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Writing throughout the Auburn University Experience:

Report and Implementation Plan from the Writing Initiative Task Force

January-August 2008

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Many students from four year colleges lack the skills to perform complex literacy tasks such as understanding arguments, making financial decisions, or interpreting results of a survey. These tasks require three kinds of literacy: the ability to analyze prose, perform mathematical computations, and understand data. These skills are increasingly important for success after graduation. For this reason we need to prepare students to write in various genres necessary for success in their personal and professional lives. Auburn University students report that they are not given as many writing assignments as their peers at the typical university in our Carnegie classification according to the 2007 NSSE data. In light of this data and the recognition that writing with revision and expert feedback is critical to improved writing, the Writing Initiative Task Force (WITF) proposes a writing program that *fosters a significant shift in Auburn's instructional culture.* In short, we see the Writing Initiative as the core and heart of Auburn's mission to impart the literacy skills so essential to educated and responsible citizens not only of Alabama but of the world.

The WITF consisting of faculty representatives from each college, the Head of the Department of English, a representative from the Faculty Senate and a Student Government Association representative (1), was charged in January of 2008 to develop recommendations for a comprehensive writing program for Auburn University. The timing of this charge was auspicious given other academic initiatives on campus including the development of Learning Communities and the adoption of the Auburn University Student Learning Outcomes (2) developed by the University Core Curriculum Oversight Committee and adopted by the Auburn University Faculty Senate on May 6, 2008. As the WITF considered its charge and developed the writing program we were cognizant of these other initiatives and believe that our program will enhance them.

Fully realized this program will impact the educational experience of *every Auburn student*. Adequate new funding is critical to ensuring that this program is an investment in both their futures and that of Auburn University.

This report has recommendations for both the current Freshman Composition program and a new Writing in the Disciplines program that will build upon the strong writing experience in the freshman year and provide students with continued and increasingly disciplinary specific writing experiences throughout their Auburn college experience. In brief, we make the following recommendations for a comprehensive Auburn writing program:

1. *Reduce the class size of all freshman composition courses to 19 students or less*
   A. **Hire additional English faculty with expertise in rhetoric and composition**
2. *Initiate a Writing in the Disciplines (WID) program for each undergraduate major*
   A. **Form a Campus Writing Board with policy-making responsibilities**

B. **Hire a Writing Programs Administrator (WPA) to oversee the writing program, faculty development for writing in the disciplines and direct the Writing Center**

3. *Increase the capacity of the Writing Center to provide support for all students*

These three recommendations provide strategies for improving student writing throughout their studies at Auburn University and preparing students for success in their given careers. They also provide the necessary resources to support faculty throughout the University to take an active and direct role in teaching writing in the disciplines. These recommendations are described in more detail below. A timeline and budget as well as addenda are attached.

1. *Reduce the class size of all freshman composition courses to 19 students or less*

Over the last few years the Freshman Composition program has been revised based in large part on guidelines for developing outcomes-based composition programs published by the Council of Writing Programs Administrators (3). The revised version of the second semester course, ENGL 1120, is already in use and the revised first semester course, ENGL 1100 will be piloted in Fall 2008.

At the present time, enrollments in sections of both ENGL 1100 and 1120 are limited to 25 students. However, nationally recommended standards for freshman composition courses published by the National Council of Teachers of English set the course limit to 20 students and recommend that each instructor have no more than three sections (4). In addition, the U.S. News and World Report's survey of colleges and universities includes as a positive criterion class size of 1-19 (5). Therefore, the WITF recommends that Auburn gradually reduce enrollment from 25 to 19 students beginning in Spring 2009 and that each instructor be assigned no more than three sections. This would be accomplished by reducing enrollment in each section of ENGL 1100 and 1120 by 1 student/semester.

Timeline for reducing ENGL 1100 and 1120 class size

By Spring 2009   reduce class size from 25 to 24
By Fall 2010   reduce class size from 24 to 22
By Fall 2011   reduce class size from 22 to 20
By Fall 2012   reduce class size from 20 to 19

A. Hire additional English faculty with expertise in the field of rhetoric and composition

At the present time, two Department of English faculty, Drs. Michelle Sidler and Kevin Roozen, have administrative and training responsibilities for the Freshman Composition program. Given these responsibilities, neither of these faculty members are able to contribute in a meaningful way to teaching in the program nor do they have time for research on the program's effectiveness and the use of evaluation data to develop the program. The additional professorial faculty will meet an immediate need for faculty with specializations in rhetoric and composition to teach Honors sections of freshman

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composition. These teachers will also fill important leadership roles in faculty development activities and in the training of teachers, GTAs, and tutors. Moreover, these writing specialists will serve as resources for faculty across campus who will be teaching and assessing writing in the disciplines. We recommend that five additional faculty positions be given to the Department of English over the next three years for this purpose.

