

**COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY**  
**Amendment to Regulation 10.2.2.1: Disciplinary Communication**

To the Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division:

CEP is proposing an amendment to SCR 10.2.2.1 regarding general education requirements. The proposed change would replace our current writing-intensive (W) requirement with a new disciplinary communication (DC) requirement.

**Summary**

Current Regulation on disciplinary writing requires a UCSC undergraduate to take “[o]ne five-credit hour course or the equivalent that provides instruction and substantial practice in writing within the context of any academic subject”.

This writing-intensive (W) requirement is failing our students in two major respects. First, there are not enough seats in writing-intensive courses to meet student demand. Second, many writing-intensive courses do not serve the needs of the students who take them. A close examination of the situation has convinced CEP that both problems stem from a single source: current writing-intensive courses need not focus on writing strategies that are appropriate to a student’s major.

Two years ago, in a resolution that was unanimously passed, “the Senate call[ed] on the administration to work with departments and with the Senate to find a solution to the W crisis, and to allocate the funding needed for it.” (See Appendix II.) In response to this call, CEP proposes a new Disciplinary Communication (DC) requirement. It would replace the W requirement and lead to the following changes:

Writing-intensive (W)	Disciplinary communication (DC)
Can be in “any academic subject”	Must be appropriate to a student’s major
Can be at any academic level	Must be upper-division
Has an exclusive focus on writing	Focus is primarily on writing, but allows other modes of communication to count (e.g. posters, oral presentations)
Must be fully met within 5 credits, normally one course	Can be met over 1-3 separate courses totaling at least 5 credits
Courses approved by CEP (SCR 10.2.2.6)	True of DC also, but new Regulation also makes explicit CEP’s role in regularly assessing DC curricula

The new DC requirement would hold for students entering fall 2009 or later. However, since it is an upper-division requirement, and since transfer students have catalog rights extending back two years, the campus will have adequate time to prepare for the change.

## Justification

### *Background*

CEP has reported extensively on the problems facing the W requirement, which must be replaced for both pedagogical and logistical reasons. For those unfamiliar with the background, recent events, and relevant arguments, we urge that you please read CEP's two documents "CEP resolution on the writing-intensive requirement" and "CEP slides on the writing-intensive requirement". The former is included as Appendix II to this justification.

Very briefly, the problems with the current W requirement are the following:

1. Too few W courses are offered. Students are required to take a W course but often cannot find any seats in them available. CEP sees roughly 300 petitions a year from students seeking to satisfy W by other means. In other words, UC Santa Cruz is imposing a requirement on students without providing adequate means to satisfy it; this is not a defensible state of affairs.
2. The educational intent originally motivating the W was that students learn to write according to the conventions of their chosen major. However, this link between the W and the major was severed when the W legislation was passed at the time of the last GE reform effort. CEP believes it has addressed concerns of faculty that led to severing this link.

Our writing-intensive requirement is broken, and tinkering will not fix it.

### *A New Approach*

The proposed legislative change would replace the W requirement with a disciplinary communication (DC) requirement, effective for students entering fall 2009. The effects of the legislation, in more detail, would be the following:

- The requirement would specify training **appropriate to a student's major**, rather than training in "any academic subject". This does **not** mean that departments (or other major-sponsoring entities) would have to mount DC courses themselves, though this is the most likely scenario. It **does** mean that departments would be responsible for articulating their own educational goals for their majors in the area of disciplinary communication, subject to the general policies defined by CEP. (See the guidelines in Appendix I.) Likewise, departments and deans would have to work together to ensure that the means are provided for these goals to be met.
- The requirement would be broadened to embrace forms of verbal/textual disciplinary communication besides writing (e.g., oral presentation, poster presentation). However, as the proposed guidelines (Appendix I) make clear, writing would still form the most substantial component of the requirement.
- It would be possible to meet the requirement over any of 1-3 courses (totaling no fewer than 5 credits), giving departments more flexibility in meeting their goals. These courses

would have to be upper-division (so that transfer students are not left out), and **all** pathways through a major would have to meet the DC goals.

- The proposed Regulation would make it clear that CEP both approves and regularly assesses DC curricula. This would codify what is already policy for the W requirement. See below.

Last quarter CEP asked every department to state its own educational goals for its majors in the area of disciplinary communication, consistent with proposed CEP guidelines given in Appendix I below. CEP also asked departments to assess the degree to which these goals are being met, and to make clear what resources would be needed in order to close any gap between goals and reality. Their responses can be found by [clicking here](#), or you can go to: <http://senate.ucsc.edu/archives/Past%20Issues/ge-reform/index.html>

CEP's earlier reports argued that fixing the problem with disciplinary writing would require significant new resources. The Disciplinary Communications (DC) initiative, in order to succeed, requires an "infrastructure" including at least the following:

- a. Undergraduate writing tutors to help out in DC courses, and a means to train them.

**Recommendation: Restore the Writing Assistance Program**

- b. A means to train graduate students to be effective teaching assistants (TA) in DC courses.
- c. Information, consultation, and intellectual support for faculty who are designing and teaching DC courses.

**Recommendation: Dedicate a new full-time position to the support of disciplinary writing at UCSC. The duties of such a position would address (b)-(c) above.**

- d. Where it is needed, fiscal support for departmental efforts to create or improve effective DC curricula.

**Recommendation:** Clearly, resources will be needed to meet departmental teaching needs. The specifics will depend on the department.

