

## **University Writing Committee Report to UNI Faculty Senate 27 March 2017**

The University Writing Committee, composed of representatives from each of the university colleges, Rod Library, Faculty Senate, Student Government, and Academic Learning Center, has proposed the Faculty Senate adopt a two-course writing graduation requirement beyond the current Liberal Arts Core 1A writing requirement. This requirement would be “writing-enhanced” as distinct from “writing-intensive.” This definition was designed with similar initiatives in mind, notably the Writing Enhanced Curriculum (WEC) model developed by researchers at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities (See <http://wec.umn.edu/>). Writing enhanced focuses on using writing, writing processes, and the metacognitive learning afforded by writing as a means to provide writing instruction and practice without slighting course content. In 2016, the Faculty Senate endorsed that proposal.

We have been asked to provide specific implementation elements. We have done so with further data gathered from a survey of the faculty so that the Faculty Senate might reach a conclusion on implementing the proposal.

### **Overview**

1. Specific degree, program, and course requirements would be decided by departments and programs for implementation over four curricular cycles (i.e. five years between adoption and implementation) to allow deliberation, funding, and clarity of graduation requirements for incoming students.
2. Course changes will not add required credit hours to any program, but instead involve some combination of
  - a. Revising existing courses to offer writing instruction as described below.
  - b. Revising programs to substitute current courses with writing instruction as described below.
  - c. Revising programs to require LAC courses that offer writing instruction as described below.
3. Writing instruction course expectations, proposed below, support UNI’s current (2016-17) Academic Catalog, which states
  - a. “Each department sets the writing requirements for its majors; because writing needs vary across disciplines, the requirements and conventions for writing differ across departments.”

### **Writing Instruction Expectations**

1. No changes are recommended to the current LAC 1A requirement for a freshman (1000) level course that focuses on introducing composition and research practices, academic/professional style, and analyzing texts.
2. A second course would be offered at the sophomore (2000) or junior (3000) level and focus on such things as the processes of composing researched arguments, informal writing to learn strategies, critically analyzing information, using writing technologies, revision strategies, soliciting, generating, and incorporating feedback into revision, proofreading and editing strategies, and the purposes, contexts, and composing of common academic and professional genres.

Students will practice composing and crafting arguments, integrating research and responding to feedback from multiple readers. This course will carry an entrance requirement of LAC 1A credit.

3. A third course would be offered at the senior (4000) level and focus on composing genres commonly used in the academic or career areas of each program. This includes the purposes, contexts, and audiences in which or for whom the writing takes place. Students will practice composing documents in professional and disciplinary genres, receive feedback on multiple drafts, and integrate feedback using revision strategies. This course will carry an entrance requirement of an appropriate second level course.
4. A writing instruction course must limit section enrollment to allow for clear guidance, criteria, and feedback for the writing assignments (typically 20 -25 students). Writing activities should be significant and distributed throughout the semester. Writing performance should comprise a significant portion of the student's final course grade.
5. Faculty teaching writing courses should be academically qualified, either by terminal degree or through faculty development in the area of written composition.

### **Oversight and Professional Development Resources Required**

Based on our investigation of best practices, we recommend any increase in writing instruction requirements be adopted with serious attention to a mechanism for maintaining instructional integrity over time. The faculty survey (Appendix) suggests that many resources are already in place, but there would be ongoing needs for professional development for newly assigned faculty, outcomes assessment, and staffing allocation to maintain sufficiently small section sizes. Suggested procedures include the following.

1. Curriculum Approval Process  
Any courses proposed by a department or the LAC as a writing instruction course might require approval of a committee of faculty in a process that is comparable to the approvals of the LACC or the Teaching Ed Committee in the current curriculum process. Consisting of faculty with expertise in writing pedagogy, the committee would ensure that the syllabus includes acceptable writing instruction as described above, the designated faculty is qualified to teach writing, and students are prepared with suitable pre-requisites.
2. Professional Development  
Many current faculty feel confident in their ability to teach disciplinary writing, but the CETL should be prepared to offer assistance in writing pedagogy that is well-grounded in relevant scholarship.
3. Outcomes Assessment  
On the expectation that Communication will remain a University learning objective, we might expect the current assessment procedures could be expanded to focus more on writing instruction as a distinct mode along with speaking and critical thinking.
4. University Resources  
Most faculty have been able to identify current courses in which writing instruction is already occurring or could be added. The ongoing commitment to smaller class sizes, in particular, would be needed to support an additional writing requirement.