The WITF reviewed institutional research on the last five cohorts of entering freshmen at Auburn University (through 2007), in particular data on the ACT scores (6). In 2007 93.7% of incoming freshman had an ACT score of 20 or better. Data on the grade distribution for ENGL 1100 and 1120 in 2007 indicate that 94.7% of students in these courses earned a C or better (7). Finally, CLA data for Auburn University freshmen for the past three years indicate that these students are performing on this test of critical thinking, analytical reasoning and written communication skills at or above the expected level. The WITF feels the current assessment data indicate that incoming students are adequately prepared for our writing courses. The resources needed to develop remedial courses would be substantial and would benefit a very small number of students. These resources can be better allocated to program enhancements such as smaller class sizes, a greatly expanded tutoring operation and additional faculty involved in the Freshman Composition program in order to improve the writing experience for all freshmen.

The WITF also examined research regarding small section faculty led freshmen experiences. While in many cases such experiences do ease the transition to college and increase retention rates, other Auburn initiatives already address this issue, including Honors courses, the Human Odyssey program and the Learning Communities. We strongly endorse these efforts and believe that as a culture of writing takes hold at Auburn, these courses will also provide opportunities for the development of critical thinking and writing skills.

2.   *Initiate a Writing in the Disciplines (WID) program for each undergraduate major*

Our review of writing at Auburn University and the institutional research provided by Dr. Drew Clark and the OIRA suggests that the current Freshman Composition program provides a strong foundation in writing, but that continued development of writing skills, particularly disciplinary writing, has no center or focus but rather relies heavily on individual faculty interest across disciplines. Many majors, particularly those with accrediting professional societies have embraced writing skills as a critical outcome of their programs, but this has not been embraced as a fundamental tenet of undergraduate education at Auburn. Some examples of disciplinary writing at Auburn are included in addendum 8.

The WITF spent a great deal of time reviewing the wide variety of WID programs at various universities and colleges, including those with writing intensive courses. From that research we are recommending that Auburn develop an outcomes-based writing program focused at the individual academic department and major level such as the one at North Carolina State University developed by Drs. Michael Carter and Chris Anson. Other universities including the University of Minnesota have developed WID programs based on this approach which has the following reasons to recommend it:

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- **Auburn University's accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, has endorsed an outcomes-based approach to accreditation and self-study.**

- **Outcomes-based approaches are already in use by many professional accrediting societies such as the American Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET) and National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).**

- **Outcomes-based approaches provide the flexibility to develop discipline-specific writing skills and to integrate writing throughout the curriculum.**

- **Applying an outcomes-based approach to disciplinary writing engages faculty as disciplinary experts in the development and assessment of student writing skills.**

An outcomes-based model for writing in the disciplines starts with the question, "What writing competencies must students in a particular discipline master to be successful in the field"? The question is applicable to every field, but the answers will be very different i.e., discipline-specific. This approach not only engages faculty in the consideration of this question, but also engages them in the development of the learning processes and activities that foster the development of essential proficiencies and in assessing whether those processes and activities are successful.

Given Auburn University's land-grant mission and the wide range of disciplines offered it is essential that faculty have the flexibility to tailor the writing experience to develop skills in discipline-specific forms of writing and discourse. It is our strong conviction that this is best accomplished by faculty familiar with the curricula (majors). Based on the discussions among the WITF members and their discussions with colleagues, the WITF has concluded that integral and continuing faculty development opportunities are critical to the success of this program. These opportunities may include workshops on the pedagogy of the teaching writing, support for teams of departmental faculty engaged in outcomes development and implementation, grants for course and curriculum development and support for cross-disciplinary research on the scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL). These opportunities will be provided by the WPA, staff from the Writing Center, the Biggio Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and the Auburn University National Writing Project (NWP) site who are experts in pedagogy and writing skill development.

Assessment is an integral component of an outcomes-based model, providing the opportunity for the use of multiple strategies to measure student proficiencies. Assessment strategies that may be employed include direct observation of student behavior, external reviews of student projects, longitudinal portfolios, internship reports, performance on standardized tests and student self-assessments or reflections on learning.

