

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON BOTHELL

2010 Writing and Communication Task Force Final Report

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Executive Summary

Vice Chancellor Susan Jeffords charged the Writing and Communication Task Force (WCTF) to identify key challenges and opportunities for the learning and teaching of writing and communication across UW Bothell's programs, and to recommend ways of addressing these challenges. Specifically, Vice Chancellor Jeffords asked that the Task Force

- Build on an inventory of current practices and emerging initiatives which will provide a clear picture of how programs currently teach and assess writing and communication;
- Consider the different needs of lower division, upper division, and graduate students; and
- Support the findings of the Technology and Teaching Innovation Task Force, as well as other relevant task forces and initiatives related to the 21st Century Campus Initiative.

The WCTF members gathered information on the teaching and learning of writing and communication within each academic program. Task Force members then solicited feedback from faculty on challenges and opportunities involved in helping students learn to write and communicate effectively within each academic program. In order to gain a better understanding of student needs in writing and communication, the Task Force examined data from the 2010 Student Survey conducted by the Office of Institutional Research, the 2008 and 2009 Freshman Surveys, and Writing Center usage statistics. Based on this information, the Task Force recommends the following:

Curriculum

Short-Term Recommendations (less than one year):

1. Request that the General Faculty Organization's Campus Council on Academic Standards and Curriculum (CCASC) review the application of the "W" requirement across UW Bothell's programs (see Appendix D for the University of Washington's "W" requirement).
2. Request that the Faculty Oversight Committee for University Studies (FOCUS), or an ad hoc committee appointed by FOCUS, with input from the Writing Center Director, review composition courses in CUSP to make sure that there is appropriate sequencing between courses and the learning goals are both appropriate and being met in all composition courses.
3. Include writing and communication in campus-wide discussions of
 - a. Campus-wide learning goals
 - b. Alignment of writing and communication goals between CUSP and upper division programs
4. Request that the GFO's CCASC draw on their work researching assessment options for transfer students (see Assessment Short Term Recommendation #2) to recommend the best mechanisms to support transfer student writers.
5. Request that the GFO's CCASC consider the needs of graduate student writers and propose recommendations for providing enhanced support for these writers.

Long-Term Recommendations (more than one year):

- 1) Request that FOCUS, or an ad hoc committee appointed by FOCUS, with input from the Writing Center Director, provide alternate pathway(s) for students entering with the least preparation in

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basic composition skills (e.g., a stretch model, 2-credit concurrent support classes, and/or early autumn-start classes in writing, research, and communication).

- 2) The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (VCAA) should consider charging a standing Writing and Communication Across the Curriculum Committee if the structure we propose places too heavy a burden on existing committees.

Assessment

Short-Term Recommendations

- 1) Request that FOCUS, or an ad hoc committee appointed by FOCUS, research writing assessment options for incoming CUSP students and recommend the most appropriate option.
- 2) Request that the GFO's CCASC research options for campus-wide assessment of writing proficiency for transfer students.

Long-Term Recommendation

- 1) Request that CUSP implement the writing assessment option recommended by FOCUS.

Faculty Development

Short-Term Recommendations

- 1) Form a Writing and Communication Teaching Circle for faculty to discuss pedagogy issues at the classroom level. These issues might include opportunities and challenges in teaching English Language Learners.
- 2) Increase visibility for faculty development opportunities in writing and communication already available through the Writing Center and Academic Services.
- 3) Request that the General Faculty Organization's Instructional Research and Support Committee (IRSC), in conjunction with the Teaching and Learning Center, plan additional faculty development activities in writing and communication to commence in 2011.
- 4) Request that each program designate a faculty writing & communication liaison to work with the Writing Center director.
- 5) Request that the Teaching and Learning Center create and promote opportunities for faculty and staff to develop research projects within and across programs that explore innovative ways to teach writing and communication.

Long-Term Recommendation

- 1) Request that the Teaching and Learning Center, in conjunction with the Academic Programs, implement faculty development activities in writing and communication, as determined in recommendation #3, above.