CEP has consulted with the Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) and other Senate leaders, the campus administration, the Writing Program, and individual departments to best understand the resource implications of this proposal. With input from CPB and the administration, we expect to be more precise about costs--and the likelihood of meeting those costs--at the Senate Meeting. See Appendix II for some discussion.

The proposed DC guidelines in Appendix I make clear what CEP's goals are for the DC requirement and what departments would need to do in order to meet those goals. Though CEP has set serious general guidelines, we are putting responsibility for defining much of the DC objectives in the hands of departments (or other major-sponsoring entities). This is appropriate, since no one else can say what it means to learn to communicate according to conventions of the discipline. In addition, the proposed guidelines give departments more say in how requirements are implemented than the current W guidelines do. In our conversations with departments it has

become clear that many of them find this new flexibility makes a great difference in their perceived ability to take responsibility for disciplinary communication.

### *Review*

Though CEP already has the authority (and the obligation) to assess the effectiveness of W courses, no system of regular review has ever been in place. A reliable mechanism of review is an important goal for general education reform. The best way to ensure regular review is to build it into a department's regular program review schedule. If this legislation passes, then CEP will work to do this.

### **Current wording**

### **Proposed wording**

<b>Current wording</b>	<b>Proposed wording</b>
<p><b>10.2.2 General Education Requirements.</b></p> <p><b>10.2.2.1</b> Students who enter the University of California, Santa Cruz, as candidates for the degree of Bachelor of Arts, Science, or Music either: (1) in fall quarter 1986 or thereafter, or (2) between fall quarter 1984 and spring quarter 1986 with fewer than 45 quarter units of transfer credit, are required to fulfill the following campus general education requirements. The courses used to satisfy these requirements must be chosen from the lists of approved courses (SCR 10.2.2.6). Only course work awarded the grade of P, C (2.0) or better may be used to satisfy these requirements.</p> <p>a. <b>Introductions to disciplines.</b> Two five-credit hour courses or the equivalent are required from different departments or programs of study in each of the three academic areas: Humanities and Arts; Social Sciences; and Natural Sciences. These courses shall introduce the scope, methodology, and content of the discipline or one of its major subdivisions. No more than one course from the Arts may be used to satisfy this requirement. For the purpose of these regulations, all literatures are considered one department; likewise, all languages are considered one department.</p> <p>b. <b>Topical courses.</b> Three five-credit hour courses or the equivalent are required, no more</p>	<p>10.2.2 General Education Requirements.</p> <p>10.2.2.1 Unchanged.</p> <p>a. Introductions to disciplines. Unchanged.</p> <p>b. Topical courses. Unchanged.</p>

than one from any academic division. Topical courses shall present issues of broad social importance at a level appropriate to non-majors from either a multidisciplinary or disciplinary perspective.

c. **Quantitative course.** One five-credit hour course or the equivalent that entails use of advanced algebra, statistics, or calculus is required. The course may be offered by any unit but should teach, not just evaluate, mathematical skill.

d. **Composition courses.** Students who enter the University of California, Santa Cruz, in fall 2005 or thereafter are required, in addition to satisfying the ELWR requirement, to complete a sequence of two five-credit hour courses or the equivalent in composition and rhetoric. These courses shall usually be taken in a student's first year and must be completed before the student enrolls in the 7th quarter. Student admitted prior to fall quarter 2005 are required to complete one five-credit course in English Composition in addition to satisfying the ELWR requirement.

e. **Writing-intensive course.** One five-credit hour course or the equivalent that provides instruction and substantial practice in writing within the context of any academic subject.

c. Quantitative course.  
Unchanged.

d. Composition courses.  
Unchanged.

e. Writing-intensive course. **Students who entered the University of California, Santa Cruz, before fall 2009, are required to complete** One five-credit hour course or the equivalent that provides instruction and substantial practice in writing within the context of any academic subject.

**f. Disciplinary communication (DC) requirement. Students entering the University of California, Santa Cruz, in or after fall 2009, must have instruction and substantial practice in modes of communication appropriate to their major. The largest component of the DC curriculum must involve writing. The requirement must be satisfied either within one five-credit upper-division course or**