A. **Form a Campus Writing Board with policy-making responsibilities in the first year.**

The WITF anticipates that program assessment will occur at both the department level by faculty involved in the curricula and at the University level through a Campus Writing Board. The Campus Writing Board will establish policies and guidelines for the development of three or four models for

writing in the majors, review documentation by the WPA of faculty engagement in outcomes development and assessment, and synthesize results in the departmental and program area data to make annual policy recommendations to the WPA for continuing curricular change and greater student proficiency in writing. The Board will also serve as an advisory board to work with the WPA, the Biggio Center and the Auburn NWP site on faculty development.

The Campus Writing Board should consist of one faculty member from each college, school and the library, a representative from the Faculty Senate, the WPA, the Coordinator of the Freshman Composition Program or another representative of the Department of English (non-voting), and representatives from the following offices (all non-voting): the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, the Office for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs and the Biggio Center. The chairperson of the Board should be a faculty member and in the first year this individual should receive ½ time release from other assignments. The Chair of the Board will report to the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies.

The Board will be established in Fall 2008 and one of its first responsibilities will be to initiate the search for the WPA. The Board should identify and retain two to three nationally recognized experts with experience in WID program development and administration and expertise in research on the effectiveness of university writing programs to consult on the development of the WID program.

B. Hire a Writing Programs Administrator (WPA) to oversee the writing program, faculty development for writing in the disciplines and direct the Writing Center

It is essential to the successful initiation of a WID program that the University hire a nationally recognized individual with experience in three areas: writing programs administration, faculty development in disciplinary writing, and research on effective undergraduate writing programs. This position must be a tenure-track faculty position with a part-time faculty appointment in a department relevant to the individual's disciplinary expertise. To attract someone with national recognition, this individual should be hired at the Associate or Full Professor level. The WPA will be responsible for working with the Campus Writing Board and departments on outcomes-based writing programs for each major, for designing and initiating a faculty WID development program and for Writing Center supervision, including hiring and director and staff who will provide tutoring services. This position will report to the Office of the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies.

3. Increase the capacity of the Writing Center to provide support for all students

It is the goal of the WITF to foster a comprehensive culture of writing at Auburn supported by a community of writers from all disciplines and including students, faculty and administration. Such a community requires work space where individuals can share ideas and support one another's intellectual development. The WITF strongly recommends that a Writing Center have a physical space convenient to the Auburn campus community. The creation of a physical center for the writing program has many advantages including:

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- **The opportunity for face to face consultation in support of student writing in order to facilitate in-depth interactions that move beyond simple editing to support for critical thinking skill development**

- **The development of a culture of cross-disciplinary writing and academic discourse on the campus**

- **A venue for students and faculty from different disciplines to meet, discuss, share and model disciplinary writing skills and ideas.**

- **Training opportunities for Auburn graduate and undergraduate students in tutoring. While few of our students will make a profession of tutoring, the skills involved are readily transferable to any work place. Learning to teach someone else is an excellent route to deeper understanding of the material.**

- **As the central academic site and service conducting research on the impact of the writing initiative, the writing center will serve as a locus for research opportunities for faculty and graduate students across disciplines.**

Space for the Writing Center should be identified in the first year of the program and planning and renovation or construction should begin as soon as possible. The Writing Center will serve as the home for the office of the WPA and writing program staff and will provide the facilities for tutoring, faculty development for WID, and research on the impact of the writing initiative. Once the Writing Center space is completed, the services of the Core Curriculum Writing Center will be moved into the Writing Center to provide a single center for the support of undergraduate writing at Auburn.

The task force recommends that expenditures for implementing the writing initiative flow *entirely from new monies or additional monies*. If exigencies arise and the writing initiative needs to be phased in differently than on this proposed timeline, the Campus Writing Board should consult with the Writing Programs Administrator and a representative of the Freshman Composition program (i.e., the Director of Freshman Composition, the English Department Head, or the Dean of Liberal Arts). Following that consultation the Campus Writing Board should be the policymaking entity that determines how to employ the monies that are allocated in order to phase in the initiative differently than proposed here.

