

Spring 2005

Chairs Survey Report

University Writing Program

University of New Hampshire



UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

University Writing Program

To Department Chairs, University of New Hampshire:

On behalf of the University Writing Committee, I am presenting the results of the Chair Survey on writing conducted last spring. This survey is part of a broader effort to review the current University Writing Requirement. I want to thank the entire Writing Committee for their work on this survey. In particular, I recognize the dedicated work of the college representatives on the Committee—Ed Larkin in COLA, Gale Carey in COLSA, Vanessa Druskat in WSBE, Betty Crepeau in HHS, and Gail Fensom at UNH Manchester—for facilitating the survey and related discussions. Most of all, I want to congratulate and thank Professor Robert Jerard, representing CEPS, for his work designing and piloting the survey. His tireless and astute contributions to this effort made the survey a useful and informative tool for the entire University, and he has set a high standard for our future assessment work.

I want to thank you for participating and making this survey a success. Your participation yielded substantial results that are significant for a number of reasons. First, the survey indicates that writing continues to be a vital aspect of learning in virtually all disciplines. This response validates the need for our ongoing efforts to find out more about how students succeed with their writing in our classrooms and beyond. The survey results also indicate a number of challenges for UNH. These challenges are aptly described in the attached report by Jeff Ringer and Mike Garcia. Many of those challenges involve our departments and programs. If we are going to manage our existing Writing Requirement better or make a recommendation regarding some future proposal, it seems to me that we should pay more attention to what departments and programs need in order to make students good writers.

I think that we are already working on the most formidable of these challenges by having conversations about writing and becoming aware of how we are succeeding and how we are not. It has been almost ten years since the Faculty Senate passed the University Writing Requirement, and it is time to have a detailed conversation about where we go from here. This survey, the enclosed results, the other dimensions of the Writing Requirement review, the continuing work of the University Writing Committee, and my visit during your Annual Workshop are part of that conversation.

As we continue the review of the Writing Requirement, I look forward to hearing from chairs directly or through their college representatives on the University Writing Committee. Our near-term goal is to survey all WI courses during the coming academic year. I've attached the draft survey instruments that the Writing Committee will consider

at their first meeting in September. If you have comments or questions about that effort in particular, please let me know soon so that I can make the rest of ongoing review as useful as possible.

Again, thank you for your help so far.

Elliott Gruner
Director, University Writing Program

Spring 2005 Department Chairs Survey Report

Jeff Ringer and Mike Garcia

Overview

In the fall of AY 2004-05, the University Writing Committee (UWC) considered the existing University Writing Requirement (UWR) and decided upon a comprehensive plan for its review. As of this writing, that assessment—which includes course surveys, studies of undergraduate writing development, and descriptions of how writing is taught at UNH—is well under way. Moreover, this assessment plan meets a timely need for UNH and its writing programs: we have the opportunity to better understand student writing, to better support the integration of writing across the disciplines, and to make a recommendation regarding the current Writing Requirement.

The first stage of this review includes the Chairs Survey that many of you participated in this past spring. This survey sought to gauge department chairs' perceptions of the UWR, of writing-intensive courses, and of writing in general at the department/program level. It also sought to define challenges unique to WI course instruction and to determine what departments and programs need in order to better implement the UWR. The aggregate results of the survey are attached.

Our goal in this report is to highlight and discuss the concerns noted by department chairs. Many of these concerns deal with a perceived lack of institutional support; others reflect a perceived disconnect between the values of writing upheld by the UWR and the discipline-based values of programs across the university curriculum; still other comments point toward differences in views of what writing is, what "good writing" means, and what the UWR and the University Writing Program (UWP) entail. Although our focus here is to work primarily with the content of the open-ended comments, we will appeal to the statistical data to support, challenge, and guide our observations. This report and the aggregate results of the Chairs Survey will be considered by the Writing Committee this coming year. If accepted, this report will join other assessments that will assist the Committee in making a recommendation regarding the current Writing Requirement.

Survey Structure. The Chairs Survey included 13 items divided into three major subgroups. Each subgroup included two kinds of questions or prompts: those that asked

chairs to write their comments (e.g., "Please comment on the writing skills of graduates of your programs" and "What is the most positive aspect of the University Writing Requirement?"), and those that asked chairs to choose from a fixed set of answers, indicating their level of agreement or disagreement (e.g., "The writing skills of the graduates of my program are important to their future success" and "UNH does a good job in helping faculty fulfill the University Writing Requirement").

The purpose of the three subgroups was to analyze chairs' views on writing at UNH from three different vantage points. Whereas the first section, *Writing in Your Program*, asked chairs to provide "general impressions" on how important writing is to graduates of their program—as well as commenting on how well their graduates write—the second section, *Impact of the University Writing Requirement on Your Department/Program*, asked chairs to consider how well the UWR has achieved the goal of "ensur[ing] that UNH students receive sufficient opportunities to develop their writing skills." Finally, the third section, *UNH Institutional Support for Writing*, asked for feedback on how well UNH and the UWP have assisted individual programs in implementing the WI course requirement.

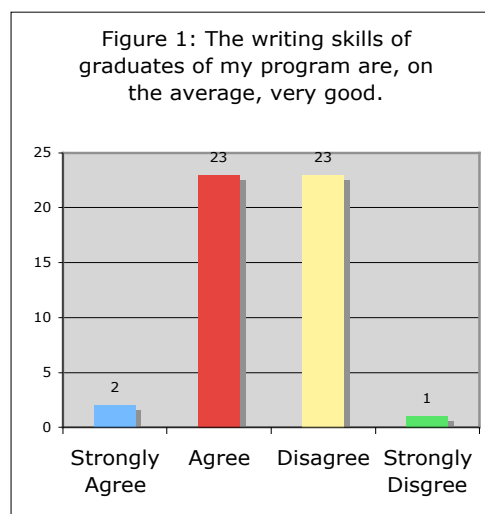
Perceptions

One of the Writing Committee's primary goals for the survey was to gauge chairs' perceptions of writing and writing instruction in their departments: 1) how they defined good writing, 2) how they understood their programs' roles in fulfilling the UWR and 3) how they describe the discipline-specific challenges of writing.

1) Definitions of Good Writing. As Figure 1 indicates, survey respondents' perceptions of UNH graduates' writing abilities were evenly split. Percentage-wise, whereas 49% agreed that graduates were by and large "very good," 51% disagreed. However, many responses to open-ended prompts revealed a lack of consensus regarding what "good writing" means in general, what it means in the context of students' undergraduate careers, and what it means in the workplace.

Many chairs provided general evaluations of their students' writing: they found it "very basic," "good to very good," "a wide variation," "adequate," "declining," "mediocre to downright bad," "exceptionally strong," "a mixed bag," and so on. Only a small group of responses, however, stated reasons for their evaluation. The following are direct quotes:

Students have most difficulty identifying a topic and organizing their thoughts.



They find it difficult to evaluate something and then defend that evaluation.

[They show] poor command of the rules of grammar.

Many never seemed to have learned the parts of speech.

[They struggle with] transitions between paragraphs and overall organization.

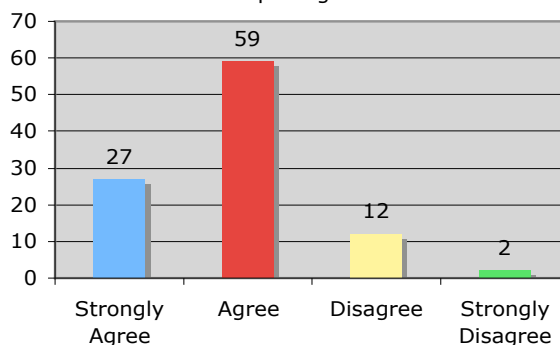
[Some can] barely complete a single page with complete sentences.

The most frequent writing problems raised in the survey responses include a lack of "grammar" skills and an inability to use proper citation. Some respondents used the term *grammar* to refer to traditional grammar instruction: sentence diagramming, parts of speech, fundamental rules of syntax and morphology, and so on. Others indicated a lack of attention to surface errors during the writing process. Most chairs used the word *grammar* to mean something other than traditional grammar instruction; some described problems with conventional discourse within an academic field or conventional academic discourse in general. Some chairs, in fact, made little distinction between "grammar" and APA referencing. Clearly there could be a number of different problems at play.

The various functions and duties of writing often overlapped throughout the survey responses. It was clear that most chairs' functional definition of "good writing" was firmly situated within an *academic* context—in other words, popular or literary criteria did not influence the definition.

2) Responsibilities of Programs. The majority of chairs agreed that their WI courses were responsible for introducing their students to what one respondent referred to as "basic writing skills." However, respondents showed some confusion and frustration with the University Writing Requirement, which is ostensibly designed to enable and structure this instruction. Figure 2 indicates that while 27% strongly agreed that faculty understand the requirement, a combined 14% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. The same percentages held true when chairs were asked whether faculty were aware of the guidelines for WI courses.

