbers in the table below are based on WLD 57 sections offered during the 2016-17 academic year. They compare the current cost of WLD 57S sections with the projected cost of the multiple-pathway model described in this document.

### Cost Models

<b>SCC WLD 57 Model (based upon 2016-2017 data)</b>	2016-2017 payment to SCC = <b>\$899,304.18<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>UCD Multiple ELWR Pathway Model</b>	

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<sup>1</sup> Cost reflects use of adjunct quarterly professors as 94% of WLD 57 teaching staff. Two full time, tenured faculty from SCC's English department participate in the program: one as an instructor and one as a coordinator of the SCC course.

Recurring yearly programmatic cost	
1) 0.5 FTE administrative support	1) \$40,000
2) Course release for assistant director	2) \$12,000
Recurring instructional cost (three possible models)	
1) 80% Lecturer + 20% AI	1) \$959,909
2) 20% Lecturer + 80% AI	2) \$990,342
3) 50% Lecturer + 50% AI	3) \$975,125
One time costs (outfitting spaces for instructors, etc.)	\$40,000
Total Projected Recurring Yearly Cost to UCD	\$1,011,909 -- \$1,042,342
Projected difference in yearly cost to UCD to fund the ELW multiple pathways	\$112,604.85 -- \$143,037.82

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## CAPSTONE RUBRIC

### Rubric for Using Capstone Experiences to Assess Program Learning Outcomes

Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
Relevant Outcomes and Lines of Evidence Identified	It is not clear which program outcomes will be assessed in the capstone course.	The relevant outcomes are identified, e.g., ability to integrate knowledge to solve complex problems; however, concrete plans for collecting evidence for each outcome have not been developed.	Relevant outcomes are identified. Concrete plans for collecting evidence for each outcome are agreed upon and used routinely by faculty who teach the capstone course.	Relevant evidence is collected; faculty has agreed on explicit criteria statements, e.g., rubrics, and has identified examples of student performance at varying levels of mastery for each relevant outcome.
Valid Results	It is not clear that potentially valid evidence for each relevant outcome is collected and/or individual faculty use idiosyncratic criteria to assess student work or performances.	Faculty has reached general agreement on the types of evidence to be collected for each outcome; they have discussed relevant criteria for assessing each outcome but these are not yet fully defined.	Faculty has agreed on concrete plans for collecting relevant evidence for each outcome. Explicit criteria, e.g., rubrics have been developed to assess the level of student attainment of each outcome.	Assessment criteria, such as rubrics, have been pilot-tested and refined over time; they are usually shared with students. Feedback from external reviewers has led to refinements in the assessment process, and the department uses external benchmarking data.
Reliable Results	Those who review student work are not calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way; there are no checks for inter-rater reliability.	Reviewers are calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way <u>or</u> faculty routinely check for inter-rater reliability.	Reviewers are calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way, <u>and</u> faculty routinely check for inter-rater reliability.	Reviewers are calibrated, and faculty routinely finds assessment data have high inter-rater reliability.
Results Are Used	Results for each outcome may or may not be collected. They are not discussed among faculty.	Results for each outcome are collected and may be discussed by the faculty, but results have not been used to improve the program.	Results for each outcome are collected, discussed by faculty, analyzed, and used to improve the program.	Faculty routinely discusses results, plan needed changes, secure necessary resources, and implement changes. They may collaborate with others, such as librarians or Student Affairs professionals, to improve results. Follow-up studies confirm that changes have improved learning.
The Student Experience	Students know little or nothing about the purpose of the capstone or outcomes to be assessed. It is just another course or requirement.	Students have some knowledge of the purpose and outcomes of the capstone. Communication is occasional, informal, and left to individual faculty or advisors.	Students have a good grasp of purpose and outcomes of the capstone and embrace it as a learning opportunity. Information is readily available in advising guides, etc.	Students are well-acquainted with the purpose and outcomes of the capstone and embrace it. They may participate in refining the experience, outcomes, and rubrics. Information is readily available.

## Guidelines for Using the Capstone Rubric

A capstone is a culminating course or experience that requires review, synthesis and application of what has been learned. For the fullest picture of an institution's accomplishments, reviews of written materials should be augmented with interviews at the time of the visit.

