

May 28, 1998

**To:** Deans, Chairs, and Directors of Undergraduate Admitting Colleges

**From:** Council on Liberal Education, Joel Weinsheimer, Chair  
Frank R. Akehurst, Department of French & Italian  
Catherine Asher, Department of Art History  
John Beatty, Department of Ecology, Evolution & Behavior  
David L. Frank, Department of Mathematics  
Roger P. Miller, Department of Geography  
Wayne Potratz, Department of Art  
Kathryn K. Reich, College of Liberal Arts  
Gerald Rinehart, Carlson School of Management  
Larry Rudnick, Department of Astronomy  
Steve Simmons, Department of Agronomy & Plant Genetics  
Arthur E. Walzer, Department of Rhetoric  
Judith Wanhala, College of Liberal Arts Honors

**Re:** Call for Writing Intensive Proposals

Beginning in fall 1999, the delivery of writing instruction at the University of Minnesota will undergo fundamental change. In the past, the English Department, Rhetoric Department, and General College have borne primary responsibility for teaching writing. After fall 1999, every undergraduate department in the university will share in that responsibility. Just as the teaching of critical thinking cannot be relegated to one or two units alone, so writing instruction must be our common aim and ambition. In the belief that writing is best taught across the whole undergraduate curriculum, and pursuant to its charge of 1991, the Council on Liberal Education has adopted the Writing Intensive course structure outlined below.

Writing Intensive courses, as understood by the Council, are defined as courses at either the upper or lower division level in which the course grade is directly tied to the quality of the student's writing as well as to knowledge of the subject matter, so that students cannot pass the course who do not meet minimal standards of writing competence. In Writing Intensive courses a significant amount of writing is required—minimally ten to fifteen finished pages beyond informal writing and in-class examinations, if any. Students in WI courses are given instruction on the writing aspect of the assignments, and these assignments include at least one for which students are required to revise a draft after receiving feedback. Otherwise, writing assignments may be of various kinds and have various purposes, as appropriate to the discipline.

Students matriculating in Fall 1999 and thereafter will be required to take four WI courses in addition to freshman writing as currently required by various units and offered by English, Rhetoric, and General College. To avoid multiplying requirements, many (but not all) WI courses will be those already fulfilling Liberal Education Core and Theme requirements. At least two of the four required courses must be taken at the 3-level or above. It is expected that, at a minimum, one upper division WI course will be offered within each major or program area. More than one WI course per major is certainly encouraged, especially in the case of majors with few electives. Upper division WI courses whose primary focus is writing instruction will count as fulfilling two of the four WI requirements; such courses cannot substitute, however, for freshman writing or for the one course minimum WI requirement in each major or program area.

The Provost's office will allocate recurring funds to the undergraduate-admitting colleges to use in the ways they consider most conducive to implementing this new structure of writing instruction.

In addition to sample syllabi, assistance in planning and offering WI courses is available from the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies of Writing <http://CISW.cla.umn.edu>. Students in need of help beyond what a WI instructor

can offer may be referred to the University's writing centers and tutorial services <http://www.writinghelp.umn.edu>. For information on both CISW and the writing centers, see the information below.

To expedite approval of WI courses, the Council has authorized a highly streamlined procedure of proposal and review. It begins with the assumption that proposals are offered conscientiously and in good faith compliance with the ends and criteria of the WI policy stated above. After two years, one third of the WI courses will be sunsetted each year, so that the Council can review the success of the policy in general and the specific courses within it.

To propose a course for Writing Intensive status, please fill out the form and send it to the Council on Liberal Education, c/o Laurel Carroll, 160 Morrill Hall ([l-carr@tc.umn.edu](mailto:l-carr@tc.umn.edu)). The Council will begin reviewing proposals as soon as they are received, beginning in July, 1998. Proposals received after the deadline will be in danger of arriving too late for offering in fall 1999.

Deadline OCTOBER 23, 1998

WI Course Proposal Form

Please submit your proposal via email to: [CLEwrit@tc.umn.edu](mailto:CLEwrit@tc.umn.edu).

If you do not access to an email account, you may send the information to:

Laurel Carroll  
160 Morrill Hall

Any questions may be directed to:

Laurel Carroll  
[l-carr@tc.umn.edu](mailto:l-carr@tc.umn.edu).  
160 Morrill Hall  
624-1320

Deadline OCTOBER 23, 1998

Department designator:

Course number:

College:

Course title:

Name of the faculty sponsor or coordinator:

Name of the preparer (if other than the sponsor):

(500 character limit per question.)

1. How does assigning a significant amount of writing serve the purposes of this course?
2. What types of writing (e.g., research essays, formal lab reports, journaling) are likely to be assigned?
3. What types of instruction will students receive on the writing aspect of the assignments?
4. How will the students' grades depend on their writing performance?