Writing Center and Academic Services

Short-Term Recommendations

- 1) Change the name of the Writing Center to the Writing and Communication Center to reflect the range of assignments with which the Center assists students.
- 2) Increase visibility of the Writing Center on the UW Bothell home page.

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- 3) The Writing Center, in conjunction with the Academic Programs and the Library, should improve program-specific writing and research resources and feature these resources prominently on the Writing Center website.
- 4) Create a position for a Graduate Student Assistant (GSA) in the Writing Center to focus on supporting graduate student writers campus-wide.
- 5) Request that the Writing Center, in conjunction with Academic Programs and Student Life, build on current work to create a culture of writing and communication on campus. This work should pay particular attention to student-centered initiatives such as open mics, contests showcasing student work, creative writing groups, and continued support of UW Bothell's two student journals and online newspaper in order to cultivate a rich writing and communication culture on campus.

Long-Term Recommendation

- 1) Request that the Writing Center respond to the recommendations of the GFO CCASC (see Curriculum Short-Term Recommendation # 5) by developing a proposal for a holistic plan to support graduate student writers campus-wide.

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Introduction

Vice Chancellor Susan Jeffords charged the Writing and Communication Task Force (WCTF) to identify key challenges and opportunities for the learning and teaching of writing and communication across UW Bothell's programs, and to recommend ways of addressing these challenges. Specifically, Vice Chancellor Jeffords asked that the Task Force:

- Build on an inventory of current practices and emerging initiatives which will provide a clear picture of how programs currently teach and assess writing and communication;
- Consider the different needs of lower division, upper division, and graduate students; and
- Support the findings of the Technology and Teaching Innovation Task Force, as well as other relevant task forces and initiatives related to the 21st Century Campus Initiative.

From its founding in 1990, UW Bothell has emphasized writing, information literacy, research and communication in the support of a diverse student population and life-long learning. UW Bothell's Mission Statement pledges to "emphasize and develop critical thinking, writing, and information literacy, in order to graduate students with life-long learning skills." The WCTF represents the first formal cross-program dialogue on these goals, reflecting the rapid growth and multiplication of academic programs, as well as the changing composition of its student body.

The work of the Task Force has taken place in the context of how best to serve the needs of a growing and increasingly diverse student population, and our recommendations are shaped by the desire to help students reach their full potential at UW Bothell. The 21st Century Campus Initiative envisages both rapid growth in FTE and an expanding curriculum as more undergraduate and graduate programs are added. The campus will also enroll a larger proportion of international students and students from diverse backgrounds. Writing and communication support needs will grow at a greater pace than the increase in student numbers because key elements of the growth in numbers, such as international students and the students admitted under the Academic Transition Program, will require higher-than-average levels of support in order to succeed at UW Bothell.

In establishing this Task Force, the Vice Chancellor recognized that the teaching and learning of writing and communication is a shared endeavor across multiple sites and contexts – students develop skills in the classroom with faculty and Academic Services staff, in the Writing Center, with peers in both formal and informal settings, and in online and in-person forums. Research in student learning shows that writing and critical thinking are inextricably linked, and that students build proficiency when they write throughout their education (Bean, 1996). As the Writing Council at UW Seattle maintains, "...writing is not a skill that can be learned once, like bike-riding, and remembered indefinitely. Rather, we learn to write over time, in different genres, and with a need for consistent practice and application. If students are to develop the habits and understandings that enable strong writing, they must write frequently, in a variety of settings, and over their entire undergraduate career (Next Steps, 2005, p. 1)".

The shared responsibility for student success was a guiding principle for the Task Force, and shapes many of our recommendations, which involve institutional and program support for faculty development, strengthening of Writing and Academic Services support for students and faculty, and the development of additional mechanisms that will enable the campus community to continue the rich conversations around writing and communication that have begun with the work of this Task Force. This ongoing institutional conversation will enable us to continue to embed and assess writing and

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communication skills across the curriculum and address the needs of a diverse and rapidly growing student population.

