Institute Writing Committee

Report to Academic Senate – May, 2020

Committee

The members of the IWC committee this year were

College Representatives

Steven Day (KGCOE), Co-Chair

Josh Thorson (CAD), Co-Chair

Pam Conley (NTID)

Seshavadhani Kumar (COS)

Gretchen Wainwright (CET)

Tae Oh (GCCIS)

Esa Rantanen (CLA)

Shawn Sturgeon (SCB)

Nancy Valentage (CHST)

Ex Officio Members

David Martins (Provost's Delegate)

Pamela Kincheloe (University Writing Program Director)

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)

Institute Writing Committee Charges

The standing committee charges for the IWC for AY2018-2019 are listed here:

https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/academicsenate/standing/institutewriting/charges

The following sections provide updates as to where we stand with respect to each of these charges.

Charge 1 - Propose a policy that clarifies representatives' responsibilities for engaging and reporting to their respective college constituencies.

This was accomplished in several ways:
- To a large extent, the role of representatives' responsibilities for engaging the college constituency is part of the committee description, which are listed above in the Ongoing Responsibilities of our committee charges.
  https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/academicsenate/standing/institutewriting/charges
- The flowchart (Appendix A) includes the role of the college delegate to this committee as it relates to WI course approvals.

- For specific charges, such as the work towards the modification to D01.5 for graduate writing, the representatives' feedback gathered from their college and communicating to their college was discussed within the committee for the purposes of informing the policy.

Charge 2: Propose Policy on Graduate Writing as an amendment to D01.5

This was proposed and passed by the Senate. Revised text D01.5 is attached as Appendix C. The committee was quite proud of this accomplishment and appreciative of collaboration from the Office of Educational Effectiveness Assessment, Office of Graduate Education, Graduate Program directors, and input received from senators.

Charge 3: Revise Appendix B of the Course Outline Form to more clearly articulate the expectations of the IWC when reviewing courses for WI designation, and to clarify the procedure and sequencing for course outline approvals.

This charge was completed. The IWC reviewed the Appendix, aligned it with the current Course Outline form, simplified and clarified the ordering of the various sections, and included new language that provides clearer instruction on how to complete the form. Revised text D01.5 is attached as Appendix B.

Charge 4: Clarify policy and where appropriate, propose revisions regarding about the (sic) required language of writing for Writing Intensive Courses.

No revision to policy regarding the language of writing for Writing Intensive Courses is recommended at this time. 11-0-0 vote in a May 8th, 2020 meeting of the IWC.

Some of the considerations from committee discussion included:

- There is consensus that a course that satisfies all of the criteria for a WI course that is in a non-English *natural language* such as French, Chinese, etc. may be perfectly appropriate as a WI-PR course if the topic of the program is the language itself. There is precedent for this: COLA-MLJP-402, approved Jan 2019.
- There is consensus within the IWC on the idea that writing in a computer language would not fulfill WI criteria, yet no programming course has ever been submitted. Hence, this policy would be written solely to preclude something that has never happened and we don't think is likely to happen. The current criteria for a WI course sufficiently capture the intent.
- The choice of terminology that might be used within policy to define which languages are or are not acceptable for WI status is fraught. Colleagues in NTID, in particular, for which their natural language is American Sign Language could reasonably take offense. Indeed, there is interesting literature within the academic community discussing if signed video presentations should be accepted in lieu of written theses[1]. We feel that introducing policy solely to preclude something that has not happened and is unlikely to happen is unnecessary. The current criteria for a WI course sufficiently capture the intent.

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[1] R.Shaw and M.Thurman, *Signed Language Academic Papers,* International Journal of Interpreter Education, 4(2), 74–86.

Progress on Ongoing Responsibilities

These responsibilities are listed here not as separate charges, but included within the preamble:
https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/academicsenate/standing/institutewriting/charges

Responsibility 1 - 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

The committee reviewed all "Writing Intensive" (WI) course materials submitted. The registrar was informed of all courses approved as WI by the committee, and an IWC spreadsheet was updated online each semester. The IWC reviewed and approved twelve (13) courses during the 2019-2020 Academic Year. Some required revision, but every course submitted for approval was eventually approved.

Although not specifically listed as a charge this year, we've reported courses with WI approval in that past. A search within SIS shows 2191 (Spring 2019): 69 WI-GE courses, 23 with open seats. 2195 (Spring 2020): 68 WI-GE courses, 28 with open seats. For 2201 (Fall 2020): 71 WI-GE courses, all with open seats as of May 5, 2020. Further, it is our understanding that every program currently has a WI-PR course and that this has been true for at least two years. We have asked the registrar to run a report to confirm or refute this assumption.