<p>f. <b>Arts course.</b> One five-credit hour course or the equivalent is required in the performance, theory, or history of the arts.</p> <p>g. <b>Ethnic studies course.</b> One five-credit course or the equivalent is required which deals with ethnic minorities in the United States or with a non-Western society or culture. This requirement applies only to students entering fall quarter 1986 or thereafter.</p> <p>h. A given course may apply toward as many as three of the requirements above. However, no single course may satisfy both the disciplinary Introduction and the Topical requirement.</p> <p><b>10.2.2.2</b> Students should complete requirements A, C, and the English Composition component of D (SCR 10.2.2.1) during their first six quarters of enrollment.</p> <p><b>10.2.2.3</b> Transfer or advanced standing credit may apply toward all of the requirements in SCR 10.2.2.1 except the Writing-intensive courses. Writing-intensive courses must be taken at UCSC. An eligible transferred course of 4.0 quarter units or 3.0 semester units may be considered one course with respect to campus general education requirements. Responsibility for assessment of work completed at other campuses of the University of California or at other institutions is delegated to the Director of Admissions. In making such assessments, the Director consults with the Faculty when appropriate.</p>	<p><b><u>within a combination of up to three upper-division courses totaling at least five credits. Major program requirements must include disciplinary communication curricula that are approved and regularly assessed by the Committee on Educational Policy.</u></b></p> <p><del>fg.</del> Arts course. Unchanged.</p> <p><del>gh.</del> Ethnic studies course. Unchanged.</p> <p><del>hi.</del> Unchanged.</p> <p>10.2.2.2 Unchanged.</p> <p>10.2.2.3 Transfer or advanced standing credit may apply toward all of the requirements in SCR 10.2.2.1 except the Writing-intensive/<b><u>disciplinary communication</u></b> courses, <del>which</del> <del>Writing-intensive</del> courses must be taken at UCSC. An eligible transferred course of 4.0 quarter units or 3.0 semester units may be considered one course with respect to campus general education requirements. Responsibility for assessment of work completed at other campuses of the University of California or at other institutions is delegated to the Director of Admissions. In making such assessments, the Director consults with the Faculty when appropriate.</p>
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<p><b>10.2.2.4</b> Students admitted during the times described in SCR 10.2.2.1 with three or more quarters of advanced standing from another campus of the University of California are required to fulfill in their entirety the University of California, Santa Cruz, campus general education requirements (SCR 10.2.2.1). However, students who, at the time they enroll at the University of California, Santa Cruz, campus, have completed the general education/breadth requirements of another University of California campus will be deemed to have completed the University of California, Santa Cruz, general education requirements.</p> <p><b>10.2.2.5</b> Petitions for the granting of an exception to the general education requirements must be recommended by the student's preceptor and reviewed for approval by the Committee on Educational Policy.</p> <p><b>10.2.2.6</b> When colleges, departments, and other agencies propose a course, they designate which of the general education requirements (SCR 10.2.2.1), if any, the course is presumed to meet. The Committee on Educational Policy, consulting when appropriate with the dean of the relevant academic division, approves or disapproves the designation.</p>	<p>10.2.2.4-6 Unchanged</p>
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Respectfully submitted;

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

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## **Appendix I: Draft Guidelines for Disciplinary Communication Courses**

### **Background**

All students should learn to communicate effectively, and in a manner appropriate to their chosen fields of study. The ability to write well is a central and necessary outcome of such learning. In addition, depending on the discipline, other forms of written/verbal communication may be deemed important enough to teach and require. These might include, for example, the ability to speak effectively, to debate, or to create and deliver poster presentations. Even in the case of writing, norms of style, organization, data presentation, etc., vary widely from discipline to discipline. The goal of the Disciplinary Communication (DC) requirement is to ensure that students acquire the skills in writing and other forms of verbal communication deemed appropriate by the faculty overseeing their majors.

The DC requirement is both a general education (GE) requirement and a major requirement. All students must satisfy the DC requirement by passing a set of 1-3 upper-division courses, totaling a minimum of 5 credits. Because it is a GE requirement, it is subject to both Senate Regulation on GE and policy on GE overseen by the Committee on Educational Policy. However, according to Regulation, students must satisfy the DC requirement by means of courses in, or closely related to, their major field. Therefore, departments must play a central role in determining the content and form of the course(s) that satisfy the DC requirement for their majors. Though this fact does not require that units mount or sponsor courses for their own majors, we expect that this will be the most common means by which DC courses are provided. In the ideal case, DC courses will simply be normal courses satisfying the major because they impart substantive major content, but will incorporate components that fulfill the DC requirement.

DC courses must be upper-division courses. They may be special sections of large lecture courses that place emphasis on the instruction and evaluation of writing and other disciplinary communication skills. They may be lab courses. Since disciplinary communication skills are most meaningfully learned in the context of real disciplinary subject matter, DC courses should ideally be substantive courses in the discipline.

As noted above, a central component of DC courses must involve writing. The essential characteristic of this writing component is the assumption that students will learn how to write through an iterative process of writing and feedback. In order to ensure that practice in writing is adequately concentrated, no more than three courses can be used together to satisfy the DC requirement. In their DC course(s), students must write a minimum of 25 pages total (subject to the qualification noted further below). This can be in the form of one large paper or several smaller papers, but no paper counting toward the requirement should be under three pages. The 25-page minimum can include drafts if the instructor judges a new draft to differ substantially from the previous one.

### **Department-specific considerations**

Departments can propose that DC requirements for a major be satisfied by means of one 5-credit course or by 2-3 courses (totaling at least 5 credits).

The guidelines given above leave a great deal of room for departments to determine the content and form of courses satisfying the DC requirement. CEP encourages departments to reflect on questions like the following:

- What kind of writing should our majors learn to do? Should it be exclusively academic writing, or should students also learn modes of non-academic writing that might be



- important in their careers (for example, grant proposal writing, memo writing)?
- How can writing assignments be used to teach the content of some of our courses?
  - Are there forms of disciplinary communication besides writing that our majors should learn? Public speaking? Poster preparation and presentation? And so on.

In order to encourage inclusion of other forms of disciplinary communication instruction in DC proposals, CEP will allow a reduction to 20 pages of the total writing page count if there is a substantive non-writing communication component to the proposal.

### **Requirements**

In more detail, a department's DC curriculum should meet the following criteria:

#### *Reach*

- DC educational objectives are for *all* majors. DC courses must therefore be upper-division courses, and every pathway through the major must lead to satisfaction of DC objectives.

#### *Substance*

- DC objectives must be met over at most three courses, and every paper counting toward DC requirements must be at least three pages long.
- Students should write at least 25 pages over the course of the DC curriculum. Drafts count toward this total if the instructor considers rewrites to be substantial. This page minimum can be lowered to 20 if DC objectives include substantial practice and instruction in poster creation, oral presentation, etc.

