

University Writing Committee Final Report 2011-12

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Summary of Activities: The University Writing Committee's (UWC) main activity of the year was designing a rotation system and process for regularly reviewing writing plans. Both documents were sent in draft form to departments to solicit suggestions and final versions (available at <https://fp.auburn.edu/writing/constructingPlan.aspx>) were sent to departments scheduled for review in 2012-13. Several departments that did not submit writing plans until spring 2012 were given a pass for the first review cycle since they would not have had the time to collect any data or make adjustments to their curriculum. The UWC had given a few extensions to departments unable to complete their writing plans because of changes in program curriculum or in faculty, but all of those programs submitted plans that the UWC approved. In some cases the UWC asked programs to provide us with progress reports during the 2011-12 academic year. These progress reports were posted to the Office of University Writing's (OUW) website with the original plan and the UWC's comments. Thus, at this point all undergraduate majors at Auburn have an approved writing plan that: 1) identifies the kinds of writing important for the major, 2) provides multiple opportunities to practice those kinds of writing over the major, 3) includes more than one audience and purpose, 4) provides feedback and opportunities to revise, and 5) assesses the plan to determine how to continue to improve writing and writing instruction.

Issues: Though we worked with the SGA and the GSA to identify student representatives, those selections did not occur until after the time for the meeting had been determined. The Graduate Student Representative did not attend any meeting all year and never responded to email after the initial contact. Similarly, some of the faculty representatives have schedules that keep them from attending meetings. To avoid these difficulties with the student representatives, we secured student representatives for 2012-13 during the 2012 spring semester and worked with University Senate and those colleges whose representatives will be rotating off the committee to identify new faculty representatives. To facilitate continuity we also arranged for representatives who were rotating off the committee to meet with their replacement over lunch. We believe some adjustments need to be made to the membership of the UWC and have attached a separate page requesting these changes.

Plans for 2012-13: The UWC will review reports from 28 majors in 2012-13, most slated for the fall term. One of the challenges will be to make the reporting process meaningful to faculty in the departments while collecting sufficient information to allow the UWC and the OUW to make recommendations about next steps. The Director of University Writing is meeting with each of these 28 departments over the summer to determine if they have questions or concerns about the process. As the UWC does the first round of reviews, we expect to make adjustments to the review process and report form, and we are actively soliciting from departments their suggestions for both the process and additional support the OUW could provide to students or faculty.

University Writing Committee (UWC) – Request for alterations to membership

The University Writing Committee works closely with the Director of University Writing to implement and sustain the writing initiative. Much like the University Curriculum Committee or the Assessment Committee, the UWC could not do its work without close coordination with the administrative unit charged with overseeing this initiative. In the first two years, the Ralph “Shug” Jordan Professor of Writing has served as the co-chair of the committee. Recognizing that future applicants to this Professorship may not be familiar with the work of the Writing Committee, and that some applicants may be unwilling to take on the responsibility of chairing the UWC, we recommend that:

- the Director of University Writing be designated the continuing Chair
- the Ralph “Shug” Jordan Professor of Writing be added to the UWC as a voting member

The Director of the Miller Writing Center (MWC) reports to the Director of University Writing. Though the MWC certainly supports the writing initiative through its work with students and faculty, it has no role to play in reviewing the writing plans. We are concerned that including the Director of the MWC on the UWC simply provides double representation for the Office of University Writing. We recommend that:

- the Director of the Miller Writing Center be deleted as a Continuing/Ex-officio, non-voting member of the UWC and instead be invited at least once per year to brief the UWC on the programs, activities, and usage of the MWC

The writing initiative depends on partnerships with a number of existing units, and several of these units provide the UWC with additional expertise in important aspects of implementing the writing plans. But, the Directors of these units are often unable to participate in the UWC meetings because of conflicts in their schedules. We recommend that

- the Director or representative of the Biggio Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning be added to the UWC as a continuing, non-voting member
- the Directors of other units currently on the UWC be expanded to include a representative from their unit if they themselves are unable to attend

Membership: **recommended changes in red**

Faculty: One faculty member from each college or school
One representative from the faculty of the University Libraries
The Ralph “Shug” Jordan Professor of Writing

Students: One undergraduate student, appointed by SGA
One graduate student, appointed by GSA

Continuing/Ex-officio, non-voting:

Director of University Writing, **Chair**
~~Director of Miller Writing Center~~
Director or representative of Biggio Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning
Director **or representative** of First-year Composition
Director **or representative** of Institutional Research and Assessment
Representative or designee from the University Curriculum Committee