### *Dimensions of the Rubric:*

1. **Relevant Outcomes and Evidence.** It is likely that not all program learning outcomes can be assessed within a single capstone course or experience.  
Questions: Have faculty explicitly determined which program outcomes will be assessed in the capstone? Have they agreed on concrete plans for collecting evidence relevant to each targeted outcome? Have they agreed on explicit criteria, such as rubrics, for assessing the evidence? Have they identified examples of student performance for each outcome at varying performance levels (e.g., below expectations, meeting expectations, exceeding expectations for graduation)?
2. **Valid Results.** A valid assessment of a particular outcome leads to accurate conclusions concerning students' achievement of that outcome. Sometimes faculty collects evidence that does not have the potential to provide valid conclusions. For example, a multiple-choice test will not provide evidence of students' ability to deliver effective oral presentations. Assessment requires the collection of valid evidence and judgments about that evidence that are based on well-established, agreed-upon criteria that specify how to identify low, medium, or high-quality work.  
Questions: Are faculty collecting valid evidence for each targeted outcome? Are they using well-established, agreed-upon criteria, such as rubrics, for assessing the evidence for each outcome? Have faculty pilot tested and refined their process based on experience and feedback from external reviewers? Are they sharing the criteria with their students? Are they using benchmarking (comparison) data?
3. **Reliable Results.** Well-qualified judges should reach the same conclusions about a student's achievement of a learning outcome, demonstrating inter-rater reliability. If two judges independently assess a set of materials, their ratings can be correlated and discrepancy between their scores can be examined. Data are reliable if the correlation is high and/or if discrepancies are small. Raters generally are calibrated ("normed") to increase reliability. Calibration usually involves a training session in which raters apply rubrics to preselected examples of student work that vary in quality, then reach consensus about the rating each example should receive. The purpose is to ensure that all raters apply the criteria in the same way so that each student's product would receive the same score, regardless of rater.  
Questions: Are reviewers calibrated? Are checks for inter-rater reliability made? Is there evidence of high inter-rater reliability?
4. **Results Are Used.** Assessment is a process designed to monitor and improve learning, so assessment findings should have an impact. Faculty can reflect on results for each outcome and decide if they are acceptable or disappointing. If results do not meet faculty standards, faculty can determine which changes should be made, e.g., in pedagogy, curriculum, student support, or faculty support.  
Questions: Do faculty collect assessment results, discuss them, and reach conclusions about student achievement? Do they develop explicit plans to improve student learning? Do they implement those plans? Do they have a history of securing necessary resources to support this implementation? Do they collaborate with other institution professionals to improve student learning? Do follow-up studies confirm that changes have improved learning?
5. **The Student Experience.** Students should understand the purposes different educational experiences serve in promoting their learning and development and know how to take advantage of them; ideally they can also participate in shaping those experiences.  
Questions: Are purposes and outcomes communicated to students? Do they understand how capstones support learning? Do they participate in reviews of the capstone experience, its outcomes, criteria, or related activities?