#### *Cumulativity*

- Writing assignments should be distributed throughout the term, with papers assigned and returned to students during both halves of the quarter.
- Students should have the opportunity to receive criticism of drafts, particularly drafts of longer projects.

#### *Instruction*

- The curriculum should explicitly address the assumptions and conventions of writing in the major's discipline, for instance, the use of sources; the analysis of evidence; and the methods of research, argument, and proof.
- Responses to papers should not be limited to correction of errors, but should address issues of argumentation, presentation, etc.

**COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY**  
**Resolution on the Writing-Intensive (W) Requirement**

To the Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division:

**Summary:** The campus must either provide more financial support for writing in the disciplines or abolish it as a requirement.

**Background: the W**

One of the requirements for graduation from UCSC is the completion of a writing-intensive course. According to Senate Regulations (10.2.2.1.e), students must take “one five-credit hour course or the equivalent that provides instruction and substantial practice in writing within the context of any academic subject”. Courses satisfying this requirement bear a ‘W’ designation in the catalogue.

The W is not a first-year writing requirement. Students must independently satisfy the university’s C1 and C2 composition requirements, ideally in their first year. Rather, the W is intended to provide an intensive writing experience sometime after the first year. The great majority of W courses are upper-division. Furthermore, a W course is usually offered by an academic program, and typically most of its substantive content is not writing related. Many majors include a writing-intensive course as part of their major requirements. In a W course, students learn how to write papers using the conventions – of style, formatting, argumentation, etc. – of a specific academic discipline. In these ways, the W is different from a first-year composition course.

The existence of W at UCSC reflects a 25-year nationwide trend in higher education in “Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)”. Two essential tenets of WAC are these:<sup>1</sup>

- 1) Students can learn to write adequately only if we teach writing continually rather than solely in the first year; therefore the teaching of writing is the responsibility of the entire academic community.
- 2) Writing promotes learning; writing in a specific discipline promotes learning the substance of that discipline as well as the conventions of writing in that discipline.

CEP conducted a survey of nine other universities and colleges to see whether they also have a requirement like our W – that is, a requirement that students take one or more

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<sup>1</sup> An excellent resource on Writing Across the Curriculum is “The WAC Clearinghouse” at <http://wac.colostate.edu/index.cfm>.

courses, at a level beyond frosh writing, that teach and require writing in the context of a discipline. This is a fuzzy category, but most of them do have such a requirement.<sup>2</sup>

### **The problem**

In the last two years the supply of seats in W courses has fallen well below what is needed. Students in many majors are having an increasingly hard time satisfying the W requirement in time for graduation. One result of this is that CEP received over 160 petitions last year from students seeking to satisfy W by unconventional means. The trend continues this year.

The causes of this problem are well understood. For many years, students could satisfy the W requirement by virtue of taking the college core courses. Core courses were allowed to satisfy the W requirement, we believe, because of a fear when it was first established that there would not be a sufficient supply of W courses. However, given the objectives discussed above for a W requirement, letting core courses satisfy W was a bad idea, and this state of affairs was always meant to be temporary. In the late 1990s CEP voted to remove the W designation from Core Courses and in addition to make satisfaction of the C composition requirement (now C2) a prerequisite to W. This was a well-motivated decision, but the feared shortfall of W courses has now come to pass.

This is in good part a problem of resources. We might like all of our classes to be small. But it is widely recognized that the realities of teaching and evaluating writing impose a special need for class size limits in writing courses. This is why freshman composition sections are held to roughly 25 or fewer students across the UC system.<sup>3</sup> A W course faces the same realities. And yet there has never been a system of funding in place to secure realistic student-to-evaluator ratios for W courses. Faculty are not willing to teach writing-intensive courses without adequate resources.

This problem has been compounded by several other recent developments. First, funding for the Writing Program was drastically cut in 2002. Upper-division courses in the Writing Program which satisfied the W requirement were one casualty of these cuts. Others were a vibrant peer tutoring program that served W courses, and the funded involvement of Writing Program faculty in consulting with faculty designing and teaching W courses. Second, overall campus growth over the last five years, accompanied by particularly dramatic growth in some programs, has only worsened the gap between resources and needs for the W.

Departments have never been required to provide W courses for their majors. Yet in the past students often could satisfy the W through their major, or they could find a W course intended for non-majors. As W seats disappear, students are increasingly “crashing” W

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<sup>2</sup> The institutions surveyed were UC Berkeley, UC Davis, UC Irvine, UCLA, the University of Michigan, Duke University, the University of Maryland at College Park, George Mason University, and Dartmouth College.

<sup>3</sup> For discussion of this point see “Bringing Writing Class Size in the UC System in Line with National Standards”, a report of the University Committee on Preparatory Education, May 2005.

courses that were never meant for large numbers of non-majors. For example, in the current quarter (winter 2007) about 80 non-majors enrolled in Literature 101, a W course. As a result, about 60 majors who needed the course to satisfy major requirements were prevented from enrolling. Faculty experiencing events like this note the detrimental effect on the class caused by the presence of students who are fundamentally uninterested in the subject matter and resentful at having to be there. Departments are understandably reacting. Over the past year, we have seen programs restrict enrollment in their W courses, or eliminate their W courses (or at least the W designation) altogether. The problem is snowballing.