Figure 2: Faculty in my program understand the University Writing Requirement and know how to advise undergraduates in completing it.



Some chairs faulted their own faculty for the lack of awareness:

[We need to] convince more ... faculty of the necessity of good writing skills.

Some of my faculty are very aware of the program—others are not.

Meanwhile, many laid the burden of responsibility at the feet of the Writing Program.

The Writing [Program] can be very unhelpful.

I dislike the actual process of applying for WI status.

Our professors have been too busy to see the paperwork through the Writing [Program] bureaucracy.

And others chose not to target any particular department or institution:

There has been a dearth of ideas about how to implement the WI expectations.

There is no effective way to assess faculty compliance with the guidelines.

No matter what the cause, many chairs expressed concerns that WI courses often fail to provide students with solid instruction in writing in their disciplines

3) Disciplinary Disconnect. When asked what the most positive aspect of the UWR was, one chair from CEPS wrote,

None. Students need technical writing for success and not exploratory writing.

Despite the ambiguity of the term "exploratory writing," one could infer that it points to process-based writing-to-learn procedures such as freewriting, journaling, and drafting. Such techniques tend to delay exactness and preciseness in language, two of the pinnacles of what the respondent above refers to as "technical writing."

Some may disagree with the goals of writing-to-learn and process-writing methodology. However, this comment may point to a wider issue: the disparity between what individual disciplines value as "good writing" and the values espoused by a writing program with roots in composition pedagogy. It is this disparity—what we will refer to as a *disciplinary disconnect*—that seems prevalent in respondents' perceptions of writing in general and in perceptions of the UWR.

In fact, as some chairs suggested, the genres and forms of writing required in different disciplines—and the way such writing should be taught—vary greatly:

Scientific writing is quite different from composition classes.

[The needs for writing instruction] depend on the specialization of the department.

Survey respondents noted a variety of forms and genres students would be expected to learn as they moved in and out of courses in their major: lab reports, term papers, design documents, essay exams, field books, business plans, case analyses, memos, reaction papers, long and short papers, take-home exams, "minute" papers, journals, oral

presentations, argumentative scientific papers, "writing to learn," research proposals and draft proposals. Due to this variety, chairs noted that a few general education WI courses could not serve as panacea to all writing issues students will face.

Individual disciplines do not only differ in regards to the forms and genres of writing they use. As some chairs indicated, what teachers value in writing also seems to vary across disciplines:

Many of the faculty in my program are frustrated with the emphasis on 'process'... They find that students do not expect to be responsible for the writing they hand in as a final product.

Many students seem to reach the upper-level courses with too cavalier an approach to the importance of basic writing skills.

[W]e ought to be giving [our students] good tools (analytical organization, grammar, style, syntax) that will stand them in good stead when they get to the advanced stage that expression constitutes.

Overall, however, the survey results suggest that chairs generally perceive the UWR as beneficial to their programs and students. For example, in response to the prompt, "The writing skills of the graduates of my program are important to their future success," chairs overwhelmingly agreed (98%). As many chairs noted in their comments, they are glad for the existence of the UWR because it has given writing a higher profile in departments and programs across the curriculum.

Challenges

In addition to gauging chairs' perceptions on writing and writing instruction, the UWC also sought to understand difficulties departments face in implementing the UWR, ranging from institutional issues such as class size to pedagogical and methodological concerns related to the teaching of writing itself. The survey responses yielded useful insights in these areas.

1) Class Size. Chairs commented on class size as one of the chief obstacles to achieving the goals of the UWR:

Insist on our limiting class size. English 401 has a cap of 24, which is about right. For all that people say about being able to teach writing in large classes, I am not persuaded. I have helped students improve their writing substantially only when I have been able to spend considerable time with them, one-on-one. There is no substitute for that.

Acknowledge that writing-intensive courses may need reduced enrollment to succeed and not punish instructors for these low numbers.

I fear as classes grow in size, our commitment to improving these writing skills will diminish. I know within our department as [our] 400 & 500 level courses have tripled in size, that the 3-5 page reflective paper is the first assignment that is dropped from the course. This is where the commitment to student education and managing an efficient University curriculum are at odds. The faculty need to hold to the importance of WI courses despite pressures to increase numbers and effectively balance large classes with smaller classes that have as one of their foci writing.

[Provide] more resources: smaller classes (our department has all large classes, unlike most departments in the college).

In addition to the many complaints about class size, some comments (for instance, "We are currently eliminating the [WI] designation of some courses because of difficulty of implementing the requirements without resources") indicated that asking faculty to teach WI courses without limiting class size creates a significant problem.

2) The Burden of Teaching Writing. The increased workload for WI courses generally translated into comments about how much time and effort instructors must devote to their courses:

[I dislike] the requirement that we teach writing in addition to our primary pedagogical goals.

Well, [the UWR] has increased my workload extraordinarily, I will say that. The amount of reading and evaluation that I do on a weekly basis probably quadrupled since all my upper level courses turned WI.

??????? I find writing to be the most difficult thing to teach. It is labor-intensive...

I think the requirement is fine. But implementation is difficult, if nothing else for lack of time.

While most chairs had favorable views toward the requirement itself, several were concerned about the UWR's implementation. Specifically, they were concerned that a university-wide writing requirement might lead to the devaluation of writing itself:

I like and support the [UWR]. But... I think there has been a dearth of ideas about how to implement the WI expectations such that faculty just see it as more work for themselves and not for the value it might have for student outcomes.

Sell the value of writing as an end in itself, not as a requirement fulfiller.

It seems clear that even the faculty who support the UWR do not always feel they have the proper training to teach or include writing as a part of their curricula:

We are barely "trained" to teach in our discipline, no one ever taught us how to teach writing.

Although class size and the added burden of teaching writing represented two of the challenges faculty face in implementing WI courses, others were briefly mentioned as well. They included difficulties in working with basic writers; issues concerning English-language fluency of some teachers; faculty resistance to the UWR; lack of consistent standards for WI courses; limited WI course availability within specific majors; and lack of set policies on how to deal with administrative exceptions, such as when students study abroad.

Needs

In response to the challenges mentioned above, chairs made specific suggestions as to how the institution could better support implementation of the UWR. Several suggestions reflected chairs' desires to see the UWR and UWP meet the genre- and disciplinary-based writing needs of the various departments and programs. As the following quotes suggest, chairs wish to see the implementation of the UWR further supported at the department/program level:

We need a course specifically designed for engineering—Engineering Communication. This is where students would really learn about writing and how it relates to their profession.

Provide more support on [an] individual college basis that better reflects the nature of the college and its various programs (technical writing, case analysis, analytical and research skills).

In science disciplines students need more work and feedback regarding writing laboratory reports.

Chairs consistently commented on how the University Writing Program could better assist individual departments and programs in the implementation of the UWR. Specifically, respondents indicated a need for 1) more writing fellows and tutors, especially those with disciplinary knowledge; and 2) faculty roundtables and workshops, both provided for individual departments and programs.

1) Writing Fellows and Tutors. Several chairs noted a lack of available writing fellows and writing center tutors.

[P]rovide more resources: ... more TA help; more writing fellows.

Provide writing scholars free of charge to each WI course.

Specifically, they suggested that these tutors and fellows be placed at the department and college level:

An in-college writing advisor who can keep regular scheduled conference hours and help sessions would strengthen an already strong program.

Assign Writing Fellows to Programs/Departments.

Provide tutors with expertise on discipline specific writing.

2) Faculty Workshops. Many of the comments that called for more emphasis on the disciplinary nature of writing went beyond the scope of individual classrooms; faculty expressed strong interest in larger discussions regarding disciplinary-based values of writing. The following comments indicate a desire to make faculty sharing and collaboration on writing assignments a recurring event of the academic year:

Perhaps regularly sharing brief reports of tips or strategies that seem helpful in improving student writing. Even if the same information was shared annually, it would probably be helpful.

Overall, I'd say UNH could meet with programs individually to hear concerns and share ideas.

Chairs in general favored writing workshops sponsored by the UWP and the Center for Teaching Excellence. However, some comments reflected a desire to see these workshops and discussions take place in a more specific context. One chair requested workshops that focus on writing in specific disciplines, while another called for a workshop (for both faculty *and* students) that focuses on "the writing process," drafting, and feedback.

In general, chairs responded favorably to the prospect of working with consultants and with other faculty members in crafting better writing assignments (one chair referred to these as "creative writing assignments tied to course content."). The bottom line is best summed up by this chair's comment: "Faculty need to be encouraged to use the available resources to enhance their teaching."