## **Appendix**

As of Thursday, 24 March 2017, we gathered 180 responses from instructional staff members across campus. This survey asked participants to respond given a definition of “writing-enhanced” as outlined above.

### *Discussion of Survey Results*

Most (87%) reported that they did NOT teach a writing enhanced course in the LAC. A smaller majority (56%) reported they did NOT teach a writing-enhanced course in their major program. We gathered finer-grained data on those specific courses respondents felt could be considered writing-enhanced with most instructors (54%) responding they felt their programs already had courses that could fit the designation of writing-enhanced and about a third (32%) indicating they would like to explore whether their program(s) did have courses that could or did have courses that could be converted. Only 13% responded with no feeling that their program(s) would benefit from a writing-enhanced course or courses.

Participants were also asked to indicate the kind of assistance they most desired in terms of implementing writing-enhanced learning. About half (50.60%) responded that they wanted to learn more about “time-saving ways to provide students with useful feedback,” underscoring a recognition that writing-enhanced teaching entails a greater time commitment. Slightly less than half (45.78%) responded they would like assistance with “various kinds of writing assignments appropriate for my discipline.” This underscores the notion that a significant portion of faculty and instructional staff understand how writing and writing instruction are situated, often based more on genres and their complex social functions rather than rote grammar and mechanics.

### *Significance of Survey Results*

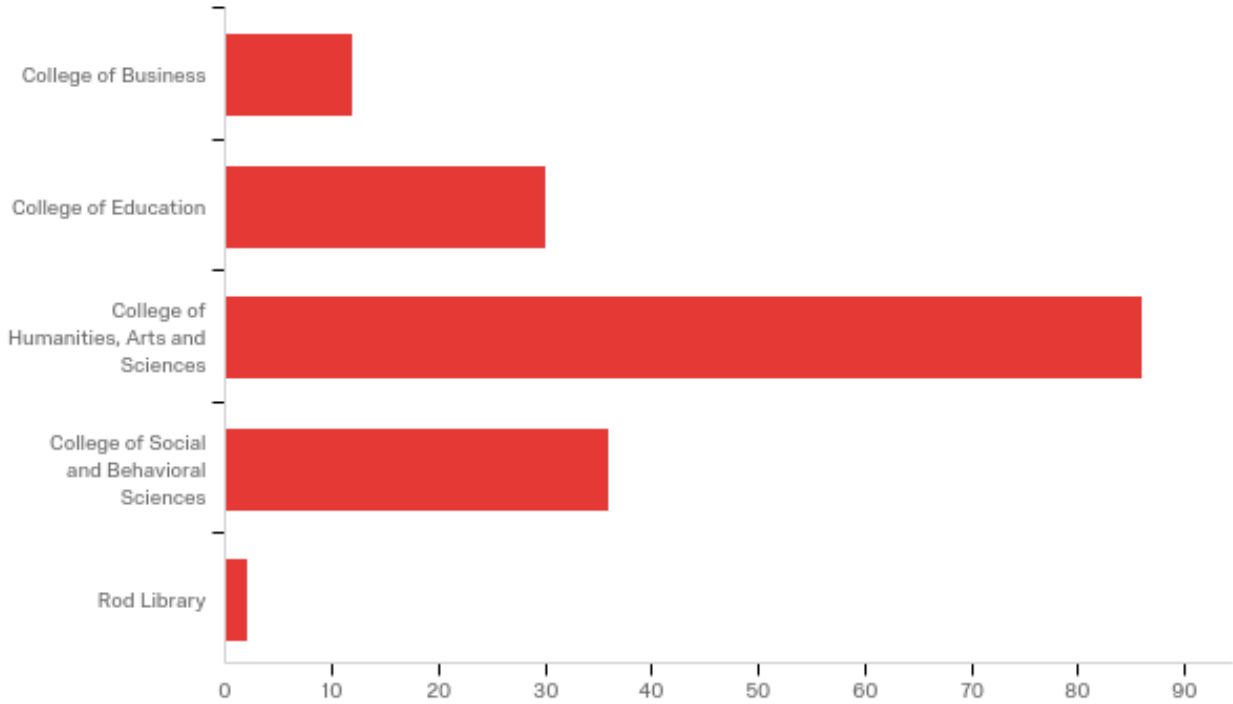
Our results further suggest that a large-scale and bureaucratic structure is not necessary. At many institutions this might consist of a Director of Writing, Assistant Directors, sub-specialists, and all the requisite office space, file storage, administrative assistants, clerical work, release time, and student workers necessary. Rather than what we referred to occasionally as “the Cadillac model,” we propose modest investment of resources in already existing programs and institutes on campus such as CETL, the University Writing Program, and/or Provost Fellows program. Such areas are sites where 1) some assessment and reasonable accountability of a writing-enhanced program can occur and 2) where appropriate professional development incentives be offered.