In short, UCSC requires the W without providing an adequate number of courses to allow students to satisfy it. The shortfall of W offerings is placing an unacceptable burden on our students. It has also become a burden to the campus advising staff, to the Senate, and to the faculty who teach W courses.

**In a sense the solution to this problem is simple: our faculty must decide either that they want to increase funding to writing in the disciplines – necessarily at the expense of something else – or that they are ready to abolish the W requirement. CEP sincerely hopes for the former.**

### **A proposal**

The details of any proposal to increase funding for W must depend on how precisely the W will be taught and supported. Currently the majority of W courses are taught by regular faculty, and many are courses that have an independent reason to exist because they also serve to satisfy major requirements. This reflects the underlying philosophy of the W: in such courses, students should learn to write at an advanced level, with substantive content, and according to the conventions of an academic discipline. We assume for discussion that all of this will continue to be true.

As noted above, courses having a significant writing component can be meaningful and effective only if the ratio of student-to-evaluator remains reasonable. Reading and evaluating papers takes time. Note that we speak of the “student-to-evaluator” ratio here, and not of the student-to-instructor ratio. At many other institutions, a W-like course has an enrollment that is typically limited to 12-20 students. Given the realities at UCSC of enrollments, course loads, and workload ratios, we assume that such a model here is a non-starter. However, though we have never had any class-size limit for W courses, those with larger enrollments have generally counted on TA support. By “student-to-evaluator ratio” we mean the ratio of students to faculty-plus-TAs. (This is equivalent to student-to-instructor ratio at institutions with small class size limits.) There is variation across institutions in what is considered an acceptable ratio; in our survey it ranges from 1/12 at well-funded institutions like Duke University that significantly invest in writing to 1/23 at the University of Maryland, College Park. Yet this variation is obviously modest, reflecting a strong consensus that for writing courses the ratio should not get much worse than 1/20. This is precisely the ratio used at UCLA and UC Irvine for their W-like courses. At these UC campuses, this ratio reflects the number of students to the

instructor-plus-TAs, just as we assume must be done here. For the purposes of this proposal, we assume a ratio of 1/20 as well.

Many programs already succeed in providing a significant number of W courses for their own majors or others. In this sense, the campus does already fund writing in the disciplines. The campus should not interpret this proposal to imply that *all* units mounting W courses should be allocated *new* resources according to what they provide. The resources required to do this would be far greater than what we contemplate here; funding at such a level is unrealistic and unnecessary. Rather, the campus needs to allocate resources in such a way as to redress specific shortfalls where they are occurring.

We note that the cost of funding a TA and a lecturer can be roughly comparable. The means chosen to address any unmet W need should depend on the department and its circumstances. That said, there is an obvious advantage to supporting W by means of teaching assistantships at a time when the campus is striving to expand its graduate programs. Enhancing resources dedicated to W offerings could enable UCSC to meet its long-stated goal of combining graduate growth with improvements to undergraduate education.

The bulk of any new funding for the W must go to increasing the number of available W seats as outlined above. But a vibrant W requires two other forms of support as well.

First, faculty often need someone to consult with when they design and teach W courses. Equally important, graduate teaching assistants can benefit from consultations and from workshops or training in the teaching or evaluation of writing. One of our Writing Program faculty in fact bears the title of W (or Writing in the Disciplines) Coordinator. However, due to budget cuts to that program mentioned earlier, the W Coordinator's role is now reduced mainly to reviewing proposed W courses on paper. UCSC is fortunate to have a cadre of outstanding Writing faculty who have the experience and vision to support an excellent Writing in the Disciplines program. In order to have a strong W requirement, we must again fund Writing in the Disciplines.

Second, students taking W courses need additional support outside of class as they work to improve their writing skills. Most W courses are – and should be – taught by regular faculty. We can expect our faculty to impart what they know about the conventions of writing in their own disciplines and to evaluate writing at the level of argumentation, presentation of evidence, and so on. But faculty will not flock to teach W courses if they must devote attention to more basic grammar and composition, or if their students turn in papers that are miserably short in these areas. We therefore also advocate restoring the Peer Writing Assistant program formerly run by the Writing Program. When that program existed, students in a W course had free access to tutors who were upper-division undergraduates with some training. The program was highly valued by both students and W instructors.

**We estimate that meeting the needs laid out above will require an increase in funding on the order of \$250,000 per year.** (The actual cost of shoring up the W requirement will depend on various factors. The figure may be less or more in the end, but it is very likely to be well into the six figures.) Of that amount, we estimate that about 60 percent would go to TAS funds to support either graduate students or lecturers offering W sections or courses; another 20 percent would fund the Writing Assistant Program; and the remaining 20 percent would fund approximately one Writing Program FTE equivalent. We provide a rationale for each of these amounts in turn.

The projected sum of about \$50,000 for a Writing Assistant program is based on what that same program cost when it existed, loosely adjusted for inflation. As an alternative or supplemental source of funding for such tutoring, the campus might also consider student fees.

As mentioned, there is currently no funding that would allow any Writing Program faculty to actively support the W requirement. Writing Program faculty can support the W by consulting closely with instructors a W course, for example, or by offering training courses for TAs and writing assistants. Increased funding (on the order of \$50,000) could be used to hire new faculty or to buy time for existing faculty (or both). One important consideration is whether the campus could benefit from hiring someone who specializes in the teaching of writing specifically in the sciences or engineering, areas where there is currently a shortfall in W courses.