## GENERAL EDUCATION RUBRIC

### Rubric for Evaluating General Education Assessment Process

Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
GE Outcomes	GE learning outcomes have not yet been developed for the entire GE program; there may be one or two common ones, e.g., writing, critical thinking.	Learning outcomes have been developed for the entire GE program, but list is problematic (e.g. too long, too short, unconnected to mission and non-assessable values.)	Outcomes are well organized, assessable, and focus on the most important knowledge, skill, and values of GE. Work to define levels of performance is beginning.	Outcomes are reasonable, appropriate, and assessable. Explicit criteria, such as rubrics, are available for assessing student learning. Exemplars or student performance are specified at varying levels for each outcome.
Curriculum Alignment with Outcomes	No clear relationship between the outcomes and the GE curriculum. Students may not have opportunity to develop each outcome adequately.	Students appear to have opportunities to develop each outcome. Curriculum map shows opportunities to acquire outcomes. Sequencing and frequency of opportunities may be problematic.	Curriculum is explicitly designed to provide opportunities for students to develop increasing sophistication re each outcome. Curriculum map shows "beginning," "intermediate," and "advanced" treatment of outcomes.	Curriculum, pedagogy, grading, advising, are explicitly aligned with GE outcomes. Curriculum map and rubrics are well known and consistently used. Co-curricular viewed as resources for GE learning and aligned with GE outcomes.
Assessment Planning	No formal plan for assessing each GE outcome. No coordinator or committee that takes responsibility for the program or implementation of its assessment plan.	GE assessment relies on short-term planning: selecting which outcome(s) to assess in the current year. Interpretation and use of findings are implicit rather than planned or funded. No individual or committee is in charge.	Campus has a reasonable, multi-year assessment plan that identifies when each outcome will be assessed. Plan addresses use of findings for improvement. A coordinator or committee is charged to oversee assessment.	Campus has a fully articulated, sustainable, multi-year assessment plan that describes when and how each outcome will be assessed. A coordinator or committee leads review and revision of the plan, as needed. Campus uses some form of comparative data (e.g., own past record, aspirational goals, external benchmarking).
Assessment Implementation	Not clear that potentially valid evidence for each GE outcome is collected <u>and/or</u> individual reviewers use idiosyncratic criteria to assess student work.	Appropriate evidence is collected; some discussion of relevant criteria for assessing outcome. Reviewers of student work are calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way, and/or faculty check for inter-rater reliability.	Appropriate evidence is collected; faculty use explicit criteria, such as rubrics, to assess student attainment of each outcome. Reviewers of student work are calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way; faculty routinely checks for inter-rater reliability.	Assessment criteria, such as rubrics, have been pilot-tested and refined and typically shared with students. Reviewers are calibrated with high inter-rater reliability. Comparative data used when interpreting results and deciding on changes for improvement.
Use of Results	Results for GE outcomes are collected, but not discussed Little or no collective use of findings. Students are unaware of and/or uninvolved in the process.	Results are collected and discussed by relevant faculty; results used occasionally to improve the GE program. Students are vaguely aware of outcomes and assessments to improve their learning.	Results for each outcome are collected, discussed by relevant faculty, and regularly used to improve the program. Students are very aware of and engaged in improvement of their learning.	Relevant faculty routinely discusses results, plan improvements, secure necessary resources, and implement changes. They may collaborate with others to improve the program. Follow-up studies confirm that changes have improved learning.



## Guidelines for Using the General Education Rubric

For the fullest picture of an institution's accomplishments, reviews of written materials should be augmented with interviews at the time of the visit. Discussion validates that the reality matches the written record.

