To: Department/Program Chairs
From: Jim Magyar (COGE), Maureen Reddy (Assessment), Mike Michaud (Writing Board)
Date: 4/11/18
Subject: Creating Greater Visibility for Writing in the Disciplines (WID) at RIC

The Committee on General Education (COGE), building on and extending its earlier work on Writing in the Discipline (WID), is asking departments/programs to help create greater visibility for our WID requirement. Towards these ends, we ask your assistance with three initiatives:

1. **WID Webpage:** departments/programs will need to create a WID webpage, to be included on department/program homepages, in which answers to a series of common WID questions, provided by COGE, are given (this webpage will ultimately become a link within the grey navigation box on the left side of department/program homepages);
2. **Syllabi Statement:** departments/programs will need to include language on course syllabi which explicitly identify WID courses as such;
3. **RhodeMap:** departments/programs will need to revise their RhodeMaps to explicitly identify which classes in their curriculum count as fulfilling their WID requirement.

We make these requests because it has come to our attention that RIC students and faculty are not always aware of their department's/program's efforts to satisfy the college's WID requirement. We seek to create greater visibility and awareness about the college's commitment to teaching writing in the disciplines, a key element of our General Education program. Below, we provide more information about each of the three initiatives.

1. WID Webpage

We ask that departments create a WID webpage which contains answers to the following questions:

1. Why or in what ways is writing important to your discipline/field/profession?
2. Which courses are designated as satisfying the WID requirement by your department? Why these courses?
3. What forms or genres of writing will students learn and practice in your department's WID courses? Why these genres?
4. What kinds of teaching practices will students encounter in your department's WID courses?
5. When they've satisfied your department's WID requirement, what should students know and be able to do with writing?

To assist departments/programs in the process of generating answers to these questions, we are providing language borrowed from existing WID plans (see Appendix). We offer these examples as heuristics that departments/programs can draw on as they work to generate answers to the five common WID questions, above.

To begin this process, we ask that departments/programs return to their original WID plans, most of which were written 5-7 years ago, to determine a) whether they still accurately capture the department's needs and desires as regards WID, and b) whether language from these statements can be repurposed on the new departmental WID webpage. Ideally, existing WID plans will be discussed by faculty at department meetings or assessed by a departmental curriculum committee (WID plans can be accessed by visiting the COGE webpage on the RIC website).

Dr. Michael Michaud of the campus Writing Board, who has been charged with assisting departments/programs with this initiative, will facilitate all communications with Web Services once departments/programs have generated their webpage content. *We ask that Mike be the only one to communicate with Web Services on this project.*

Additionally, Mike can meet with departments/programs to discuss WID requirements and offer feedback on WID webpages, should they desire assistance. Mike can be reached at mmichaud@ric.edu or 456-8661.

2. Syllabi Statement

We ask that once WID requirements have been revisited, revised, and approved by departments/programs, that a statement be created to include on syllabi of WID-designated courses. This statement should identify WID courses as such to both students and faculty.

Towards this end, we provide, below, the following WID syllabus statement template, which departments can adapt for their own purposes.

> _____ has been designated by the Department of _____ as one of its Writing in the Disciplines (WID) courses. Students enrolled in WID courses should expect to write more than in traditional classes and to receive instruction in and feedback on their written work. WID courses like this one build on and extend knowledge of writing that students gain in General Education courses such as First-Year Writing, First-Year Seminar, and Connections classes as well as other departmental WID courses.

If departments prefer to write their own syllabus statements, they are encouraged to do so.

3. RhodeMaps

We ask that once WID requirements have been revisited, revised, and approved by departments/programs, they, in cooperation with the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC), work to update their existing curriculum RhodeMap to explicitly identify the courses that have been designated as satisfying their WID requirement. This can be accomplished by contacting Mike Michaud or Sue Abbotson, chair of Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) (sabbotson@ric.edu).

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We thank you for your time and effort in helping to create greater visibility for writing in the disciplines at RIC. To assist you in planning, we offer this suggested timeline for the completion of the three initiatives outlined above:

1. **End of Fall Term (2018):** Answers to questions for WID webpage generated;
2. **End of Spring Term (2019):** Syllabus statement adopted or drafted; RhodeMap revision completed.

As you can see, it is our hope that each department will be able to complete these three initiatives by the end of the 2018/2019 academic year.

If you have questions or would like help in facilitating these projects, please reach out to Mike Michaud (mmichaud@ric.edu). Once you have completed these projects, please forward your documents to Mike and he will facilitate discussions of them with COGE.

Appendix: Sample Language for Answers to Common WID Questions

Why is writing important to your discipline/field?

- Writing is essential to communicating as a professional nurse. Professional nurses write as caregivers, advocates, teachers, and researchers. Nurses use writing to provide high quality safe care to patients and communities, to propose improvements to health care delivery, and to promote changes in health care policy. (Nursing)
- An essential writing skill for chemists is learning to keep a good laboratory notebook. The lab notebook is the permanent record of all experimental work. In research labs, it is the notebook record that provides data for publication or a patent claim. Future workers need to be able to repeat an experiment from the notebook record. (Chemistry)
- Writing assignments are integral to all accounting and CIS courses. Students in both majors need to have the ability to communicate with many constituencies and in many forms. Accounting majors learn how to communicate information to help users make smart decisions. (Accounting & CIS)
- Writing in the Discipline of general management (GM) concerns three major areas: writing done by managers; writing clearly and concisely; and writing with others. Topics include planning, organizing, leading, and controlling aspects of the company's structure, operations, employees, and relationships with the external environment (e.g., economy, laws). (Management)

Which courses are designated as WID by your department? Why these courses?