The TAS figure is the most difficult to project. For present purposes, we note that UCLA allocates \$250,000 for a very similar purpose. The money goes as matching funds to departments for TA support in W-like courses. Crudely adjusting for the difference in undergraduate enrollment (roughly 25,000/15,000), this corresponds to a figure of \$150,000 for UCSC.

In order to sustain the W, any commitment of the sort proposed here would obviously have to be ongoing. And since the point of funding the W is to sustain a pedagogically realistic student-to-evaluator ratio, funding should be indexed to both enrollment and inflation.

For the campus to make a decision to fund the W along these lines, it will require the strong and synergistic backing of both the administration and the Senate faculty. Given budget realities, a choice to fund the W will be a choice to sacrifice something else.

CEP will sponsor a resolution at the March 9 Senate Meeting that will call on the administration to provide increased funding to redress the W shortfall and to work with departments and the Senate to solve the W crisis. If the faculty are clear on the choice they are making, and if the resolution passes, it will represent a faculty mandate to the administration. In this event, we will call on the administration to come through with the necessary funding. We will also call on the administration to acknowledge that writing in the disciplines is a responsibility of the entire campus and not of any particular division. Whether all departments can or should provide Ws for their majors, a student should be

able to satisfy the requirement with a course tailored to the needs of his or her discipline. (See the discussion below.) When students are forced to satisfy the W requirement through courses far outside their field of interest, neither the students nor the faculty are well served.

Should such a resolution fail to pass, then the Senate will have to seriously consider eliminating the W requirement. We do not think there is a viable middle road. Watering down the W requirement, as some have proposed, would leave the campus with the burden of administering a requirement that has limited substance or effectiveness. And continuing to impose a requirement on students without providing enough class seats for everyone is not an option.

We strongly favor retaining and revitalizing the W requirement. If our campus declines to fund it, then UCSC will find itself out of step with a nationwide trend in good practices in undergraduate writing and learning.

### **Epilogue: whose responsibility is writing in the disciplines?**

The question of who should offer W courses has sometimes engendered controversy on campus. Some faculty feel that not all departments should be expected to teach W courses. Our main goal here has been to propose increased funding for the W requirement, and to a large extent the case is the same regardless of who teaches the courses. But our discussion obviously reflects the view intrinsic to the Writing Across the Curriculum movement that W-like requirements are best satisfied within a student's major. Here we address this issue in a bit more detail.

First, it should be borne in mind that the relevant Senate Regulation (10.2.2.1.e) specifies a course that "provides instruction and substantial practice in writing within the context of *any* academic subject" (emphasis added). That is, the Regulations do not require a student to satisfy the W within his or her major, and do not require departments to provide W courses. CEP is not proposing any change to this Regulation. We do not believe that the W can be saved or improved by attempting to force unwilling faculty or departments to take it on.

But, perhaps over time, we would like to persuade faculty and departments that this is the best thing to do. Where faculty seem unpersuaded, we hear two concerns. The first is the lack of resources to help teach an effective W, the problem of the "unfunded mandate". The proposal here is meant to help address this impediment. The second concern is pedagogical: perhaps W courses can or should be taught only by certain faculty (for example, writing instructors), or perhaps writing is not relevant to all disciplines. Our response to this second concern involves several points.

1. Scholarship is by nature public and interactive. Every discipline has its conventions for communicating, and all call on writing sometimes. It can and should be the goal of every discipline that its majors learn to communicate accordingly.

2. That said, the conventions of communication vary widely from discipline to discipline. We believe that departments should have a good deal of leeway to decide what a W-like requirement ought to mean to them and their students. This should entail breadth or flexibility on CEP's part in determining W policy. Going further, we note that scholarly communication occurs in important forms besides writing. We give talks, design and present posters, and so on. Though writing must be a component of a requirement on scholarly communication, it need not be the only one. A more broadly conceived requirement than our W might be called a *DC* requirement – a requirement in *disciplinary communication*. A move in this direction might require a change in Senate Regulations.
3. The object of writing in the disciplines is as much about *writing to learn* as it is about learning to write. In other words, writing (or other forms of scholarly expression) should occur within the discipline because it is an excellent tool for *learning the content of that discipline*. As scholars ourselves, we understand that few things reveal gaps in our understanding of material, or a weakness in our reasoning, as putting our thoughts into words does. The use of writing to foster a deep understanding of a student's major is arguably the most important aspect of a W-like requirement. No discussion of advanced writing requirements should lose sight of this point.
4. Among those who argue for writing within a student's own discipline, it is well understood that regular faculty may not want to spend time teaching and evaluating general matters of composition, grammar, usage, and so on. Indeed, though all faculty teaching W-like courses can (and probably should) consider basic quality of writing in *evaluating* papers, they should *not* feel compelled to teach it or provide detailed feedback about it. To view the matter otherwise is not only unrealistic, it misses an essential point of writing in the disciplines (see 3 above). In a W-like course, faculty should focus on matters such as structure and quality of argumentation (as well as the substance of the writing). In addition, faculty *can* teach some of the conventions of writing in their own discipline, including conventions of paper organization, data presentation, citation, and argumentation.
5. It is nevertheless true that deficiencies in basic writing skills will persist even for more advanced students and that such deficiencies can hinder achievement in a W-like class. For writing in the disciplines to succeed, students need strong support for basic skills *outside of class*, for example in the form of peer writing tutors. In addition, we must do everything we can to ensure that students are having their needs met in first-year composition courses.
6. Finally, some departments may continue to feel that they cannot or should not provide writing in the disciplines training within their own departments. Should this be true, there are alternative structures to consider for providing for their students, structures that nevertheless come closer to the ideals expressed here than our current system does. For example, many universities have advanced writing courses sponsored within a particular *division*. UCSC is fortunate to have several types of units in which



disciplinary-based writing courses might be housed, such as departments, divisions, colleges, and the Writing Program. Wherever such courses are located, however, we believe strongly that regular departmental faculty must have a hand in determining their content and quality, for all of the reasons given above. But – at least to some extent – this is a separate matter from who pays for them or teaches them.

