

## **Administrative Response to Discipline Review**

### **Composition and Literature**

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The Composition and Literature (WR/ENG) Discipline Review was presented in the Spring of 2010. We thank you for your efforts to create, maintain, improve, and expand the high quality Composition and Literature courses across the district. Those efforts serve the community well and we thank you for your continued efforts to make these disciplines something about which the college in general and you in particular can take great pride.

This Administrative Response will address: A) items of note B) work still to be completed, and C) administrative response to the SAC's recommendations.

#### **Items of Note**

- Strong harmony between PCC's Core Outcomes and WR/ENG SAC course content and objectives.
- Thoughtful consideration of student success, including how WR 121 stands apart from other Writing courses.
- Desire to improve student success for all students and willingness to research why some student groups do better or worse than other groups.
- Support efforts for students, e.g., Rock Creek's "Writing Instructors' Best Practices Idea Book" and Cascade's WR 115 student success project.
- Development of a Composition Wiki created by faculty members district-wide to support students and save them the cost of a Writing Manual.
- Development of a process to review and revise CCOGs in WR 115, 121, and 122.
- Involvement of some WR/ENG faculty members in internationalization efforts and the Asian Studies program.

- Involvement of some WR/ENG faculty members on the Learning Assessment Council.

### **Work Still To Be Completed**

Coverage of how outcomes assessment leads to course and discipline improvement needs to be provided. Program/discipline review guidelines identify particular areas to address during the discipline review process. Assessment of outcomes (at the course, discipline and college level) should be included, and we found this weakly addressed in your report. SACs are asked to consider how the assessments of outcomes lead to changes, and documentation of assessment driven change must be provided.

Discipline review is an important vehicle for providing evidence of continuous improvement to external stakeholders, including the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). In its April 2010 Interim Accreditation Report, NWCCU noted that PCC must document “progress in demonstrating, through regular and systematic assessment, that students who complete their programs have achieved the intended learning outcomes of degrees and certificates. Further, the college must begin to demonstrate, in a regular and systematic fashion, how the assessment of student learning leads to the improvement of teaching and learning.”

For example, you reference developing a new course, WR 222, Writing the Research Paper, but don't explain how and why you decided that this course was necessary. How did assessments of student learning inform this curricular improvement? Was there something lacking in existing courses (WR 115, 121, 122, and/or 227)? We expect that conversations about how to better serve students followed assessment of student outcomes in preceding courses and we also expect that it would not be difficult to describe how assessment of student outcomes drove the creation of the course.

We are confident that the WR/ENG SAC does, in fact, approach its discipline with this spirit of continuous improvement. Your discipline review refers to discussions and reflection among faculty, including thoughts on activities to undertake in the future. This kind of discussion is integral to continued growth in college offerings. It is vital that we document and provide evidence of how assessment and related improvement occurs within a discipline.

With regards to this matter, we request an update by the end of Fall term 2010.

### **Administrative Response to the SAC's Recommendations**

#### Recommendations related to Faculty

1. Additional funding could allow the hiring of additional full-time faculty. *The permanent budget augmentation, approved by the Board of Directors in June, included an additional full-time WR/ENG instructor at Cascade. Additional WR/ENG instructor positions will be considered along with other requests for full-time instructors as we prepare the next biennial budget.*

#### 2. Instructor qualifications

2.1. Require all 30 credits of literature/rhetoric to be at the graduate level. *We support this change as it is consistent with PCC and state requirements.*

2.2. Require that high school teachers teaching dual-credit courses meet the same standards as Comp/Lit faculty. *This is already the case.*

3. The Comp/Lit SAC believes that sabbaticals must be supported. In addition, the Comp/Lit SAC believes that Conference attendance for both PT and FT faculty must be encouraged and supported financially. *We agree and will work to see that funding of these activities is considered as we prepare the next biennial budget. With regards to conference attendance, please consider support available through Staff Development.*

#### 4. Class size

4.1. English faculty members should never be assigned more than 12 hours a week of classroom teaching. In fact, the teaching load should be less, to provide adequate time for reading and responding to students' writing; for holding individual conferences; for preparing to teach classes; and for research and professional growth. *Clearly composition instructors need to spend significant amounts of time outside the classroom in student conferences and giving feedback on student writing. This is recognized in the faculty contract in the lower number of classroom contact hours required of composition instructors compared to instructors in other disciplines.*

4.2. No more than 20 students should be permitted in any writing class. Ideally, classes should be limited to 15. Students cannot learn to write without writing. In sections larger than 20, teachers cannot possibly give student writing the immediate and individual response necessary for growth and improvement. *We do not support a reduction in class sizes.*

4.3. Remedial or developmental sections should be limited to a maximum of 15 students. It is essential to provide these students extra teaching if they are to acquire the reading and writing skills they need in college. *This is a topic covered by another SAC and beyond the scope of the WR/ENG SAC.*

4.4. No English faculty member should teach more than 60 writing students a term: if the students are developmental, the maximum should be 45. *We do not support a reduction in the number of students served.*

