RIT Institute Writing Committee (IWC)
Report to Senate for Academic Year 2013-2014
May 9, 2014

Institute Writing Committee Charges (2013-2014)

The following charges were received from the Chair of Academic Senate by the IWC chair on Sept. 10, 2013.

1. Continue to evaluate courses submitted for WI designation. Develop guidelines and procedures for assessing WI courses that have been taught in the classroom. This will include discussions about guidelines and procedures for evaluating the WI program.
2. Recommend a timeline for optimal student completion of the various writing requirements at RIT, including first year writing and writing intensive general education courses.
3. Present a proposal for a WI course enrollment cap at Academic Senate. Identify resource and staffing ramifications of such enrollment caps at various numbers of students.

Summary of Work by IWC for Academic Year 2013-2014

Below is a summary of the activities carried out by the IWC over the academic year. The committee was very active, evaluating numerous proposals for WI course status, assessing the implementation of the Writing Program, devising a plan to address a shortage of Writing Intensive General Education course seats identified by the committee, and proposing changes to the Institute Writing Policy which were accepted at Academic Senate on Thursday, May 8.

1. Revision of the Course Criteria Checklist (CCC) Form. The form used to evaluate applications for WI course status was revised in September. The new version includes cover pages providing instructions for completing the form, along with a description of the submission and evaluation process. In particular, a clarification of how to present writing-related learning outcomes was made, and examples of formal and informal writing are provided. The form is available from the URL at the bottom of this page. This improved the quality of submitted CCC’s, and reduced the number of CCC’s needing revision. (related to Charge 1)

2. Evaluating WI Course Proposals. At the time of this report, the committee has reviewed 126 requests for Writing Intensive (WI) course designation. Courses submitted for WI status after May 7, 2014 will be considered in Fall 2014. Of the 126 CCC submissions, 113 courses have been approved as Writing Intensive: 4 First-Year, 46 General Education, 46 Program, and 17 courses designated as both General Education and Program. (related to Charge 1)

---

1 The WI course approval procedure is described on the IWC web site: [http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/academicsenate/iwc/submission.php](http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/academicsenate/iwc/submission.php)
3. Compilation of Resources for IWC. A variety of resources were compiled and added to the MyCourses shell for the committee (e.g. regarding General Education requirements, previous reports to senate, and a history of CCC submissions and evaluation outcomes), along with minutes for meetings during AY 2013-2014 that were taken by Carl Lutzer, the College of Science representative.

4. Evaluation of WI Course Delivery and the Writing Program. The committee discussed evaluating WI courses and the WI program a number of times throughout the year. Limiting this discussion was the fact that the current WI policy has not yet been fully implemented, due to a shortage of Writing Intensive General Education (WI-GE) seats. There was agreement that the fully implemented Writing Program needs to run for some time before a meaningful assessment can be made. There is also some uncertainty about the extent to which this evaluation would be distributed across the colleges versus centralized. (related to Charge 1)

5. Evaluating Writing Program Implementation and Plan to Address WI-GE Seat Shortage. In November 2013 the committee made a presentation to Academic Senate, showing that while the number of available seats for First-Year and Program WI courses was sufficient, there was a significant shortage of WI-GE seats (less than 50% of the necessary capacity). The committee asked the Academic Senate to endorse a waiver of the WI-GE requirement for students enrolled in academic years 2012, 2013 and 2014. The senate voted against this recommendation.

Subsequent to this, the Provost granted a waiver of the WI-GE requirement for students enrolled in AYs 2012 and 2013, and requested that the IWC prepare a plan to address the WI-GE seat shortage in collaboration with the University Writing Program (UWP). The plan created by the committee is detailed in a memo to the Provost2, and was presented at Senate on Thursday Apr. 23, 2014 by the IWC Chair and David Martins (Director, Institute Writing Program). The plan details a variety of strategies, including changes in advising practices, changes in the Institute Writing Policy (details are below), and increasing the number of WI-GE designated courses. We believe that the proposed plan will produce the necessary number of WI-GE seats by Spring 2015 at a cost of roughly $50,000 per year, with WI-GE courses capped at 25 seats per section (related to Charge 3).

6. Revision of the Institute Writing Policy (formerly D16.0, now D1.5). The chair participated in two meetings with the Inter-College Curriculum Committee (ICC) to present changes suggested by the IWC for the Institute Writing Policy. After minor modifications, the changes were accepted at Academic Senate on Thursday, May 8.

The newly approved Policy D1.0 includes an updated Institute Writing Policy (D1.5) that replaces the current one (D16.0). The revised policy states that ideally, First-Year Writing is taken in the first year of study, a General Education WI course is taken in years 2 or 3, and a Program WI course in year 4 (related to Charge 2). Changes in committee membership and responsibilities were made to reflect the IWC’s new role as a subcommittee of the ICC and its changing role within the institute. Finally, the revised policy allows a second Program WI

---

2 https://ritdml.rit.edu/handle/1850/17262
A course to substitute for the current General Education WI requirement, but also states that ideally a WI-GE course is used to meet the requirement.

**Proposed Charges for 2014-2015**

1. Monitor and report to Academic Senate on the implementation of the IWC plan to increase the number of available WI-GE course seats.
2. Develop a protocol for implementing section-by-section WI course designations (e.g. through communication with the Registrar’s Office and the SIS system).
3. Gather feedback about the experience of teaching WI Courses to inform the design of the Institute Writing Policy, incentives for offering courses for WI instruction, etc.
4. Evaluate the Course Criteria Checklist (CCC) form used to evaluate applications for WI course status.
5. Identify a meaningful way to assess existing Writing Intensive courses.

**Committee Membership (2013-2014)**


**College Representatives:** Richard Zanibbi (Chair, GCCIS); Michael Palanski (SCB); Clark Hochgraf (CAST); Pamela Kitcheloe (NTID); Carl Lutzer (COS); Matthew Marshall (KGCOE); Eric Nystrom (CLA); Sarah Thompson (CIAS); Nancy Valentage (CHST)

**Ex Officio Members:** David Martins (Director, University Writing Program); Matthew Fluet (At-Large Senate rep.); Phillippa Powers (Director, Academic Support Center); Stan Van Horn (Director, English Language Center) Dianna Winslow (Director, First Year Writing Program)