

Approved by the Academic Senate May 20, 2010

Action Item One: **The Academic Senate approves the proposed revision to “Policy D16.0 Institute Writing Policy”.**

**Proposed Revision:**

**D16.0 Institute Writing Policy**

A. Tenets

The Writing Policy is informed by these basic tenets:

- Writing practice and instruction fosters higher order thinking and cultivates critical intellectual processes such as analyzing ideas, solving problems, and evaluating claims.
- Writing is a complex activity that must be continually adapted to the particular needs of disciplinary and multi-disciplinary contexts.
- Writing competencies are essential for graduates to secure jobs, advance in their given professions, and participate in all forms of civic life.
- Students should have primary responsibility for the quality of their writing.
- If students are to improve their writing, they must be given opportunities to write in a variety of forms and to revise their writing in response to peer and faculty feedback.
- Faculty in the students' programs are best situated to help their students adapt writing competency to professional contexts.

B. Writing Across the Curriculum Program Requirement

The Writing Across the Curriculum Program requirement entails three writing intensive (WI) credit-bearing courses.

1. One designated Writing Intensive course in the first year, Writing Seminar or other so-designated WI course with approval of the Writing Program Administrator.
2. One required Writing Intensive course in General Education.
3. One required Writing Intensive course or sequence of courses in the student's major Program.

Students should complete Writing Seminar or other so-designated WI course by the end of their first year. Students should take one WI course in General Education by the end of their third year. The WI course in the first year, in General Education,

and in the program must be passed before students receive the degree. Students should be able to complete WI requirements within the existing graduation requirements.

#### C. Criteria for Writing Intensive Courses

The following criteria will be met in the Designation of “Writing-Intensive” courses:

1. Students must complete informal and formal writing assignments sequenced during the course intended as “writing to learn” and “learning to write” assignments. Examples of informal and formal writing assignments include brainstorming, free writing, journals, reaction-response essays. Examples of formal writing include critiques, reviews, laboratory reports, case studies, observations, essays, proposals, and research papers.
2. Students must receive feedback from instructors. The feedback should facilitate the composing process but give the primary responsibility for revision to the student. This feedback might be supplemented by peer mentors, writing fellows, and writing center instructors.
3. Students must have an opportunity to incorporate feedback from instructors (as well as from peer mentors, writing fellows, and writing center instructors) and complete substantive revision of written work.
4. The course must include classroom discussion of particular writing conventions—vocabulary, organization, evidence, citation—specific to the discipline or profession.
5. A minimum of 20% of the grade for the course must be based on the extent to which students display program writing criteria (i.e., as evaluated by rubrics) in the revision and editing processes of formal writing.

#### D. Institute Approval Process for Writing Intensive Course Designations

Courses proposed to meet the WI criteria (as defined in this policy) must first be submitted for review to the appropriate curriculum review bodies using the “University New or Revised Course Outline approval form.” College and Department Curriculum committees are not expected to review course proposals to determine if they meet WI criteria. Review of courses to determine if they meet the WI criteria will be conducted by the Intensive Writing Committee (IWC) who will approve WI designation as follows:

First Year Writing Seminar

In the case of a first year course intended as a WI course substitution for the Writing Seminar, the IWC will review each proposed course and recommend approval for WI designation and substitution for Writing Seminar. When WI designation is not recommended, the First-Year Writing Program Administrator will provide suggested modifications to the department proposing the course as a WI substitution for Writing Seminar

#### WI General Education Courses

In the case of new or newly designed General Education courses intended to carry a WI designation, the IWC will review each course and recommend approval for WI designation to the GEC. When WI designation is not recommended, the IWC will provide suggested modifications to the college curriculum committee. The modified course can be resubmitted to IWC for reconsideration prior to review by the GEC.

#### WI Program Courses

In the case of existing academic programs, requests for new or newly designed program courses to be designated as WI will be submitted to the department and college curriculum committee, using normal course review procedures. The college curriculum committee will refer each course proposed for WI designation to the IWC. The IWC will review each course and recommend approval for WI designation to the college curriculum committee. When WI designation is not recommended, the IWC will provide suggested modifications to the college curriculum committee. The College Curriculum Committee can resubmit the course with modifications to the IWC for reconsideration.