Finally, as we draw on the work of the Technology and Teaching Innovation Task Force, we find that communication itself is a moving target. Students are more likely to use non-written forms of communication than before, and even their *writing* takes new forms and addresses new audiences as technology and its social uses change. We hope some of the recommendations below will help UW Bothell keep pace with, if not outpace, these changes. At the same time, our inquiries demonstrated that traditional academic writing remains the primary mode of communication taught in the UW Bothell curriculum, and thus many of our recommendations focus specifically on writing.

Mapping Student Needs

The Task Force gathered data from the 2010 student survey conducted by the Office for Institutional Research, the 2008 and 2009 CUSP Freshman surveys, Writing Center usage statistics, and faculty comments from all programs on student needs and abilities, as well as faculty needs for teaching writing and communication (see Appendix F for faculty comments). These data helped us map student needs and raise questions that can inform future assessment projects.

UW Bothell serves students from diverse educational, social, and cultural backgrounds: mature students/working students who may be on campus only one or two evenings a week; transfer students from other institutions; English Language Learners (ELL) and international students; first generation college students (e.g., Academic Transition Program students); and 18- to 22-year old students who expect flexibility in the way they learn and access support. The diversity of our student population means that we need to be creative and flexible in how we provide support and access to teaching and services to develop writing skills.

In addition, UW Bothell offers a tremendous diversity of programs for its small size. Individual faculty members often teach students at a variety of levels, from lower division to upper division to graduate students. Students at each of these points have distinct writing and communication needs.

Furthermore, writing and communication tasks vary considerably by program and field of study: in addition to standard research paper assignments, students may be asked to write scientific reports; prepare and communicate a set of technical instructions or a procedure; research, write and edit Wikipedia entries; use graphs and charts to convey visually both quantitative and qualitative information; produce posters and presentations to communicate research findings; and use reflective writing and portfolios to demonstrate learning over time.

Throughout UW Bothell's programs, faculty report vastly different levels in student preparation in basic composition skills (i.e., grammar, usage, and knowledge of standard academic written discourse). Faculty across UW Bothell's programs raise questions about whose responsibility it is to address these issues, as well as what expectations UW Bothell has about acceptable levels of composition proficiency at different points in a student's career on this campus. In order to best serve student needs, there will need to be a continuing dialogue among administrators, faculty and staff about expectations for student writing at UW Bothell.

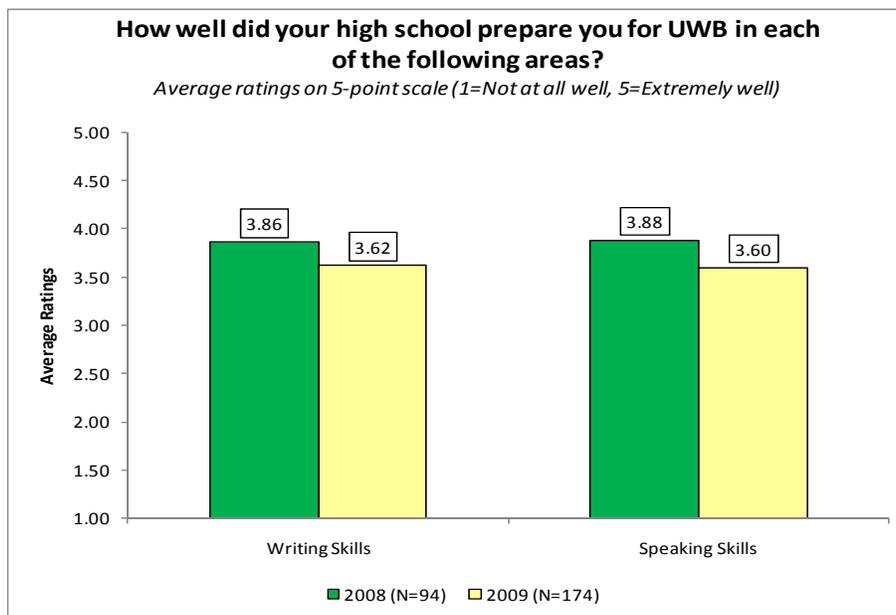
One key consideration relating to student preparedness and needs is the growing English Language Learner (ELL) population at UW Bothell. Twenty-four percent of students who responded to UW Bothell's 2010 Student Satisfaction Survey indicated that English was not their native language. These students bring linguistic and cultural resources into UW Bothell classes and introduce different sets of