### *Dimensions of the Rubric:*

1. **GE Outcomes.** The GE learning outcomes consists of the most important knowledge, skills, and values students learn in the GE program. There is no strict rule concerning the optimum number of outcomes, and quality is more important than quantity. Do not confuse learning processes (e.g., completing a science lab) with learning outcomes (what is learned in the science lab, such as ability to apply the scientific method). Outcome statements specify what students do to demonstrate their learning. Criteria for assessing student work are usually specified in rubrics, and faculty identify examples of varying levels of student performance, such as work that does not meet expectations, that meets expectations and that exceeds expectations.  
Questions: Is the list of outcomes reasonable and appropriate? Do the outcomes express how students can demonstrate learning? Have faculty agreed on explicit criteria, such as rubrics, for assessing each outcome? Do they have exemplars of work representing different levels of mastery for each outcome?
2. **Curriculum Alignment.** Students cannot be held responsible for mastering learning outcomes without a GE program that is explicitly designed to develop those outcomes. This design is often summarized as a curriculum map—a matrix that shows the relationship between courses and learning outcomes. Pedagogy and grading aligned with outcomes help encourage student growth and provide students' feedback on their development. Relevant academic support and student services can also be designed to support development of the learning outcomes, since learning occurs outside of the classroom as well as within it.  
Questions: Is the GE curriculum explicitly aligned with program outcomes? Does faculty select effective pedagogies and use grading to promote learning? Are support services explicitly aligned to promote student development of GE learning outcomes?
3. **Assessment Planning.** Explicit, sustainable plans for assessing each GE outcome need to be developed. Each outcome does not need to be assessed every year, but the plan should cycle through the outcomes over a reasonable period of time, such as the period for program review cycles. Experience and feedback from external reviewers can guide plan revision.  
Questions: Does the campus have a GE assessment plan? Does the plan clarify when, how, and how often each outcome will be assessed? Will all outcomes be assessed over a reasonable period of time? Is the plan sustainable? Supported by appropriate resources? Are plans revised, as needed, based on experience and feedback from external reviewers? Does the plan include collection of comparative data?
4. **Assessment Implementation.** Assessment requires the collection of valid evidence that is based on agreed-upon criteria that identify work that meets or exceeds expectations. These criteria are usually specified in rubrics. Well-qualified judges should reach the same conclusions about a student's achievement of a learning outcome, demonstrating inter-rater reliability. If two judges independently assess a set of materials, their ratings can be correlated and discrepancy between their scores can be examined. Data are reliable if the correlation is high and/or if discrepancies are small. Raters generally are calibrated ("normed") to increase reliability. Calibration usually involves a training session in which raters apply rubrics to preselected examples of student work that vary in quality, then reach consensus about the rating each example should receive. The purpose is to ensure that all raters apply the criteria in the same way so that each student's product would receive the same score, regardless of rater.  
Questions: Do GE assessment studies systematically collect valid evidence for each targeted outcome? Does faculty use agreed-upon criteria such as rubrics for assessing the evidence for each outcome? Do they share the criteria with their students? Are those who assess student work calibrated in the use of assessment criteria? Does the campus routinely document high inter-rater reliability? Do faculty pilot-test and refine their assessment processes? Do they take external benchmarking (comparison) data into account when interpreting results?
5. **Use of Results.** Assessment is a process designed to monitor and improve learning. Faculty can reflect on results for each outcome and decide if they are acceptable or disappointing. If results do not meet faculty standards, faculty (and others, such as student affairs personnel, librarians, and tutors) can determine what changes should be made, e.g., in pedagogy, curriculum, student support, or faculty supports.  
Questions: Do faculty collect assessment results, discuss them, and reach conclusions about student achievement? Do they develop explicit plans to improve student learning? Do they implement those plans? Do they have a history of securing necessary resources to support this implementation? Do they collaborate with other campus professionals to improve student learning? Do follow-up studies confirm that changes have improved learning?

## PORTFOLIOS RUBRIC

### Rubric for Using Portfolios to Assess Program Learning Outcomes

Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
Clarification of Students' Tasks	Instructions to students for portfolio development provide insufficient detail for them to know what faculty expects. Instructions may not identify outcomes to be addressed in the portfolio.	Students receive instructions for their portfolios, but they still have problems determining what is required of them and/or why they are compiling a portfolio.	Students receive instructions that describe faculty expectations in detail and include the purpose of the portfolio, types of evidence to include, role of the reflective essay (if required), and format of the finished product.	Students in the program understand the portfolio requirement and the rationale for it, and they view the portfolio as helping them develop self-assessment skills. Faculty may monitor the developing portfolio to provide formative feedback and/or advise individual students.
Valid Results	It is not clear that valid evidence for each relevant outcome is collected and/or individual reviewers use idiosyncratic criteria to assess student work.	Appropriate evidence is collected for each outcome, and faculty has discussed relevant criteria for assessing each outcome.	Appropriate evidence is collected for each outcome; faculty use explicit criteria, such as agreed-upon rubrics, to assess student attainment of each outcome. Rubrics are usually shared with students.	Assessment criteria, e.g., in the form of rubrics, have been pilot-tested and refined over time; they are shared with students, and students may have helped develop them. Feedback from external reviewers has led to refinements in the assessment process. The department also uses external benchmarking data.
Reliable Results	Those who review student work are not calibrated with each other to apply assessment criteria in the same way, and there are no checks for inter-rater reliability.	Reviewers are calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way or faculty routinely check for inter-rater reliability.	Reviewers are calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way, and faculty routinely check for inter-rater reliability.	Reviewers are calibrated; faculty routinely finds that assessment data have high inter-rater reliability.
If Results Are Used	Results for each outcome are collected, but they are not discussed among the faculty.	Results for each outcome are collected and discussed by the faculty, but results have not been used to improve the program.	Results for each outcome are collected, discussed by faculty, and used to improve the program.	Faculty routinely discusses results, plan needed changes, secure necessary resources, and implement changes. They may collaborate with others, such as librarians or Student Affairs professionals, to improve student learning. Students may also participate in discussions and/or receive feedback, either individual or in the aggregate. Follow-up studies confirm that changes have improved learning.
Technical Support for e-Portfolios	There is no technical support for students or faculty to learn the software or to deal with problems.	There is informal or minimal formal support for students and faculty.	Formal technical support is readily available and technicians proactively assist users in learning the software and solving problems.	Support is readily available, proactive, and effective. Programming changes are made when needed.