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Addenda:

Writing throughout the Auburn

University College Experience

Addendum 1:

Marcia Boosinger, Associate Dean for Public Services and Head of Reference and Instruction Services, Ralph Brown Draughon Library

Sharon Roberts, Associate Professor and Undergraduate Program Officer, Biological Sciences, College of Sciences and Mathematics and Faculty Fellow of the Biggio Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning

Donna Angarano, Professor, Clinical Sciences and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, College of Veterinary Medicine

Lenda Jo Connell, Professor, Consumer Affairs, College of Human Sciences

George Crandell, Professor, English, College of Liberal Arts and Acting Associate Dean of the Graduate School (until August 08 Head of the English Department)

Stephen Ditchkoff, Associate Professor, Wildlife Sciences, School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences

Magdalena Garmaz, Associate Professor, School of Architecture, College of Architecture, Design and Construction

Karen Marlowe, Assistant Dean and Associate Department Head, Harrison School of Pharmacy Mobile Campus

Beverly Marshall, Associate Professor, Finance, College of Business

Tony Overfelt, Professor, Mechanical Engineering, Samuel Ginn College of Engineering

Richard Penaskovic, Professor, Philosophy, College of Liberal Arts, University Senate Representative

Kimberly Raines, Adjunct Faculty, School of Nursing

David Sutton, Associate Professor, Communication and Journalism, College of Liberal Arts

Anna Twardy, Junior, Accounting, Student Government Association representative

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David Weaver, Professor, Agronomy and Soils, College of Agriculture

Alyson Whyte, Associate Professor, English Language Arts Education, Curriculum and Teaching, College of Education and Director of the Sun Belt Writing Project

Addendum 2:
http://www.auburn.edu/academic/provost/undergrad_studies/ccoc_learningoutcomes.html

Addendum 3:
http://www.wpacouncil.org/positions/outcomes.html

Addendum 4:
http://www.ncte.org/about/over/positions/category/class/107626.htm

Addendum 5:
http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/usnews/edu/college/rankings/about/weight_brief.php

Addendum 6:
https://oira.auburn.edu/factbook/enrollment/newstudents/possasa.aspx

Addendum 7:
personal correspondence from Dr. Michelle Sidler, Coordinator, Freshman Composition Program

Addendum 8: Examples of Disciplinary Writing at Auburn University
Honors Course work – Submitted by Anna Twardy, SGA representative to the Writing Initiative Task Force

Honors courses at Auburn University have enhanced my writing abilities greatly, whether through short writing assignments, presentations, or analytical essays. I was fortunate enough to have Dr. Anna Riehl for Honors World Literature II (ENGL 2217), and her passion for both literature and writing made the class very enjoyable. Dr. Riehl incorporated writing in various ways throughout the semester:

- Pop quizzes were used not only to test reading of the assigned material but also the ability to express thoughts clearly and succinctly.
- Two essays were assigned with a five page limit and other concrete guidelines for understanding the assignment. Also, Dr. Riehl gave adequate feedback if an essay was turned in about a week early.
- Five short assignments were given with a 350-400 word limit. These short essays involved both writing and analytical skills as each one required a question in the beginning, an answer to the question using evidence from a reading in the body, and a follow-up question in the conclusion.
- Each student had to lead class discussion for one day during the semester. The reading material was assigned by Dr. Riehl, but students were free to choose any format of teaching to engage the class in discussion of the text. This assignment took both careful reading and planning in order to be executed

properly. A written outline of discussion had to be turned in beforehand as well.

- The midterm and final comprised of both identification of quotes from text and short essay questions. However, students had the option to do a creative final at the end of the semester instead of taking the regular exam. Students' work ranged from making up a discussion between characters of different novels to describing literature from A-Z with examples from the different texts serving as each letter.

Each of these assignments brought more understanding of the material covered in class while cultivating each student's writing style. Dr. Riehl's variety of written assignments and constant feedback to students are exemplary of the type of program the WITF is suggesting to implement.

College of Architecture, Design and Construction - Submitted by Magdalena Garmaz, Associate Professor, School of Architecture

The School of Architecture, in order to meet professional accreditation requirements, has integrated a series of writing assignments, primarily within its theory and history courses, throughout curriculum. While architecture students are expected to utilize critical thinking and writing skills in their design studios, it is in the architecture history sequence (in second and third year) that these skills are further tested and also greatly improved. Upper level theory seminars and thesis research bring additional opportunities for writing enhancement. All of this puts considerable burden on faculty teaching these classes, since it is imperative to provide feedback to students through different stages of assignment.

A Writing Award was established several years ago in order to recognize examples of best undergraduate (and graduate) writing.

