



### Writing Across the Curriculum INFORMATION SHEET

The Writing Across the Curriculum program supports the university's new commitment to writing, as it:

- Supports faculty in their efforts to integrate writing into disciplinary, general education, and writing intensive courses.
- Encourages, promotes, and celebrates writing of all kinds.
- Conducts and shares research on literate practices and instruction in all disciplines and across the curriculum.
- Facilitates assessment of campus writing initiatives.

To meet those objectives, the WAC Program offers tiered support structures for faculty:

- The Writing Exchange offers informal one-hour workshops that focus on discrete issues in writing instruction. Faculty who attend these workshops can share experiences and leave with teaching strategies to consider. During the 2016-2017 academic year, workshop topics included writing prompt design, sequencing writing assignments, handling the paper load, writing in digital environments, and assigning writing to multilingual students.
- Writing-Intensive Course Development Workshops are half-day workshops that provide faculty with an essential framework for developing or refining a Writing Intensive (WI) course.
- Two-Day writing workshops introduce faculty to the principles of writing across the curriculum and include sessions on developing effective writing outcomes, sequencing writing assignments, and engaging students in writing. In January 2017, 30 faculty attended the inaugural two-day workshop.
- One-on-one consultations afford faculty with the opportunity to work with the WAC director on a personal level. During the 2016-2017 academic year, the director provided feedback on the sequence of writing assignments, writing prompts, grant proposals, graduate school applications, program learning outcomes, and rubric design.

The WAC workshop series is structured in such a way that the one-hour workshops invite busy faculty to participate in a brief conversation about writing. Ideally, that conversation will entice faculty to attend the longer and more-intensive workshops and thus foster a growing community of faculty dedicated to writing instruction on campus.

The January 2017 two-day workshop included a guest participant and keynote speaker, Jonathan Alexander, the Chancellor's Professor of English, Education, and Gender & Sexuality Studies, Director of the Center for Excellence in Writing & Communication, and Equity advisor at the University of California, Irvine. A half-day workshop in April 2017 included a guest participant and keynote speaker, Andrea A. Lunsford, the Louise Hewlett Nixon Professor of English Emerita, Claude and Louise Rosenberg Jr. Fellow, and former Director of the Program

in Writing and Rhetoric at Stanford University. Lunsford is the author of our campus writing handbook, *The Everyday Writer*. Inviting distinguished scholars to participate in the workshops and deliver keynote addresses helps to shape the workshops into truly professional events that faculty can value. The addition of inviting esteemed colleagues to reinforce instruction in writing pedagogy further validates the writing workshops and writing program.

In conjunction with the Office of Undergraduate Studies, the WAC program sponsors an *ad hoc* committee on the status of writing on campus, which hosts The Campus Writing Conversations, a series of forums and focus groups intended to provide faculty with the opportunity to voice concerns about the status of writing on campus. The first conversation was held on April 19<sup>th</sup>, following a half-day writing workshop. Offering the first focus group conversation to workshop participants created an opportunity for faculty invested in writing to voice their opinions. A second focus group was held on May 11<sup>th</sup>. The input garnered from those workshops will help the writing committee develop focused discussions during the 2017-2018 academic year.

At the request of the WAC program, the university adopted a custom version of *The Everyday Writer* as its writing handbook. Currently, the custom textbook includes a description of the university writing requirements and links the learning outcomes of the GE A2 and GE A3 writing courses to relevant pages in the text. Any faculty teaching Engl 1004, 1005a, 1005b, 1010, or 1050 who assigns a writing handbook must assign *The Everyday Writer* or receive approval to assign a different writing handbook. The WAC director promotes the book at writing workshops and encourages WI faculty to assign the book. Such a custom book facilitates in a unified vision of writing on campus.

Looking to the future, the WAC program will offer summer workshops devoted to creating WI courses and proposals in an effort to expand the university's WI course offerings. As more faculty become literate in writing pedagogies, more departments will be able to create GE A3 writing courses, and the WAC director will provide support in that accord. Working closely with the writing center, the WAC director will develop a writing fellows program, which offers tutorial support tailored to specific disciplines. Such outreach will help the writing center evolve its services.

### **GE Revision, Semester Conversion and the Writing Curriculum**

Both GE revision and semester conversion inspired faculty to redesign the writing curriculum and to offer a variety of support systems for faculty even though campus writing efforts received high marks during the previous WASC visit and in the 2007 GE program review.

A faculty-led initiative, the Faculty Learning Community on Language, Literacy, Rhetoric, and Writing, offers a unique set of experiences to university faculty, students, area teachers, and community partners. With membership from each of the university's colleges, the FLC is a multi-disciplinary faculty organization that aims to support faculty, students, and community partners through a series of symposia on language, literacy, and writing. The FLC's long-term goals include the creation of an official Language & Literacy, Rhetoric & Writing Center that supports student and faculty research and provides students and faculty with the opportunity to share expertise and shape language policy on campus and to support similar efforts within local schools and community organizations. The FLC's first symposium in 2016 hosted about 100 participants, and the second symposium is slated for June, 2017.

The university has undertaken dramatic writing program redesign efforts since the last WASC visit. While these efforts are in nascent stages, they will ultimately transform the university curriculum. Writing is now a core feature of the university curriculum, and students will have valuable writing experiences during each stage of their education. This new focus on writing

promotes critical literacies and writing as a mode of thinking. Students demonstrate their writing competencies by:

- Completing a GE A2 first-year writing course.

During their first year on campus, students either enroll on a one-semester writing course (Engl 1010) or a one-year writing course (Engl 1005a and 1005b). Students needing more support and practice in writing enroll in the yearlong sequence, which offers more support, more time on task, and more low-stakes writing opportunities than Engl 1010, the one-semester writing course.

- Completing a GE A3 writing and critical thinking course or an approved equivalent.

After completing their GE A2 writing course, students can enroll in a GE A3 course, which combines writing and critical thinking. This course can provide students with their first exposure to disciplinary writing, as any department on campus can propose a GE A3 course. Currently Communication Studies, English, Philosophy, and Political Science offer such courses. Additionally, students in the College of Engineering, Computer Science, and technology complete Engl 2030: Introduction to Technical Writing, to satisfy this requirement.

- Completing the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR).
- Completing two writing-intensive courses.

The writing-intensive (WI) course requirement ensures that students receive writing instruction in their field at the upper-level. Such instruction will prepare students for the writing in their careers. These courses must include a minimum amount of writing with the opportunity for revision.

- Completing an upper-division writing course in the major, which may be counted as a writing-intensive course.

The new writing requirements follow a vertically-integrated structure that assures students receive coordinated writing instruction during their academic careers. To support the newly-expanded upper-level writing requirements, the university hired a Director of Writing Across the Curriculum.