

***WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM***

***Recommendations for Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)  
& Writing in the Disciplines (WID) at CUNY***

***Recommendations for CUNY WAC Writing Fellows Guidelines***

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(Summer/Fall 1999)***

***Office of Academic Affairs  
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*Recommendations for Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)  
& Writing in the Disciplines (WID) at CUNY*

## **Recommendations for Writing Across Curriculum and Writing in the Disciplines at CUNY**

Prepared by the Faculty Sub-Committee on Models and Methods of the University-wide Committee on Writing Across the Curriculum

Endorsed by the University-wide Committee on Writing Across the Curriculum

### **Preface**

In responding to the Board of Trustees' resolution that "each college intensify and expand its programmatic efforts to strengthen the teaching of writing in courses across the curriculum and that such efforts ensure that quality writing skills are fostered in all disciplinary areas," the Sub-Committee on Models and Methods of the CUNY Writing Across the Curriculum Committee has reviewed the literature on successful programs nationwide and examined existing programs within the university.

Successful programs include the following:

- *A sound writing pedagogy.* Writing is one of the most effective tools for teaching and learning in all disciplines and at all levels. Writing engages the student in various and complex uses of the language, in thinking through issues, problems, and values. It enables students to think on paper, to summarize, speculate, question, analyze, reflect, critique, and evaluate. A sound pedagogy allows time for students to write and revise, to collaborate with others, to think and think again, to edit and proof-read.
- *A coherent writing curriculum.* A comprehensive, coherent plan is in place for integrating writing in courses across the curriculum from the first to the final year. Further, writing intensive courses build upon the foundation of formal writing courses to explore the subject matter and discourse conventions of the disciplines. They also use informal "writing to learn" assignments.
- *On-going faculty development.* Workshops, seminars and mentoring relationships disseminate good practices and support program development.
- *Writing support services.* Writing centers and tutorial services are not confined to freshman writing but serve students in subject area courses and beyond the introductory level.
- *Sufficient funds.* Successful programs require administrative and financial support in the form of funding for faculty development, reduced class sizes and support services such as writing centers.

Based on the above, as initial steps to a more comprehensive model, we recommend the following:

### Structure and Designated Courses

Writing courses of various kinds need to be required at all levels within a college curriculum:

- **Foundation Courses.**  
Ideally, formal college level writing course(s) are prerequisites and/or corequisites for writing intensive (WI) courses in all disciplines. Relationships between formal writing courses and the disciplines are encouraged in the form of clusters and blocked, paired, or linked courses in learning communities.
- **Writing Intensive (WI) Courses.**  
A number of courses should be designated writing intensive (WI) and required of students in both the lower and upper division. As a beginning requirement, we suggest: (1) Two WI courses in the community college and lower division, at least one of which would be taken between 30 and 60 credits. (2) Two additional WI courses in the four-year colleges, to be taken after the 60 credit mark, at least one within the major discipline.

### Transferability and Articulation

- WI courses should be transferable from the community colleges to four-year colleges. Faculty development workshops or conferences should facilitate and aid articulation. Students transferring from non-CUNY institutions should be required to take WI courses commensurate with their number of credits.

### Criteria for WI Courses

- Informal “writing to learn” activities should take place throughout the semester.
- Students in all WI courses at all levels will write a minimum of 10-12 pages of formal writing, which incorporate opportunities for revision and which can be satisfied by a variety of writing assignments.
- Instructors should be encouraged to use a series of short assignments rather than one long one, i.e., should integrate writing into the course throughout the semester.
- Research papers (if assigned) should be completed in stages so that students profit from instructional mediation and feedback.
- Course grades in WI courses should be based in substantial part on assessment of students’ written work.

### Selection of Faculty

- Ideally, through a process of self selection, full time faculty will teach WI courses.

## Faculty Development and communication

- Workshops should be on-going, beginning before WI courses are taught. They should generate handbooks with writing strategies that can be used across the curriculum as well as discipline-specific techniques including assignments and evaluation suggestions. These workshops should be team taught with at least one person from a discipline other than English.
- Faculty proposing and developing WI courses should have support, including on-going workshops, and incentives, such as stipends or reassigned time, while teaching WI courses.
- There should be university-wide communication among CUNY faculty, especially between four-year and two-year institutions.