4.5. No more than 25 students should be permitted in discussion courses in literature or language. Classes larger than 25 do not give students and teachers the opportunity to engage literary texts through questions, discussion, and writing. If lecture classes must be offered, teachers should be given adjusted time or assistance to hold conferences and respond to students' writing. *We do not support a reduction in enrollment limits for literature classes. These classes have been taught successfully with a limit of 35 for well over ten years.*

4.6. Any faculty members assigned to reading or writing laboratories or to skills centers should have that assignment counted as part of the teaching load. Identifying and addressing the individual needs of students is a demanding form of teaching. *We believe this is already being done. The faculty lead in the writing center is compensated for those duties and part-time faculty members who tutor are paid for their services.*

4.7. No full-time faculty member's load should be composed exclusively of sections of a single course. (An exception might occur when a specific teacher, for professional reasons such as research or intensive experimentation, specifically requests such an assignment.) Even in colleges where the English program consists mainly of composition, course assignments should be varied. Repeating identical material for the third or fourth time the same day or semester after semester is unlikely to be either creative or responsive. *We are not aware of any examples of this problem occurring. If and when this occurs, the faculty member should seek to fix this problem with the help of the Faculty Department Chair and/or Division Dean.*

4.8. No English faculty member should be required to prepare more than three different courses during a single term. Even if the faculty member has taught the same course in previous years, the material must be reexamined in the context of current scholarship and the presentation adapted to the needs of each class. *WR/ENG instructors don't teach more than three classes in a term, unless they accept an overload, so we don't consider this to be an issue.*

4.9. The time and responsibility required for administrative, professional, scholarly, and institutional activities should be considered in determining teaching loads and schedules for English faculty members. These responsibilities cover a broad range, such as directing independent study, theses, and dissertations; advising students on academic programs; supervising student publications; developing new courses and materials; serving on college or departmental committees; publishing scholarly and creative work; refereeing and editing professional manuscripts and journals; or holding office in professional organizations. *The contract covers teaching loads and other responsibilities. There are many professional activities which might meet the non-teaching requirements of faculty. We suggest that faculty members work with Faculty*

*Department Chairs and/or Division Deans to ensure engagement in professional activities most relevant to serving students and programs within contractual guidelines.*

#### 4.10 SAC Recommendations for absolute class size limits

All Literature (ENG) classes 35 (DL= 25)

WR121-WR 227 27 (DL= 20)

WR 115 24 (DL= 20)

*We do not support a reduction in class size limits.*

4.11 Given the new mandate for Comp/Lit to be responsible for PCC students' information literacy (and additional obligations) there is strong concern about the potential efficiency of our program. The SAC would like some research into how these additional obligations affect our program's effectiveness and, depending on the outcome of said research, to revisit/adjust the recommendations for class sizes. *Please provide Institutional Effectiveness with an outline of the research you think that would address this concern.*

#### Recommendations related to College Core Outcomes

1. Before converting our courses from 3 to 4 credits, we did not require Information Literacy at the WR 115 level except in the broadest sense of the term (see above). We have succeeded in incorporating specific new components of Information literacy into WR 115, as well as enhancing this instruction at the higher levels, in an effort to make sure the students still experience the materials formerly contained in our capstone WR 123 now that that course is no longer taught. However, we do want to know if our students are doing as well at the end of the program as they did when we still taught WR 123. Currently, our goal is to set aside time to talk about Information Literacy at the WR 121 and WR 122 levels, to see how effective these changes have been from the instructors' vantage points. We are not convinced that there is enough time in the shorter sequence to cover all the topics we used to be able to cover. *We support this conversation and look forward to hearing your conclusions.*

2. We are recommending revisions to the Comp/Lit instructor evaluation forms that students fill out at the end of the term. In these forms, we want to highlight the College Core Outcomes, so we can gather evidence of student achievement and instruction. We would like to improve our survey information by asking IE to contact students who have graduated from PCC and who may be able to tell us how well our classes prepared them for the circumstances in which they find themselves needing to use their communication and analytic skills. *We are interested in learning more about what you have in mind here. Student self-assessment of learning can be one valuable source of information. We advise against, however, trying to use a single evaluation form to assess both student learning and faculty effectiveness.*

3. We are recommending that the Comp/Lit SAC compile a digital archive of sample student essays such as those attached below. We would use this archive of representative work to show new instructors and instructors in the dual-credit high school programs, to communicate our expectations of what our students are asked to produce. We would also be able to use the archive during our inservices when we do group reads of assignments so as to norm our grading process. Perhaps the current wiki-space provided by the college to the SAC would be an appropriate place for this digital archive. *We encourage and support this action.*