## Guidelines for Using the Portfolio Rubric

Portfolios can serve multiple purposes: to build students' confidence by showing development over time; to display students' best work; to better advise students; to provide examples of work students can show to employers; to assess program learning outcomes. This rubric addresses the use of rubrics for assessment. Two common types of portfolios for assessing student learning outcomes are:

- Showcase portfolios – collections of each student's best work
- Developmental portfolios – collections of work from early, middle, and late stages in the student's academic career that demonstrate growth. Faculty generally requires students to include a reflective essay that describes how the evidence in the portfolio demonstrates their achievement of program learning outcomes. Sometimes faculty monitors developing portfolios to provide formative feedback and/or advising to students, and sometimes they collect portfolios only as students near graduation. Portfolio assignments should clarify the purpose of the portfolio, the kinds of evidence to be included, and the format (e.g., paper vs. e-portfolios); and students should view the portfolio as contributing to their personal development.

### *Dimensions of the Rubric:*

1. **Clarification of Students' Task.** Most students have never created a portfolio, and they need explicit guidance.  
Questions: Does the portfolio assignment provide sufficient detail so students understand the purpose, the types of evidence to include, the learning outcomes to address, the role of the reflective essay (if any), and the required format? Do students view the portfolio as contributing to their ability to self-assess? Does faculty use the developing portfolios to assist individual students?
2. **Valid Results.** Sometimes portfolios lack valid evidence for assessing particular outcomes. For example, portfolios may not allow faculty to assess how well students can deliver oral presentations. Judgments about that evidence need to be based on well-established, agreed-upon criteria that specify (usually in rubrics) how to identify work that meets or exceeds expectations.  
Questions: Do the portfolios systematically include valid evidence for each targeted outcome? Is faculty using well-established, agreed-upon criteria, such as rubrics, to assess the evidence for each outcome? Have faculty pilot-tested and refined their process? Are criteria shared with students? Are they collaborating with colleagues at other institutions to secure benchmarking (comparison) data?
3. **Reliable Results.** Well-qualified judges should reach the same conclusions about a student's achievement of a learning outcome, demonstrating inter-rater reliability. If two judges independently assess a set of materials, their ratings can be correlated and discrepancy between their scores can be examined. Data are reliable if the correlation is high and/or if discrepancies are small. Raters generally are calibrated ("normed") to increase reliability. Calibration usually involves a training session in which raters apply rubrics to preselected examples of student work that vary in quality, then reach consensus about the rating each example should receive. The purpose is to ensure that all raters apply the criteria in the same way so that each student's product would receive the same score, regardless of rater.  
Questions: Are reviewers calibrated? Are checks for inter-rater reliability made? Is there evidence of high inter-rater reliability?
4. **Results Are Used.** Assessment is a process designed to monitor and improve learning, so assessment findings should have an impact. Faculty can reflect on results for each outcome and decide if they are acceptable or disappointing. If results do not meet their standards, faculty can determine what changes should be made, e.g., in pedagogy, curriculum, student support, or faculty support.  
Questions: Do faculty collect assessment results, discuss them, and reach conclusions about student achievement? Do they develop explicit plans to improve student learning? Do they implement those plans? Do they have a history of securing necessary resources to support this implementation? Do they collaborate with other institution professionals to improve student learning? Do follow-up studies confirm that changes have improved learning?
5. **Technical Support for e-Portfolios.** Faculty and students alike require support, especially when a new software program is introduced. Lack of support can lead to frustration and failure of the process. Support personnel may also have useful insights into how the portfolio assessment process can be refined.  
Questions: What is the quality and extent of technical support? What is the overall level of faculty and student satisfaction with the technology and support services?

## PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES RUBRIC

### Rubric for Assessing the Quality of Academic Program Learning Outcomes

Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
Comprehensive List	The list of outcomes is problematic: e.g., very incomplete, overly detailed, inappropriate, and disorganized. It may include only discipline-specific learning, ignoring relevant institution-wide learning. The list may confuse learning processes (e.g., doing an internship) with learning outcomes (e.g., application of theory to real-world problems).	The list includes reasonable outcomes but does not specify expectations for the program as a whole. Relevant institution-wide learning outcomes and/or national disciplinary standards may be ignored. Distinctions between expectations for undergraduate and graduate programs may be unclear.	The list is a well-organized set of reasonable outcomes that focus on the key knowledge, skills, and values students learn in the program. It includes relevant institution-wide outcomes (e.g., communication or critical thinking skills). Outcomes are appropriate for the level (undergraduate vs. graduate); national disciplinary standards have been considered.	The list is reasonable, appropriate, and comprehensive, with clear distinctions between undergraduate and graduate expectations, if applicable. National disciplinary standards have been considered. Faculty has agreed on explicit criteria for assessing students' level of mastery of each outcome.
Assessable Outcomes	Outcome statements do not identify what students can do to demonstrate learning. Statements such as "Students understand scientific method" do not specify how understanding can be demonstrated and assessed.	Most of the outcomes indicate how students can demonstrate their learning.	Each outcome describes how students can demonstrate learning, e.g., "Graduates can write reports in APA style" or "Graduates can make original contributions to biological knowledge."	Outcomes describe how students can demonstrate their learning. Faculty has agreed on explicit criteria statements, such as rubrics, and has identified examples of student performance at varying levels for each outcome.
Alignment	There is no clear relationship between the outcomes and the curriculum that students experience.	Students appear to be given reasonable opportunities to develop the outcomes in the required curriculum.	The curriculum is designed to provide opportunities for students to learn and to develop increasing sophistication with respect to each outcome. This design may be summarized in a curriculum map.	Pedagogy, grading, the curriculum, relevant student support services and co-curriculum are explicitly and intentionally aligned with each outcome. Curriculum map indicates increasing levels of proficiency.
Assessment Planning	There is no formal plan for assessing each outcome.	The program relies on short-term planning, such as selecting which outcome(s) to assess in the current year.	The program has a reasonable, multi-year assessment plan that identifies when each outcome will be assessed. The plan may explicitly include analysis and implementation of improvements.	The program has a fully-articulated, sustainable, multi-year assessment plan that describes when and how each outcome will be assessed and how improvements based on findings will be implemented. The plan is routinely examined and revised, as needed.
The Student Experience	Students know little or nothing about the overall outcomes of the program. Communication of outcomes to students, e.g. in syllabi or catalog, is spotty or nonexistent.	Students have some knowledge of program outcomes. Communication is occasional and informal, left to individual faculty or advisors.	Students have a good grasp of program outcomes. They may use them to guide their own learning. Outcomes are included in most syllabi and are readily available in the catalog, on the web page, and elsewhere.	Students are well-acquainted with program outcomes and may participate in the creation and use of rubrics. They are skilled at self-assessing in relation to the outcomes and levels of performance. Program policy calls for inclusion of outcomes in all course syllabi, and they are readily available in other program documents.

### Guidelines on Using the Learning Outcomes Rubric

This rubric is intended to help teams assess the extent to which an institution has developed and assessed program learning outcomes and made improvements based on assessment results. For the fullest picture of an institution's accomplishments, reviews of written materials should be augmented with interviews at the time of the visit.

