To: Joe Zornado, COGE; Sue Abbotson, UCC
From: Mike Michaud, Interim WID Coordinator and Writing Board (Chair)
Date: 9/21/20
Subject: Update on Writing In the Disciplines (WID) Visibility Project

Introduction

I write to offer an update on the WID Visibility Project, which I was charged by COGE with implementing in the spring of 2018. Two years into this project and nearing its completion, I would like to offer a status update on my work and share some thoughts about future directions for WID at RIC.

Background

WID arrived at Rhode Island College as part of the General Education revision of 2010-2012. The original language of the WID requirement, now almost a decade old, is as follows:

Writing in the discipline (one or more courses)

Writing in the discipline - each department will identify the course(s) at the sophomore level or above in which students learn to write for that discipline. This may be a new course or an existing course; writing instruction need not be the sole content of the course but writing instruction must be a portion of the course's requirements. This course must be required in the major and is not included in the 40 credit hours of General Education courses. COGE will maintain a list of these courses.

WID was assessed by the college in the summer of 2017, by then-Assessment Coordinator Dr. Maureen Reddy (assessment report attached). Dr. Reddy's report focused, in particular, on the problem of awareness among departments and faculty about the existence of WID and so her recommendations grew from this central finding. In order to implement some of Dr. Reddy's recommendations, COGE appointed me to the position of WID Coordinator in spring 2018. My charges were as follows:

1. Develop a statement for faculty about implementing WID, aimed at allaying fears and clarifying the requirement.
2. Review and collaborate with departments/programs to update existing WID "plans."
3. Guide departments/programs in the creation of a syllabus statement to be included on all WID courses.
4. Develop a WID webpage for each department/program that includes answers to a series of common questions about WID, aimed at a student audience.
5. Update RhodeMaps to identify explicitly WID courses.

Work Completed

For the past two years, I have worked to implement the objectives above and I am pleased to report that the work is now mostly complete. An additional step we have taken in creating greater visibility for WID is to identify all WID courses with a "W" in the course catalogue and online within the MyRIC interface. I've included several administrative documents along with this report to document my progress:

1. A memo that was sent to all departments/programs in the spring of 2018 outlining the initiative, which I called the WID VIsibility Project.
2. A statement drafted by the campus Writing Board to provide an overview of WID for faculty.
3. A packet containing spreadsheets which list all WID courses by department and also indicate which departments/programs have yet to finish their work (i.e. WID website).

Many faculty members have given their time to this initiative and should be thanked for their efforts. Most especially, I'd like to acknowledge and thank Sue Abbotson, who, in her capacity as chair of UCC, has put in many hours updating RhodeMaps, the course catalogue, and MyRIC. Also, I'd like to thank Maureen Reddy whose report stirred COGE to inquire into WID at RIC in the first place.

Looking to the Future

Dr. Reddy offers several recommendations in her assessment report that were not taken up by COGE. These more extensive initiatives are as follows:

● Develop a compliance mechanism for courses designated as meeting the WID requirement (such as collecting and reviewing syllabi on a regular schedule).
● Sponsor an annual workshop for faculty teaching WID (in cooperation with the FCTL and the Writing Board).
● Recommend that each faculty member teaching WID attend at least one more extensive writing pedagogy workshop (again, FCTL and the Writing Board are resources for this possibility).
● Assessment properly belongs with each program/department because the WID courses are part of their curricula. COGE and the assessment coordinator should encourage departments to include assessment of WID courses and to report results to COGE to help with ongoing assessment and improvement of the General Education program.

I believe it is time that college revisit its WID requirement and the administrative structures which organize and support it along the lines that Dr. Reddy suggests. The WID requirement was appended to a significant overhaul of General Education almost a decade ago. With the completion of the WID Visibility Project we have now taken important steps to ensure, at a minimum, that our colleagues and, more importantly, our *students*, know of the existence of WID at RIC. For students to know when they are taking a WID course (and for faculty to know when

they are teaching such a course), however, is a low bar. There is much more that can and should be done. I'd like to conclude, then, by asking for a discussion of "next steps" with regard to WID at RIC. The administrative arrangement within which WID currently lives and the viability of making the interim WID coordinator position permanent should, in my opinion, be a part of this discussion.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these thoughts.