

REPORT ON THE WRITING PROGRAM

The current mission of the UCSC Writing Program is to provide a curriculum of writing course for undergraduates who need to fulfill their lower division writing requirements. The whole campus, not just the Humanities Division, is served by our students' knowing how to write well. Unlike the Math Department, which also oversees a major lower-division requirement, the Writing Program is not a department and does not have a major.

Until recently the Writing Program also included in its mission the offering of courses to assist students in satisfying the "W" (writing-intensive) General Education requirement, to provide courses for students in need of work beyond Writing 1, to provide a curriculum for students wishing to do advanced work in writing, and to work closely with other faculty and programs on improving writing in disciplinary contexts.

Eschewing history and concentrating on the present, we address here only classes associated with the program's lower-division offerings. Outlined below is a factual report on the Writing Program's financial circumstances. We describe the work to be done and the dollars that pay for the work. We conclude by offering some interpretations on four controversial issues. We offer one recommendation about the funding model.

I. The work that needs to be accomplished by the Writing Program

A. Basic writing requirements that students need to graduate

Each fall between 3,100 and 3,200 new freshmen arrive at UCSC. This number is expected to remain reasonably constant even as the campus grows. (The planned increase in total campus enrollment is projected to come from increases in continuing students ("retention rates"), in new junior-level transfer students, and in new graduate students.) Each student has three requirements to satisfy concerning writing, known as ELWR, C, and W.

1. Entry-Level Writing Requirement (ELWR, formerly known as Subject A). All students must pass the ELWR by the end of the fourth quarter of their college career. Typically about half of UCSC students have already passed the ELWR requirements before matriculation (by passing a state-wide exam in the spring prior to matriculation; by getting a 3.4 or 5 on their AP English exam; by obtaining a high SAT score). In 2004-2005, for example, 1070 students had not already satisfied the ELWR requirement by the time Fall classes began.¹

Students who need to pass ELWR are assigned to special sections taught by trained writing instructors. The special sections are generally the same size as or smaller than regular core course sections, with 20 to 22 students per section. In Fall 2004, there were 49.5 sections serving 1070 students. (In 2003, 1270 students were served. In 2000, 1045

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students were served). Students in the ELWR sections are also encouraged to sign up for ELWR tutoring concurrent with core course.²

The special sections of the college core courses and the supplemental tutoring are intended to advance student writing to the level that passes the minimum requirement (ELWR). Typically the large majority of students (around 80%) pass the ELWR by the exam given in November or by an appeal subsequent to the exam. In 2004, 78% of the students in special sections passed in November. Most of the students who did not pass were bilingual or bidialectal and would be placed in ESL tracks on many other UC campuses.

Students who do not pass ELWR in November of freshman year are subsequently directed into special writing sections: W20 (winter quarter) and W21 (spring quarter). Tutoring is available to students in these classes as well; those who paid the \$69 fee in the fall are not required to pay it again. The workload credit once available to students working with tutors is no longer provided.³

One other course needs mention here. Writing 22A (for first-quarter students) and Writing 22B (for fourth-quarter and a few more advanced students) are 3-unit classes that serve students whose English language skills need additional attention. They are the only courses the Writing Program offers specifically for English language learners. Writing 22A serves as a supplement to the college core course.

During the 2001-02 academic year, 263 students took Writing Program-funded W20, W21, W22 (13 sections); class size averaged 20.2. (Only 9 students took Writing 22B in this inaugural year of the W22A/B courses.) An additional two sections of Writing 22A were funded by EOP, bringing the total number of students up to 308 and the average section size to 19.3. In 2002-03, approximately 264 students took W20, W21, W22 (in, we believe, 13 sections) In 2003-04, 413 students filled 19 sections of W20, W21, and W22, with an average class size of 21.7.

2. Composition. Students must satisfy the C (Composition) requirement. Annually, a significant number of students—in fall 2002 the figure was 510—enter UCSC having placed out of the C requirement by virtue of their AP scores, or by scoring an 11 or 12 on the Writing Placement Exam. Among other students, some complete the requirement at another institution while others leave UCSC before completing the requirement. The net result is that between 2100 and 2500 students have typically taken Writing 1 per year. The recent and projected size of the entering freshmen cohort would suggest stabilization at about 2,200 students per year.⁴ In 2001-02, Writing 1 class size averaged 22.5. In 2003-04 it averaged 24.7.

3. Discipline-based writing. As part of the campus GE, students must take and pass a writing-intensive course, offered and funded by various academic departments—part of the campus GE requirements and not officially in the realm of the Writing Program.