## Survey Results, Raw Data

*Faculty Survey: Writing-Enhanced Courses at UNI*

March 25th 2017, 3:02 pm MDT

### Q1 - About You 1. In which of UNI's colleges do you work?

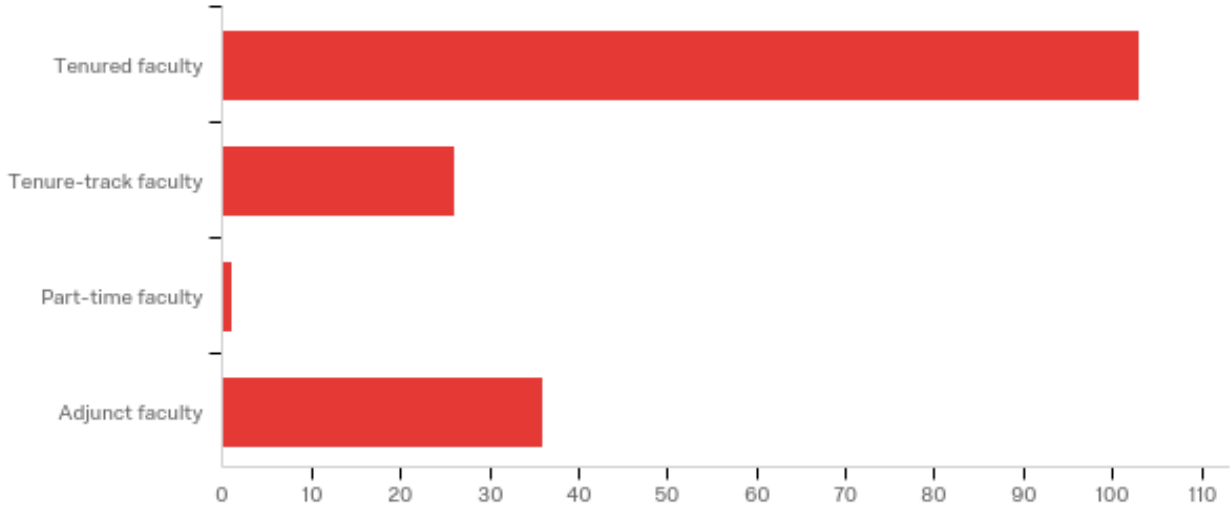


#	Answer	%	Count
1	College of Business	7.27%	12
2	College of Education	18.18%	30
3	College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences	52.12%	86
4	College of Social and Behavioral Sciences	21.82%	36
5	Rod Library	1.21%	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>165</b>

**Q2 - 2. Please identify your department/program:**

(shortened for brevity)

**Q3 - 3. Which term best describes your position on campus?**



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Tenured faculty	62.05%	103
2	Tenure-track faculty	15.66%	26
3	Part-time faculty	0.60%	1
4	Adjunct faculty	21.69%	36
	Total	100%	166

**Q5 - 1. What existing LAC course(s) other than the first-year courses (LAC 1A, e.g., English 1005; Cornerstone; Philosophy: The Art of Thinking, etc.) do you think could be designated as writing-enhanced courses?**

1. What existing LAC course(s) other than the first-year courses (LAC 1A, e...

I don't know.

Humanities I/II/III (small sections only)

Music History courses

some capstone courses

I would think virtually any of the social science and humanities courses, but it would require both smaller class sizes and training for the instructors.

Communcation LAC

Inquiry

capstones, non western cultures, history of us

Women and Society- as long as class size is kept low

None, and Philosophy doesn't fit as is.

None. I don't think Philosophy should be offered in lieu of a writing requirement.

Soundscapes

capstones, literature courses, practically any if the prof is willing to take the time to grade writing.

Any literature, humanities, communication, arts, history class

Soundscapes

ANY

Humanities

SCIED 1200 Inquiry into Life Science

MUS 1100

Capstone, Humanities I, II, III; Literature

it would depend on the instructor

This is impossible to answer without knowing more about the way the courses are taught. Also, it will vary considerably from prof to prof in how it's taught

I don't know

Not sure

All capstones

Literature

I thought all existing LAC courses (except for capstone) were available for first-year courses. Sorry for my ignorance.