Responsibility 2 - Act as a liaison between all academic units to determine student and faculty need regarding implementation of the writing policy.

See Charge 2.

Responsibility 3 - Define priorities for adequate professional and curricular support for both students and faculty.

The committee did not spend significant time on this responsibility this academic year.

Responsibility 4 - 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.
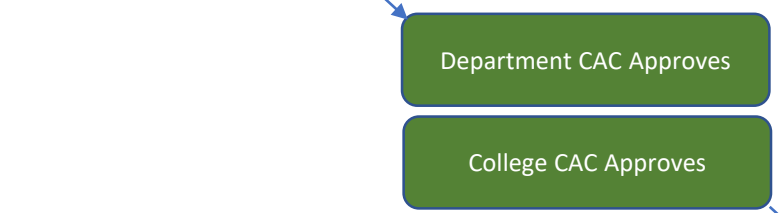
The committee did not spend significant time on this responsibility this academic year.

Responsibility 5 - 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.
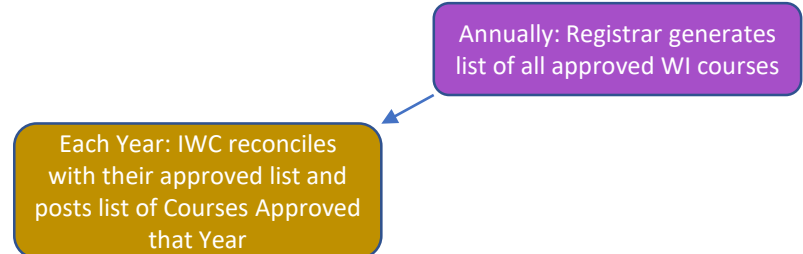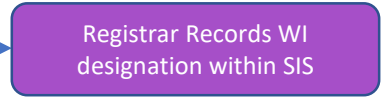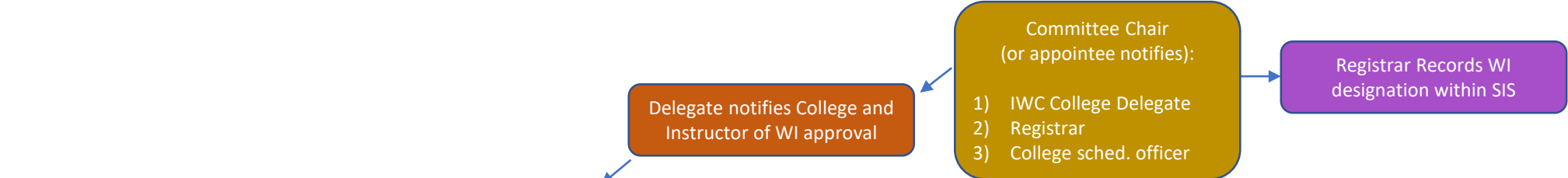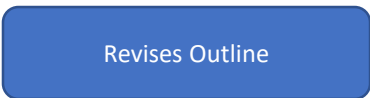
Many committee members do serve in an advisory role to program faculty within these college, particularly related to the design of Writing Intensive courses, as well as the documentation of these courses within Appendix B of the Course Outline. The committee did not spend significant time on the "additional opportunities for writing".

Possible IWC Charges for AY 2020-2021

1. Coordinate with the Office of Effective Educational Assessment about the mechanism and logistics related to implementing the Graduate Writing Policy in the revised D 01.5. This should include:
   a. Complete the design of the G-PAW form, aligning it with the newly passed Graduate Writing Policy (D01.5). A draft of the form exists, and should be further refined in consultation with the Office of Effective Educational Assessment.
   b. Logistics transferring G-PAW submissions included in the Program Assessments to the IWC.
   c. Determine with Institute governing bodies when Graduate Writing Policy (D01.5) will officially go into effect.
   d. Develop a process for collating recommendations and resource requests from the G-PAW and communicating them to Academic Affairs, Office of Graduate Education, the Institute Writing Program, and other relevant administrative bodies.

2. Evaluate process for approval of WI courses, including:
   a. Alignment with GEC approval.
   b. Alignment with posted policy is D01.1. Meet with GEC to discuss WI approval requirements that exist in the structure of the Course Outline itself, review new Appendix B.
   c. Implement WI process flowchart and add to relevant websites and documents for clarity in requesting WI designation, communicate this process with the Registrar, ICC, GEC, and scheduling officers across the Institute.