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B. Work of the Writing Program that enables students to meet their requirements

One way to understand the Writing Program is to ask: what must it do and what must it pay for (not always the same things) so that students may meet their obligations?

The Writing Program, together with the colleges, must offer sufficient classes to help students satisfy two university and campus requirements: ELWR and composition. The Writing Program no longer offers upper division courses and thus no longer has responsibility for helping students meet the “W” requirement.

The Writing Program has several tasks to fulfill concerning ELWR. It must pay for 24 ELWR sections of college Core classes. It must select instructors for those classes in consultation with the provosts. When asked, it must also advise the colleges on the selection of instructors for the 25 or so college-funded ELWR sections.

The Writing Program must also offer enough sections of Writing 1 to meet the demand. The number of sections has varied between 88 (2002-03) and 100 (2003-04). If the documented demand exceeds the Program’s projected need for classes, then the Program applies to the Division for funds to mount additional sections. For instance, in 2003-04, a year in which there was a significant enrollment bubble, the Writing Program asked for and received funding for 14 additional sections of Writing 1 and two additional sections of Writing 20;. Nevertheless, it ended the 2002-03 year without having run seven more sections of Writing 1 that were estimated to be needed.

The Writing Program must offer enough sections of W20, W21, W22 to meet the demand. In 2002-03, the demand appears to have totaled 17 such courses; in 2003-04, there were a total of 19. EOP has helped pay for sections of Writing 22: it funded 2 of 3 such courses in 03-04 and 3 of 5 in 04-05.

The Writing Program must offer Writing 169, the course taken by undergraduates who wish to serve as writing assistants in ELWR sections of college Core classes and in Writing 20 and 21. The program annually funds two sections of Writing 169.

The Writing Program must offer Writing 203, the course taken by graduate students who wish to teach W1.

The Writing Program must pay for 2 or 3 C sections of Stevenson’s winter Core course.

In addition to offering sufficient classes to meet university and campus ELWR and composition requirements, and to offering classes that help graduate and undergraduate students participate in these efforts, the Writing Program must oversee the management of its portion of the curriculum. The Writing Program must keep track of students’ progress to meeting the ELWR; administer the liaison between colleges, Writing Program, and EOP/Learning Support Services; score the Analytical Writing Placement Exams (offered campus-wide five times annually), appeals to exam results, and writing portfolios submitted in lieu of the exam for Writing 20 and Writing 21 students; and

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judge student appeals to waive the composition requirement (among other things). The Writing Program also handles the customary business of a department, making sure that instructors are hired and reviewed, grades are recorded, individual student concerns are attended to, people are paid, and so on.

C. The new system

In spring, 2004, the Academic Senate approved a new system, designed by the Council of Provosts and the Writing Program, for covering lower-division writing. The new system, which will go into effect in the fall, 2005, modifies the old in two critical ways: First, the strongest writers, those who under the old system would have tested out of Writing 1 (C), now take a composition (C2) class, thus ensuring that even the ablest writers are instructed in college-level writing. Second, the new system also catches some of the weakest writers, those who under the old system satisfied the ELWR and C by taking community college courses of uncertain quality. Now they must take C2 before going on to their other classes, again ensuring that they have at least some college-level writing instruction in their first year.

The new system bifurcates the same enrollment by writing level, without adding new requirements or sections, and thus will be cost neutral. The new system will not necessitate the teaching of additional courses but will require that some of our courses will be re-labeled and will require that they distinguish more finely than before among levels of writing ability among the entering students. In the current system, all students take College 80 (e.g., Merrill 80, Crown 80), some sections of which are designed to help people satisfy the ELWR. In the new system, most students will take College 80 A and those who have obtained high scores on the diagnostic tests (SATs, AP tests, writing placement tests) will take College 80B. In the old system most students (approximately 2300 students) took Writing 1 while those with high test scores placed out of Writing 1. In the new system, the same will occur; but now Writing 1 will be called Writing 2.

II. Resources that enable the Writing Program to meet its obligations

A. Background

The state does not fund instruction intended to allow students to pass the ELWR test because in its view such instruction is “remedial.” Whether particular courses are viewed as remedial or not is open to interpretation, but the administration of ELWR and the grading of ELWR exams make claims on the Writing Program budget that are not funded by the state] W 20, 21,22, like all Writing Program classes, generate FTE enrollments, are included by the campus in its workload counts and are therefore viewed as not remedial and appropriately funded by the state. However, because W 20, 21,22 (as well as non-instructional and remedial expenditures) are currently funded out of the same fixed budgetary allocation, it is obvious that the more costs incurred for these responsibilities, the less money there will be for W 1.