#### *Dimensions of the Rubric:*

1. **Comprehensive List.** The set of program learning outcomes should be a short but comprehensive list of the most important knowledge, skills, and values students learn in the program. Higher levels of sophistication are expected for graduate program outcomes than for undergraduate program outcomes. There is no strict rule concerning the optimum number of outcomes, but quality is more important than quantity. Learning processes (e.g., completing an internship) should not be confused with learning outcomes (what is learned in the internship, such as application of theory to real-world practice).  
Questions. Is the list reasonable, appropriate and well organized? Are relevant institution-wide outcomes, such as information literacy, included? Are distinctions between undergraduate and graduate outcomes clear? Have national disciplinary standards been considered when developing and refining the outcomes? Are explicit criteria – as defined in a rubric, for example – available for each outcome?
2. **Assessable Outcomes.** Outcome statements specify what students can do to demonstrate their learning. For example, an outcome might state, “Graduates of our program can collaborate effectively to reach a common goal” or “Graduates of our program can design research studies to test theories.” These outcomes are assessable because the quality of collaboration in teams and the quality of student-created research designs can be observed. Criteria for assessing student products or behaviors usually are specified in rubrics that indicate varying levels of student performance (i.e., work that does not meet expectations, meets expectations, and exceeds expectations).  
Questions. Do the outcomes clarify how students can demonstrate learning? Are there agreed upon, explicit criteria, such as rubrics, for assessing each outcome? Are there examples of student work representing different levels of mastery for each outcome?
3. **Alignment.** Students cannot be held responsible for mastering learning outcomes without a curriculum that is designed to develop increasing sophistication with respect to each outcome. This design is often summarized in a curriculum map – a matrix that shows the relationship between courses in the required curriculum and the program's learning outcomes. Pedagogy and grading aligned with outcomes help encourage student growth and provide students feedback on their development.  
Questions. Is the curriculum explicitly aligned with the program outcomes? Do faculty select effective pedagogy and use grading to promote learning? Are student support services and the co-curriculum explicitly aligned to reinforce and promote the development of student learning outcomes?
4. **Assessment Planning.** Programs need not assess every outcome every year, but faculty are expected to have a plan to cycle through the outcomes over a reasonable period of time, such as the timeframe for program review.  
Questions. Does the plan clarify when, how, and how often each outcome will be assessed? Will all outcomes be assessed over a reasonable period of time? Is the plan sustainable, in terms of human, fiscal, and other resources? Are assessment plans revised, as needed?
5. **The Student Experience.** At a minimum, students need to be aware of the learning outcomes of the program(s) in which they are enrolled. Ideally, they could be included as partners in defining and applying the outcomes and the criteria for varying levels of accomplishment.  
Questions: Are the outcomes communicated to students consistently and meaningfully? Do students understand what the outcomes mean and how they can further their own learning? Do students use the outcomes and criteria to self-assess? Do they participate in reviews of outcomes, criteria, curriculum design, or related activities?

