



MOVING TOWARD WEC IN WIP

WHY NOW? WHY WEC?

The Writing Intensive Program is celebrating its 25-year anniversary this year. Compared to other writing across the curriculum (WAC)/writing in the disciplines (WID) programs, ours is a dinosaur. In the time that most universities see WAC programs come and go and come again, WIP has maintained and continues to maintain a high level of support for writing and writing pedagogy across the disciplines, even through economic downturns and global pandemics. WIP regularly works with 20 departments from across the college, supporting around 6000 students each year. In terms of the WAC taxonomy developed by Condon and Rutz (2012), WIP would be classified as an “established” program, one with its own mission to support student writers and writing pedagogy across the disciplines, a regular series of training initiatives, and a fulltime administrator (p. 367). Now, though, I believe we might capitalize on momentum around writing to transition to become an “integrated” program; as such, WIP may be “able to reach out to become important to other efforts, other programs, other agendas—and its value to the institution broadens in ways that increase WAC’s prominence and its sustainability” (Condon & Rutz, 2012, p. 371). Below, I highlight a model we might look toward to support this transition, as well as the steps and considerations involved in making this move.

The past two decades have seen the rise of a new model for a WAC/WID program: the Writing Enriched Curriculum (WEC), created at the University of Minnesota by Pamela Flash. This model addresses the shortcomings of atomized approaches to WAC by integrating writing and support for writing pedagogy at the department/program level in partnership with the WAC program. In this way, WEC maintains a core tenet of WIP’s philosophy as one of its central principles: “that writing is instrumental to learning and as such is continually developed and is the shared responsibility of all academic disciplines” (Flash, 2020, p. 20). WEC also adds to this several additional principles that build nicely upon WIP’s foundation, namely “that those who infuse writing instruction into their teaching require ongoing, partnered support” and “that systemic, curricular incorporation of writing into ‘content instruction’ can be most meaningfully achieved when those who teach are provided multiple opportunities to articulate, interrogate, and communicate their assumptions and expectations” (Flash, 2020, p. 20). Accordingly, the WEC model extends WIP’s philosophy and existing infrastructure into a more integrated and comprehensive approach to WAC and departmental partnerships, respectively.

Transitioning from WIP’s current predominantly course-based approach to integrating writing into discipline-specific classes to WEC’s “systemic, curricular” approach would afford WIP the benefits outlined below while addressing some of the challenges associated with the program’s current model. For instance, writing-intensive courses might not be offered every semester or available to every student in a major, as they can be subject to faculty interest and availability to teach. In addition, writing-intensive classes may still feel like silos to students rather than part of a more comprehensive plan for addressing writing and helping students develop their writing-related knowledge and skills throughout a program of study. Finally, writing-intensive courses may perpetuate the misconception that writing can be learned once and for all, say, in a single disciplinary course, and thereafter students should be able to meet the faculty’s expectations for writing. By collaborating with a department’s faculty in a series of meetings to develop department-specific, discipline-relevant writing plans, WIP can work with programs to address these misconceptions and discuss where, when, how, and in what ways writing can enrich their curriculum.



Already, WIP has begun to recognize a more dynamic approach to supporting programs and classes based largely on class size and the availability of disciplinary graduate students to serve as writing coaches. Such responsiveness will enable WIP to work closely with departments on identifying the support they need to support the implementation of their writing plans.

Further, interest in WIP has steadily grown over the past few years, as faculty in more departments are proposing courses and more departments are proposing more WIP courses and more programs beyond Franklin College are reaching out to discuss possible partnerships. By capitalizing on the current ground-up momentum around writing, WIP can navigate this period of change, both maintaining its current processes and procedures while beginning to work with departments on developing and implementing their Writing Plans. With the pandemic as a source of constant interruption behind us, the core curriculum stable, and active learning as UGA's current QEP, I cannot imagine a better time to adopt WEC for WIP and more fully integrate the program into departments across Franklin College.

AT A GLANCE: PROGRAM COMPARISON

	WEC AT UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA	WIP AT UGA
ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM	director, two assistant directors, program coordinator, graduate student research assistant	director
ACADEMIC UNITS SUPPORTED	more than 70 per year	19 departments and 4 classes in Warnell per year
WRITING INTEGRATION METHOD/PROCESS	At the program level: - interested departments apply to join a cohort - cohorts work with the WEC team through a series of facilitated discussions to craft writing plans for integrating writing in the curriculum - WEC team supports writing plan implementation	Mostly at the course level: - interested faculty members submit course proposals - proposals are reviewed by WIP's director - rosters of accepted courses are assembled based on proposal quality, available funds, and potential impact/number of students Occasionally, at the program level: - departments propose a set/sequence of courses each year to be taught as writing-intensive - review process is the same, though programmatic commitment to a writing-intensive curriculum factors in



INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATION

- “fiscal support for writing instruction”
- “customized instructional support”
- “collection and delivery of student writing samples”
- “ongoing writing assessment”
- “multiple forms of assessment data that can be put to use in accreditation application processes”
- “a set of discussions that have been described as rejuvenating, lively, and formative” (Writing-Enriched Curriculum)
- faculty support in the form of a trained TA from the discipline to serve as a writing coach
- training for faculty and graduate students in writing-in-the-disciplines pedagogy
- availability of the director for faculty consultations
- end-of-term student assessment of impact of writing on the learning experience

BENEFITS OF MOVING TO THE WEC MODEL:

TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE VERTICAL CURRICULUM. Currently, the available writing programs and writing courses at UGA support an atomized approach to writing across the curriculum. That is, even if students encounter writing in FYW, in a discipline-specific WIP course or two, and in a capstone/research experience, they may struggle to transfer writing-related knowledge and skills from these individual exposures to writing/writing instruction. The WEC model can help articulate in the form of Writing Plans and corresponding curriculum design efforts—for programs and also for students in those programs—how writing contributes to the major, the role and value of writing in the discipline, as well as the skills, conventions, processes, and genres that define writing in the field. In turn, a program can enact a common vocabulary and set of strategies for talking about and teaching writing, which can help students see connections across writing assignments, across courses, and even between their coursework and their career interests.

