

**Proposal for a University Writing Program**  
**Undergraduate Council**  
May 31, 2004

**University Vision and Undergraduate Education**

The first of the UC Davis Educational Objectives for students states "Develop effective communication skills: written, oral, interpersonal, and group." Achieving campus educational objectives is central to the learning goal of the UC Davis Strategic Plan (<http://strategicplan.ucdavis.edu>). When the 2003 Chancellor's Fall Conference considered implementation of the learning goal, it identified increased attention to student writing skills and investment in a writing center as high priorities. ([http://strategicplan.ucdavis.edu/2003\\_fall\\_conference\\_report.pdf](http://strategicplan.ucdavis.edu/2003_fall_conference_report.pdf)) This campus vision for excellence in student writing guides the following proposal for a University Writing Program that will be of high quality, stable structure, and well-positioned for future development. It builds upon our current program, initiatives already begun by Elizabeth Langland, Dean of Humanities, Arts, and Cultural Studies (HArCS), recommendations from the Academic Senate Undergraduate Council ([http://www.physics.ucdavis.edu/kiskis/ug\\_council/ugc\\_writing\\_html.html](http://www.physics.ucdavis.edu/kiskis/ug_council/ugc_writing_html.html)), and broad discussions this academic year.

The writing program at UC Davis established a strong curriculum in the 1980s. Through writing instruction, support for writing instruction across the campus, and research in composition, the writing program furthers the campus-wide educational objective to graduate students who are proficient and effective in written communication. It is one of the most important undergraduate programs at the University, and one that provides the skills whereby a student may succeed or fail, not just at the university but in later careers and in graduate school.

In the last twenty-five years in the United States, we have witnessed an astounding shift in attitudes towards what was once simply designated the composition program. "Rhetoric and Composition" as a new discipline, or as a discipline reborn over the last thirty years, represents an emerging area of scholarship. Strengthening the writing program by having a research faculty directing and staffing it will achieve five important goals: 1) improve the teaching and assessment of writing as well as the pedagogical training of graduate students as writing instructors by adding a research component to the writing program; 2) reevaluate, develop, and expand the writing curriculum on the campus and thus further improve the quality of undergraduate education; 3) enhance post-baccalaureate career and educational opportunities for UC Davis students; 4) provide graduate students opportunities for research in the field of composition; 5) monitor and assess the educational achievements of the writing program.

## **Proposal**

**Therefore, to achieve these declared goals of the University, it is proposed that the University Writing Program (UWP) be established as an independent unit housed within the HArCS division of the College of Letters and Science and separate from the Department of English.**

## **Academic Charge of the University Writing Program**

Following current approaches to cognitive development, the program is designed to foster the intellectual maturation of undergraduate students from their first to fourth year. The Program oversees the lower division composition courses that can be used to satisfy college writing requirements. In addition to an upper-division composition course, the program also offers a series of courses specifically tailored to disciplines and to professions that satisfy the upper-division writing requirement. Besides these academic courses, the University Writing Program provides training for graduate students teaching in writing intensive courses as well as in all courses where a composition requirement can be satisfied. Presently offering a workshop program to strengthen the teaching of writing in the disciplines, a major goal of the program is to develop a fully functioning Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Program.

Through its writing across the curriculum program, the UWP will support General Education Writing Experience courses by offering training in writing instruction to the faculty and graduate students teaching these courses. Further, the UWP will advise the General Education Committee and the Courses Committee on criteria for writing experience courses.

The UWP will supervise the Computer Aided Instruction Program and the mentoring of its instructors.

The UWP will evaluate the educational effectiveness of writing instruction on campus by monitoring progress in the overall quality of student writing. Assessment and evaluation of the program's curriculum will be based on Writing Program Administration established guidelines for learning outcomes in university writing programs. The UWP may periodically sample and analyze student writing from writing intensive GE courses, upper division composition courses, writing in the disciplines courses, papers for major courses, honors theses, portfolios, or capstone experience courses. The resulting overall view will be the basis for recommending, as needed, improvements in instructional approaches

## **Administration**

The University Writing Program will become an independent academic program administered within the HArCS division of the College of Letters and Science and led by a Senate faculty director. The internal operations of the program will be the

responsibility of the Director and of a program committee. The program committee will be constituted according to the procedures of the College of Letters and Science. The program committee will be composed of faculty with expertise in composition and writing instruction and drawn from various campus departments. The new Senate faculty referred to later in this proposal will become members of the program committee. When the procedures of the University call for an Academic Senate faculty vote on academic personnel or curricular recommendations, the Senate members of the program committee will provide that service.

In consultation with the UWP program committee, the Provost, the English Department, and the University Writing Council (see below), the Dean of HArCS shall appoint the Director of the UWP. The Director shall report to the Dean of HArCS. In matters related to the campus-wide programs (such as writing in the disciplines and support for writing intensive courses across the campus) of the UWP, the director shall also report to the Provost or her designee.

As writing instruction is crucial to the mission of the university and the UWP serves the needs of all undergraduate students, providing funds to support the UWP is a central campus responsibility. The Director shall make a UWP budget request to the Dean of HArCS. The annual budget for the UWP will then be determined in a consultation among the Dean of HArCS, the Provost, and the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies. The budget will include funds for periodic evaluation of the educational effectiveness of the program. The budget shall be reported to the UWP and the Writing Council when other campus units receive their budgets.

The UWP will be a priority in the Comprehensive Campaign.