Conclusions

In this closing section, we would like to summarize chair responses in a way that will begin to answer the following question: *How can the University Writing Committee and the University Writing Program address the perceptions, challenges, and needs articulated by the results of the Chairs Survey?* The following conclusions attempt a synthesis of chairs' responses: 1) the UWR should focus more attention on departments and programs; 2) the UWR should provide structures for communication concerning and dissemination of information about writing at UNH; and 3) the Writing Committee should continue to learn about and inform students and faculty regarding how student writing succeeds.

1) Focusing Resources at the Departmental Level. Reading through the survey results, we were struck by the number of times department chairs called for more assistance at the department level. In the past, the UWP has employed most of its resources at the individual course level (leading workshops in courses, providing consultation for individual faculty members, staffing a particular course with a writing fellow, and so on) or at a cross-curricular level. However, as many of the comments in the *Needs* section clearly illustrate, emphasis at these levels alone is not sufficient. As mentioned earlier, many chairs perceive a disciplinary disconnect between the values of writing espoused by individual departments and those espoused by the UWP and UWR—both of which are intimately connected to the discourses of English and composition studies. Two chairs criticized the UWR for not taking into account the differences among what certain disciplines value as opposed to others:

In our program most of the courses do not lend [themselves] to adequately incorporating the amount of writing necessary to be approved. This is especially true of courses with labs.

Students need technical writing for success and not exploratory writing.

Such comments indicate that the values underpinning a university-wide writing requirement may conflict with the values of writing held by certain disciplines, a point Mark Waldo (2005) strives to make in his recent book, *Demythologizing Language Difference in the Academy*. The University of Nevada-Reno writing center director further contends that traditional writing-to-learn strategies such as freewriting, journaling, and drafting are not value-neutral and do not always "carry over" to other disciplines with sustained effectiveness.

How can the UWC and the UWR address these disciplinary differences? Many of the chairs' suggestions provide an excellent starting point. For example, we should consider assigning writing fellows to individual departments or programs. Such "department fellows" would have knowledge of the discipline, awareness of the conventions and values of writing in its discourse, and experience in writing in similar genres. Department fellows would be able to work with individual students in various courses throughout the major. At the same time, they could assist faculty in designing writing assignments and assessment strategies. Because of the extensive knowledge in the discipline these fellows would need, graduate students or advanced undergraduate students would be the best candidates. Department chairs and faculty would play a significant role in finding and recruiting qualified department fellows.

2) Standardizing Disciplinary Writing. More emphasis on the UWR at the department level might address one of the perceived shortcomings of the requirement—a lack of consistency or standardization among WI courses. Some chairs noted that, while some WI courses are truly writing intensive, others seem to require far less writing. One chair recommended that WI courses be evaluated for their WI content to determine if they are indeed writing intensive. In the words of one chair,

I wish we could raise standards and expectations across the campus. I think, quite simply, we often do not ask enough of our students.

However, although an overall effort to raise standards can cut across disciplinary lines, the *way* standards are raised—especially when it comes to a university-wide writing requirement—does not.

The current UWR may seem vague regarding how writing should be assigned, taught and evaluated in WI courses because such detailed guidelines would inevitably fit some courses and disciplines better than others. As a result, some departments might consider themselves unnecessarily limited or otherwise disadvantaged. To some, the UWR works best as a loose framework of requirements for writing that allows for further refinement at the departmental level. That is, in order to function as it should, the UWR should be further articulated or "customized" by individual colleges and departments. In departments where this step has been taken, faculty are generally more comfortable and satisfied with the UWR and more secure in the way they teach writing.

Management of enrollments for WI is a complex issue that requires further study. Waldo (2005) suggests that a University-wide writing program or requirement should allow departments and programs to work out goals and implementation. To quote another chair, in order to help programs or departments improve student writing, UNH ought to "not rely on requirements and procedures." Rather, UNH ought to "sell the value of writing as an end in itself."

3) Increasing Awareness of Writing at UNH. Another way to increase faculty awareness of and investment in the University Writing Requirement is to give them a fuller sense of writing at UNH—in other words, the "big picture" into which their writing instruction fits. Although most instructors and core faculty are aware of the UWR and its implications on their own department, they might not be aware of how instruction plays out on a broader level across the curriculum.

Workshops and roundtables have helped increase awareness, and just as importantly, current assessments of writing at UNH should continue to be publicized. The chairs' survey is one of these assessments; it and other instruments will gauge perceptions of our current programs.

Other ongoing projects will go beyond what has been done to date to describe student experiences directly.

For example, this coming AY the Writing Committee has decided to survey faculty and students in all WI courses. The current plan is for a survey to be administered toward the end of the semester. The draft instruments for this survey are attached. Comments on the concept, design, and implementation of this survey would best reach college representatives on the Writing Committee or the Program Director by early September 2005. We anticipate the results of this survey will be made available first to department chairs.

We anticipate another dimension of the review of the Writing Requirement will be a student-centered effort that could reveal much about the undergraduate writing experience at UNH: Four Years of Writing (4YW) is a longitudinal study that will follow 100 University of New Hampshire students from the Class of 2010 throughout their undergraduate careers, thoroughly documenting their experiences with writing and their growth as writers. This study differs from others in that it will not focus only on the UWR and WI courses, but will gather information on students' writing development wherever it occurs—even outside of the classroom. Using this information, we hope to learn much more about how UNH students are learning to write and how to help them develop their writing abilities.

These various efforts to address the concerns expressed in this report suggest that the "culture of writing" at UNH will continue to thrive and evolve for the benefit of our student writers. We believe that the strength of writing instruction at UNH lies in the breadth and diversity of student and faculty involvement.

References

Waldo, Mark L. (2005). *Demythologizing language difference in the academy: Establishing discipline-based writing programs*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Appendices

Attached are the following documents:

- A. Aggregate Survey Results (TrueOutcomes Combined Survey)
- B. University Writing Committee Membership
- C. The University Writing Requirement
- D. Four Years of Writing at UNH
- E. WI Course Survey Drafts
- F. University Writing Program Contact Information

Aggregate Survey Results



Combined Survey

The UNH Faculty Senate passed the University Writing Requirement in 1995 and graduated the first class to complete the requirement in 2002. In conjunction with a University-wide review of the University Writing Requirement, the University Writing Committee is reviewing the implementation of the University Writing Requirement within individual departments/programs. This review will provide vital information that will assist the Committee in making recommendations regarding the current University Writing Requirement and future initiatives. For your convenience, information concerning the writing requirement is given below.

What Are the Goals of the University Writing Requirement?

- Students should use writing as an intellectual process to learn material, discover, construct and order meaning
- Students should learn to write effectively in various academic and disciplinary genres for professional and lay audiences
- Students should learn to display competence with the generic features and conventions of academic language

What is the UNH Writing Requirement?

All bachelor's degree candidates are required to complete four designated Writing Intensive (WI) courses, including English 401 (Freshman Composition) and three additional WI courses. One course must be in the student's major, and one course must be at the 600- level or above. With the assistance of their advisor, students should monitor their WI course completion to make sure the requirement has been met by the expected date of graduation.

What are the Guidelines for Writing Intensive Courses?

"Students in the course should do substantial writing which enhances learning and demonstrates knowledge of the subject or discipline. Writing should be an integral part of the course and should count for a significant part (approximately 50% or more) of the final grade."

"Writing should be assigned in such a manner as to require students to write regularly throughout the course. Major assignments should integrate the process of writing (prewriting, drafting, revision, editing). Students should be able to receive constructive feedback of some kind (peer response, workshop, Writing Center, professor, TA, etc.) during the drafting/revising process to help improve their writing."

"The course should include both formal (graded) and informal (heuristic) writing. There should be papers which are handed in for formal evaluation as well as informal (ungraded) assignments designed to promote learning, such as invention activities, in-class essays, reaction papers, journals, reading summaries, or other appropriate exercises."

What follows is an aggregation of the following survey results:

1. CEPS Chairs Writing Survey
2. COLSA Chairs Writing Survey
3. HHS Chairs Writing Survey
4. LA Chairs Writing Survey
5. UNH_M Chairs Writing Survey
6. WSBE Chairs Writing Survey

1. The writing skills of the graduates of my program are important to their future success. (ABET_G_ME)

Choice	Percent Response (n=49)	Frequency
Strongly Agree (5)	78	38
Agree (4)	20	10
Disagree (2)	0	0
Strongly Disagree (1)	2	1
Mean / Std. Dev.	4.71 / 0.68	

2. The writing skills of graduates of my program are, on the average, very good. (ABET_G_ME)

Choice	Percent Response (n=49)	Frequency
Strongly Agree (5)	2	1
Agree (4)	47	23
Disagree (2)	47	23
Strongly Disagree (1)	4	2
Mean / Std. Dev.	2.96 / 1.10	

3. My program is subject to an external accreditation review that includes student writing skills as a required outcome.

Choice	Percent Response (n=49)	Frequency
Yes (5)	31	15
No (1)	69	34

4. Please comment on the writing skills of graduates of your program. (ABET_G_ME)

1. Very basic in spite of our efforts in providing various writing assignments
2. Satisfactory, in general
3. They get lots of opportunities to write and get strong negative feedback when their writing is poor. However, I don't think we do enough to refine their skills. Their writing is usually good to very good, but reflects their native abilities more than what we've done to improve their writing.
4. There is a huge variety in writing skills. But most are able to write adequate (or better) technical reports.
5. It's a mixed bag. I think if we considered the change in student writing from the first day to the last, we would see substantial change for many. But I'm not convinced the ultimate products demonstrate high quality all the time. I know our faculty work hard with research students to get senior thesis products into good shape. It's often not easy.