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skills and challenges regarding writing and communication. Some international students, for example, may have a firmer grasp of English grammar rules than their native English-speaking counterparts, but may lack familiarity with US academic conventions.

UW Bothell's 2010 Student Satisfaction Survey suggests that ELL students rank writing support in their classes as extremely important to them (6.4 out of 7), with their satisfaction lagging behind by a point. ELL students ranked the importance of Writing Center assistance slightly lower (5.9), with their satisfaction lagging by approximately 1.25 points. These data suggest that ELL students place high importance on writing support within the classroom context and, to a slightly lesser degree, from the Writing Center. These data further suggest that there is room for improvement in both the support ELL students receive in the classroom and in the Writing Center. UW Bothell has already recognized the need to provide additional resources to support the growing ELL population, most notably the hire of an ELL specialist who will serve students in all of UW Bothell's programs (please see Appendix C for additional data on ELL students from this survey as well as data on ELL usage from the Writing Center). As the population of ELL students grows, UW Bothell should continue to build out infrastructure to ensure that their writing and communication needs are satisfied.

One key location for teaching basic composition skills is within The Center for University Studies and Programs (CUSP). Annual surveys of first-year undergraduate students at UW Bothell suggest a growing need for increased support for writing and communication for lower-division students. In 2008 and 2009, first-year undergraduates were asked, "How well did your high school prepare you for UW Bothell in each of the following areas?" The undergraduates' ratings of their preparation in writing and speaking dropped significantly between 2008 and 2009. The ratings of preparation in writing and speaking skills are summarized in the following chart.



Students' ratings of their high school preparation in other areas (critical reading, math and quantitative, research, and study skills) did not change significantly between 2008 and 2009.

In addition, the CUSP Final Report on the Third-Year Review included the following in its recommendations for program improvements in the next five years), which also speaks to the need for increased support for writing and communication at UWB:

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Although CUSP has a carefully constructed math and quantitative literacy curriculum, the writing program appears to be ad hoc and lacking in coherence. Further, UW Bothell has only a few full-time faculty with experience teaching composition. Any new strategy would need to address who will be teaching writing and how a new writing program will be constructed. (2009, p. 36)

These observations about writing instruction within CUSP inform several of our recommendations, detailed in the following section. However, although CUSP classes provide one important point at which student needs and abilities can be assessed and developed, UW Bothell also continues to serve a substantial population of transfer students who do not come through the CUSP program (as well as graduate students who may come from other undergraduate institutions). We have therefore also taken into consideration how writing and communication can continue to be embedded effectively within and across core courses for upper division students (such as BIS 300 and the new BIS 499 portfolio course in IAS, for example), so that students have multiple opportunities to develop their skills.

The Task Force's observations about student needs raise three broad categories of interest and concern. The first has to do with data about our students: how can we develop consistent and regular data about the writing and communication capacities of our students as they enter programs of study, as they progress through their coursework, and as they complete their degrees? The second is about faculty development: as student populations and other factors change, how can faculty best be supported and prepared to teach writing and communication in different UW Bothell programs? Third, given the importance of writing in all programs, how should the institution help students who have not yet gained proficiency in basic composition? The WCTF cannot provide final answers to these questions, and we urge UW Bothell to create robust mechanisms for fostering ongoing discussions about them within and across programs.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are organized around four broad categories: curriculum, assessment, faculty development, and Writing Center/Academic Services. We include both short-term and long-term recommendations. Recommendations are in bold, and are followed by short discussions of rationale and suggestions for possible implementation.