### **University Writing Council**

A University Writing Council, which is independent of the University Writing Program, will enhance the campus-wide mission of the Program. The primary role of the Council will be to maintain and strengthen the connections of the UWP with the rest of the campus. The Council will also work to enhance the quality and stability of the program. Through campus-wide representation and communication, it will bring a perspective that will be helpful in ensuring that the program plays its proper role as a unit with campus-wide responsibilities. As a part of that role, the Council may also advise on broad plans for assuring that the Program serves the needs of the campus and thereby maintains a strong base of support. To be effective in that role, the Council must be independent of the University Writing Program. Thus while it is important that there be some representation on the Council from the Program so that Council members are well informed about the Program, it is crucial that a majority of the Council members be independent of the Program.

### *Membership of the University Writing Council:*

Six Senate faculty members broadly representative of the undergraduate colleges (appointed by the Chair of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate in consultation with the faculties of the undergraduate colleges),  
Director of the UWP,  
Chair of the Department of English,  
Two undergraduate students (appointed by ASUCD),  
One graduate student who teaches lower-division composition (appointed by GSA),  
Two Academic Federation members who teach in the UWP (appointed by the Academic Federation),  
Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies or her designee,  
One undergraduate dean (rotating through the undergraduate colleges and appointed by the Provost),  
One associate dean (rotating through the undergraduate colleges, appointed by the Provost, and with the dean and associate dean not from the same college),  
One representative from the Undergraduate Council (appointed by the Chair of the Undergraduate Council).

The six faculty, the students, the Federation members, the dean, the associate dean, and the UGC representative shall serve two year staggered terms.

The Chair of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate shall select one of the six Senate faculty members (and not the Director of the UWP) to serve as chair of the Council.

The Council shall meet at least quarterly for consultation with the Director. The Council shall make an annual report on the activities of the UWP and submit it to the Provost, the Chair of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate, the Dean of HArCS, and the Director or the UWP no later than June 30. The report will give statistics on courses taught and the availability of required courses, review the reports on the educational effectiveness of the program, assess the adequacy of the program's resources for meeting the needs of students, and make recommendations for the budget and for adjustments in courses offerings for the following year. While it is hoped that this independent perspective of the Council will be valuable, it will in no way replace any aspects of prescribed campus administrative, personnel, or program review procedures.

### **Faculty**

Three further goals of the UC Davis Vision and Strategic Plan would be enhanced by the creation of an independent writing program. These include, "Improvement in the ranking of UC Davis programs in national surveys that are based on research visibility and excellence," "Growth in the level of extramural funding across all disciplines," and an "Increase of the proportion of undergraduate classes taught by tenure-track faculty."

To strengthen the Writing Program and give it national prominence, the program will recruit a director with a national reputation in Rhetoric and Composition. In developing the program, the Director will recruit tenure-track faculty who engage in research in the field of composition and who maintain research programs linked to the University Writing Program. They will be engaged in grant writing and involved in assessment and in developing a Writing-across-the-Disciplines Program. They will be able to represent the Program to the faculty at large, to the UC system, and outside the institution.

Therefore, it is proposed that one Senate faculty FTE be allocated for a Director of the UWP, that a search for the Director begin as soon as possible, and that four additional Senate faculty FTE be allocated for the UWP. They may have joint appointments in departments and colleges across the campus.

Departments that host new faculty associated with UWP through full or joint appointments will give their recommendations for these academic personnel actions according to the established procedures for new faculty appointments.

In addition, the program will have Academic Federation faculty. All continuing lecturers presently housed in the Department of English will be transferred to the UWP. All lecturers with one-year contracts hired as a result of a search will be transferred from English to the UWP.

For additional instructors, the UWP will assign courses to English Department graduate students, postdoctoral lecturers, and postdoctoral teaching fellows on the basis of an MOU agreed upon by the Department of English, the Dean of HArCS, and the UWP.

## **Staff**

UWP staff will continue to be housed with English staff. Some of this staff may have overlapping responsibilities to be determined by the MSO in collaboration with the director of the UWP, the chair of English, and the staff in the administrative unit.

## **Course transfer**

In accordance with the procedures of the Academic Senate, the following English courses are to be decertified as ENL courses and recertified as UWP courses:

- ENL 1
- ENL 18
- ENL 19
- ENL 101
- ENL 102
- ENL 104
- ENL 390 and 392

The following lower division English courses will remain ENL courses:

ENL 3  
ENL 4  
ENL 5

The following graduate courses will remain ENL courses:

ENL 391, 393, & 396

### **Courses that Satisfy Composition Requirements**

Each college on the Davis campus establishes its own mandatory writing requirements. Within the larger governance context provided by the Academic Senate, the UWP program committee can advise departments, colleges, and the Committee on Courses of Instruction on new and existing courses best suited to satisfy composition requirements.

### **Program Review**

During the transition period as the UWP shifts from being part of the English department to being an independent program, there will be an initial (2004-06) internal review to examine the effectiveness of the MOU. This will take into account changing enrollment patterns (of undergraduates and of graduate students in English), the educational goals of the UWP that might emerge as the program becomes independent and develops a different curriculum, and changes the Department of English might initiate due to changes in its graduate student mentoring. The director of the UWP in collaboration with the Program Committee and the chair of English in consultation with the Graduate Adviser of English will be responsible for this review.

In later years, the appropriate bodies of the College of Letters and Science and of the Academic Senate will review the program following the established review periods and policies of the College (TPPRC) and the Senate.

### **Supporting documents**

See [http://www.physics.ucdavis.edu/kiskis/ug\\_council/uwp.html](http://www.physics.ucdavis.edu/kiskis/ug_council/uwp.html)