6. They struggle with mechanics to some extent but the bigger problem is a difficulty writing evaluative documents. They will summarize something they have read, but they find it difficult to evaluate something, and then defend that evaluation.
7. They could (and should) be much better.
8. Writing is an important part of doing mathematics and statistics at all levels and contexts. Students meet writing experiences at all stages.
9. There is a wide variation in writing skills, but overall the writing skills are good.
10. Pretty good overall.
11. Some of the students are very good, but I think far too many of them are quite poor. My hypothesis is that far too many of them get by without being required to do as much writing as we think because I believe that in far too many courses students work in groups and the bulk of those reports are written by the same minority.
12. Majors required to take WI courses. Essay questions and papers are common requirements in all courses. Essays in intro courses too.
13. There is a great deal of variation in the writing skills of our students. Students have most difficulty identifying a topic and organizing their thoughts. But mechanics are also problematic.
14. I can only speak about my own students, but I am sometimes surprised to see juniors and seniors struggling with such things as formulating a thesis for an argumentative essay and with effective use of paragraph structure.
15. There is, of course, great variability in the writing skills of our students. The modal student, however, writes with less-than-desirable clarity and with poor command of the rules of grammar.
16. Students must display competency in writing in nearly every 500- and 600-level course in our curriculum. I am confident that most of our graduates have acquired a satisfactory level of writing proficiency before they graduate.
17. In fact, I do not know the answer to number 3, above. Graduates of my program, like those of other programs at UNH, demonstrate writing abilities that are generally below what we should expect of college graduates. Many seem never to have learned the basic parts of speech and rules of grammar, let alone the finer points of style. Many of the faculty in my program are frustrated with the emphasis on "process" in the current composition dogma. They find that students do not expect to be responsible for the writing they hand in as a final product, and often have not been taught, in ENGL 401, how properly to formulate, research, organize, write, and cite an academic essay. In private moments, faculty often despair of the possibility for change here, especially since ENGL 401 is often staffed by graduate students who, themselves, demonstrate poor writing abilities.
18. a large number of students (less than a majority) have mediocre to downright bad skills at writing. I believe they come from high school lacking these skills--I don't believe the one English gen ed they have to take can magically fix them.
19. Uneven
20. Most writing experience comes from the thesis writing. We do not currently have a writing seminar, although we had such a course two years ago taught by a postdoc fellow. Some additional writing experience comes from being a TA in writing intensive courses. Additionally, we have a course for Juniors, Seniors and graduate students (Advanced Scientific Writing) that provides formal training in scientific writing and manuscript reviewing. This is presently a small, select class and such a course might be useful for a wider audience.
21. I personally don't have the opportunity to evaluate the writing skills of most of our department's graduates. I spoke with a colleague who teaches an upper level writing intensive course: he assessment is none of the students are poor writers. He feels that some are good writers and some are 'adequate'. However he doesn't think the students get enough feedback on their writing style through lower level writing intensive courses and through lab reports.
22. The writing skills of undergraduate students in general have declined. Most science students do not understand why they need to write clearly and concisely.
23. There is considerable variation across the 4 years in writing skills. Scientific writing is quite different from composition classes. Perhaps one of the most difficult things for them is to learn how to look a numerous sources of literature and integrate the information and properly cite the literature. A problem I have seen--at least early on--is that when the information tends to

- come from the web, students don't know how to cite it. Furthermore, there is a temptation to cut and paste--hence it may not be in their own words. I hear odd phrases, especially from some international sites translated into English, that I heard my parents use--but these kids don't talk that way. It is also difficult for professor in science to have adequate time in the course for multiple drafts of writing.
24. Graduates, overall, achieve a good level of writing skills while in the major. However, in all honesty, I have seen the overall the level of writing ability decline in the last 5-10 years.
 25. Overall they are good, but their writing experience in my program is confined to a particular style of writing. I can't really comment on the overall writing skills.
 26. I'd say the writing skills of graduates in my program are, on average, "good" but not "very good." We have some exceptionally strong writers, but also some who are not strong at all. On the whole, I would say most of our graduates do make progress at improving their writing, but some students come into the program with writing skills that are exceptionally weak. So what "progress" really means is relative.
 27. Most students are not effective written communicators
 28. I've noticed somewhat of a decline over the years in the commitment to excellence in writing in our classrooms. In part, I think this is because there has been a decline in the level of writing skills that students bring to the program initially. Many of our entering students really lack all sorts of skills to be good students.
 29. The best of our graduates have had extremely strong writing skills and most are certainly quite good. I remain concerned, however, that too many students seem to reach the upper level courses with too cavalier an approach to the importance of basic writing skills including grammar and proper citation.
 30. The majority of students still have problems with basic writing skills especially transitions between paragraphs and overall organization; staying focused and establishing a clear thesis are also major problems.
 31. In response to number 3, several of our programs are subject to accreditation standards for writing however, about half are not subject to this level of scrutiny.
 32. I think their skills are quite variable. Some students write very well when they enter the professional program in their senior year - others do not. We work very hard in their senior year to improve their capacity to write for various audiences, so students who are weak improve, however, I feel that some still are not where we would like them to be by the time they receive their BS degree.
 33. It depends on a) the specialization in the department. Some are very demanding in terms of writing while others do not focus on writing; b) the expectations of the advisor in terms of writing preparation. Some advisors counsel students into more writing intensive couraes and others do not. Thus students writing ability ranges from those clearly ready for graduate theses and who write longer papers in a logical style that considers appropriate formats (APA) to those that can barely complete a single page with complete sentences.
 34. There is a wide range of writing skills within our majors. Some of our graduates are excellent at written communication and expression, grammar, APA referencing. I would estimate that 10% of our graduates are not accomplished writers, have little understanding of how to create a persuasive written argument, do not understand or attend to basic grammar, and are either lazy or clueless when it comes to APA referencing.
 35. We tend to have extensive writing in each of our courses. We have two writing intensive courses in the major. The skill levels of our graduates remain good to poor.
 36. The writing ability of students entering our program has, in our view, seriously declined over the past decade. We are dismayed to see that many cannot organize an expository piece, a research paper, or a simple response to an essay question.

5. Faculty in my program understand the University Writing Requirement and know how to advise undergraduates in completing it. (ABET_G_ME)

Choice	Percent Response (n=49)	Frequency
Strongly Agree (5)	27	13
Agree (4)	59	29
Disagree (2)	12	6
Strongly Disagree (1)	2	1

Mean / Std. Dev. 3.96 / 0.98

6. Writing Intensive (WI) courses have had a positive effect on student writing skills in my Department/Program. (ABET_G_ME)

Choice	Percent Response (n=47)	Frequency
Strongly Agree (5)	13	6
Agree (4)	64	30
Disagree (2)	19	9
Strongly Disagree (1)	4	2
Mean / Std. Dev.	3.62 / 1.07	

7. Current WI courses provide adequate opportunity for students in my Department/Program to complete the Writing Requirement. (ABET_G_ME)

Choice	Percent Response (n=49)	Frequency
Strongly Agree (5)	35	17
Agree (4)	59	29
Disagree (2)	6	3
Strongly Disagree (1)	0	0
Mean / Std. Dev.	4.22 / 0.74	

8. Faculty teaching WI courses in my program are aware of the WI guidelines (see above). (ABET_G_ME)

Choice	Percent Response (n=49)	Frequency
Strongly Agree (5)	27	13
Agree (4)	59	29
Disagree (2)	12	6
Strongly Disagree (1)	2	1
Mean / Std. Dev.	3.96 / 0.98	

9. Please comment on the role of WI courses in your program. What are the specific goals of WI courses in your program? What methods are used in WI courses in your program? e.g. writing with revision, lab reports, term papers, memos, etc. (ABET_G_ME)

1. The UNH WR has not had an impact on our program since the courses that count towards the writing requirement were already in place.
2. Lab reports and term papers with revisions
3. Some of my faculty are very aware of the program, others are not. Hence the first disagree. Our WI have lab reports with revision and some study of technical writing in general. We want our students to be able to write clear and convincing technical documents.
4. I don't believe it has changed anything. In my mind, WI means lots of it and opportunity for constructive revision. This certainly happens in Chem 699 (senior thesis). Our other course Chem 698 is WI, but it's been handed around so much I don't know whether it fits the criteria for WI. We just decertified our advanced labs for WI status. Our majors are complaining because they write a lot in these labs, (but often not revision of drafts), and much more so than in WI courses outside the major, some of which they claim hardly contains any writing at all (even if worth more than 50% of the grade).
5. Our writing intensive courses are offered at the senior level. Students must take four senior electives, at least one of which must be writing intensive. The WI senior electives vary in their approach, but all of them use repetitive writing assignments: e.g. a series of short (1-3 page) evaluative pieces, a series of lab reports, a multi-submission term paper, a collection of design documents, etc. Most courses use a combination of these, plus essay exams, software documentation, and other writing. I think the biggest thing we struggle with is getting appropriate and timely feedback to students. In some cases the writing is part of a much bigger workload, and does not get the attention that is required. We are currently reviewing our WI courses to try to provide a more consistent set of WI courses.