### Necessary Conditions

- Ideally, class size should be limited to 20 in WI courses.
- WI Classes larger than 20 should have tutorial add-ons of various kinds.
- Writing Centers should be enlarged and have tutors familiar with disciplines other than English. They should be equipped to support student writing beyond entry level writing courses. Ideally, they should be run by professionally trained, full-time directors.
- Additional funding will be required to create these conditions enabling WI courses to succeed.

### Administration and Monitoring

- An interdisciplinary oversight committee on each campus should insure that WI courses fall within these guidelines.

Sub-committee members: Linda Stanley, chair; Marsha Cummins; Sandra Hanson; Carolyn Kirkpatrick; Jack Kligerman; Peter Miller; Franceska Smith; Judith Summerfield

*Recommendations for CUNY WAC Writing Fellows Guidelines*

## **Recommendations for CUNY Writing Across the Curriculum Writing Fellows Guidelines**

Prepared by the Writing Fellows Sub-Committee of the University-wide Committee on Writing Across the Curriculum

Endorsed by the University-wide Committee on Writing Across the Curriculum

### Principles

- Writing Fellows are Level II or III doctoral students drawn from across the thirty-one academic programs of the Graduate School and University Center. They should be skilled writers with experience/interest in undergraduate instruction.
- Writing Fellows are responsible for fifteen hours of service per week during the academic year. They will be appointed for one year with the prospect of renewal for a second year.
- The work assignments of the Writing Fellows are the province of the college (see below), but some examples of appropriate responsibilities might include: developing/working within e-tutoring programs; supporting writing intensive courses as consultants, tutors, and section leaders; working as discipline/divisional writing consultants; establishing/extending writing laboratory projects; supporting faculty and curriculum development initiatives; advancing college efforts to prepare students for proficiency examinations; extending college instructional technology capabilities. Writing Fellows may have multiple assignments during the course of a semester.
- Writing Fellows should support institutional goals rather than the work of a particular faculty member. They are not graders, research assistants, or adjunct instructors. In general, they should not be responsible for their own course(s).

### Training

- Writing Fellows are engaged in mentoring relationships. They advance the work of undergraduates; college coordinators attend to the professional development of the Fellows.
- Writing Fellows will participate in training programs either at the college where they have been assigned or at a centralized venue.
- More important, Writing Fellows will be supervised by a college coordinator throughout the academic year. That mentor is responsible for supervising the work of the Fellows and for fostering their professional development. That support may take a variety of forms, but should include regular meetings/seminars.
- College coordinators will receive release time in return for insuring that Writing Fellows receive appropriate assignments, supervision, and advocacy.

## Process

- The Provost's Office at the GSUC will distribute a description of the program and a call for application to all Level II and III students.
- At the same time, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will inform CAO's at each college about the program, and invite them to request the assignment of Writing Fellows to their colleges. In their response, CAO's should briefly describe their plans for deploying the Fellows and designate a college coordinator for the program. CAO'S may choose, of course, to delegate this responsibility to the college's WAC/WID director or its University-Wide Committee on Writing Across the Curriculum (UCWAC) representative.
- A sub-committee of the UCWAC will review college requests, and may consult with college representatives about their plans for deploying Writing Fellows. This is not a competitive process - the objective is to assign Writing Fellows to all participating colleges - but the sub-committee is charged with insuring that college plans fall within the guidelines for the program and, where appropriate, with helping colleges maximize the effectiveness of the Writing Fellows.
- The UCWAC sub-committee will forward college requests to the GSUC Provost's Office where a pool of appropriate candidates will be assembled for each college's consideration. College coordinators will choose Fellows from this pool through whatever selection process best serves the interest of the college.
- The GSUC Provost Office will continue to match candidates with colleges until all positions are filled.
- The performance of each Writing Fellow will be evaluated during the spring semester by the college coordinator. At that time, colleges may choose to reappoint Fellows for a second year. Reappointment is at the discretion of the college.
- The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will designate a central monitor to address concerns from the colleges and from the Fellows. The monitor will establish procedures for assessing the effectiveness of the program at each participating college.