Curriculum

Short-Term Recommendations (less than one year):

- 1) Request that the General Faculty Organization's Campus Council on Academic Standards and Curriculum (CCASC) review the application of the "W" requirement across UW Bothell's programs (see Appendix D for the University of Washington's "W" requirement).**

Currently, the "W" requirement is the only university-wide upper division writing requirement and there is little institutional support or oversight for its application. The GFO's CCASC could examine how UW Bothell's programs implement the "W" requirement.

We would like to note that although appropriate application of the "W" requirement is important, we do not believe that the "W" requirement is, in and of itself, a robust enough requirement to meet students' writing and communication needs. The Arts and Sciences Writing Council at UW Seattle undertook a two-year study of the "W" requirement and determined that this model did not provide students with adequate training to communicate effectively in their chosen disciplines (Report of the Arts, 2006). They observed that the requirements that lower-division students take one 5 credit "C"

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course and two upper-division “W” courses “are significantly less rigorous than those of our peer institutions.” (Report of the Arts, 2006, p. 3) Washington State University, for example, does not require significantly more coursework in writing and communication, but places greater emphasis on assessment. All WSU students participate in two writing assessments: one when they enter the University, and one during the junior year. The first assessment is used to place students in appropriate composition classes. Students are then required to take two lower division writing and communication classes. The second assessment requires students to construct a portfolio of their work. Faculty members assess the portfolios to make sure that students have met writing and communication learning outcomes. Students then must take two discipline specific “writing in the majors” courses prior to graduation. Though this model is resource intensive, it helps to ensure that learning goals in writing and communication are met.

As the program reports illustrate (see Appendix F) requirements within many of UW Bothell’s Academic Programs exceed the “W” requirement and we strongly support these efforts.

- 2) Request that the Faculty Oversight Committee for University Studies (FOCUS), or an ad hoc committee appointed by FOCUS, with input from the Writing Center Director, review composition courses in CUSP to make sure that there is appropriate sequencing between courses and the learning goals are both appropriate and being met in all composition courses.**

Though there are many examples of excellent writing instruction at the classroom level within CUSP, the writing program overall lacks a well articulated structure as well as clearly defined and measurable outcomes. With the hiring of a full time rhetoric and composition lecturer as well as a lecturer specializing in ELL issues, CUSP will have added resources to revisit and revise the writing curriculum so that it best serves the needs of UW Bothell lower division students and offers effective preparation for students entering upper division programs. We recommend that FOCUS determine a plan to review and revise the CUSP writing curriculum. We further recommend that the incoming composition and rhetoric lecturer take an active role in this process, either as an elected member of FOCUS or providing ongoing input to FOCUS.

- 3) Include writing and communication in campus-wide discussions of**
 - a. Campus-wide learning goals**
 - b. Alignment of writing and communication goals between CUSP and upper division programs**

All programs at UW Bothell have writing and communication goals, either at the program level or within specific courses that focus on writing and communication (these goals are embedded in the program reports in Appendix F). Working to articulate campus-wide writing and communication goals, especially within the framework of other campus-wide learning goals, can guide the campus’s efforts to offer appropriate writing and communication instruction and support services throughout a student’s UW Bothell education. In addition to establishing campus-wide writing and communication goals, examining the alignment of writing and communication goals between CUSP and the upper division programs will help lower-division students become better prepared to enter upper division programs at UW Bothell.

- 4) Request that the GFO’s CCASC draw on their work researching assessment options for transfer students (see Assessment Short Term Recommendation #2) to recommend the best mechanisms to support transfer student writers.**

Faculty members across UWB’s programs have expressed concern about the level of writing proficiency of transfer students entering upper division programs. Currently, Business is the only program that requires a writing assessment for incoming students (see discussion under Assessment, Short-Term

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Recommendation #1). As part of their work researching assessment options for transfer students, we request that the GFO's CCASC recommend mechanisms to support transfer student writers. These recommendations may include, but should not be limited to, additional assessment requirements for incoming transfer students.