Pol Intl 1024, Pol Gen 1020, Pol Amer 1014

I'm not sure I understand the terminology about writing enhancement. Students should write, and the more the better. But these things vary across disciplines and there's no need for us to micromanage each other

English 1120, Germ 1120, French 1120

chem 1010

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Humanities

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Any

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Ask instead what class shouldn't. Any class under 25 should be writing intensive and some above.

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Capstonr (especially if offered in depts as a profession-specific, writing intensive course)

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some Humanities sections

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Not familiar with them, but why not all?

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Humanities

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Don't know

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Critical Writing about Literature

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It seems that any of the humanities courses could be writing-enhanced quite easily. Honestly, I would like to see all courses have a writing-enhanced option.

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None

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Theatrical Arts and Society

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All non Western courses; all social science course

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All of them

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wouldn't know

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I have no idea

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Pol Amer 1014 (Intro to American Politics)

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Unsure what exists

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Capstone

**Q6 - 2. What existing LAC course(s) in your own academic program do you think could be designated as a writing-enhanced course?**

2. What existing LAC course(s) in your own academic program do you think co...

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None

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Philosophy: The Art of Thinking and Religions of the World (small sections only)

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Music History courses

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General Chemistry I CHEM 1110

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Religions of the World, Philosophy: The Art of Thinking

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ANTH 1002 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology; any of the Non-Western Cultures courses

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Certain Dimensions of Wellness theory classes

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Inquiry

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non western cultures, history of US

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None

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All of the courses in my program should focus on writing, but none is fit to replace a writing requirement.

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Soundscapes

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Principles of Chemistry (with lab)

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Soundscapes

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Soundscapes

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ANY

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Life: The Natural World Honors section

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Intro to Literature, Capstone courses

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Religions of the World

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MUS HIST 1010, 1020, 1030

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NA

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none that are LAC

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Again, difficult to answer since different profs will teach differently, require different amounts of writing or types of writing assignments



I don't know

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Not sure

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History of the United States

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Literature

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Sadly, I don't think any can.

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Research and Policy

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Pol Intl 1024, Pol Gen 1020, Pol Amer 1014

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Well, all of them if faculty are rewarded for the extra work to go behind objective testing

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None -- Econ uses large sections/multiple choice tests

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general chemistry

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math LAC courses could/should -- but won't at their present size

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Humanities

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Any

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none

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Soundscapes

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Humanities

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2030 Development

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TECH 3182 / 5182

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Don't know

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Critical Writing about Literature

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I think they all could, really.

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Intro to Lit.

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None. The LAC doesn't allocate courses to us.

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Theatrical Arts and Society

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Native Central and South America; Native North America; Japan, China, and Africa; intro to sociology; CNS

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Theatrical Arts & Society

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Sound Scapes

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Intro to Psych; probably my section only

N/A

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none

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Unsure

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Ethics, oral Communication

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Capstone

**Q8 - 3. What required course(s) in your major program(s) could be identified as writing-enhanced with respect to the discipline?**

3. What required course(s) in your major program(s) could be identified as...

CHEM1110 General Chemistry I, CHEM1120 General Chemistry II, CHEM4440 Physical Chemistry Lab

MATH 3203, MATH 3214

pretty much all courses in Philosophy and World Religions

Music History courses

Physical Chemistry Lab CHEM 4440

We have a range of writing-enhanced courses in both majors - designated that way, and students have to take at least 2.

ANTH 3001 Language and Culture; possibly ANHT 4001 Anthropological Theory

CHEM 1100 General Chemistry I and CHEM 1200 General Chemistry II

BIOL 3100

Health Promotion Theory

Inquiry

Introduction to the study of history, Junior-Senior seminar

Communication Theory, Communication Research Methods

None

Music History

CHEM 1110 (General Chemistry I), CHEM 1120 (General Chemistry 2), Physical Chemistry Lab, Instrumental Analysis--almost any of our lab classes, in fact.

Music history, music literature, some music education classes

Foundations of LYHS

Tech 4159, Tech 4174

Music History, Opera History, Conducting

Comm Theory

Evolution, Ecology & the Nature of Science; Evolutionary Biology

Music History

PHYSICS 4110 Modern Physics Laboratory

Literature survey courses, multicultural literature,

MUS HIST 1020, 1030

Clinical Processes

qualitative/quantitative/rhetorical methods courses

Again, impossible to answer based on course. Most of us teach a lot of writing, but some don't.