## PROGRAM REVIEW RUBRIC

### Rubric for Assessing the Integration of Student Learning Assessment into Program Reviews

Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
Required Elements of the Self-Study	Program faculty may be required to provide a list of program-level student learning outcomes.	Faculty are required to provide the program's student learning outcomes and summarize annual assessment findings.	Faculty are required to provide the program's student learning outcomes, annual assessment studies, findings, and resulting changes. They may be required to submit a plan for the next cycle of assessment studies.	Faculty are required to evaluate the program's student learning outcomes, annual assessment findings, bench-marking results, subsequent changes, and evidence concerning the impact of these changes. They present a plan for the next cycle of assessment studies.
Process of Review	Internal and external reviewers do not address evidence concerning the quality of student learning in the program other than grades.	Internal and external reviewers address indirect and possibly direct evidence of student learning in the program; they do so at the descriptive level, rather than providing an evaluation.	Internal and external reviewers analyze direct and indirect evidence of student learning in the program and offer evaluative feedback and suggestions for improvement. They have sufficient expertise to evaluate program efforts. Departments use the feedback to improve their work.	Well-qualified internal and external reviewers evaluate the program's learning outcomes, assessment plan, evidence, benchmarking results, and assessment impact. They give evaluative feedback and suggestions for improvement. The department uses the feedback to improve student learning.
Planning and Budgeting	The campus has not integrated program reviews into planning and budgeting processes.	The campus has attempted to integrate program reviews into planning and budgeting processes, but with limited success.	The campus generally integrates program reviews into planning and budgeting processes, but not through a formal process.	The campus systematically integrates program reviews into planning and budgeting processes, e.g., through negotiating formal action plans with mutually agreed-upon commitments.
Annual Feedback on Assessment Efforts	No individual or committee on campus provides feedback to departments on the quality of their outcomes, assessment plans, assessment studies, impact, etc.	An individual or committee occasionally provides feedback on the quality of outcomes, assessment plans, assessment studies, etc.	A well-qualified individual or committee provides annual feedback on the quality of outcomes, assessment plans, assessment studies, etc. Departments use the feedback to improve their work.	A well-qualified individual or committee provides annual feedback on the quality of outcomes, assessment plans, assessment studies, benchmarking results, and assessment impact. Departments effectively use the feedback to improve student learning. Follow-up activities enjoy institutional support
The Student Experience	Students are unaware of and uninvolved in program review.	Program review may include focus groups or conversations with students to follow up on results of surveys	The internal and external reviewers examine samples of student work, e.g., sample papers, portfolios, and capstone projects. Students may be invited to discuss what they learned and how they learned it.	Students are respected partners in the program review process. They may offer poster sessions on their work, demonstrate how they apply rubrics to self-assess, and/or provide their own evaluative feedback.

### Guidelines for Using the Program Review Rubric

For the fullest picture of an institution's accomplishments, reviews of written materials should be augmented with interviews at the time of the visit.

#### *Dimensions of the Rubric:*

1. **Self-Study Requirements.** The campus should have explicit requirements for the program's self-study, including an analysis of the program's learning outcomes and a review of the annual assessment studies conducted since the last program review. Faculty preparing the self-study can reflect on the accumulating results and their impact, and plan for the next cycle of assessment studies. As much as possible, programs can benchmark findings against similar programs on other campuses.  
Questions: Does the campus require self-studies that include an analysis of the program's learning outcomes, assessment studies, assessment results, benchmarking results, and assessment impact, including the impact of changes made in response to earlier studies? Does the campus require an updated assessment plan for the subsequent years before the next program review?
2. **Self-Study Review.** Internal reviewers (on-campus individuals) and external reviewers (off-campus individuals, usually disciplinary experts) evaluate the program's learning outcomes, assessment plan, assessment evidence, benchmarking results, and assessment impact; and they provide evaluative feedback and suggestions for improvement.  
Questions: Who reviews the self-studies? Do they have the training or expertise to provide effective feedback? Do they routinely evaluate the program's learning outcomes, assessment plan, assessment evidence, benchmarking results, and assessment impact? Do they provide suggestions for improvement? Do departments effectively use this feedback to improve student learning?
3. **Planning and Budgeting.** Program reviews are not be *pro forma* exercises; they should be tied to planning and budgeting processes, with expectations that increased support will lead to increased effectiveness, such as improving student learning and retention rates.  
Questions: Does the campus systematically integrate program reviews into planning and budgeting processes? Are expectations established for the impact of planned changes?
4. **Annual Feedback on Assessment Efforts.** Institutions often find considerable variation in the quality of assessment efforts across programs. While program reviews encourage departments to reflect on multi-year assessment results, some programs are likely to require more immediate feedback, usually based on a required annual assessment report. This feedback might be provided by an assessment director or committee, relevant dean or others; and whoever has this responsibility should have the expertise to provide quality feedback.  
Questions: Does someone or a committee have the responsibility for providing annual feedback on the assessment process? Does this person or team have the expertise to provide effective feedback? Does this person or team routinely provide feedback on the quality of outcomes, assessment plans, assessment studies, benchmarking results, and assessment impact? Do departments effectively use this feedback to improve student learning?
5. **The Student Experience.** Students have a unique perspective on a given program of study: they know better than anyone what it means to go through it as a student. Program review can take advantage of that perspective and build it into the review.  
Questions: Are students aware of the purpose and value of program review? Are they involved in preparations and the self-study? Do they have an opportunity to interact with internal or external reviewers, demonstrate and interpret their learning, and provide evaluative feedback?