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By the same token, with the shift to a static budget model, funding meant for lower-division undergraduate instruction must now also cover the cost of Writing 203 (usually half the cost, as it is currently co-taught by an SOE and an NSF lecturer) and of two sections of Writing 169. Prior to the introduction of this model, these classes constituted a line item in a budget separate from that of the lower-division writing requirements.

B. General

The annual budget for the Writing Program has been flat for at least three years (2001-02 through 2003-4). Writing Program expenditures over the last three years have ranged from \$1,640,448 in 2002-03 to \$1,588,791 in 2003-04. During the same three-year period, state allocations to the Writing Program, less start-up funding, equaled \$1,610,075 (2001-02), \$1,608,466 (2002-03), and \$1,622,530 (2003-04). A portion of these funds is available to fund classes taught by lecturers. The rest is reserved for such expenses as staff salary and benefits, lecturer benefits, Lecturer SOE salary, and operating funds. As is true for all programs and departments in the Humanities, the constant amount of money has to cover more line items (and more expensive items) today than five years ago.

While funding has been flat, the method used by the campus to allocate funds to the Division of Humanities to support the writing curriculum has changed three within the last decade. Prior to 1996-97, the Division of Humanities received an annual block allocation from the campus of approximately \$1.7 million for TAs. These funds were intended for three purposes: 1) fund lecturer salaries in the Language Program to mount the language curriculum; 2) fund lecturer salaries in the Writing Program to mount the writing curriculum; and 3) provide the division with temporary academic funds for curricular support across the division. There was no explicit allocation for each of the three intended uses. Beginning in 1997-98 and extending through 2001-02, lecturer salaries (including computing and staff support, admin overhead, benefits etc.) for lower-division campus requirements (the Writing 20 series and Writing 1) in the Writing Program were funded directly by the campus on a formulaic basis, with total students served, average class size, lecturer equivalencies, and the like used as formula drivers. The Division of Humanities passed through to the Writing Program the formula-driven dollars. In 2002-03, enrollment-based funding model was abandoned and replaced by the decentralization of open faculty provisions, which was intended to cover funding not just for the Writing and Language Programs but also start-ups and upgrades in the Division as a whole.

C. 2003-2004

In 2003-04, the Writing Program received \$1,622,530 in state funds to mount and support the writing curriculum. The Writing Program received another \$39,884 from non-state sources including contributions and gifts (\$33,700), Ed fees (\$2,342), and work-study (\$3,842). Thus, the total amount available to mount and support the writing curriculum totaled \$1,662,414. In addition to the funds to support the curriculum, the instructional staff received \$85,462 in awards from COT and from extramural sources. (By and

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large, these awards are not used to support the basic writing curriculum and thus should not be factored into the analysis and are best understood as off budget.)

From 2003-04 through to the present, the program's base curricular funding for temporary academic staff (TAS) has remained static at 12 FTE, or \$620,400. TAS funds pay for classes taught by non-senate faculty (NSF), the vast majority of classes offered by the program. A decreasing series of curricular "augmentations," \$50,000 in 2003-04 and \$25,000 in 2004-05, were added to this budget. (There is no projected augmentation for 2005-06.) Though the ostensible purpose of the augmentation funds was to close down the two de-funded minors, only one course from the minors, in spring 2005, was thus paid for. All other courses in the minors were paid for out of gift funds and an additional \$18,000 augmentation in 2003-04. The balances of the "augmentation" funds have been used, each year, to fund base curricular offerings in Writing 1 and the Writing 20 series.

In 2003-04, an anomalous year because of an enrollment bubble, a total of \$1.6 million in funds flowed into the writing program in the following categories:

- \$291,636 General State Funds--Academic salaries (LSOE)
- \$880,089 General State Funds-- Temporary academic salaries for writing and college
 - Core courses (including \$620,400 for salaries; \$12,000 for chair replacement;
 - \$50,000 for phase-out of the journalism major; \$91,200 in augmentations to
 - Cover 16 courses added due to the enrollment bubble; 31,600 in additional
 - Augmentations and \$74,889 for buy-outs for faculty serving as provost
 - Or on senate committees;
- \$ 65,976 General state Funds--Staff salaries
- \$254,222 General state Funds--Employee benefits (faculty, TAS, and staff)
- \$ 50,639 General state Funds—Supplies, phones, computing, etc.
- \$ 33,700 Gifts and contributions
- \$ 2,342 Opportunity funds, Education funds
- \$ 3,862 Work-Study funds

In addition, the program started the 2003-2004 year with \$57,825 in carry-forward funds. The carry-forward funds were the result of a computational error in the Division: the Writing Program was being compensated like other departments for the salaries of graduate students teaching in the program. As the program had been told it would not receive these funds, it amassed some carry-forward.