Elementary Curriculum & Classroom Management - they write a philosophy of teaching paper in these

Not sure

All upper division courses

Critical Writing About Literature

Play Analysis

Discrete and Argumentative Mathematics

Research

nearly all of them

Math 2900 Discrete and Argumentative Mathematics

Grant Writing & Fund Raising

EDPSYCH 3148, SOCFOUND 3119

Almost all of them, but especially those with a enrollment under 30

Fin 3050, Fin 3055

We have a writing-enhanced course requirement in the religion major and a number of our courses are listed as courses that help students meet that requirement.

Intro Managerial Acct

We have already designated courses as writing intensive in our major.

SPAN 3001: Advanced Writing OR SPAN 3006: Spanish for Heritage Speakers

Any

MUS HIST 1020, MUS HIST 1030

Econ 4380 Directed Research

all history and management classes

Clinical Processes, Diagnostics, Clinical Practice

All 4000-level English courses, though feedback from multiple readers may not be a common feature. All 3000- and 4000-level Spanish, creative and professional writing courses, though researched sources may not be a common feature. If all of these are required, then none of the English courses would meet the definition of writing enhanced.

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We have no majors

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Clinical Processes, Clinical Practicum

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TECH 3182 / 5182

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PSYCH 3002 Research Methods. Are you looking at grad courses too? If so I could give some there as well

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Research Methods

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Don't know

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Again, all of them.

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All

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Research Methods in Psychology

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TECH 2072 Engineering Materials

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Intro to Reading Playscripts, Playscript Analysis

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Anthro Theory; language and culture

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Theatre history, Playscript Analysis

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Any Music History course

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intro to psych; again, my section only

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MGMT 3183 - Leadership Skills

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PolAmer 1014,

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Environmental Geology

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None

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Research methods, Communication Theories

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Every Art History I teach: Art Hist 4000 and 5000 level courses

**Q9 - 4. What elective course(s) in your major program(s) could be identified as writing-enhanced with respect to the discipline?**

4. What elective course(s) in your major program(s) could be identified as...

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CHEM4210/PHYSICS4210 Nanotechnology, CHEM4200/PHYSICS4200 Nanoscience

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Not sure.

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pretty much all courses in Philosophy and World Religions

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Music History courses

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Again, there are many in both majors that are already designated this way

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Many of our upper division classes involve extensive writing, but I'm not sure they fit the criteria listed above.

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BIOL 4108/5108

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Stress & Coping

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many upper level history classes depending on specific professor

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There are A LOT of courses that Comm Studies identifies as writing-enhanced.

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Acct 3140 and Audit

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None

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Music Literature/Wind Lit

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Biochemistry Lab is an elective in some of our majors.

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Same as above

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Independent study Pedagogy classes

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literary criticism, editing, professional writing, literary nonfiction

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CS 3610 has been at times.

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NA

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methods courses; performance & rhetoric of social protest; freedom of speech; communication, community & Change; the other dept. capstones are meant to be writing intensive too, but administrative pressures to raise class size have led some instructors to cut the number of writing assignments

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Again, impossible to answer

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n/a

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Not sure

All upper division course

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Most non-survey courses

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Any of the upper level proof based courses, perhaps.

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nearly all of them

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I'm not sure

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Fin 3040

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Same answer as above

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MATH 3540 History of Mathematics

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We have already designated courses as writing intensive in our major.

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Many (if not most) advanced electives in Spanish devote significant time on writing activities

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Any

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All MUS HIST 3000-level classes

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Econ 3257 History of Economic Thought

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4118/5118 Mental Health and We'll Being in the Classroom

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Research Methods

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Child and Adolescent Psychopathology

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NA

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PSYCH 2203, PSYCH 3606/5606. Pretty much all our courses would qualify I think, but I'm only giving those I teach.

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Don't know

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Theory and Practice of Writing; English 4765; English 4775; English 4785

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Writing is inherent in my discipline, so again, all could be writing-enhanced.