Some examples of writing assignments:

- a term paper on a significant historic building, 3000 words (with preliminary outline and draft reviewed and returned to students with comments) : ARCH 2120
- a term paper representing comparative analysis of a historical and contemporary building of the same typology, 3000 words (with preliminary outline and draft reviewed and returned to students with comments) : ARCH 3120
- a series of short essay assignments each dealing with one of the important architectural issues, such as materiality, context, etc., 500-700 words (reviewed and returned with comments) : ARCH 3700
- a letter to the editor of the Plainsman regarding the new Student Union Building, 300 - 500 words (reviewed separately by students , and then by instructor) : ARCH 3700
- an essay on one's understanding of space, written in the manner of Louis Kahn, a famous architect, 300 -400 words : ARCH 3700

College of Education-Submitted by Jada Kohlmeier, Assistant Professor, Department of Curriculum and Teaching

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The Secondary Social Studies Education program in the College of Education encourages writing with their students in several formats. In two courses, the final projects are formal papers, one a disciplinary inquiry in the social sciences and the other a curriculum analysis and philosophy statement on why and how social studies should be taught.

The first paper asks students to explore a historical topic and explain a value conflict within that topic. For example, the topic of a paper on the Japanese Internment Camps might be security vs. liberty. The students are required to explain the historical context of the event and the reasons on both sides of the decision. In addition, they identify three other historical analogies and explain the similarities and differences in those situations to the one under evaluation. In this example, other similar events might be the Alien and Sedition Acts John Adams signed, Lincoln suspending the writ of habeas corpus and the Patriot Act. Finally, the students are asked to demonstrate dialectical reasoning on the historical event by arguing the "security' position" and the "liberty" position with equal heft. They then take their own personal position on the question: when is the government justified in limiting liberties in time of war?

The second paper mentioned is written in the final course prior to internship after studying multiple theorists' visions for social studies curriculum. The students write a personal philosophy statement on why and how social studies should be taught. They lay out a vision for the purpose of schooling and social studies specifically. They then list the major goals for social studies with exemplary teaching strategies that achieve those goals. The students design a 7-12 grade course sequence describing the courses students would have in each of those six years, their goals, typical experiences students would have, and one exemplar of "a day in the life" of a student in one of those courses. Finally, they conclude their paper with a vision of social studies for the 21st century and how their scope and sequence plan best prepares students for that society.

Samuel Ginn School of Engineering-Submitted by Tony Overfelt, Professor, Department of Materials Engineering

Academic programs within the College of Engineering are accredited through the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). ABET requires that *"Engineering programs must demonstrate that their students attain … an ability to communicate effectively."* This requirement is usually interpreted to refer to both oral and written communication skills.   Auburn's undergraduate engineering programs satisfy these requirements through the freshman English composition courses along with upper division engineering courses utilizing various discipline-specific writing assignments, such as, laboratory reports, case studies, technical reviews, etc.

In addition, all academic programs include senior-level capstone engineering design courses in-which the students
- form teams,
- develop team-written proposals of potential design solutions,
- design and build real-world processes and/or devices, and finally
- report their results and conclusions in formal written reports as well as with formal oral presentations.

A key feature incorporated into many of the senior-level design projects is the incorporation of degreed engineers from industry as outside reviewers. The outside reviewers always bring an element of realism to the process that energizes the students and provides extremely valuable feedback to the engineering faculty that enables continuous improvement of the academic programs.

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College of Human Sciences--Submitted by Lenda Jo Connell, Professor, Department of Consumer Affairs

In the Department of Consumer Affairs all Apparel Merchandising and Product Develop (AMDP) students are required to take a senior level capstone course and complete a semester long internship with an approved firm. The program is one of thirteen schools endorsed by the American Apparel and Footwear Association. Students in this curriculum must display an ability to analyze case-driven situations and develop action-oriented solutions presented in both written and verbal formats. The senior level courses focus on applying problem-solving and critical thinking skills from coursework throughout the undergraduate major in a targeted and discipline related manner and use multiple writing assignments to assess student outcomes.

For the senior level product development class, students must develop a line of apparel including a detailed identification of the target market, competitive business analysis, detailed technical computer-assisted design and specifications, costing, and an international sourcing plan. The course culminates in a visual presentation (approximately 30 minutes) which is supported with extensive technical documentation (most over 60 pages). Segments of the final document and presentation are presented throughout the semester to provide time for feedback by the professor and revision by the students.