5. If graduate students or peer tutors will be assisting in this course, what role will they play in regard to teaching writing, and how will they be trained and supervised?

(1500 character limit)

Please include a sample assignment handout for a paper that students will revise and resubmit after receiving feedback on the initial draft. **RESOURCES FOR WRITING-INTENSIVE COURSES**

The Center for Interdisciplinary Studies of Writing, in collaboration with Many faculty members across the Twin Cities Campus, will support the writing-intensive initiative with the following services:

- A Writing Website (under construction). The site describes all the resources for writing available at the University of Minnesota and includes samples of writing-intensive course syllabi, assignments, student writing, information about grants, workshops, consultations, and other services. We would appreciate suggestions about new materials that you'd like to see on the Web; we'll be working on it all summer, so send us ideas! See it as it stands now at: <http://cisw.cla.umn.edu>
- Faculty Development Workshops. Topics for the upcoming year include "Designing a Writing-Intensive Course," "Responding to and Assessing Student Writing," "Technology and Writing," and more. General workshops will be open to any faculty member wishing to attend; specific workshops for selected faculty will be designed at the request of departments or colleges.
- TA Training, specifically for graduate students assisting with the writing component of WI courses.
- Grants to Individual Faculty Members who want to develop a writing-intensive course and/or investigate questions about connections between writing and learning, characteristics of writing in a particular field or profession, and student writing ability. Funds are not available for direct instruction, but they can be used for an RA to assist in development and research
- Grants to Departments that want to develop a comprehensive writing-intensive course plan by studying how such courses might be added, created by converting existing courses, integrated into the curriculum, and enhanced by using technology.
- Published Materials on Writing-Intensive Courses and Writing Across the Curriculum, including abstracts, monographs, and reports of faculty doing WI or WAC research, and teaching tips and research materials, are available in 227 Lind Hall and at the Website above.

Contact Hildy Miller ([mille229@tc.umn.edu](mailto:mille229@tc.umn.edu)) or Lillian Bridwell-Bowles ([lilbrid@tc.umn.edu](mailto:lilbrid@tc.umn.edu)) with your questions or to set up an individual or departmental consultation.

## WRITING SUPPORT NETWORK

The Rhetoric Department, English Department, Center for the Interdisciplinary Studies of Writing and the General College Writing Center have come together to bring you writing support in one place, The Writing Support Network. Below, you will find links to and a short description of every facility on campus that can help you with your writing.

The Department of Rhetoric's Online Writing Center <http://www.agricola.umn.edu/owc/>

At the department of Rhetoric's Online Writing Center, you can get Personalized tutoring over the Internet. In addition to e-mail tutoring, the OWC contains both handouts and interactive skills exercises to help you improve your writing. See us especially for questions about writing in the sciences or technology. Drop by for a tour or to ask The Grammar Oracle a question.

The University of Minnesota English Department Student Writing Center  
<http://composition.cla.umn.edu/courseweb/lab.html>

The University of Minnesota English Department Student Writing Center is Located in 306a Lind Hall. At the Writing Center's web site, you can access information about its hours of operation, view a map of its location, and learn about

its mission.

General College Writing Center [http://www.gen.umn.edu/resources/arc/writing\\_center.html](http://www.gen.umn.edu/resources/arc/writing_center.html)

Do you sometimes wonder whether what you're writing is what your instructor is looking for? Ever have trouble thinking of something to write about? Do you have questions about how to document information in a research paper? Walk in for face-to-face consultation, or get help via e-mail.

MISA <http://www.tc.umn.edu/nlhome/g031/misa/>

The Minnesota International Student Association (MISA) has a free service providing qualified writing tutors to both undergraduate and graduate international student. Students are asked to make an appointment by calling 625-6119 and provide a draft in advance of their meeting. Visit the MISA home page at: <http://www.tc.umn.edu/nlhome/g031/misa/>

Center for the Interdisciplinary Studies of Writing <http://cisw.cla.umn.edu/>

The Center for Interdisciplinary Studies of Writing promotes and encourages research concerning the written language. Our WWW site is especially designed to help students, faculty, and researchers enhance their writing. There are also hundreds of useful links to other writing resources around the country.

Quick Check Grammar Guide [http://composition.cla.umn.edu/CourseWeb/~QkCk/QC\\_Contents](http://composition.cla.umn.edu/CourseWeb/~QkCk/QC_Contents)

Sheryl Holt, the Composition Program Non-Native Speakers Coordinator provides a helpful guide for grammar problems often encountered by non-native English speakers in their writing. This guide is available on the World-Wide Web in collaboration with the Student Writing Center.

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