5) Request that the GFO's CCASC consider the needs of graduate student writers and propose recommendations for providing enhanced support for these writers.

UW Bothell offers a wide range of graduate programs and graduate student writers often have different needs from their undergraduate counterparts. We request that the GFO's CCASC consider the needs of these students and recommend support structures and mechanisms to ensure that graduate student writers receive the assistance they need to meet the writing and communication tasks required to earn their degrees.

Long-Term Recommendations (more than one year):

1) Request that FOCUS, or an ad hoc committee appointed by FOCUS, with input from the Writing Center Director, provide alternate pathway(s) for students entering with the least preparation in basic composition skills (e.g., a stretch model, 2-credit concurrent support classes, and/or early autumn-start classes in writing, research, and communication).

Currently, all incoming CUSP students are placed in the same writing classes, without consideration for prior preparation. This presents challenges for both students and instructors alike. It can create conditions where students with the least preparation are not receiving the instruction and support they need to succeed in upper division programs. We recommend that FOCUS examine this issue and choose appropriate alternate pathway(s) for students with the lowest skill level. Three possibilities that may be a good fit for CUSP students are a stretch model, 2-credit concurrent skills classes, and early fall start classes in writing and communication.

A stretch model offers the same course content of a one-quarter class over two quarters. This enables the instructor to spend twice as much time on the same material, tailoring instruction to the needs of the students. Generally, students earn credit for two courses instead of one (e.g., students would earn 10 credits for the 2-quarter sequence instead of 5 for the non-stretch course).

The two-credit concurrent support class provides an option for students of all levels to remain in the same classroom. Students with the least prior preparation take a concurrent 2-credit course where they receive additional instruction and support to help them learn the material in their composition class.

Early fall start classes provide opportunities for students to engage with key issues in college writing before they begin their first autumn quarter at UW Bothell. UW Seattle offers an early fall course called "Writing Ready" that should be considered as an option at UW Bothell. (See <http://www.outreach.washington.edu/efs/writing/> for a general description).

2) The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (VCAA) should consider charging a standing Writing and Communication across the Curriculum Committee if the structure we propose places too heavy a burden on existing committees.

In our recommendations, we have identified existing committees to take up different elements of writing and communication work (e.g., the GFO's Curriculum Committee and the Instructional Research and Support Committee [IRSC]). We made this decision in recognition of the fact that faculty members are already asked to serve on multiple committees and starting a new committee would put additional strain on UW Bothell's faculty. However, many campuses successfully convene Writing Across the

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Curriculum committees to research and address issues of writing and communication goals, instruction, and assessment. Although we do not recommend convening such a committee at UW Bothell at this time, we would like the question to be revisited in the event that the structure we propose places too heavy a burden on existing committees.

Assessment

Short-Term Recommendation

- 1) Request that FOCUS, or an ad hoc committee appointed by FOCUS, research writing assessment options for incoming CUSP students and recommend the most appropriate option.**

Currently there is no assessment of students' writing abilities when they enter CUSP. CUSP does not have a mechanism for identifying students who are likely to need extra writing support until they experience difficulty in their classes. This leads to missed opportunities for support early in a student's education at UW Bothell. We therefore recommend that FOCUS explore options for assessing the writing level of incoming students and recommend that UW Bothell adopt the most appropriate option.

At the moment, Business is the only UW Bothell program that uses some form of assessment to measure the writing skills of students: "Undergraduate transfer and continuing UW Bothell students take either the Writing Skills Assessment (a writing test given at all three UW campuses) or the SAT-W. Test scores are a consideration in admission decisions, including the decision to admit but require students to take the course Managerial Communication/Business research Skills (BBUS305/BBSKL 305)" (from Business Program report, Appendix F). We do not recommend that CUSP use a writing assessment as a criterion of admission; however, this approach to assessment could be investigated and adopted by CUSP, as well as other upper division programs at UW Bothell.

