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**RESOLUTION**  
**IN SUPPORT OF RECOMMENDATIONS AS A RESULT OF**  
**CHANGES IN CAMPUS UPPER DIVISION WRITING REQUIREMENTS**

**Resolved:** The Academic Senate endorses the recommendations in the ASD 13-57 report and directs the Executive Committee to begin conversations with academic departments and the administration for their implementation, as appropriate, no later than 2014, fall semester.

A.S. Minutes 5-16-13, approved 8-29-13

**I. CONSENT CALENDAR**

M/S/P (Walk/Bonney) Consent Calendar was approved.

- 6.1 ASD 13-105 Resolution In Support of Recommendations as a Result of Changes in Campus Upper Division Writing Requirements [Source: Exec Com] RE: ASD 13-57 Report & Recommendations from Ad Hoc Committee & CSUF Writing Board "Enhancing Collegiate Writing in the Post EWP Environment" [Dr. Fontaine presented at A.S. 4-26-13] A.S. Agenda First Reading Item 5-9-13



**ASD 13-57**

First Reading at A.S. 4-25-13

Approved together with **ASD 13-105** on Consent Calendar 5-16-13

29 March 2013

TO: Academic Senate  
FROM: University Writing Board + Ad Hoc Committee  
RE: Recommendations as a result of changes in campus Upper Division Writing requirement

As requested by the Academic Senate, the University Writing Board + Ad Hoc Committee are providing our recommendations for improving student writing following changes in the campus Upper Division Writing requirement. The group held several meetings during AY 2012-13 to collect and review data about the success rates in currently approved upper division writing courses and policies on our campus, and policies and programs developed by comparable (non-CSU) campuses for upper division or junior level writing competency.

## **1. Changes in leadership and membership of University Writing Board on Writing Proficiency**

Given that the Writing Board is charged with being responsible for approving and monitoring upper division writing courses and should be responsible for monitoring the infrastructure for faculty development and student support, we feel the committee should be expanded to include

- a Writing Across the Curriculum Coordinator: (tenure-track, joint appointment English/Academic Affairs) who would chair this committee, oversee the requirements and related curricula, coordinate with the FDC professional development for any faculty teaching upper division writing courses, and work in coordination with the Composition Coordinator in the department of English, Comparative Literature, and Linguistics.
- representatives from departments with approved upper division writing courses.

## **2. Proposed revisions to the guidelines for Upper Division Writing Courses**

The current description for upper division writing course requirements provides too little guidance to faculty designing courses and Writing Board members evaluating proposals. We propose the following revisions to UPS 320.020, Section II.B.2.

- Option 1: A single course, of at least 3 units, which involves intensive writing instruction in which students are required to complete at least 5000 words, 1000 of which can be revisions of drafts. Assessments of students' writing competence must decide at least 75% of the final course grade. In these classes students will
  - Receive writing instruction in more than one discipline-specific form.
  - Write informally and formally, in-class and out-of-class, and for more than one audience and purpose.
  - Receive timely instructor feedback on their writing and opportunities to revise.

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- Option 2: two or more courses (a total of at least six units) in which students are required to compose at least 2500 words of discipline-related writing, 500 of which can be revisions of drafts. Assessments of students' disciplinary writing competence must decide at least 30% of the final grade in each course. In these classes students will
  - Receive writing instruction in more than one discipline-specific form (genre).
  - Have more than one opportunity to practice these forms of writing.
  - Write informally and formally, in-class and out-of-class, and for more than one audience and purpose.
  - Receive timely instructor feedback on their writing and opportunities to revise.
- Additional structural requirements for these courses:
  - All should be capped at 20 students<sup>1</sup>
  - Option 1 or first of two courses in Option 2 must be taken during first two semesters after junior status is reached
  - May require supplemental instruction or tutoring

### 3. Expanding the curriculum to provide a developmental sequence of courses

Students' writing skills "will diminish if not reinforced and practiced between freshman composition and graduation" and "writing improves most markedly if [students] write while they are engaged in their major subject area" (Farris and Smith 52). Anecdotal evidence from faculty, employers, and EWP scores of students whose first language is not English suggests that some students need additional practice prior to taking the final writing course (s) in their major.<sup>2</sup> To meet this need, we recommend that currently existing courses (such as ENGL 303) or a newly-developed mid-level course be required for students who receive less than a B- (and more than a C-) in their freshman-level (GE) course.<sup>3</sup> We suggest the following parameters for the new course:

- Topic: Evidenced-based Writing
  - Collaboratively designed class with separate sections taught by English/Reading/TESOL
  - Common learning goals and assessment rubrics across sections
  - Programmatically coordinated writing portfolio assessment

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<sup>1</sup> The National Council of Teachers of English *Statement on Class Size and Teacher Workload* recommends that "no more than 20 students should be permitted in any writing class" ([ncte.org/positions/statements/whyclasssizematters](http://ncte.org/positions/statements/whyclasssizematters)); classes that are "writing intensive" or have been approved to fulfill a writing across the curriculum requirement are optimally-sized at 15-25 (Farris Christine and Raymond Smith, *Writing-Intensive Courses: Tools for Curricular Change. Writing Across the Curriculum: A Guide to Developing Programs*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1992, p. 53).

<sup>2</sup> Since spring 2010, the average pass rate for the 106 courses approved for upper division writing is 88%; in only 14 of these courses did the pass rate dip below 80%.

<sup>3</sup> According to the Office of Institutional Research, in the past five years, an average of 14% of first-time freshmen received grade C and 4% receive grade C+ in GE English; A&R reports that in the same five years, 22% of students transferred in a grade of C and .2% with a grade of C+ for GE writing.

#### 4. Additional recommendations

- GE Committee review the writing component requirement of GE courses
- All GE syllabi include the University writing rubric
- Faculty teaching GE courses be provided systematic professional development
- Students be made aware of the writing component of GE courses and its importance to ULO's
- Adequate funding from Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to support instructional assistance such as: Writing Center, University Learning Center, Supplemental Instruction, Graduate/Instructional Assistantships, FDC

The members of the Board and Ad Hoc Committee are happy to discuss any of these recommendations further with Senate Exec or Academic Senate. One final suggestion we offer is that as you consider our recommendations, it may also be advisable to reach out to organizations such as American Association of Colleges and Universities, the National Council of Teachers of English, or the National Council of Writing Program Administrators to organize an external program review.