The senior level internship involves extensive writing assignments as students develop resumes and communicate with an approved business or corporation to secure an internship. The internship is supervised by senior level faculty and is evaluated through student journals, a written in-house project developed with the firm supervisor, and evaluations by the student of their abilities in this situation and their academic preparation through the curriculum.

College of Liberal Arts-Submitted by David Sutton, Associate Professor, Department of Communication and Journalism

In COMM 4970: Special Topics in Communication, the first assignment is a movie review. For this assignment, students review a movie, a major Hollywood studio release or an independent film, that features some aspect of death and dying as the central part of the narrative. Some examples: Flatliners (1990), Dying Young (1991), Dead Man Walking (1995), The Sixth Sense (1999), The Green Mile (1999), The Life of David Gale (2003), and White Noise (2005). Their review is to consist of two parts: the first part is a 250-word summary of the film; the second part is their reaction to the film, which is also limited to 250 words.

The second assignment is a book review. For this assignment, the students review a book written for children on the subject of death, dying or grief. I encourage the students to make use of the extensive collection of juvenile literature housed in the RBD Library. The book review consists of two parts: a 250-word summary of the book, and a 250-word reaction to the book.

The third assignment is an interview with someone from another generation, preferably someone older, on the topic of death and dying. I give them some possible questions to ask their subjects: When did they first experience death? What were some of their thoughts and feelings at the time? Did they attend a funeral or memorial service? Did they find any comfort in the service? How did they cope with

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their feelings of grief? What did they observe in others around them. After conducting their interview, students will write an essay of 500 to 750 words in which they share the findings of their interview.

The fourth assignment requires my students to write a short counter-argument to an essay that appears on the "Opposing Viewpoints" database. One can find this database on the AU libraries homepage. From the list of essays provided in this database, students select one essay listed under the topic of death. Their counter-argument to their chosen essay must be between 500 to 750 words. They are to support their counter-argument with a minimum of three outside sources. These sources must be either (1) books or other bound publications from the collection housed in the RBD Library, or (2) articles from the databases listed on the AU libraries homepage.

In order to give credit where credit is due, the idea of setting a word limit for these writing assignments came from Dr. Richard Penaskovic. According to Dr. Penaskovic, setting a word limit is a good pedagogical exercise because it forces students to choose their words carefully and to focus their arguments. Long writing assignments give students too much of an opportunity to wander aimlessly around a topic. After trying this idea out in my special topics class, I have decided to make it a part of writing assignments in my other classes.

College of Liberal Arts-Submitted by Richard Penaskovic, Professor, Department of Philosophy

I use writing as a way of thinking and as a way of promoting "active learning." Active learning occurs when students do something other than listen to the professor lecture. At the start of the course I ask students to list goals they have for the course apart from a letter grade. A sub-question may be this: What's the best thing you could take from this course?

Most profs ask for an evaluation at the end of the course. I find this not especially useful. The next batch of students will have different needs. After the first test (about 4 weeks into the course), again after the mid-term exam, and then after test 3, I ask students to write a 200 word essay in which they give me feedback about the course, e.g., do I have any annoying mannerisms? If you were teaching this course would you do anything differently? Have you done the prescribed readings? How this course made you think? Do you have any suggestions for improving this course? Sometimes I give 2 pts. for their response and at other times I ask them to write anonymously. I then plot their responses on a single piece of paper divided into 3 distinct columns: Positive, negative, and suggestions (for improvement). I then run off their comments and make a copy for each student. This demonstrates my openness to their suggestions and I often learn things I would otherwise have never known. I can make small changes in how I teach.

School of Nursing-Submitted by Kimberly Raines, Adjunct Faculty, School of Nursing

The educational objectives of Auburn's School of Nursing state that "students will use verbal, written, listening, and electronic communication skills to assist clients in implementing behavior changes that maximize quality of life". These objectives are measured throughout the program in a variety of ways as evidenced by the following requirements:

- One research-based paper in *each* required upper-division course
- Multiple oral teaching projects for clients in the community incorporating original visual aids and hand-outs.
- One research-based poster presentation to faculty and peers

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  Prior to graduation, each Senior submits his/her collected works in a bound portfolio; this capstone project illustrates the ongoing development of both clinical and communication skills throughout the program. The contents of the portfolio include the above-mentioned samples plus:

- A Biographical Narrative
- A Philosophy of Nursing
- Clinical Journals
- Patient Care Plans
- Photographs of Clinical Activities