- 2) Request that the GFO's CCASC research options for campus-wide assessment of writing proficiency for transfer students.**

As we have noted previously, faculty members across UW Bothell's programs report that students exhibit uneven writing preparation and this presents challenges for students and faculty alike. This is a salient issue for transfer students who enter UW Bothell's upper division programs. A campus-wide writing assessment for incoming transfer students might help faculty and academic staff better support incoming transfer students. However, the prospect of an assessment for incoming transfer students raises important questions, such as: what additional resources would programs need to support low scoring students? What would be the relationship between a writing assessment and admissions decisions?

We request that the GFO's CCASC research options for campus-wide assessment of writing proficiency for transfer students in light of UW Bothell's institutional context to determine if a campus-wide assessment is appropriate for transfer students. If the GFO's CCASC determines that an assessment would be appropriate, then we request that they recommend what type of assessment would be best suited to UW Bothell's transfer student population.

Long-Term Recommendation

- 1) Request that CUSP implement the writing assessment option recommended by FOCUS.**

Instituting a writing assessment for incoming CUSP students would enable students with the lower levels of preparation to receive additional instructional support as they enter UW Bothell (see Curriculum long-term recommendation #1 for possible pathways for these students).

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Faculty Development

Short-Term Recommendations

- 1) Form a Writing and Communication Teaching Circle for faculty to discuss pedagogy issues at the classroom level. These issues might include opportunities and challenges in teaching English Language Learners.**

This would serve a similar function as UW Bothell's Math Circle, where faculty share ideas and strategies for teaching quantitative literacy. The Task Force suggests that the Writing and Communication Teaching Circle should be incentivized, and strongly supports the recommendations regarding faculty development put forward in the Technology and Teaching Innovation Task Force Report.

- 2) Increase visibility for faculty development opportunities in writing and communication already available through the Writing Center and Academic Services.**

The Writing Center and other Academic Services currently offer one-on-one consultations on course design (including using writing and communication activities to enhance student learning of course content; designing effective assignments and assessment tools, and strategies for managing workload); pedagogy-related resources; and collaborative teaching opportunities. However, informal faculty feedback (some of which is gathered in Appendix F) demonstrates that some faculty are not aware of these resources. Better publicity at the program level (e.g., through consultation with Program Directors and/or short presentations at faculty meetings) would help with this issue. Short presentations at campus-wide faculty events would also address this gap. Part-time or adjunct faculty in CUSP and other programs should have access to incentivized faculty development opportunities.

- 3) Request that the General Faculty Organization's Instructional Research and Support Committee (IRSC), in conjunction with the Teaching and Learning Center, plan additional faculty development activities in writing and communication to commence in 2011.**

These activities should be designed to help faculty use writing and communication to enhance student learning of course content, revise existing courses to more effectively integrate writing and communication tasks, use new technologies, and provide strategies for managing workload.

- 4) Request that each program designate a faculty writing & communication liaison to work with the Writing Center director.**

In order for Writing Center services to be as responsive to faculty and student needs as possible, mechanisms must be in place for facilitating ongoing dialogue between the Writing Center director and program faculty. Currently this communication happens sporadically, with the Writing Center director often initiating dialogue by contacting program directors with all programmatic concerns relating to writing and communication. As the programs continue to grow, it will be more effective to have a designated faculty liaison to work with the Writing Center director. This person would act as a conduit of information between the Writing Center and program faculty, help design and implement faculty development opportunities, and ensure that Writing Center services are tailored to best meet the needs of students.

- 5) Request that the Teaching and Learning Center create and promote opportunities for faculty and staff to develop research projects within and across programs that explore innovative ways to teach writing and communication.**

This recommendation would help to align teaching and research practices on campus, and is supported by UW Bothell 21st Century Campus Initiative priority that seeks to "Promote research on the

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scholarship of teaching and explore innovative teaching methodologies that foster student/faculty interactions” (21st century campus initiative, 2010). The Teaching and Learning Center should integrate writing and communication research into its strategic plans to foster the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at UW Bothell.