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All

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Psychology of Gender, Developmental Psychology, Psychology of Music, Cooperative Education

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Religion, magic and witchcraft

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Theatre History 2

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Any Music History Course

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motivation and emotion, and careers in psychology

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N/A

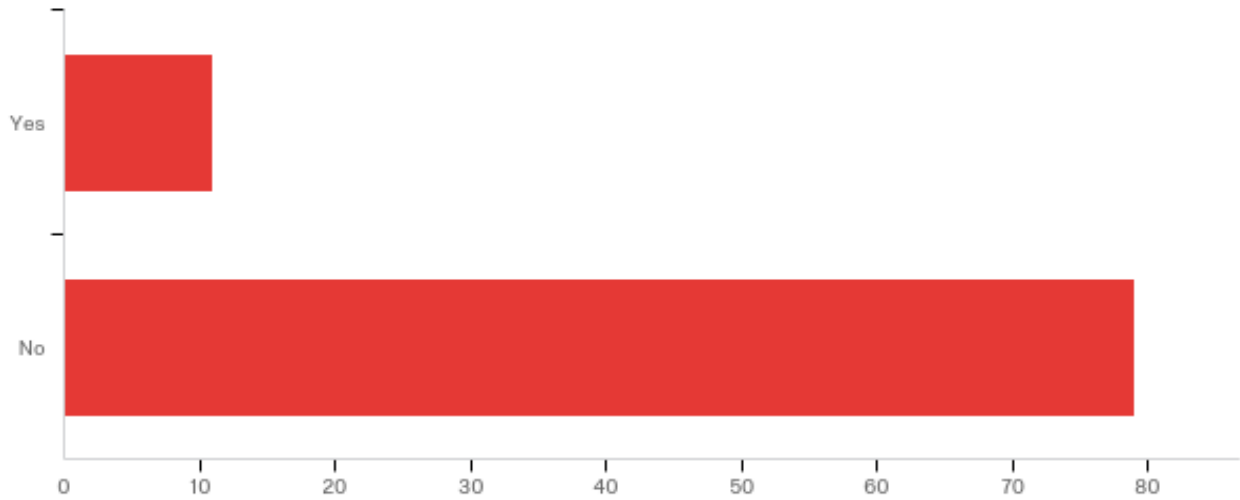
Fossils and Evolution

Unsure

All methods classes, all rhetoric classes

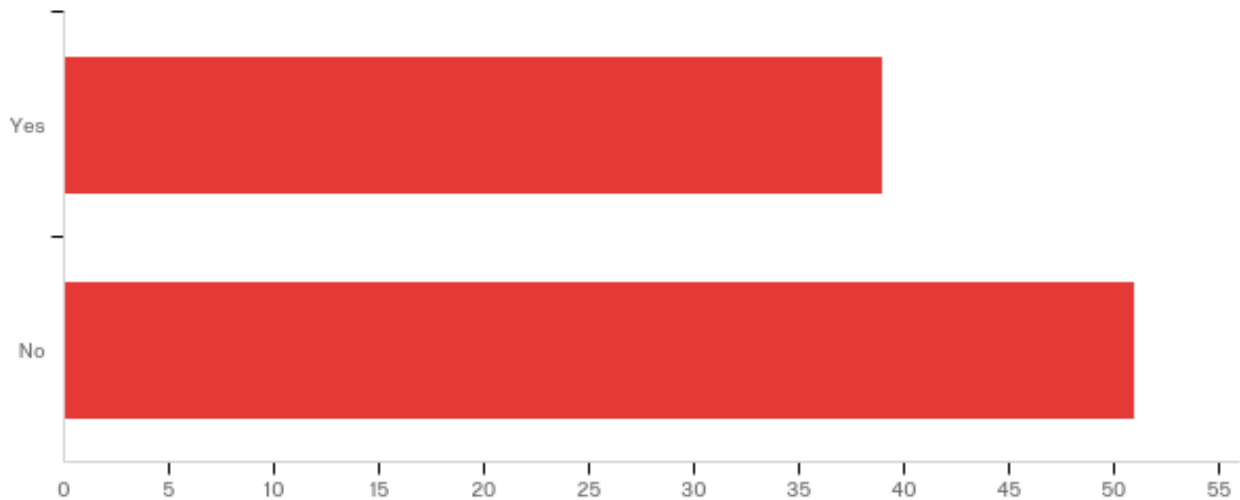
see above: all ArtHist 4000/5000 level

**Q14 - 5. Do you currently teach a writing-enhanced course in the LAC?**



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	12.22%	11
2	No	87.78%	79
	Total	100%	90

