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Subject: Writing Intensive Courses

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Academic Affairs Manual

CSUDH Writing Intensive Courses

Composition research shows that writing improves with meaningful revision and practice in diverse settings, that it engages students and improves their learning of content, and that it develops thinking skills. Research also shows that the most effective teachers of writing in the discipline are faculty teaching in the disciplines. Enhancing student preparedness and success is a high priority for the University. An important component of student success is a solid foundation in writing.

Each program must designate writing intensive courses for undergraduate students. To qualify for graduation each undergraduate student shall be required to earn at least a C in two (2) designated writing courses. This requirement will take effect no later than fall 2008 semester. In most cases the courses will be in the student's own major field. Nevertheless, if the student's major program does not offer writing intensive courses, or if the student changes major after taking writing intensive courses, then the courses may be in another area.

Writing intensive courses are intended to improve students' skill at communicating within an academic discipline. Generic writing courses, including freshman composition, advanced composition, and the writing adjunct, do not satisfy this requirement. Writing intensive courses shall be identified in the course schedule and University Catalog by having a "WI" appended to the course number (e.g., ENG 307WI, HIS 300WI).

Because it is essential that students write their own papers, the University shall provide faculty who teach writing courses with practical means for discouraging and detecting plagiarism, including access to and training in the use of an on-line plagiarism detection and prevention database.

The general education program shall provide support for this initiative by emphasizing writing in appropriate general education courses. It is the intent of this policy that the Division of Academic Affairs will provide fiscal support, to the maximum extent possible, for writing intensive courses.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING INTENSIVE COURSES:

(In the following text "program" means "division, department, or program".)

Approved: Allen A. Mori

Date: 5-27-04

A writing intensive course should meet all of the following criteria. A variation in the criteria may be granted for a particular program by the Writing Competency Committee if the program faculty and the Writing Competency Committee agree that a criterion is not appropriate to the discipline and a variation in the criteria would serve the academic interests of the University. The Writing Competency Committee shall keep a public record of all variations and the rationale for them.

1. The course should be part of an academic major in the program that offers the course.
2. Each writing intensive course should require at least the equivalent of fifteen typed pages (250 words = one page) of formal writing to be spread out over two or more assignments or consolidated into a single project with discrete components that can be submitted in draft form. The writing shall be in a form and format that is appropriate to the subject and the discipline. It should involve critical thinking and may involve analytical preparatory reading and could include diagrams or symbolic elements such as music or mathematical formulas or fragments of computer code but should be primarily a piece of writing, not a picture or a calculation or a computer program.
3. Each writing assignment should provide opportunities for serious student revision after faculty commentary. Faculty should comment on at least two-thirds of draft submissions. Such commentary can be communicated in written form and/or orally in conferences. Writing that is not subject to review and revision shall not count as part of the total of fifteen (15) required pages of formal writing.
4. Writing instruction should focus on writing techniques specific to the discipline and clarification of requirements and methods of preparation for assignments.
5. Each class should have a maximum of 25 students per instructor or graduate teaching assistant. For example, a lecture class with 100 students would satisfy this criterion if it had one instructor and three graduate teaching assistants.
6. Students shall be required to demonstrate satisfactory performance in writing, formal and informal, sufficient to receive C or better in the course.
7. Program faculty will decide which writing intensive courses offered outside of the program shall meet the writing requirement for students in the program's major, and the conditions under which such courses are accepted. Each program's policy regarding such courses must be in writing and available to students. Accepted transfer courses must clearly be writing intensive in nature, either on the transcript or in the course description. By offering writing intensive courses within the program, accepting writing intensive courses offered by other programs, or a combination of these, every program must meet the writing intensive requirement by the fall 2008 semester.
8. Writing intensive courses should be offered on a regularly scheduled basis to meet student demand in the major.

APPROVAL OF WRITING INTENSIVE COURSES:

1. Writing intensive courses are approved by agreement between program faculty and the Writing Competency Committee.
2. The Writing Competency Committee shall offer guidance in creating writing intensive courses, including assistance with assignments, grading templates, etc. The Writing Competency Committee will review existing writing intensive course syllabi periodically to assure writing intensive course guidelines are met.
3. Program faculty may choose to have all sections of a course taught as writing intensive, or only selected sections, depending on the willingness or interest of the instructors and the workload of the program.
4. Programs may decide whether to make satisfaction of the Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement a prerequisite for their writing intensive courses.
5. Before a course receives the WI designation, the program and the Writing Competency Committee must agree that adequate resources are available to support the course. If the program and the Writing Competency Committee agree that the academic interests of the University would be served by giving a course the WI designation, but adequate workload is not available to support the course, then the Writing Competency Committee should assist the department in requesting funds to offer the course.
6. The Office for Academic Programs shall establish a timeline for implementation.