Long-Term Recommendation

- 1) Request that the Teaching and Learning Center, in conjunction with the Academic Programs, implement faculty development activities in writing and communication, as determined in recommendation #3, above.**

Writing Center and Academic Services

Short-Term Recommendations

- 1) Change the name of the Writing Center to the Writing and Communication Center to reflect the range of assignments with which the Center assists students.**

As we noted earlier in the report, we view writing as one mode of communication. As it is still the most widely assigned mode of communication, we focus many of our recommendations specifically on writing. However, it is crucial that we foreground communication as the ultimate goal – students do not need to write well for its own sake; rather, they need to learn how to deploy a range of communication strategies to best meet specific rhetorical situations. Pedagogy within the Writing Center already reflects this understanding; peer tutors are trained to help students better understand their assignments and choose the best modes for addressing those assignments. In addition to helping students with traditional academic papers, tutors help students with oral presentations, PowerPoint slide decks, and multimodal group projects, among others. With more faculty requiring students to incorporate new media into their assignments, it is anticipated that the Writing Center will provide greater assistance with a wider range of assignments in coming years. The Task Force believes that changing the name of the Writing Center to the Writing and Communication Center more accurately reflects the work of the Center and the direction in which it should continue to develop.

- 2) Increase visibility of the Writing Center on the UW Bothell home page.**

Currently, visitors to UW Bothell’s home page must scroll to the bottom of the home page in order to find a link to the Writing Center. Writing Center staff members have heard repeated complaints from both students and faculty that they have had trouble locating the Writing Center’s webpage. As the Writing Center is currently the only campus-wide writing resource for both students and faculty, we recommend that a link to the Writing Center should be available “above the fold” on the UW Bothell home page. In other words, visitors to UW Bothell’s homepage should be able to see a link to the Writing Center without needing to scroll down the page.

- 3) The Writing Center, in conjunction with the Academic Programs and the Library, should improve program-specific writing and research resources and feature these resources prominently on the Writing Center website.**

Data from informal surveys of faculty (see Appendix F) suggest that some faculty perceive that the resources available through the Writing Center are too general to help their students learn program-specific writing and communication practices. Developing a more robust set of program-specific resources can help address this issue. These materials could be used in Writing Center consultations as well as within the classroom environment.

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In order to help students researching across a range of subject areas, the UWB/CCC Campus Library, for example, has developed a number of online subject guides (see, for example, the Nursing subject guide <http://libguides.uwb.edu/nursing>). This enables students to get research help at the point of need using an “anytime, anywhere” model. In developing additional web resources for writing and communication, the Writing Center can better serve students who may need help outside of Writing Center hours or who simply want some quick writing guidance without making an appointment with a tutor.

4) Create a position for a Graduate Student Assistant (GSA) in the Writing Center to focus on supporting graduate student writers campus-wide.

Several faculty members, including some program directors, have expressed concern over the alignment between the largely undergraduate peer tutoring staff in the Writing Center and the needs of graduate writers. While we do not suggest that trained undergraduates cannot offer meaningful assistance to graduate writers, we believe that dedicated resources to graduate student writers are warranted. A GSA, preferably a doctoral candidate who has already completed a Masters level writing project, would provide a cost-effective way to enable the Writing Center to offer better support to graduate student writers.

5) Request that the Writing Center, in conjunction with Academic Programs and Student Life, build on current work to create a culture of writing and communication on campus. This work should pay particular attention to student-centered initiatives such as open mics, contests showcasing student work, creative writing groups, and continued support of UW Bothell’s two student journals and online newspaper in order to cultivate a rich writing and communication culture on campus.

Opportunities for students to showcase their work and explore writing and communication in a variety of genres and spaces are an important component of a successful writing and communication program. The Writing Center, in particular, can serve as a campus-wide hub for a variety of extra-curricular writing and communication activities.

Long-Term Recommendation

1) Request that the Writing Center respond to the recommendations of the GFO CCASC (see Curriculum Short-Term Recommendation # 5) by developing a proposal for a holistic plan to support graduate student writers campus-wide.

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