- The History Department has designated three classes among its course offerings as particularly emblematic of "Writing in the Discipline." These consist of History 200 "The Nature of Historical Inquiry," History 361 "Seminar in History," (designated for History/ Liberal Arts and Public History Certificate students) and History 362 "Reading Seminar in History." (History)
- The specific courses in which chemistry students learn to write in the discipline are Organic Chemistry (CHEM 205-206), usually taken in the sophomore year, Analytical or Environmental Analytical Chemistry (CHEM 404 or 416), typically taken in the junior year, and Physical Chemistry I Laboratory (CHEM 407), taken in the junior or senior year. (Chemistry)
- BIOL 111 Introductory Biology I: Introduction to scientific communication and modeling primary scientific literature; BIOL 320 Cell and Molecular Biology: Developing further data analysis and communication skills – modeling primary scientific literature; BIOL 460 Senior Seminar: Synthesizing information: writing a scientific review paper. (Biology)

- We recognize that writing is integrally related to analyzing and responding to literature. We directly address the kinds of writing particular to the discipline of literary studies in English 201, English 202, and English 460. (English)
- HED 300 Concept of Teaching, HED 417 Instructional Planning in Health Education, HED 418 Practicum in Health Education, HED 428 Student Teaching in Health Education (Health Education)

*** Note that few of these examples articulate *why* these courses are identified as WID.

What forms or genres of writing will students learn and practice in your department's WID courses? Why these genres?

- Examples of formal writing include among others précis of articles, analytical book reviews, comparative book reviews, historiographical essays and research papers. (History)
- In the chemistry program, students learn to keep laboratory notebooks in Organic Chemistry (CHEM 205-206). The notebook is used to record procedures, observations, data, and conclusions. (Chemistry)
- The most salient point at which our department captures the quality and depth of our candidates' abilities to write in their disciplines is with the Teacher Candidate Mini Work Sample (TCMWS). These assignments require candidates to write about 5 critical areas relevant to meeting the exceptional learning needs of their school-age students. (Special Education)
- Forms of communication include financial statements and related analysis, tax returns and tax advice, audit reports, client proposals and recommendations. CIS majors learn the conventions of program and systems documentation and how to communicate facts, ideas and recommendations in systems analysis and design projects. (Accounting & CIS)
- Management students (in all concentrations) and marketing students must be able to plan, write, and complete reports, recommendations for action, memoranda, and letters. (Management)
- Because the discipline of Psychology is a science, the peer-reviewed journal article plays a major role in transmitting advancements in knowledge of human behavior. (Psychology)

*** Note that few of these examples articulate *why* students are asked to learn these genres.

What kinds of teaching practices will students encounter in your department's WID courses?

- Students meet one-on-one with the instructor twice during the semester. At those times, their research projects are discussed as well as their progress in improving their writing. (History)
- Often our 300 level classes use a combination of "low stakes" and "high stakes" writing assignments daily in this class. In sociology 345, for example, students submit journal writing and discussion board comments ("low stakes"), which they are to do daily. They also submit five formal (4-6 pages) papers due every two weeks. These formal writing assignments are theory driven and use a variety of books on victimization. Students are expected to use citations and references to document their work ("High stakes"). (Sociology)
- Peer review is used for some assignments, some instructors review and comment on (but do not grade) a draft of the paper; or, after the reports are evaluated and returned with comments, students are required to take them to the Writing Center for help before resubmission. (Chemistry)
- Students are required to write a report that analyzes the accounting policies and financial statements in the case, along with making a recommendation on whether to purchase the company's stock, supported by the analysis. Typically the instructor does one sample case at the beginning of the semester to provide a model for students to follow in these assignments. (Accounting & CIS)
- The review paper is submitted as a series of critically evaluated drafts culminating in a final submission at the completion of the course. (Biology)
- A complete first draft is peer reviewed using a structured review form. (Management)
- Students write a term paper in four parts. Subsequent assignments build on feedback given on earlier assignments. (Management)
- Students may be asked to submit multiple drafts of some papers, responding to feedback from peers and/or the instructor. (Anthropology)
- Larger projects will be broken into their components, with the opportunity for instruction on writing and presentation at each stage. There will be opportunity for revision on some of papers. (Anthropology)

When they've completed your department's WID requirement, what should students know and be able to do with writing?

- One of our program goals is "ability to articulate sociological analyses in oral and written form." (Sociology)
- Students can learn how to write like a sociologist, including statement of research question and/or hypotheses, presenting a literature review, presenting one's findings, writing a discussion section and a conclusion. We stress the difference between an opinion essay and a critical research paper. (Sociology)

- A desired outcome is for our students is to develop their writing over the course of their studies. Our goal is that their work in sociology 460 reflects their enhanced ability and comfort with writing formal research papers. (Sociology)
- ***WID Program Outcomes:*** The Bachelor of Science in Nursing graduate will:
    - Effectively communicate in writing in the various professional nursing practice roles.
    - Accurately and precisely document professional practice in clinical settings.
    - Prepare thoughtful and effective research papers in the discipline of nursing.
    - Prepare oral and written presentations individually and collaboratively to achieve a specific purpose.
    - Engage in reflective writing for personal professional development.