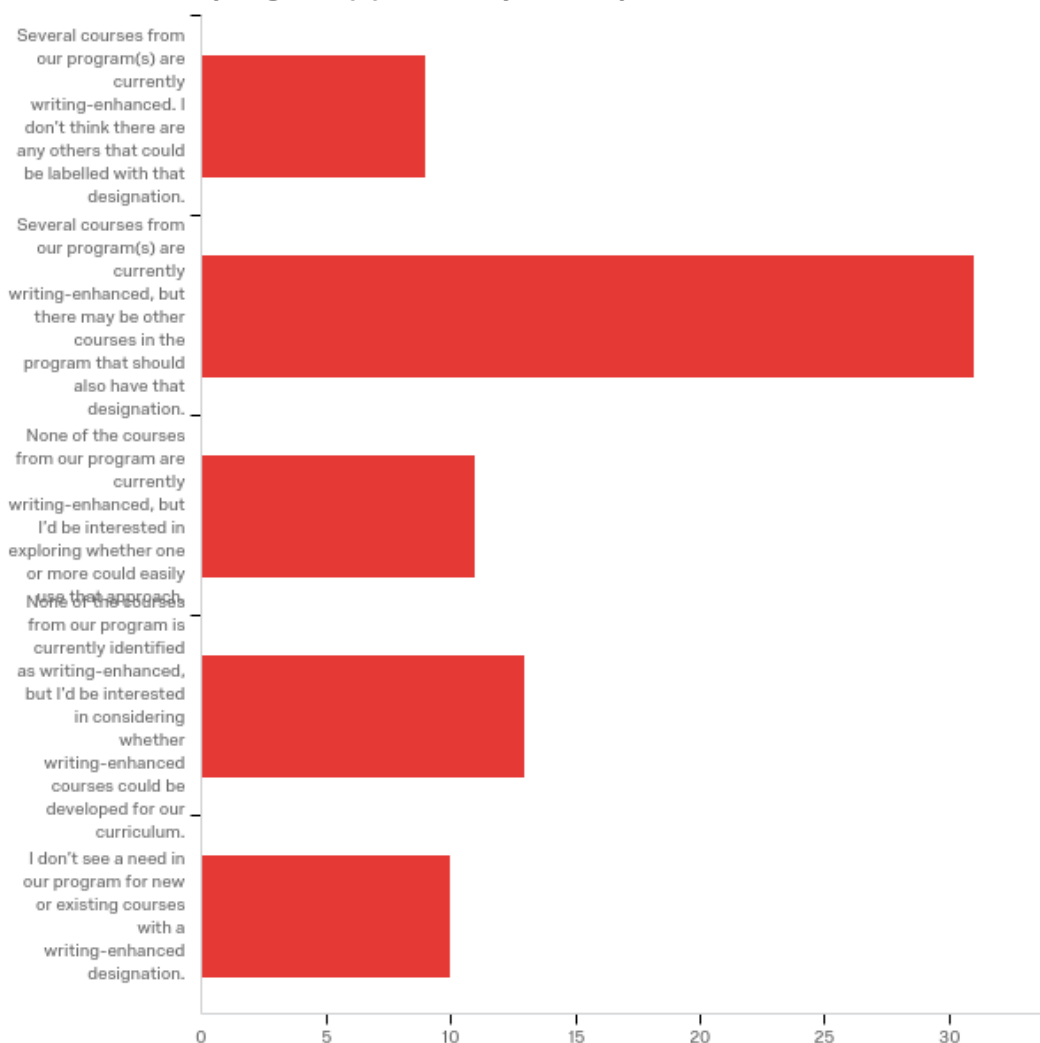
**Q15 - 6. Do you currently teach a writing-enhanced major course?**