3. Evaluate system for the tracking and monitoring of WI courses, and the related student requirement for Writing across the curriculum including:
   a. Determine if the implementation of the Writing Requirement within AAR is consistent with policy and aligned with Gen Ed approval process
   b. Work with the registrar to develop regular means of reporting and tracking WI approval.

4. Review mission, scope, purpose (make this more meaningful)
   a. Revisit and edit posted material related to IWC processes, and structure for consistency. This should include:
      i. D01.5, D01.0 , and
         https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/academicsenate/iwc/
      ii. With particular attention to:
         1. IWC vs. UWC
         2. Membership of IWC
         3. Relation between the IWC, University Writing Program, and other units.
         4. Advertising of process for submission for WI.

Instructor	Department / College	College Delegate to Institute Writing Committee	Institute Writing Committee	Registrar

Prepare Course Outline: Link: download

◄····· **Recommended: Instructor consult IWC delegate** ·····► **IWC College Delegate may work with Course author**

Department CAC Approves

College CAC Approves

March 1: Our process is rolling, but must be to IWC if desired to be reviewed prior to March 15.

IWC College Delegate presents course to IWC for Approval

Discussion and Vote

Revises Outline ◄ **Revised Outline** ◄ **IVW Delegate sends required changes to CCC and outline author (if known)** — **Changes required**

Approved

Committee Chair (or appointee notifies):
1) IWC College Delegate
2) Registrar
3) College sched. officer

Registrar Records WI designation within SIS

Delegate notifies College and Instructor of WI approval

Maintain Course Outline

Annually: Registrar generates list of all approved WI courses

Each Year: IWC reconciles with their approved list and posts list of Courses Approved that Year

APPENDIX B: WRITING INTENSIVE

Preliminary Notes:

The Course Outline itself must include a student learning outcome related to writing (6.0) and a topic related to the discussion and teaching of writing (4.0) to illustrate that the teaching and learning of writing is part of the design of the course. Course outlines that do not already explicitly and clearly include a writing related-outcome in Section 6 and a writing-related teaching topic in Section 4 will need to be revised for approval as a writing intensive course.

This appendix is meant to highlight the facets of a course directly relevant to Writing Intensive (WI) status. The information in the appendix should clearly reflect and elaborate on the writing-related content expressed in sections 4.0 (Topics) and 6.0 (Course-Level Student Learning Outcomes) in the Course Outline above.

Writing Intensive courses must go through Department and College Curriculum Committees before they are submitted to the IWC.

Information provided here will also be used to identify appropriate courses for inclusion in RIT's Learning Outcomes assessment cycle.

I. Course Category: *Check one*

First Year Writing	
General Education (WI-GE)	
Program (WI-PR)	

A course can be both WI-GE and WI-PR.

II. Nature of the Course:

Criteria that define Writing Intensive courses at RIT can be found at the Institute Writing Committee web site (click HERE).

   a. **Writing-Related Course Learning Outcomes.**
   List the Course Learning Outcomes related to writing (copied from section 6.0).

   b. **Writing-Related Course Discussion Topics**
   Class topics listed in Section 4.0 of the Course Outline must include instruction on specific writing strategies. List the writing-related topics (copied from section 4.0) and briefly describe the writing strategies discussed.

   In-class instruction of writing strategies can include discussions of revision strategies, genre conventions, copyediting, concision, and clarity. For more information, (click HERE).

   c. **Informal and Formal Writing Assignments**

1. 1. Informal writing (commonly described as "writing to learn") is distributed throughout the course as appropriate to its learning outcomes. Use the space below to describe briefly the informal writing assignments in the course and the distribution of those activities throughout the course.

   Informal writing includes activities such as free/quick-writing, lab notebooks, response/reading journals, and online discussions. For other examples, (click HERE).

2. Formal writing assignments (commonly described as "writing in the discipline") engage students in the work of the discipline/s represented by the course. Use the space below to describe briefly the formal writing assignments in the course, and what students will learn by completing the assignment(s).

   Formal writing assignments include genres such as a research/project report, case study, and clinical observation. For more examples, (click HERE).

d. **Revision Policy**

Students must receive feedback from instructors and have an opportunity to incorporate that feedback into a revision of the written work. Use the space below to describe briefly the kinds of feedback students are provided, and what opportunities students have to improve their writing based on that feedback.

Feedback can be given in many forms, including margin comments, summative end-comments, a 1-on-1 conference, scoring guides, and rubrics. For more information, (click HERE).

e. **Writing Portion of Grade**
At least 20% of the overall course grade must be based on writing assignments that demonstrate the student's ability to display writing competency in the revision and editing process of formal writing. What percentage of the overall course grade is based on formal writing?