WRITING PLANS. These living documents provide a road map for 1) how writing is situated in the field and in discipline-specific coursework, 2) how writing is integrated into the curriculum, 3) how writing instruction is supported and maintained, and 4) how writing and writing instruction will be assessed. Writing Plans will be developed through a collaboration between WIP administration and departmental faculty in a series of meetings. Examples of Writing Plans from the University of Minnesota can be found [here](#).

ACCOUNTABILITY. With the WEC model, individual programs acquire more responsibility for writing instruction and their students’ development as writers. Rather than expecting FYW and high school teachers to have taught, once and for all, students to write, programs see and establish their role in the



developmental process of helping students gain the writing-related skills and experience they need to effectively communicate in their classes and be prepared for their post-graduation careers and lives. Currently, this accountability may be subject to individual faculty members' interest and availability to teach writing-intensive courses. Reconceiving the relationship between WIP and individual departments as a partnership helps to create an added layer of accountability, as well, as both partners share in the responsibility, decision making, time, and commitment to enriching a curriculum with writing.

SUSTAINABILITY. Since WIP currently focuses support at the level of individual classes, the writing curriculum in certain programs of study is subjected to the availability and interest of particular faculty. The WEC model helps ensure that writing-intensive courses and learning experiences are afforded to students as a programmatic objective. This can help faculty in departments share the responsibility for writing instruction and ensure that writing-intensive courses are offered consistently to increase accessibility for students. In addition, the iterative development and regular assessment of Writing Plans ensures that programs maintain and advance their writing-enriched curricula over time according to a manageable, collaborative process.

ASSESSMENT. In addition to WIP's existing assessment methods, the WEC model supports an assessment process that occurs at the departmental level, which can contribute to accreditation and program review efforts. As well, the assessment strategies set forth in the Writing Plans can be customized to allow programs to see how well students are meeting faculty expectations for writing and evaluate the effectiveness of the writing instruction offered.

TIMELINE FOR TRANSITION

IN SPRING 2022—

- Launch call for course proposals as per usual.
 - For programs that submit at least four course proposals and starting with departments that have long participated in WIP, offer to collaborate with the department on the development of a Writing Plan during the next academic year.
- Develop a flexible but structured process and supporting documents for creating Writing Plans with departments:
 - Timeline
 - Meeting schedule and agendas
 - Document templates
 - Appointment of department liaison
 - Incentives for participating
- Consider the creation of a campus-wide Writing Board to approve writing plans, etc.

FALL 2023-SPRING 2024—

- Work with three departments to create Writing Plans (cohort A).



- Write up a formal proposal to establish a Campus Writing Board.
- Enlist three new departments for the next year to develop Writing Plans (cohort B).

FALL 2024-SPRING 2025—

- Implement Writing Plans for cohort A.
- Work with cohort B to develop Writing Plans.
- Enlist three new departments for the next year to develop Writing Plans (cohort C).

FALL 2025-SPRING 2026—

- Assess and revise Writing Plans for cohort A.
- Implement Writing Plans for cohort B.
- Work with cohort C to develop Writing Plans.
- Enlist three new departments for the next year to develop Writing Plans (cohort D).

SUPPORT

INCENTIVES FOR DEPARTMENTS TO DEVELOP WRITING PLANS

In addition to describing for faculty the benefits of this work for their students and their programs, the following might be helpful to motivate participation:

1. Box lunches for department meetings used for developing/discussing Writing Plans.
2. Stipend for departmental faculty appointed faculty writing liaison.
3. Full WIP TAship for program to support up to four writing-intensive courses during an AY year (note, for some programs, this is already the case).

MAINTENANCE OF WIP'S CURRENT INSTRUCTIONAL AND SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET

This is important to continue to support a robust roster of writing-intensive classes across the curriculum and support full TA lines in programs developing/with Writing Plans, as well as to facilitate WIP training.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES (PERHAPS SHARED BY DEPARTMENT AND WIP)

To implement their Writing Plans, departments might consider additional areas of need for support beyond TAs serving as writing coaches and current WIP training initiatives. Responsibility for these might be shared between the department and WIP and could include the following:

1. Departmental TA to serve in more administrative capacities while Writing Plans are in development: coordinating meetings, contacting faculty, recording input from faculty, identifying teaching and learning resources, making resources available to faculty, and helping to draft the Writing Plan itself.
2. Writing instruction workshops to train faculty (beyond WIP's current faculty orientation).
3. In partnership with the Writing Center, a trained TA or undergraduate student to serve as a satellite writing center for the department for an academic year.
4. Student RAs to assist with Writing Plan assessment efforts and the development of websites/eLC courses to share writing-related instructional materials, resources, and more.



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