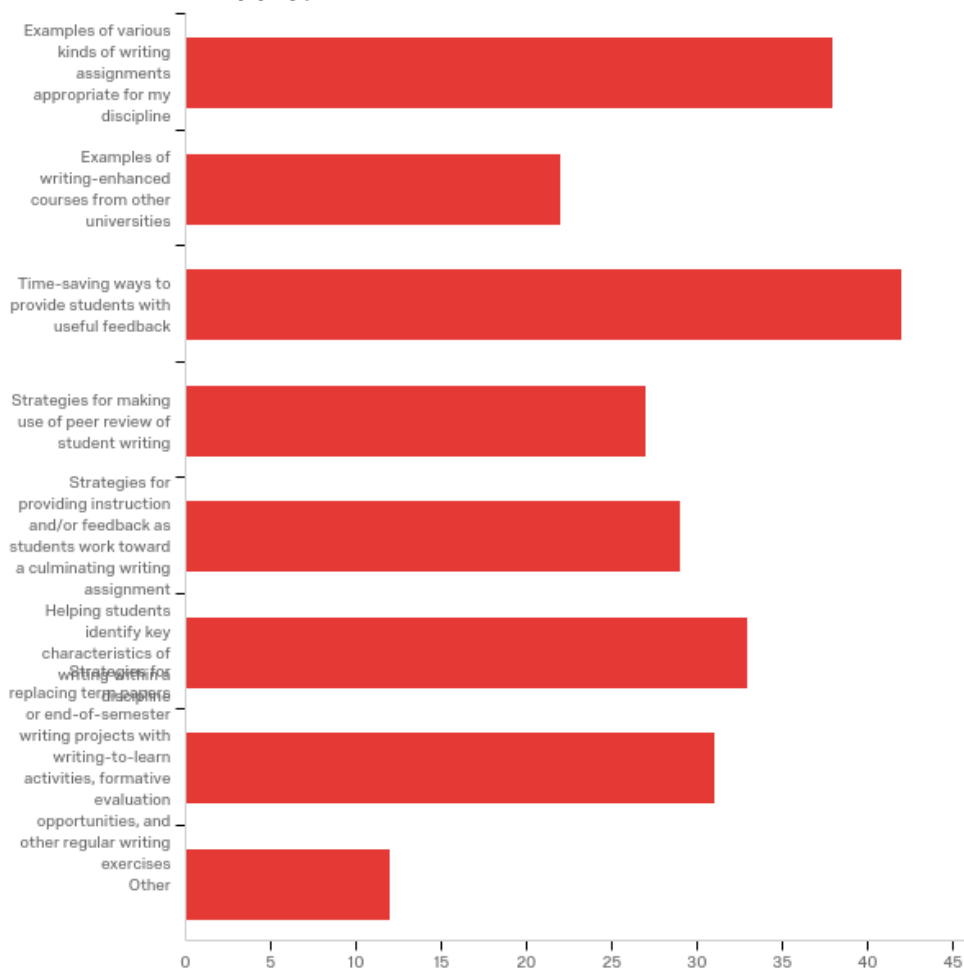
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	43.33%	39
2	No	56.67%	51
	Total	100%	90

**Q10 - Your Recommendations for Next Steps in Enhancing Students' Writing Skills** 1. Your program may or may not currently offer courses that could be considered "writing-enhanced" in terms of pedagogy, or that may be designated as writing-focused in each semester's course schedule book. Please click the response below that best describes your thoughts about writing-enhanced courses in the program(s) within your department:



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Several courses from our program(s) are currently writing-enhanced. I don't think there are any others that could be labelled with that designation.	12.16%	9
2	Several courses from our program(s) are currently writing-enhanced, but there may be other courses in the program that should also have that designation.	41.89%	31
3	None of the courses from our program are currently writing-enhanced, but I'd be interested in exploring whether one or more could easily use that approach.	14.86%	11
4	None of the courses from our program is currently identified as writing-enhanced, but I'd be interested in considering whether writing-enhanced courses could be developed for our curriculum.	17.57%	13
5	I don't see a need in our program for new or existing courses with a writing-enhanced designation.	13.51%	10
	Total	100%	74

**Q11 - 2. Which of the following topics would you see as most useful in helping your program(s) develop pedagogical tools to improve students' writing skills? (Check all that apply).**



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Examples of various kinds of writing assignments appropriate for my discipline	45.78%	38
2	Examples of writing-enhanced courses from other universities	26.51%	22
3	Time-saving ways to provide students with useful feedback	50.60%	42
4	Strategies for making use of peer review of student writing	32.53%	27
5	Strategies for providing instruction and/or feedback as students work toward a culminating writing assignment	34.94%	29
6	Helping students identify key characteristics of writing within a discipline	39.76%	33
7	Strategies for replacing term papers or end-of-semester writing projects with writing-to-learn activities, formative evaluation opportunities, and other regular writing exercises	37.35%	31
8	Other	14.46%	12
	Total	100%	83

## Other

Other

ELearning integration especially peer review

More courses and better job security for adjuncts, who bear the vast majority of writing-instruction burden at this school

I don't need any help to help students be able to write in my discipline

Strategies for giving effective feedback on writing over eLearning, including technology info.

Scientific Reports

NO

The answer says check all that apply, but the survey will not allow multiple selections for this response. I choose #3,4,& 5

all of the above

Examples of writing-enhanced courses from other universities' COMPETING programs

Since it wouldn't allow me to pick multiple answers, I'd say all of the above.

I think all of the suggestions are good. I wasn't able to click on more than one at a time.

All of the above, but the survey won't let me pick more than 1