	<20%
	20% or more

D01.5 UNIVERSITY WRITING POLICY

I. Rationale
  A.   The Writing Policy is informed by these basic tenets:
    1.   Writing practice and instruction fosters higher order thinking and cultivates critical intellectual processes such as analyzing ideas, solving problems, and evaluating claims.
    2.   Writing is a complex activity that must be continually adapted to the particular needs of disciplinary and multi-disciplinary contexts.
    3.   Writing competencies are essential for graduates to secure jobs, advance in their given professions, and participate in all forms of civic life.
    4.   Students should have primary responsibility for the quality of their writing.
    5.   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.
    6.   Faculty in the students' programs are best situated to help their students adapt writing competency to professional contexts.

  B. Special Considerations for Graduate Programs
    1.   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.
    2.   Each Graduate Program determines the writing related requirements and outcomes for its students and prepares its students to write and communicate successfully in the discipline.
    3.   Graduate Programs "shall normally require a minimum of one academic year of full-time graduate level study, or its equivalent in part-time study, with an accumulation of not less than 30 semester hours. Research or a comparable occupational or professional experience shall be a component of each master's degree program. The requirements for a master's degree shall normally include at least one of the following: passing a comprehensive test, writing a thesis based on independent research or completing an appropriate special project." (New York State Commissioner's Regulations, Part 52.2(c)(8)). This requirement includes discipline specific writing and is referred to here as a culminating experience.
    4.   Through continuous self-assessment, which includes formative and evaluative assessment of student writing, 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. Trends and needs for graduate student writing among and across graduate programs must be examined on a regular cycle to inform how university resources are deployed to advance graduate student writing.

II. Writing Across the Curriculum Program Requirement for Undergraduate Programs
  A.   Student requirements
       The Writing across the Curriculum Program requirement entails three writing intensive (WI) credit-bearing courses for all undergraduate programs.
    1.   One introductory WI course in the first year, "FYW: Writing Seminar" or other so-designated First Year Writing (FYW) course with approval of the First Year Writing Program Director.
    2.   One course or sequence of courses in the student's degree program (PR-WI).
    3.   A third WI course. Ideally this is a general education course (GE-WI), but it may also be a second PR-WI course.
       Ideally these courses would be distributed through the student's time at RIT (e.g. FYW in the first year, a second WI course in years 2-3, and a PR-WI course in year four).
       All undergraduate programs must provide and require at least one discipline-specific WI course (PR-WI). Students must be able to complete all WI requirements within the existing graduation requirements, and must successfully complete three WI courses before receiving a degree

B. Criteria for Writing Intensive Courses
   The following criteria will be met in the designation of "Writing-Intensive" courses:
   1. Students must receive instruction in at least one writing-related learning outcome. First Year Writing courses will include a learning outcome related to awareness of the social and intellectual aspects of writing in the university. There are three writing-related learning outcomes described in General Education SLOs. Program WI courses should describe a writing-related learning outcome that is discipline specific.
   2. 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 writing assignments include brainstorming, free writing, journals, and reaction-response essays. Examples of formal writing include critiques, reviews, laboratory reports, case studies, observations, essays, proposals, and research papers.
   3. Students must receive feedback from instructors and have an opportunity to use that feedback to complete substantive revision of written work. 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.
   4. The course must include classroom discussion of particular writing conventions and strategies specific to the discipline or profession. Examples of effective discussions include: revision strategies, peer review, vocabulary, organization, use of evidence, citation, concision and clarity, and removing ambiguity.
   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.

III. Writing Requirements for Graduate Programs:
   A. Every graduate program shall have:
      1. At least one student learning outcome specifically related to written communication included within their Program Level Outcomes Assessment Plan (PLOAP), overseen by the Office of Educational Effectiveness Assessment, Academic Affairs.
      2. At least two formative feedback activities related to discipline-specific writing.
         a. These activities shall be distributed across the program.
         b. These activities shall be designed to assist students in achieving the writing-related student learning outcome and to prepare students for the required writing within their culminating experience.
   B. Every graduate program at RIT shall submit a report on students' achievement of the writing related student learning outcome (III.A.1) to the Office of Educational Effectiveness Assessment (EEA) at least once every five years. The report will include an attachment (Graduate Plan for Achievement in Writing) reflecting on the formative feedback activities (III.A.2). The Graduate Plan for Achievement in Writing will inform a yearly needs analysis reported to the Academic Senate, the Office of Graduate Education, and the Office of the Provost.