*Recommendations for the First Phase of Faculty Development for WAC at CUNY  
(Summer/Fall 1999)*

## **Recommendations for the First Phase of Faculty Development for Writing Across the Curriculum at CUNY (Summer/Fall 1999)**

Prepared by the Faculty Development Sub-Committee of the University-wide Committee on Writing Across the Curriculum

Endorsed by the University-wide Committee on Writing Across the Curriculum

### Rationale

Well-designed faculty development is essential to the success for the Writing Across the Curriculum Initiative. Maximum impact for the WAC Initiative, including its Writing Fellows component, can be achieved only if WAC is an active, visible presence on each campus. Two factors critical to establishing and maintaining that presence are, first, the involvement of a core of informed, committed faculty members on each campus and, second, the development of an initiative that will serve the needs of the college and will also serve as a context for the work of the Fellows assigned to that campus.

However each campus designs its initiative--and on some campuses that very design may be the first step--Writing Fellows and college faculty members should work as partners. In this way, the initiative, which extends beyond the tenure of any particular Writing Fellow or Fellows, enhances their authority and credibility on campus. At the same time, as partners in the effort, the Fellows will be able to make their marks upon it.

The faculty development effort should be both intensive and extended, consisting first of a University-wide base experience, to be followed by ongoing faculty development on each campus, as well as ongoing University-wide activities. CUNY faculty across the disciplines on the various campuses have extensive knowledge and experience with WAC. The planning and design of the summer experience and other WAC activities should draw as widely as possible on these faculty members.

### Faculty Development Needs

- Each campus needs a core of informed and committed administrators and faculty from a range of disciplines to plan and steer its WAC initiative to provide maximum impact. This group needs a shared understanding of good practice in the teaching of writing; a familiarity with the history and techniques of WAC; and an awareness of the key issues involved in its implementation in the various disciplines.
- To implement WAC, each campus needs to define for itself a structure which will meet its needs and make the best use of the Writing Fellows. Campuses also need to consider how they will institutionalize and sustain the WAC effort. They will be greatly aided in their planning by information about WAC initiatives at similar institutions, including other CUNY

campuses.

- Writing Fellow, like the faculty members with whom they will work, will come from a range of disciplines. They will need to acquire an understanding of good practice in the teaching of writing; a familiarity with the principles, history, and techniques of WAC; and an awareness of the key issues involved in its implementation in the various disciplines.
- Writing fellows will not have the usual credentials that confer authority and credibility on campus: tenure, rank, a network of colleagues. They will need a context or structure that makes their work visible and respected.

### Proposed Plan

**Summer Institute:** The University will sponsor a two-day intensive initial experience, comparable to the workshops conducted by the New York City Writing Project and the Bard College Center for Writing and Thinking, for the new Writing Fellows and for a comparable number of campus faculty members, including the campus supervisor of the Fellows. The Institute will provide essential opportunities for orientation, for disciplinary and cross-disciplinary exchange, and for exchange between two- and four-year campuses, as well as for the building of effective working relationships among the permanent faculty members and the Writing Fellows assigned to each campus. In addition, the Institute will provide the groundwork for a continuing University exchange. These participating faculty members should be identified by the campus and should represent a range of disciplines, including ESL. Some campuses may wish to send a campus administrator or a writing center director.

**Campus-based Study Groups or Teams:** The work begun at the Summer Institute will continue on campus, with team members continuing to meet as a study/planning/implementation group. These groups will meet regularly to continue to discuss the fundamental principles of WAC, to examine issues and problems, and to facilitate the campus planning and implementation of WAC activities.

**Additional Campus Activities:** Campuses should include in their plans activities for informing the faculty at large about WAC and for involving additional faculty members in WAC. Depending upon the needs of the campus and amount of prior WAC activity there, these might include among other things: workshops, demonstration lessons, newsletters, help in planning courses, feedback about curriculum or assignments.

**Additional University Activities:** University-wide exchange would be fostered via web-based discussion, distance conferencing, and other information-sharing, along with periodic University-sponsored colloquia.