It is important to remember that the colleges and EOP pay for some of the courses for which the Writing Program provides input concerning staffing.

III. Issues involving different points of view, interpreted through our lens

A. The issue of graduate students

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At one point, the Dean of Humanities (Jorge Hankamer) set up an incentive program to encourage the Writing Program to hire graduate students as instructors of W1. The Writing Program was able then to hire graduate students for approximately \$2500 per course. Then the incentive program was suspended. Currently, it costs the university about \$7700 per graduate student per course. That figure includes \$5611 for Teaching Fellow salary (paid by the Writing Program); \$1503 for resident fees (paid by the central administration); and \$504 for health insurance (paid by the central administration.) Note that this figure does not include the cost of training graduate students (through Writing 203) or mentoring them.

How does that figure compare with the compensation (salary plus benefits) of a lecturer? The answer, of course, depends on the salary paid to lecturers. The median salary of lecturers is \$48,450. To this one needs to add benefits, derived through the formula in which salary is multiplied by 13.5% and the figure of \$6,700 is added to the sum. Thus, to a salary of \$48,450, one would add \$13,240 for a total compensation of \$61,691. That figure is presumed to cover 8 courses so that each course taught by “the average lecturer” costs \$7711 – essentially the same the direct cost of a graduate student (excluding Writing 203 and mentoring costs).

B. The issue of adequacy of resources

With a budget of \$1.6M can the Writing Program meet all its obligations? While different funding streams come to the Writing Program, some of the streams have fences around them and some do not. Thus, for ease of calculation, one can assign reasonable costs to each of the obligations and see if the costs can be covered by \$1.6M.

One way to conduct the calculations makes the amount of \$1.6M seem not only reasonable but also comfortable. We can start by assuming that the number of courses to be offered per year is somewhere between 137-145 (24 college courses; plus 90 Writing 1; plus 18 Writing 20-22; plus 2 courses of Writing 169; plus 1 course of Writing 203; plus 2 courses chair buy out). We then take \$7700 as the average per course cost. The total cost of 137 courses at \$7700 comes to \$1,054,900. The total costs of 145 courses at \$7700 comes to \$1,116,500. Naturally, other expenses must be covered, including compensation for support staff (which might be estimated at \$85,000 for staff salaries and benefits and for work-study help) supplies (which might be estimated at \$50,000), and also the payment of equivalencies.

Seen from the point of view of those within the Writing Program, however, the budget looks overly constrained. Members of the Writing Program are aware of serious warning signals. First, in 2003-04, only a small portion of the augmentation meant to help ease out the journalism minor was actually used for that purpose. The bulk of the money was used to deliver the core curriculum. Second, although the salaries of the 4 Lecturers with Security of Employment (LSOEs) swell the budget, LSOEs together can teach only 24 courses. Third, enrollments have been at the permissible maximums, and it seems that there may be a large “float” of students who will --sooner rather than later --need to enroll in Writing 1. In spring 2005 the Writing Program filled its classes before 150-170

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students who had just cleared the ELWR had a chance to enroll in Writing 1. (These are among the weakest writers on campus.) Finally, the regulations accompanying the new C1/C2 system indicate that students must satisfy C2 (a requirement met mainly by Writing 1, which will be renamed Writing 2) by the time they begin their seventh quarter. Given that there are about 700 students who have not completed Writing 1 by the end of the fifth term, there may be a logjam ahead.⁵ The severity of the logjam depends, ironically, on student attrition. If attrition rates continue at their current rates of 10% a year, then the problem is not particularly great; but efforts are being made to lower attrition rates.

CPB feels that differences concerning the adequacy of resources can only be resolved with data that tracks students—noting, for instance, how, when, and where they satisfy their writing requirements. At present, Institutional Research does not track students or courses in a way that allows for the best planning at the campus level (as opposed to providing data for the purposes of the Office of the President

CPB worries about the negative consequences of the present practice of funding at a minimum level and then augmenting when a great need is manifest. Such a system places a great strain on the chair of the Writing Program and creates uncertainty for loyal lecturers. It may also compromise the education of students who may be saddled with “last minute” hires.