6. Several different methods are used including field books, lab reports, essay exams, and term papers. The field books, lab reports, and essay exams provide more of a sequential feedback loop rather than a revisional feedback loop -- both are helpful.
7. Writing demonstrates understanding of mathematics.
8. The WI courses offer a variety of writing methods with the common theme being writing with revision. Term papers, business plans, case analysis, and memos are all used to varying degrees in the WI courses.
9. Term papers, Short essays, case solution write ups
10. I believe that the intention is good, but I believe also that the implementation is not so good.
11. Exams with essays, frequent report writing on econ conditions (issues) and research papers
12. Writing in our department is complicated by the fact that we teach students to write in a foreign language as well as in English. In the courses in English we likely don't differ from other departments who want their students to be able to write cogent, coherent, linguistically strong papers. In the foreign language the attention may be more narrowly focused on the correctness of language, particularly in the lower level courses.
13. Writing is an integral part of all English Department courses, with the possible exception of linguistics. Faculty use a wide range of methods, including journals, reaction papers, formal argumentative and research essays, both long and short papers, take-home exams, in-class essay exams, etc.
14. Our goals are the same as those of the WI Committee. Methods run the gamut -- writing with revision, lab reports, term papers, "minute" papers, journals, etc.
15. The methods used are widely variable and involve nearly all you mention here. But some members of my department have acquired other methods by virtue of their special training. For example, our faculty in rhetorical studies are trained in the principles and methods of effective oral expression. These principles and methods are applicable to written as well as oral communication. Presently, all of our 600-level courses are WI. We are keenly interested in seeking WI designations for our 500-level courses too. Those courses meet the guidelines specified for writing intensive courses.
16. very much oriented toward writing academic papers.
17. We pay special attention to the writing of research papers, since our students must submit a senior thesis. All of our students must write draft proposals, proposals with annotated bibliographies, and a 20-page research paper at the 500 level. Methods include capping key seminars at 15 students, intensive professor feedback, workshopping, presenting sample difficult sentences from student papers for all to work on collectively, distributing excellent student work to the whole class, to go over carefully and refer to as a model, and insistence on absolute student responsibility for the final draft.
18. We have two core courses for the major that are WI (at the 400 and 500 level), and one senior thesis capstone course for the major that is WI. Students do informal, formal writing, revisions, and for the senior thesis, they also write a research paper. We have had some problems with the senior thesis (students don't budget enough time, do not have the preparation to research and organize a long paper, etc). We have just created a methods course (that will also be writing intensive) to help better prepare them for the senior thesis.
19. In research, and many of the other jobs our students will get after graduating, writing clearly and well is essential. I believe the more we make them write, the better!
20. From course to course, the role varies. Overall, goals include making a compelling argument to a scientific audience, and how to do the same for a management audience. Methods include all those listed.
21. The WI courses are very important, as they generally provide valuable feedback to the students on the rules and styles of scientific writing.
22. Of the two writing intensive courses in my program one relies on lab reports (with revisions) and the other relies on term papers with revisions. The goals are for students to express their thoughts in the technical style appropriate to the discipline and to write in a good scientific style.
23. There is lots of variation, but perhaps the main goal is to teach students how to do scientific writing. Usually time constraints prevent much writing with revision, rather the hope is that with multiple papers/reports that the writing will improve from first to last. However, this next year I will have 3 short assignments near the beginning where I will require revision, because I'm not confident that they take the comments seriously--as long as the grade is satisfactory to

- them. Often if the last assignment is at the very end of the class, the students don't even bother to come and pick up their papers. I send them to their Granite State Box--but I don't really think they look at the comments. The grade is all that seems to matter. We don't have a senior thesis requirement, but those who do write a senior thesis get the best training. I had one student who got a little frustrated with all the drafts she had to write until I found it acceptable. But afterwards she thanked me when she realized what was happening. She was really proud of what she had written!!
24. Students engage in a variety of writing activities within the program. They write reaction papers that help them in self-exploration re: ethical principles, theories, and cultural perspectives, as well as a variety of more research papers, including 'newsletter' articles, essays, and formal research papers.
 25. WI courses in my program utilize writing with revision, lab reports, and research papers.
 26. On the whole, I think WI courses have made a world of difference! I'm not saying every graduate is a "very good" writer, of course, but nonetheless I am a strong advocate for the idea that WI courses overall are having a positive impact. WI courses in our program are designed to demonstrate the benefit of drafting, revision, and collegial review. We use these WI methods, in part, as goals in and of themselves. I say this because by implementing the methods, students are able to see first hand the impact these methods have on their own writing. It becomes evident to them that drafting, revision and feedback really do result in a better product. And this "lesson" applies to all writers in the class, those who are starting out at a very low skill level to those starting from a very high skill level. Every student sees progress in her or his work, and the students also gain a sense of the skill level of the group as a whole. To me, students benefit when they have a stronger sense of how their peers write - this knowledge of others enables them to better understand how their OWN work might be seen from the point of view of a reader. And this is good. In addition to drafting, review and revision, we also emphasize a wide variety of writing forms and modes, from argument to narrative to journal to report and on and on. Since all of our program's upper level courses are WI courses, students end up taking at least two WI courses in the major, since we require each to take two upper level courses in order to complete degree requirements. Thus, students get a broad range of WI methods and modes of writing from within the program's curriculum itself. I hope these comments help. By the way, it is extremely hard to express one's thoughts in this tiny little box into which we must type! In any case, thanks for all your work.??
 27. There are no specific goals of the WI courses. However, my impression is that writing is used primarily as a writing to learn tool.
 28. Our courses, as far as I know, have always been writing intensive.
 29. A variety of strategies are used. Our intro courses often use in -class writing, essay exams and short essays with required revisions. Other courses stress research papers and projects that require drafts and revisions. We try to include a variety of types of writing in courses - exposition, comparative analysis, and critical assessment.
 30. The role of WI classes varies with the option in our department. For example, some are met by lab reports and some have extensive writing of short reaction or theme papers and some have extensive term papers.
 31. We have two WI courses in our program. Both occur in the senior year when students enter the "professional" program. This change occurred three years ago when we moved from a BS to a BS/MS program. In our former BS program we had a sophomore level course that addressed professional communication (oral and written). This course had small classes, typically 18 - 20 students). We dropped this course because of the change in the structure of the program. The course formed the basis of writing expectations in the major and I for one, miss it. Currently our two senior level courses address writing for research purposes socializing students to the more formal styles of professional writing. They are not as systematic as our sophomore level course, but I think they do a reasonable job of facilitating students' written work. Our other courses also have considerable writing - lab reports, memos, research papers, etc. Some have the opportunity for revision, some do not. We have not pursued WI designation for these courses because we do not "need" them, but they have a heavy writing component.
 32. There is a range of interest in and understanding of WI and its place in the department, much less the university. For my own specialization students write two long papers in two consecutive WI courses that they revise at least twice and which I comment on in draft and final forms.
 33. The WI courses within our department have different goals. One course requires repeated

revisions and drafts of two 10-20 page proposals. These papers are a research proposal and a grant proposal so the writing is structured, and requires APA referencing. Students receive repeated feedback from the instructor on their papers as the semester progresses, there are in-class workshops on writing specific aspects of the proposals, the writing center comes to class and does one workshop a semester and puts a face to the Writing Center, students are STRONGLY encouraged to use the WC throughout the semester. The students work in teams and give each feedback on their writing and students are encouraged to ask outside readers to review their proposals. The other departmental WI courses use journaling, reaction papers, and reading summaries as the primary method of written expression. In this way, we try to cover a variety of writing styles and provide a number of ways for students to enhance their writing.

34. We have two that all take. I think we need to revisit their effectiveness.
35. Students in our WI course write lab reports and term papers. To my knowledge, the instructors do not use specific writing teaching methodologies.

