

Status Report: Graduate Writing Related Charges

Institute Writing Committee

April 4, 2019



College Representatives

- Pam Conley (NTID)
- Steven Day (KGCOE), Co-Chair
- Seshavadhani Kumar (COS)
- Yossi Nygate (CET), Co-Chair
- Tae Oh (GCCIS)
- Esa Rantanen (CLA)
- Shawn Sturgeon (SCB)
- Josh Thorson (CAD)
- Nancy Valentage (CHST)

Ex Officio Members

- David Martins (University Writing Program Director/Provost's Delegate)
- Stanley Van Horn (English Language Center Director)
- Cha Ron Sattler-Leblanc (Senior Director, Academic Support Center)
- Jacquie Mozrall (Dean's Delegate)
- Sylvia Perez-Hardy, ICC Convener (non-voting)

New Charges to Institute Writing Committee (IWC)

1. Draft a third section of D01.5 University Writing Policy addressing graduate writing [...] This policy should i) provide a clear directive as to how graduate programs participate in graduate writing support and improvement; ii) modify such policy such that full buy-in from graduate programs is accomplished.
2. Add graduate writing to IWC's oversight and evaluate formulation or modification of associated policy across domestic and overseas campuses. Bring to Senate any necessary amendment to Policy B02.0 for Senate discussion and vote.
3. Provide estimates as to the cost of supporting graduate student writing based on findings from IWC1.

Proposed Implementation Timeline	
2019	Submit “grad writing policy” to AS for approval
2020	Submit budget proposal for centralized writing support
2021	Implementation of new university-wide writing support for graduate students; workshops for grad directors on completing G-PAW
2021-22	All graduate program submit G-PAW to IWC for review; G-PAW includes a demonstration of how the assessment of program-level, writing-related student learning outcome have been integrated into ongoing academic program review
2022-25	All programs assess program-level, writing-related student learning outcome as part of ongoing academic program review and submit copy of report to IWC

Motivating Values

- **Align with current reporting procedures (e.g., for program review and assessment, for accreditation, etc.) as much as possible**
- **Create clear guidance for programs on ways to support student achievement in writing**
- **Provide clear avenues for needs assessments, which support data-driven budget proposals**
- **Highlight activities that programs are currently providing that support writing achievement**

Process

- **Review of earlier report(s) on graduate writing**
- **Survey of all graduate programs (last year)**
- **Development of Tenets, Policy, and Procedure (Fall AY 2018):**
 - Consideration of survey data
 - Conversations with constituents
 - Committee debate
- **Gathering of feedback from stakeholders on draft (now)**

Key Stakeholders

- **Twyla Cummings, Graduate Dean**
- **Graduate Program Directors**
- **Graduate Council**
- **Graduate Faculty**
- **Graduate Students**
- **Provost's Office**
- **Office of Educational Effective Assessment**
- **Institute Writing Committee (IWC)** – Academic Senate standing committee currently focused on undergraduate writing
- **University Writing Program (UWP)** – delivers and supports three key areas of undergraduate writing: First-Year Writing, the RIT Writing Commons, and support for faculty teaching “WI” courses
- **English Language Center (ELC)** – offers a comprehensive, intensive academic program that provides English language instruction in a cross-cultural learning environment to prepare international students for success in graduate and undergraduate study

Questions on Process?

Draft Policy Follows

A. Tenets (draft)

The Graduate Writing Policy is informed by these basic tenets:

- Students entering post-baccalaureate education must gain specialized knowledge of their field which includes understanding academic and professional forms of communication within the discipline and an ability to communicate ideas purposefully and effectively within the norms of their discipline.
- Each graduate program determines the specific writing requirements and outcomes for its students and prepares its students to write and communicate successfully in the discipline.
- Through continuous self-assessment, graduate programs provide data regarding student needs and performance on writing outcomes and activities, and these data drive and shape the work of university-wide support programs whose mission is to advance excellence in written communication.
- Every graduate student shall demonstrate their ability to write through a program-specific graduation requirement.
- In support of graduate writing, the IWC shall conduct needs analyses, incorporating information from the G-PAW, and annually report resource recommendations to the Academic Senate and Provost's Office.

B. Policy (draft)

- Every graduate program at RIT shall have at least one specific program-level student learning outcome and one graduation requirement related to written communication in a natural language.
- Every graduate program at RIT shall include in their program requirements at least two discipline-specific activities distributed across the program plan in order to prepare students to complete their writing-related graduation requirement/culminating experience.
- Every graduate program at RIT shall submit a Graduate Plan for Achievement in Writing (G-PAW) to the Institute Writing Committee (IWC) that demonstrates how the program meets the policy requirements (above) and every five years present a self-assessment of the writing-related outcome and activities.
 - *If a program is submitting the G-PAW for the first time and does not yet have a writing-related outcome or activities, and has not developed an assessment plan, then the initial G-PAW submission must specify the program's timeline to meet the policy requirements.*

C. Procedure (draft)

- To demonstrate how it meets the policy requirements each program will submit a Graduate Plan for Achievement in Writing (G-PAW) to the IWC according to a university-wide schedule and implementation plan.
- Once programs include a writing-related learning outcome in its cycle of program review (PLOAP), each program will share its self-assessment data with the IWC to demonstrate efforts for continuous improvement of the writing-related outcome and related activities.
- If the program is not able to demonstrated how it meets the graduate policy requirements, IWC will be available to assist the program to develop an implementation plan to create specific program-level learning outcomes related activities as required by the policy.

Graduate Plan for Achievement in Writing (G-PAW)

The G-PAW is designed to fulfill a dual role:

1. To determine if a graduate program has specific program outcomes and graduation requirements related to written communication that meet the requirements of this policy, and
2. To articulate a clear plan to support student achievement in disciplinary writing.

The IWC will work with individual graduate programs to provide guidance on how to meet the policy requirements.

Discussion