## **Resolution**

### WHEREAS

- The ability to write effectively is fundamental to a university education;
- Writing is a complex skill that must be nurtured beyond the first year of college;
- Writing in a discipline promotes a deeper understanding of the substance of that discipline;
- Effective evaluation of and feedback about writing puts a special demand on evaluator-to-student ratios and therefore on resources;
- The current capacity shortfall in W offerings at UCSC places an unacceptable burden on students, advisors, and faculty;
- This problem of capacity cannot be addressed without an increase in resources devoted to W, unless the quality or meaning of W is to be compromised;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate calls on the Central and Divisional administration to work with departments and with Senate committees to find a solution to the W crisis and to allocate the resources needed for it.

Respectfully submitted,

### COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

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February 23, 2007

# Proposal to replace W with DC



Committee on Educational Policy

February 18, 2009

## Current writing requirements at UCSC

Requirement	When taken	How taken
C1 (Composition)	1 <sup>st</sup> year	Usually college core course
C2 (Composition)	Before 7 <sup>th</sup> quarter	Usually Writing 2; sometimes core
W (Writing-intensive)	After C2; usually upper division	A course in some discipline

## **C1 & C2**

A requirement of two quarters of frosh writing is sound, and no change to GE is proposed here.

(Relevant legislation was put in place only 5 years ago.)

## **The W (Writing-intensive) requirement**

SCR 10.2.2.1 e:

“One five-credit hour course or the equivalent that provides instruction and substantial practice in writing within the context of any academic subject.”

## Writing in the Disciplines

- Writing is a skill that needs continual nurturing.
- Hence it is common for universities to have requirements beyond “frosh” writing, intended for more advanced students.
- “Best practice”: do this within the context of a student’s major.
  - Every discipline has its own conventions for argumentation, data presentation, paper layout, etc.
  - Students are more motivated to write when they are writing about things that are interesting to them.
  - Writing improves understanding of the discipline.

## **Problems with the W**

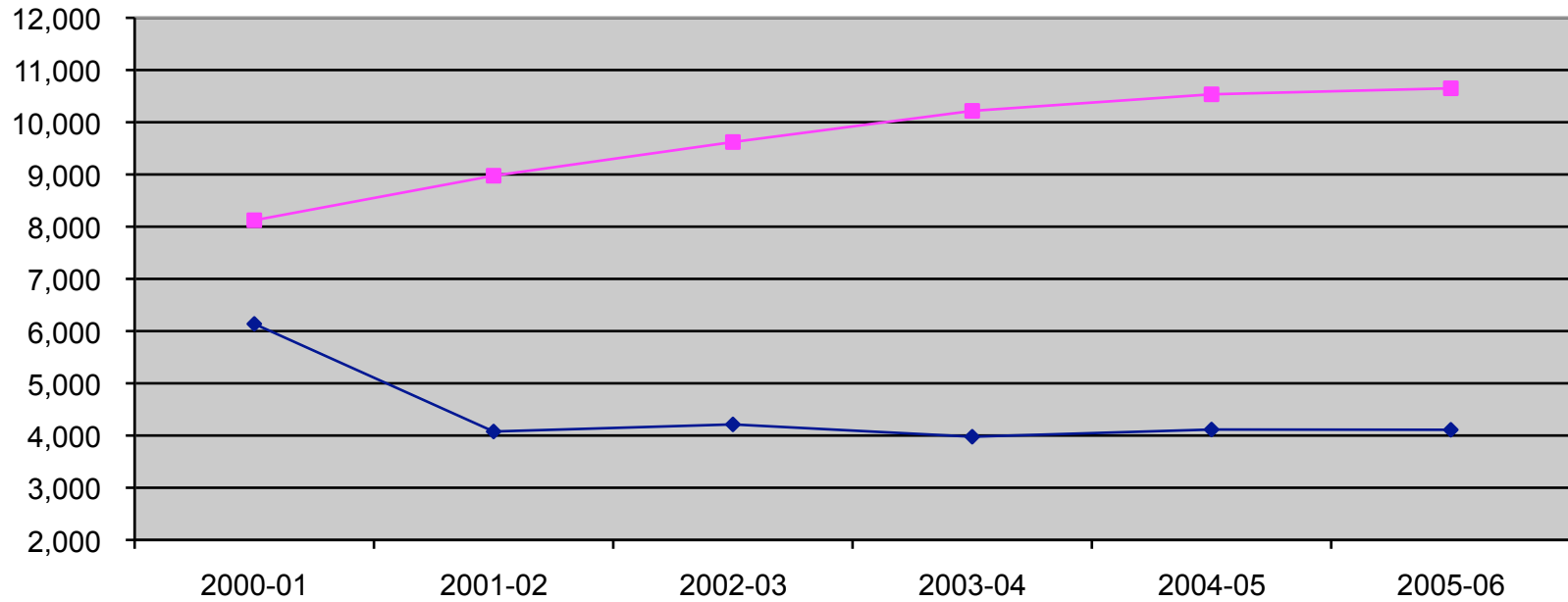
### *Educational:*

- Regulations don't require writing in the major.
- Many students satisfy it in courses outside their majors, so get none of the educational benefits mentioned above.