10. UNH does a good job in helping faculty fulfill the University Writing Requirement.

Choice	Percent Response (n=47)	Frequency
Strongly Agree (5)	2	1
Agree (4)	57	27
Disagree (2)	36	17
Strongly Disagree (1)	4	2
Mean / Std. Dev.	3.17 / 1.09	

11. What is the most positive aspect of the University Writing Requirement?

1. None. Students need technical writing for success and not exploratory writing.
2. Setting a level of required writing experiences.
3. It focuses on the process of writing.
4. Writing is a vehicle for thinking and for communication. I encourage it as much as possible, even in our big courses. I think it is an important expectation for a college graduate to do these things well.
5. That the WI requirement exists. I think the mere existence of the requirement has raised the awareness of students that writing is important.
6. We are barely 'trained' to teach in our discipline, no one every taught us how to teach writing.
7. It reminds educators and students of the importance of writing.
8. Maintenance of standards for the WI program, support, and screening of appropriate courses for the WI requirements.
9. It places emphasis on writing!
10. Its intent.
11. Discipline for all majors
12. that students are compelled to write more often, thus, hopefully, helping them to clarify their thoughts and to secure their knowledge base.
13. That it exists.
14. It forces faculty members to include writing assignments in their courses, and it raises the awareness of the importance of teaching writing.
15. The UWR reinforces throughout students' education that sound expression is an index of sound understanding. I do believe many, if not most, get the message that their successes in life are often related to their capacity to write incisively.
16. The idea that UNH grads should be able to write coherently is good in principle
17. The general goals are very appropriate
18. gives students good experience with writing
19. Its existence.
20. Allows for a variety of writing assignments.
21. As above, more writing, more better.
22. Helps students in each discipline achieve better writing and analytical skills
23. It represents a statement that we value good writing, and will help students to achieve it.
24. Having a writing intense component in a class tends to improve teaching, learning and writing skills

25. The most positive aspect of the Writing Requirement is that students continue to write throughout their college careers, e.g. beyond Freshman English.
26. It forces the students to write.
27. Students have to write.
28. It is clear & easy to understand & follow.
29. It is there! Students must write in order to graduate.
30. As I say, the fact that it truly does get results for each student that completes it. The results come at different levels, of course, but they are clear (to me at least) nonetheless.
31. It has raised awareness of discipline specific writing.
32. That it formalizes the expectation for effective writing by all students.
33. Students are required to write and have their writing assessed in areas related to the major as well as more traditional forms of writing. The level of feedback is essential if we want to improve writing on this campus.
34. I have benefited from the various writing workshops presented over the years. Cindi Gannett worked closely with me on the development of some of the WI courses that I used to teach (in the former BS program). This learning was easily translated to the WI Course I currently teach. I have also incorporated peer reviewing, submission of drafts, and other strategies as appropriate in non-WI courses I teach. My departmental colleagues have not been as proactive in taking advantage of these resources.
35. That there is one.
36. It makes faculty attend to the importance of writing within the general education of our students. With the increased emphasis on larger class size, the opportunity to write and gain feedback from the instructor is threatened. It is extremely time consuming and impossible to manage within a large class.
37. Variety of courses in which they do writing; writing in the major
38. The fact that we have one. Practice is certainly one component of writing improvement.

12. What do you most dislike about the University Writing Requirement?

1. Need help for students that study abroad such as Budapest where they may miss one of the WR.
2. Faculty teaching WI courses in major have less English capability than the students.
3. None
4. The formulas, the lack of documentation, the requirement that we teach writing in addition to our primary pedagogical goals
5. I think the requirement itself is fine. But implementation is difficult, if nothing else for lack of time.
6. I like and support the idea. But it doesn't fit everything equally well. I think there has been a dearth of ideas about how to implement the WI expectations such that faculty just see it as more work for themselves and not for the value it might have for student outcomes. The value doesn't translate into the time necessary to construct and sustain the writing experience. Students also see very clearly that some WI courses have much less writing in them than others. And they complain about that. Perhaps the end-of-semester evaluation could inquire about how WI the course was?
7. My impression is that many of the WI courses on campus are quite weak, even ones offered in the English department. I wish we could raise standards and expectations across the campus. I think, quite simply, we often do not ask enough of our students.
8. I'm not sure that is has sufficient 'buy in' from the faculty or students. It seems to be more of a formality.
9. At times procedural issues override the original and fundamental intent of the requirement.
10. The burden of the WI requirements falls to the departments that are responsible for the WI courses. Instructors in these courses should be better recognized and compensated for their efforts
11. WI courses across the UNH do not have consistently intensive writing requirements.
12. Its implementation.
13. No Support. class size productivity vs. writing
14. Besides the time it takes to grade or even read the papers, the quality of writing suggested by the requirement does not appear to be one that students strive for. If we can convince more students (and in some cases faculty) of the necessity of good writing skills and its efficacy in the learning process, we may make some progress toward the University's goals.
15. When this program first began, it was met with cynicism among some faculty. Frankly, I am not

- persuaded that most faculty consciously think about meeting the specific requirements of this program, and there really is no effective way to assess faculty compliance with the guidelines. In reading student course evaluations in English I have upon occasion noticed students complaining about there being too little writing in a given writing intensive course.
16. I haven't heard any criticisms about having a requirement, but there are two common complaints about its implementation. One is that some faculty perceive the proposed classroom methods as either useless or as lacking impact commensurate with the time expended. For example, some see the notion of ungraded first drafts as an invitation for students to take their writing less rather than more seriously. But generally, these are rather scattered criticisms and do not amount to a major critical theme. Historically, faculty have nearly without exception thought that the English composition course is inadequate as the only required writing intensive course. That view is based on the perception that many sections of that course emphasized expressive writing that treated display of feelings and attitudes as an end in itself rather than viewing writing as a goal oriented, more practical mode of communication. I understand that ENG 401 has been reformed, but this perception will take some time to change.
 17. Students claim that the writing center can be very unhelpful -- give them bad advice. One student described how she was asked to change her argument.
 18. It was not until this year that adequate course choices were available to students to fulfill the requirements.
 19. the lack of institutional support. classes are too large in our program to adequately implement the requirements of WI courses
 20. It asks a lot of faculty, and therefore, should provide faculty with more help during the approval process. Our program has courses awaiting approval, but our professors have been too busy to see the paperwork through the Writing Center bureaucracy. Frankly, the Writing Center has been a barrier to getting new WI courses approved, because it has (I imagine) been unable to have people actively help professors through the red tape.
 21. NA
 22. It has the potential to become ad hoc, just another desultory hoop to be cleared before graduation.
 23. Not enough courses as WI
 24. I think it is sound.
 25. The limited choices within the major and the disparity between course writing requirements
 26. Students need even more reinforcement than currently is part of the Writing Requirement. [This is not a dislike, it's more of a comment on my part].
 27. It increases the workload for an instructor and affects course content
 28. In our program most of the courses do not lend to adequately incorporating the amount of writing necessary to be approved. This is especially true of courses with labs.
 29. Sometimes students avoid taking a course because it is a WI course -- even though they are interested in taking the course otherwise!
 30. nothing
 31. Well, it has increased my workload extraordinarily, I will say that. The amount of reading and evaluation that I do on a weekly basis probably quadrupled since all my upper level courses turned WI. Part of the reason for this is because I have incorporated WI techniques into all my classes, although only the upper level are officially WI. If I were to pick on anything, I would say that I dislike the actual process of applying for WI status. I don't really dislike it, I guess, but it has created inertia for me in that I probably have two or three courses that are truly WI but which do not have WI status because I have not found the time to submit the paperwork for them. This is unfortunate for students, and I do accept responsibility, but perhaps the process of applying for WI could be streamlined in some way?? Just a thought.
 32. I dislike (actually resent) that writing has become a specialized part of the curriculum.
 33. There is nothing that I dislike about it.
 34. As with General Education in general, students see WI classes as something to get done, rather than as a new challenge in their education.
 35. It is fine the way it is.
 36. Personally, I love it.
 37. It doesn't seem to be systematic in its approach.