At the same time, CPB recognizes the difficulty of finding a good solution. The real source of the problem may lie in the inherent uncertainties that plague the enterprise of testing students and placing them in courses at the beginning of the Fall. Given the class sizes of 25 or fewer students, if 50 students more than expected fail to pass one of the writing exams, it may be necessary to mount two extra courses.

C. Funding Model

The funding model has undergone many changes. It may be prudent therefore to keep things as they are. It may also make sense to revert to a prior model: the enrollment model. Yet, in light of the special circumstances of the Writing Program, the best model is one that assures both flexibility and predictability. At present, the Writing Program depends on augmentations from the Humanities Division when enrollments balloon beyond reasonable expectations. Might we not gain in simplicity, predictability, and equity to use an enrollment-based formula for funding the program?

D. Funding Sources and Funding Streams

EOP pays for some sections of Writing 20, 21, and 22. Might it not be a good idea to expect EOP to pay for all sections of Writing 10, 21, and 22?

Funding for the Writing Program flows through the Humanities Division. When Humanities needs to make severe cuts, it may think to capture savings by cutting TAS, a move that has especially severe consequences for the Writing Program. When times are

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less constrained economically, in contrast, there is little incentive for Humanities to lavish resources on the Writing Program, especially in an era when the campus is seeking to expand its graduate programs relative to undergraduate programs. Presumably, at the undergraduate level, the Writing Program provides the greatest services to those who are not likely to major in the Humanities

Is CPB suggesting then that the Writing Program be funded directly from the center and not through the Humanities conduit? No. Right now, no one seems to be asking for such a change. The Division seems willing to provide the accounting services needed. But, recognition of the mismatch between the needs of the Humanities Division and the needs of the Writing Program lend weight to the idea that a strict enrollment-based funding model might be a good safeguard against potential conflicts in the future.

E. Commensurable Funding

The Writing Program has a long history of innovative and highly successful collaborations with other units. For example, senior members of the Writing Program have co-taught W courses in the disciplines and have worked with graduate students in various department. Now, however, the funding model imposes restrictions so that SOE lecturers cannot unit in other units without risking bankruptcy for either the host units or the Writing Program. Under a chancellor who has made inter-disciplinarity and inter-divisional inter-disciplinarity one of her explicit goals, it seems unnecessarily restrictive to have a funding policy that essentially keeps the Writing Program's most experienced instructors on a short leash. CPB urges the administration to re-consider the funding model and to make it more flexible.

Note of Appreciation

We are grateful to Kathleen Dettman, Carol Freeman, Bill Ladusaw Don Rothman, and Roz Spafford for the help and guidance they provided, and we are especially appreciative of the great help provided us by Dario Caloss and Elizabeth Abrams.

¹ Some 330 students placed out, mostly through local placement.

² This service, once required of all Subject A students and funded by the Writing Program, was formerly linked to a 2-unit workload credit tutorial, but now costs students \$69 apiece and no longer provides enrollment credit. Some students who sign up for the tutorials have the tutorial fee paid by EOP. In the first year of fee-for-tutoring (2003-04), the colleges paid the fees for some low-income students; in the second year, the Writing Program elected to pay those fees but in the near future (2006) they will no longer have the special funding it is using to do so.

³ Note: the "credit" associated with tutoring was workload credit only. It could not be applied to the degree; it was counted for measurement of academic standing and financial

aid purposes. Planning and Budget did an analysis that suggested that the removal of such credit had minimal, if any, impact on students. Of the ~1200 students evaluated for 2003-04, 10-15 might have fallen below minimum progress if the credit for the tutorials had not been available. Minimum progress measures only the number of units students accumulate, however. The workload credit enabled under-prepared students to take two main classes, and ELWR section of Core in which they concentrated on writing and academic discourse, and another, possibly also including a for-credit lab. There has as yet been no study measuring the academic effect of the loss of workload credit on the campus's most at-risk students.

⁴ The effect of enhanced selectivity in admissions has not yet been determined; but the high standards for exemption probably mean that the figure of 2200 will remain realistic for some years to come.

⁵ A study by institutional research showed that 63% of an entering class had taken writing 1 by the end of the winter of sophomore year. Thus about 1950 or so students took writing 1 by the end of the fifth quarter. Add to this the figure of 500 or so students who placed out of Writing 1, and the resultant is 2450. 3100 minus 2450 is 650. 3200 minus 2450 is 750. Thus we arrive at the figure of 700.