### *Practical:*

- Students “crash” W courses outside their majors.
- Affected departments react by curtailing W offerings.
- Even more students struggle to find W.
- CEP sees hundreds of petitions a year from students.

### W enrollments relative to non-frosh UG enrollments



◆ W course Enrollments      ■ Fall Non-New Frosh UG's



## **Resolution**

In 2007 CEP aired initial proposals for reform of W, and made clear that implementing them would require resources.

CEP asked the senate to support further work on this problem by means of a resolution stating that

“...the Senate calls on the administration to work with departments and with the senate to find a solution to the W crisis, and to allocate the funding needed for it.”

This resolution passed unanimously.

## Comparison of current and proposed requirements

Writing-intensive (W)	Disciplinary communication (DC)
Can be in “any academic subject”	Must be appropriate to a student’s major
Can be at any academic level	Must be upper-division
Has an exclusive focus on writing	Focus is primarily on writing, but allows other modes of communication to count (e.g. posters, oral presentations)
Must be fully met within 5 credits, normally one course	Can be met over 1-3 separate courses totaling at least 5 credits
Courses approved by CEP (SCR 10.2.2.6)	True of DC also, but new regulation also makes explicit CEP’s role in regularly assessing DC curricula

## **CEP's request to departments (last Fall)**

- Lay out your educational goals for your majors in the area of disciplinary communication. What should students be learning to do?
- Tell us how these goals are, or could be, met through your curriculum.
- Discuss resource issues, if any.

## Departmental responses

Responses from 25 departments for 34 majors.

A common thread in responses: need for support

- Student-instructor ratio
- TA training
- Peer tutoring

Many departments *do* provide W for their majors.

## Our proposals on resources

- CEP has called for
  - re-establishment of a strong peer tutoring program
  - the hire of a faculty member dedicated to Writing in the Disciplines
  - resources to deploy TAs where needed, and TA training
  - Staff support
- In consultation with CPB, we estimate a cost of \$250,000
- The administration has assured CEP and CPB that, should this legislation pass, it will support allocating these resources.

## **Would this change make upper-division writing stronger or weaker?**

The case for weakening:

- We allow for an overall reduction of 5 pages in writing (out of 25) for programs that incorporate significant oral or poster presentations.
- Spreading writing over 2-3 courses “dilutes” the training.

## **Would this change make upper-division writing stronger or weaker?**

The case for strengthening:

- Educational benefits of placing the requirement in a student's chosen discipline.
- Spreading writing over 2-3 courses reinforces the training.
- Departments will be asked by CEP to make their DC goals explicit and to connect these with their curriculum.
- All transfers will benefit from it.
- It will be sustainable: no orphaned students and petitions.
- It will be better supported than W.

## CEP's expectations for DC curricula

### *Reach*

- DC educational objectives are for *all* majors. DC courses must therefore be upper-division courses, and *every* pathway through the major must lead to satisfaction of DC objectives.

### *Substance*

- DC objectives must be met over at most three courses, and every paper counting toward DC requirements must be at least three pages long.
- Students should write at least 25 pages over the course of the DC curriculum. Drafts count toward this total if the instructor considers rewrites to be substantial. This page minimum can be lowered to 20 if DC objectives include substantial practice and instruction in poster creation, oral presentation, etc.



## *Cumulativity*

- Writing assignments should be distributed throughout the term, with papers assigned and returned to students during both halves of the quarter.
- Students should have the opportunity to receive criticism of drafts, particularly drafts of longer projects.

## *Instruction*

- The curriculum should explicitly address the assumptions and conventions of writing in the major's discipline, for instance, the use of sources; the analysis of evidence; and the methods of research, argument, and proof.
- Responses to papers should not be limited to correction of errors, but should address issues of argumentation, presentation, etc

## **“I can’t teach writing”**

Regular faculty may not want to spend time teaching and evaluating general matters of composition, grammar, usage, and so on.

We faculty *can* consider basic quality of the writing in *evaluating* papers.

But we should *not* feel compelled to teach basic writing skills or provide detailed feedback about it.

Instead, the idea is to focus on structure and quality of argumentation - and the substance!

We *can* teach some conventions of writing in our own discipline: argumentation, paper organization, data presentation, citation, ...

**“Students don’t have the *basic* writing skills. Why are we talking about the W?”**

It is important that C1/C2 do the best possible job imparting writing skills.

CEP pledges to work with colleges and the Writing Program to assess results of frosh writing and improve it where possible.

Our proposal provides for support *outside of class*, for example in the form of peer writing tutors.

Let’s not respond to the challenge of underprepared students by lowering our academic standards.

## **CEP on W two years ago:**

“We must increase funding for it or consider abolishing it... Let’s keep it. An ability to write well, and appropriately to one’s field, is not an academic luxury.”

If this legislation does not pass, then CEP will introduce legislation to abolish W in the Spring.

The faculty are unanimous in wanting good student writing.

The administration supports us.

In these tough times, let's stand up for education.