13. How can UNH do a better job helping programs improve the writing skills of their students?
(ABET_G_ME)

1. We need a course specifically designed for engineering - Engineering Communication. This is where students would really learn about writing and how it relates to their profession.
2. Making sure WI courses meet the requirements for WI designation.
3. Provide writing scholars free of charge to each WI course.
4. I think continue what it is doing - supporting the faculty who are supporting the students.
5. Publicize what has happened in English 401 -- it sounds positive and interesting. No one knows about it. You might consider reducing the requirement to 3 courses instead of 4. English 401, one thing substantial in the major, and one thing outside. Then work with each major to raise the quality and consistency of what is implemented.
6. I am not sure my program needs anything in particular. We will continue to work to improve our own offerings. We know what we need to do and we are slowly getting there.
7. Show more respect to faculty. Allow them the TIME to do a better job. Encourage and reward them appropriately. Introducing new requirements and micromanaging doesn't ensure a positive affect on the educational experience.
8. Reach out to teachers and students directly. Do not rely on requirements and procedures. Sell the value of writing as an end in itself, not as a requirement fulfiller.
9. Provide more support on a individual college basis that better reflects the nature of the college and its various programs (technical writing, case analysis, analytical and research skills). An in-college writing advisor who can keep regular scheduled conference hours and help sessions would strengthen an already strong program.
10. The instructors teaching our WI classes do not utilize the resources available thru the Writing Center. (You may want to contact them to find out why!) To encourage them to do an even better job and to encourage others to place greater emphasis on writing, they ought to be rewarded for the extra time/effort they put into teaching these classes by being given a
 1. reduced teaching load. UNH ought to fund such load reductions.
11. Insist on individual writing assignments and develop standards by which students must pass or repeat.
12. Put less emphasis on faculty productivity (Dollars) and more on quality. Cut costs from
 2. non-academic activities
13. UNH is a fourth rate university. It should stop tinkering with undergraduate education measures that serve 'window dressing' functions. It needs more, better, and better paid faculty. Addressing these needs better serves both the university's research and teaching (including writing) functions.
14. Continue to draw attention to the value of the writing skill and its effectiveness as a learning tool; educate faculty (at all levels) of the expectations of the writing requirement.
15. Insist on our limiting class size. English 401 has a cap of 24 which is about right. For all that people say about being able to teach writing in large classes, I am not persuaded. I have helped students improve their writing substantially only when I have been able to spend considerable time with them, one-on-one. There is no substitute for that.
16. ?????? I find writing to be the most difficult thing to teach. It is labor-intensive and may require more than a semester with the same individual. Like learning any skill, if one receives different instruction from different instructors, one is not likely to improve. My sense is that this is what our students face.
17. I am not sure there is anything that could be done in addition to the writing center and making student peer readers available to faculty who want them. (It turns out that faculty who use readers consider it a very mixed sort of experience, but I am not sure anything could be done to improve upon the situation.)
18. Be more consistent and pro-active regarding the nature of a writing intensive course
19. not sure
20. provide more resources: smaller classes (our department has all large classes, unlike most departments in the college); more TA help; more writing fellows. we are currently eliminating the wi designation of some courses because of difficulty of implementing the requirements without resources
21. Hold the English department accountable for the 401 curriculum. End the emphasis on personal writing. Students misunderstand its purpose, and wind up thinking that writing is about "expression" rather than precision. I do not believe it is fair to burden 20-year olds with the duty to express themselves -- well before they have very much to express. Rather, we ought to be giving them good tools (analytical organization, grammar, style, syntax) that will stand them in good

- stead when they get to the advanced stage that expression constitutes. As it stands, we expect them to express without these tools. Do we ask our math students to engage in calculus before we're sure they know their sums?
22. NA
 23. More active involvement of the writing center in WI and gen ed classes.
 24. Provide the writing center peer tutors for free, instead of charging for them (I assume we still pay for them, as we did originally)
 25. Continue with the WI requirement and encourage more courses to be WI, especially at the 600-700 levels.
 26. In Science Disciplines Students need more work and feedback regarding writing laboratory reports.
 27. Acknowledge that writing-intensive courses may need reduced enrollment to succeed and not punish instructors for these low numbers.
 28. More workshop opportunities for students and professors re: the writing process... I have students write drafts which they get feedback on. Some don't seem to appreciate this process, but I see a real benefit for them.
 29. Provide workshops to help faculty do a better job of teaching writing.
 30. As I work in a Liberal Arts discipline, I've found my colleagues and I are fairly comfortable with writing in our classes, so we haven't felt as though we haven't been getting enough "help" from UNH. I imagine other disciplines, especially non Liberal Arts disciplines, may have another view. In any case, to my mind, part of the problems our students have with writing are due to the culture in general, as opposed to the culture of the classroom specifically. I believe we can and do make a difference in our classes, but at some level I may be pessimistic that we can ever get writing skills up to an exceptional level across the board. We are living through an epistemological shift, I believe, and that has consequences for how, or even if, our students have any inclination to write and write well. Overall, I'd say UNH could meet with programs individually to hear concerns and share ideas - sort of as a clearinghouse for information and ideas. I say this, of course, without any clear sense of the practicalities of such meetings given limited resources.
 31. Require writing in a broader array of classes. Provide workshops on discipline specific forms of writing. Provide tutors with expertise on discipline specific writing. Above all: Reduce class size and reward teachers for the enormously time consuming task of teaching WI courses.
 32. Perhaps regularly sharing brief reports of tips or strategies that seem helpful in improving student writing. Even if the same information was shared annually, it would probably be helpful.
 33. Continue to assist faculty in the creation of creative writing assignments tied to course content. We need to make writing more fun.
 34. Continue to offer workshops and opportunities f
 35. or consultation. Faculty need to be encouraged to use the available resources to enhance their teaching.
 36. I think the revisions to English 401 will help over time. I have found the Writing Center and folks associated with WI to be very thoughtful and helpful.
 37. I fear as classes grow in size, our commitment to improving these writing skills will diminish. I know within our department as are 400 & 500 level courses have tripled in size, that the 3-5 page reflective paper is the first assignment that is dropped from the course. This is where the commitment to student education and managing an efficient University curriculum are at odds. The faculty need to hold to the importance of WI courses despite pressures to increase numbers and effectively balance large classes with smaller classes that have as one of their foci writing.
 38. Assign writing Fellows to Programs/Departments
 39. Develop a system for identifying students in need of writing remediation, and target them in specific, intensive courses.

University Writing Committee Membership

AY 2004-2005

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES

Elliott Gruner	Director, University Writing Programs, Academic Affairs
Lee Seidel	Director, Teaching Excellence
John Ernest	Director of Comp/ Gen Ed Rep/LA Rep
Judy Spiller	Student and Academic Services
Mimi Becker	Faculty Senate representative

COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES

LSA:	Gale Carey, Animal and Nutritional Sciences
LA:	Edward Larkin, Chair, Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
EPS:	Robert Jerard, Mechanical Engineering
WSBE:	Vanessa Druskat, Management
HHS:	Elizabeth Crepeau, Chair, Occupational Therapy
UNHM:	Gail Rondeau, UNH Manchester

Ex officio (non-voting)

Mark Rubinstein	Office of Student and Academic Services
Kathie Forbes	Registrar, Secretary

University Writing Requirement

Motion to Revise the University Writing Requirement
Passed in Principle May 8, 1995

Passed with amendment and with the attached implementation plan and guidelines on
November 27, 1995

“WRITING INTENSIVE” COURSES. All undergraduates will be required to complete Freshman English plus three “writing intensive” courses, at least one of which will be in the major, and at least one of which will be on a 600-level or above.

RATIONALE

As the cornerstone of any higher education, academic and disciplinary literacy is the concern of the entire faculty and the whole university curriculum.

Understanding that literacy is a long-term developmental process, the university community is committed to the following goals for student writing and learning.

- a. Students should use writing as an intellectual process to learn material, to discover, construct, and order meaning.
- b. Students should learn to write effectively in various academic and disciplinary genres for professional and lay audiences.
- c. Students should learn to display competence with the generic features and conventions of academic language.

Writing assignments which support course and curricular objectives are strongly encouraged in all courses, whether they are designated Writing Intensive or not. However, in order to ensure that students have a coherent and intensive set of experiences with writing at the college level that will help them meet the goals listed above, the Academic Senate has passed a motion (May 8, 1995) requiring that students must take at least four courses which are defined as Writing Intensive (WI).

The old writing requirement built into the GenEd program (Groups IV-VIII) is no longer feasible, and students can and do avoid GenEd courses with significant writing components. This new requirement will ensure that students attend to writing throughout the undergraduate career. Courses designated “writing intensive” will be identified in GenEd (by the GenEd Committee) and in each undergraduate major (by department or program faculty). Sufficient seats now exist in GenEd classes of less than 30 to accommodate as many students as might wish to fulfill this requirement with two GenEd courses. The University Writing

Center will provide not only individual assistance to students but also consultation to faculty as the attempt to implement “writing across the curriculum.” Writing in the major will take many forms, from senior theses and projects to major special courses.

Motion for Criteria and Implementation of “Writing-Intensive” Courses
Passed 11/27/95

1. That the passage of GenEd Revision #1 be finalized with the following description of the general features of Writing-Intensive Courses and implementation plan (see below).
2. Additionally, that a Writing Committee be formally constituted as a Permanent Committee with representation from the following constituencies:

- 1) General Education Committee
- 2) Academic Standards
- 3) A representative from each of the colleges*
- 4) Center for Teaching Excellence
- 5) Coordinator of Composition
- 6) Director of the Writing Center
- 7) Director of the WAC Program
- 8) Undergraduate Student Representatives (to be chosen by the Student Senate)

*Each college will be represented by one of the other categories or by election. Since Liberal Arts (English Department) will have permanent representation through categories 5,6, or 7, there should at least one additional Liberal Arts representative to ensure the other departments can also be represented.