4. An issue we are watching at the moment is the effect of our SAC having waived the Math 20 competency prerequisite for our classes. This decision may be making it more difficult for students to achieve the outcome of numerical analysis when they work with research materials in our upper-level writing classes. We encourage you to consider this and possibly speak with representatives of other SACs that have done the same thing. *Since MTH 20 is fifth-to-eighth grade math, having students with a higher numeracy level would likely benefit student progress and success. We encourage you to consider a progression of MTH prerequisites as students progress through WR courses, similar to the progression of WR prerequisites required as students progress through MTH courses.*

5. We will revisit the Core Outcomes Mapping Matrix and update it after we finish the current process of revising the composition CCOGs. We recommend that our SAC discuss the inclusion of specific language from the College Core Outcomes in our new CCOGs, based on our reflection regarding Core outcomes with specific attention to community and environmental responsibility. *We support this action.*

### Recommendations related to Distance Learning

#### Advising

1. Before registration, optional face-to-face orientations at a variety of locations are one way to help students determine if they are ready for the challenges of Distance Learning. *Any student can go through a face-to-face orientation and we support encouraging all students to do so. We must remember, though, that not all students are close enough to PCC to do so. For those who are, the new "Start Lab" program should go a long way to improving student readiness.*
2. A web page of student cautionary comments may help students understand what to expect. Having experienced online students answering the question, "What do you wish you had known before you began taking distance learning classes?" can provide a variety of insights that may alert new students to the nature of the Distance Learning experience. Especially with humanities classes, students express surprise at the amount of time and the level of interaction required. *Agreed. Please work with Distance Education Department to create this resource.*
3. Distance Learning students should be encouraged to contact advisors by telephone or through Eluminate, especially prior to registering for the first online class but also throughout the student's online experience to determine whether that is the appropriate modality for that individual and to facilitate instructor-student communication or make suggestions to enhance the experience. *We agree that it would be helpful for DL faculty to encourage students to work closely with an advisor.*

## Delivery Methods

1. IE might conduct a study of Comp/Lit DL students and instructors to address any curriculum-specific strengths and weaknesses. *Please provide Institutional Effectiveness with an outline of the research you think that would address this concern.*

Enrollments *For the three items below, please provide Institutional Effectiveness with an outline of the research you think that would address this concern.*

1. Gain more information on attrition rates in all writing classes to get a better sense of why and when students are dropping. Start with the withdraw rates from the past several years.
2. Find out why WR 121 alone does not have these results, as this could help PCC to make changes to the other DL classes to improve these rates.
3. Find out how many of those who dropped a writing class went on to try again and what modality they eventually succeeded in (for those who did end up completing the class).

## Class Size

1. In accordance with the NCTE, CWPA, and ASU findings and statements on class size, the Comp./Lit. SAC recommends that enrollments for DL composition courses be limited to 20 students. *We do not support a reduction in class size.*
2. We recommend that discussions begin now on how best to implement these changes so that they can take effect in the near future in a manner that is beneficial to students, faculty, and staff while also being cost effective.

## Resources

1. Development of research guides for a department, course, or assignment. *We need a clarification as to the meaning of this recommendation. Is this something you are recommending to the SAC, or to the administration?*

2. Weekly RSS feed messages with text, links, and/or tutorials delivered to the course page. *Good idea, but keep in mind that not all students or instructors will wish to receive RSS feeds.*
3. Online tutorials. A personal email should be sent by the campus reference librarians to the online instructors from that campus before the start of classes in order to promote available services for the instructors. Mailing lists should be supplied by the department heads. *We will discuss this with the District library staff.*

### Quality Assessments

1. The SAC should work with the DL Department to develop student satisfaction surveys specific to literature and composition courses. *Yes, please do so, coordinating with Institutional Effectiveness in the process.*
2. The SAC should look at how departmental involvement in DL course assessment varies by campus and make recommendations for improvements. *Agreed. We are one college, not four separate colleges. It may prove helpful for the SAC to develop evaluation tools specifically for on-line composition and literature courses. This would be a great help to Faculty Department Chairs and Division Deans evaluating part-time and full-time faculty members.*

### Recommendations about Facilities and Support

1. To increase instructional effectiveness, all classrooms should be equipped with computer podiums. Most of our textbooks are web based and require constant access to the internet during class. Internet reference and research sources are also used to support faculty lectures and class discussions. Additionally, wheelchair accessible podiums should be made available to physically challenged faculty. *Agreed. Please work with your campus Division Dean and Dean of Instruction on this matter since advances are campus-driven, even if paid by a district-wide bond. For example, additional podiums were added at Sylvania over the summer and more will be added in the coming year.*

2. Increased office space, classrooms, more offices for part-time faculty, and more faculty conference areas should be provided. At present, there are not enough computerized classrooms, offices for part-time faculty and private areas for faculty-student conferencing, to accommodate our present and future enrollments. *Again, please work with your campus Division Dean and Dean of Instruction on this matter since advances are campus-driven, even if paid by a district-wide bond.*

We look forward to receiving your response to our request included in the "Work Still To Be Completed" section of this administrative response and having that response by the end of Fall term 2010. Let us know if you have questions or concerns. One or more of us would be glad to meet with representatives of the SAC if need be.

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