### E. Institute Responsibilities for Implementation and Assessment

#### 1. Institute Writing Committee

The Institute Writing Committee shall be a standing committee of the Academic Senate and will serve to implement this policy and evaluate courses for the determination of meeting the WI designation. The membership of the IWC shall include: a college faculty representative from each college to be elected by his or her collegial faculty; one representative elected at large by the Academic Senate; the Writing Program Director; one representative from the Academic Support Center, and the English Language Center; and the provost or his or her delegate (ex-officio, voting). Representatives will serve staggered three-year terms with the possibility of reappointment. The committee will report annually to the Provost and the Academic Senate on its work.

To facilitate the implementation of this policy and the Writing Across the Curriculum program, the Institute Writing Committee will:

- consult with the curriculum committees of the various departments, programs, and colleges to review writing program objectives and the criteria for Writing Intensive Courses
- review courses proposed to carry a Writing Intensive (WI) designation and grant approval for this designation.
- act as a liaison between all academic units to determine student and faculty need regarding implementation of the writing policy
- define priorities for adequate, professional and curricular support for both students and faculty.
- stay current with research for changing best practices in Writing Program Administration, assess the feasibility and desirability for instituting these practices at RIT, and make recommendations accordingly.
- serve in an advisory role to program faculty in the development of assessment methods for the writing outcomes
- participate in an RIT “culture of writing” by working with faculty design additional opportunities for writing: writing contests, student publications, service courses, special projects, and individual study.

## 2. Writing Across the Curriculum Implementation

RIT believes that for a Writing Across the Curriculum Program to be successful it is necessary that students and faculty will have the benefit of meaningful and appropriate support. Support may include the provision of faculty offering professional consultations on syllabus design and development for writing-intensive courses, as well as offering ongoing education opportunities or offering students a place to go for continued assistance on the writing they are preparing for the Writing Intensive classes. All faculty and students are encouraged to consider their own role in cultivating and practicing writing, and to develop their understanding of and practice in writing.

## 3. Writing Across the Curriculum Program Assessment

To determine the extent to which the Writing Across the Curriculum program supports appropriate General Education Student Learning Outcomes, a comprehensive, coordinated, and data-driven system of assessment will be implemented. In order to sustain the assessment system and complete the related assessment work (e.g., course and syllabi development, rubric development, faculty development), the Writing Across the Curriculum Program will be assessed over a five-year period.

Central to the assessment process is the belief that writing assessment must be embedded in the environments in which writing is produced. The IWC will advise the assessment of the First Year program, and will be available to assist in the assessment of the WI courses and the General Education Learning Outcomes, and in the assessment of the Institute Writing policy.

**Action Item Two:**

**The Academic Senate approves the proposed revision to “Policy B2.0 Charter of Academic Governance” that allows for the establishment of an Institute Writing Committee (IWC) as a Standing Committee of the Academic Senate.**

**Proposed Revision:**

**B2.0 ARTICLE X. STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE**

10.10 Institute Writing Committee. The Institute Writing Committee (IWC) shall evaluate courses for the determination of meeting the Writing Intensive (WI) designation and maintain appropriate inter-college relationships with regard to Institute Writing Policy matters. The IWC will consult with the various curriculum committees regarding program objectives and the criteria for WI Courses, review courses proposed to carry a WI designation and grant approval for this designation, act as a liaison between all academic units to determine student and faculty need regarding implementation of the writing policy, define priorities for adequate professional and curricular support for both students and faculty, stay current with research for changing best practices with writing program administration, assess the feasibility and desirability for instituting these practices at RIT, and make recommendations accordingly, serve in an advisory role to program faculty in the development of assessment methods for the writing course outcomes, participate in a “culture of writing” by working with faculty to design additional opportunities for writing: writing contests, student publications, service courses, special projects, and individual study. The membership of the IWC shall include: a college faculty representative from each college to be elected by his or her collegial faculty; one representative elected at large by the Academic Senate; the Writing Program Director; one representative from the Academic Support Center, and the English Language Center; and the provost or his or her delegate (ex-officio, voting). Representatives will serve staggered three-year terms with the possibility of reappointment.

Note: It is suggested that the description of the IWC follow the description of the General Education Committee in the charter so undergraduate curriculum information is sequential. This would necessitate a renumbering of items in the Charter.