The Writing Committee will:

- a) recommend policies concerning the administration and operation of the University Writing Requirement and WAC/UWC Program,
- b) oversee the development of writing-intensive courses in General Education and in major disciplines,
- c) promote writing across the curriculum,
- d) evaluate the program regularly (every second or third year on a rotating basis) using a variety of measures, such as analysis of syllabi, interviewing of faculty and students, surveys, portfolio, etc., and, as necessary, suggest changes in procedure or policies to ensure efficiency, and
- e) advise the Provost on resources required to support the program requirements.

*The Writing Committee will act as a clearinghouse for disseminating information about the University Writing Requirement and will keep and update the information sent by departments, including syllabi and course descriptions. The committee will cooperate with the Registrar's Office to publish a list of WI courses for the university each year.

*The Writing Committee will not undertake a formal approval process for each course or department plan but will cooperate with departments in their planning. However, to ensure accountability and the provision of adequate support and resources over the long-term, the committee will monitor and assess the WI course offerings regularly (every two or three years) through a variety of means, such as analysis of syllabi and/or portfolios, interviews with faculty and students, surveys and questionnaires.

Guidelines for Writing-Intensive Courses

These guidelines are intended to support and supplement this revision of the university writing requirement. In order to fulfill the following guidelines, Writing-Intensive courses need to be supported by restrictions on class size and/or additional supports such as teaching assistants, class linked tutors, stipends for materials and course development, the Writing Center, and Writing-across-the-Curriculum support. Departments will have the authority to use or reconfigure existing courses or, alternately, to develop new courses to fulfill the WI requirements as they see fit.

1. Students in the course should do substantial writing which enhances learning and demonstrates knowledge of the subject or the discipline. Writing should be an integral part of the course and should account for a significant part (approximately 50 percent or more) of the final grade.

Learning in any course includes learning the appropriate ways of reading, writing and thinking for that subject or discipline. Traditional writing assignments, such as senior theses, seminar papers, take-home and in-class essay exams, case studies, laboratory notebooks or reports, proposals, literature reviews, and field research should be considered as possible sources for satisfying the writing requirement. There is no single or universal formula for satisfying the WI requirement as courses naturally differ according to their level, form, and function. For example, General Education courses may emphasize writing-to-learn strategies, while major courses may incorporate an additional focus on discipline-specific writing.

While it is important to make explicit the conventions of thinking and writing in one's area of expertise, instructors are not expected to treat every mechanical or

stylistic infelicity. Students with basic writing problems (constant and recurring difficulties with usage and sentence structure) can be referred to the writing center for assistance.

2. Writing should be assigned in such a manner as to require students to write regularly throughout the course. Major assignments should integrate the process of writing (prewriting, drafting, revision, editing). Students should be able to receive constructive feedback of some kind (peer response, workshop, Writing Center, professor, T.A., ect.) during the drafting/revising process to help improve their writing.

The quantity of the writing required is less important than how the writing is integrated into the course. For example, frequent short writing assignments (2-5 pages) for which the student receives comments and an opportunity to revise can sometimes be more effective than long research papers submitted at the end of the course which receive comment and evaluation only after the course is over. Longer assignments can be broken up into stages or components with feedback at critical points to allow for a more effective writing/researching process and, ultimately, a more satisfying product.

3. The course should include both formal (graded) and informal (heuristic) writing. There should be papers written outside of class which are handed in for formal evaluation as well as informal assignments designed to promote learning, such as invention activities, in-class essays, reaction papers, journals, reading summaries, or other appropriate exercises.

Assigning work in a variety of genres for a variety of audiences can help students synthesize and apply disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge effectively. It is important that evaluation of writing be conducted by people trained in the conventions of the genre being used and be appropriate to the nature of the assignment. New writing and assessment strategies, such as portfolio and student self-assessment, are encouraged.

Faculty Writing Intensive Course Survey

Note: This is a draft of a survey of all WI courses that will be administered to appropriate faculty at the end of the Fall 2005 semester.

Background Information

Department and Course Number

1. My faculty rank is:
2. My college is:
3. My department is:

Faculty will indicate whether they strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree with the following questions:

4. To my mind, this course qualifies as Writing Intensive.
5. Writing was a major part of my grade (more than 50%) in this course.
6. This course included both formal and informal, graded and ungraded writing.
7. This course allowed students to use a writing process that included drafting and feedback during the preparation of written work.
8. Writing is a tool for learning.
9. Writing is a career enhancing skill.
10. Students used my feedback on their writing to improve their final submissions.
11. The writing students did in the course helped them with the subject course material.
12. I treat student writing with respect.
13. The structure of the course enabled students to work on papers in a timely way.
14. I provided timely feedback on writing to students in the course
15. This course increased student confidence in their writing ability.

Subjective Questions

16. From your perspective, How did the writing activities in this course influence student learning?
17. Has your view of writing changed as a result of this course?

Thank you for your participation

Student Survey of Writing Intensive Course

Note: This is a draft of a survey of all WI courses that will be administered to students in WI courses at the end of the Fall 2005 semester.

Background Information

Department and Course Number

1. Gender: male, female, transgender
2. Age
3. My class standing is: first year student, sophomore, junior, senior
4. My college is:

Students will indicate whether they strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree with the following questions:

5. To my mind, this course qualifies as Writing Intensive.
6. Writing was a major part of my grade (more than 50%) in this course.
7. This course included both formal and informal, graded and ungraded writing.
8. This course allowed me to use a writing process that included drafting and feedback during the preparation of written work.
9. Writing is a tool for learning.
10. Writing is a career enhancing skill.
11. In general, I work on my papers so that they reflect the best work I can do.
12. I usually plan my time so that I can draft and revise papers prior to final submission.
13. I use the feedback I receive on my papers to improve my writing.
14. The writing I did in this course helped me understand the course material.
15. I received feedback that has helped me complete the written assignments more effectively.
16. The teacher treated my writing with respect.
17. The structure of the course enabled me to work on my papers in a timely way.
18. I received timely feedback on my writing in this course.
19. This course increased my confidence as a writer.

Subjective Questions

20. How did the writing activities in this course influence your learning?

21. Has your view of writing changed as a result of this course?

Thank you for your participation

Four Years of Writing: A Study of the UNH Undergraduate Experience

The University of New Hampshire will soon begin a study that follows 100 undergraduates as they live, work and write through four years at UNH. Our goal is to know much more about how UNH students learn to write and how to help those students become better writers. Researchers will use **interviews**, **case studies**, **writing portfolios** and **surveys** to learn about undergraduate writing experiences at UNH.

The study will center on the ways in which students approach the various writing projects in each of their UNH courses, and will address questions and issues raised by the **University Writing Committee**.

This study represents a number of firsts for UNH:

- It will be the first four-year dedicated study of student learning at UNH.
- It will be the first four-year study of writing at UNH.
- It will be the first-ever dedicated effort to collect a portfolio of student writing within the context of the UNH undergraduate experience.

This study will be vital to academic progress:

- It has the potential to become a national landmark study of how students learn and write.
- It will examine students from a wide variety of disciplines, majors and backgrounds.
- It will provide graduate students from the English and Composition programs with opportunities for research in their fields.
- It will yield findings that will be published in discipline-specific and general education journals.

Objectives will include the following:

- Determining what, when, where, why and how UNH students write and the expectations placed on that writing.
- Collecting and examining student expectations and attitudes toward writing at specific moments throughout their undergraduate careers.
- Determining students' writing proficiency at entry and exit.
- Describing how students navigate the University Writing Requirement, with special attention to the role Writing Intensive courses play in their development.
- Determining our students' convergent and divergent writing experiences.
- Determining students' awareness of their own writing development and their own needs for improvement.
- Determining obstacles to students' progress, including causes for regression.
- Describing the teaching practices that influence student behavior.

- Describing which other opportunities and activities positively affect students' writing during their years at UNH.
- Describing what constitutes success for student writers at UNH.

University Writing Program Contact Information

University Writing Program
Robert J. Connors Writing Center
7 Hamilton Smith Hall
862-3272

Elliott Gruner
Director, University Writing Program
elliott.gruner@unh.edu

Jeff Ringer
Assistant Director, University Writing Program
jeff.ringer@unh.edu

Amy Van Haren
Director, Robert J. Connors Writing Center
amy.vanharen@unh.edu

Mike Garcia
Coordinator, Four Years of Writing
mike@freshcomp.net