UH System-wide Standing Committee on Written Communication
Annual Writing-Intensive Report
Spring 2015

This form is based on the document “Procedures and Policies for University of Hawai‘i Writing-Intensive Programs to Provide for Inter-Campus Articulation of Writing-Intensive Course Designations, April 1988.”

According to the 1988 Inter-Campus Articulation agreement, each campus will annually submit to the System-wide Standing Committee on Written Communication a description of how its Writing-Intensive (WI) program addresses the concerns listed below. Campus WI Program Directors may provide supporting or qualifying details in the blank spaces provided or may append additional materials as needed.

Upon receipt of each description, the Committee will review, advise, and recommend action on inter-campus articulation of the campus’s WI courses.

Campus: Honolulu Community College

Writing-Intensive Program Director: Eric Shaffer, Assistant Professor, Language Arts

Report submitted by (name and title): Eric Shaffer, Assistant Professor, Language Arts

Date: April 10, 2015

I. PROGRAM SUPPORT

Personnel

1. Is the program directed by a person who has been appropriately appointed and given appropriate released time to supervise the program? (Note: The Committee has interpreted “appropriate released time” as “support that is appropriate for the program’s current size and state of development.”)

I, Dr. Eric Paul Shaffer, continue as the WI committee chair and program director, after being appointed as WI Coordinator for Honolulu Community College when Marcia Roberts-Deutsch, former Coordinator and Division Chair for Humanities and Social Sciences, was appointed Dean of University College at HCC.

Last year, Dr. Erika Lacro, our Honolulu Community College Chancellor, agreed to one course release per semester, but in the subsequent semester, that agreement was revoked.

2. Who assists the director in supervising the program? (e.g., Faculty Board, student assistant)

The WI-Focus Committee now consists of six members: the chair (me), one representative from the Humanities Division and one from the Social Sciences Division. Currently, these three University College members are balanced by three members from the Careers and Technical Education (CTE) Divisions of Honolulu Community College. As of now, there are six members of the WI Committee.

During the past academic year, for a variety of reasons, the General Education Board, at the request of the CTE faculty, agreed to relieve CTE faculty of their focus board responsibilities. As a result at the beginning of AY 2015-2016, CTE faculty will no longer serve on the WI-Focus board.

Further assistance for the WI Coordinator is provided by other WI faculty as needed, either for review of new courses or those requiring certification, preparing for meetings, distributing materials, or for various forms of assessment.
3. Do the director and board members have adequate professional/secretarial/clerical assistance to support their work and maintain records necessary for articulation of WI courses?

Although assistance can be obtained from the Secretary for University College (the Liberal Arts program of HCC, which provides almost all of the WI courses on campus), all paperwork, meeting preparation, and maintenance of WI documents is done by the chair.

At the least, I believe that financial and material support is needed for the various needs of the operation of the WI-Focus board. There is no reason that the committee chair should purchase supplies to keep the WI-Focus board operational.

4. Does a network of support exist for instructors of WI courses?

Yes. Concerning applications for WI certification and re-certification, the chair is always available for conference and guidance. There is a website on the HCC Intranet that provides a constantly-updated chart of current WI certifications. There are also regular WI e-mails from the chair concerning course evaluations and certification dates. I’ve also recently posted on Laulima instructions for instructors concerning how to retrieve their WI course evaluations and how to increase their response rates. Generally, all support comes from the chair, who keeps WI instructors current and the process moving and verifies the semester’s WI courses, instructors, and enrollment.

**Overall Teaching Load and Class Size**

5. Are classes designated as WI limited to 20 students so that effective interaction between instructor and student can occur?

Yes. All WI courses at Honolulu Community College are capped at 20 students.

6. Are teaching loads of instructors such that courses can be planned for and carried out in a way that is true to the spirit of the WI guidelines and that does not add unreasonably to the overall workload of the instructor?

Yes.

7. Is the teaching of WI courses appropriately rewarded in review processes, including tenure and promotion?

If a faculty member specifies that teaching WI courses is part of the way in which they fulfill their professional obligations, that information should be positively considered in the review process.

**Student Needs**

8. Are enough WI courses offered so students can meet graduation or degree requirements?

Yes. Honolulu Community College has many WI offerings on record across multiple disciplines. Liberal Arts students are required to take a minimum of two courses to meet A.A. requirements, and they are encouraged to take a third while they attend the college.
9. Are WI courses clearly designated in class schedules?

Yes. They are so designated in the online schedule, and a list of WI and other Focus-area courses is also included in the Registration Guide prepared each semester. For the past three semesters, I have also included a list of the coming semester’s WI offerings, including course name, alpha, and number, CRN, meeting days and times, modality (classroom or web), and instructor name, in our campus newspaper, Ka Lā.

10. Are students advised about the availability of and purpose for WI courses through regular campus publications?

Yes. This information is in the college catalogue and included in the registration guides each semester.

11. Can students who need help on writing problems get help, either from instructors or from staff in a writing workshop or laboratory?

Yes. While the prerequisite for any WI course at HCC is passing ENG 100 with a “C” or higher, students (particularly those for whom English is not their first language) may need some additional help with basic writing skills. Instruction is provided by the instructor of the course, but the College also provides additional support through the College Skills Center and the campus Writing Center, which has a new satellite location in Building 7, where many of the WI courses typically meet.

12. Are WI designations recorded and explained on student transcripts?

The designation exists, but no detailed explanation on the transcript per se. That is not something the College has control over.

Budget

13. Have adequate funds been provided to support the program?

Yes, in terms of supporting faculty salaries. As noted, however, no additional personnel support is provided. Incidental expenses (e.g., duplication of writing samples for assessment) are generally absorbed into a division’s budget or, more likely, by the WI-Focus board chair.

II. COURSE DESIGNATION PROCESS

1. Is the WI designation process reasonable, explained to faculty, and followed regularly by program administrators?

Yes. Information about the program, and the procedures for certifying or re-certifying courses, is available to all faculty on the campus intranet site. Peer mentoring is also provided. All WI faculty meet as a group at least once a year. WI certification is managed by the WI Coordinator, and monitored by the General Education Board, which coordinates all actions pertaining to Foundations, Diversification, other Focus-area courses (e.g., HAP) as well as General Education for CTE programs.
2. Does the designation process include the following:
   a) Publicizing the hallmarks of writing-intensive courses

   Yes; see above.

   b) Soliciting proposals from individual faculty members

   Yes. Specific deadlines for submission of applications for new courses are set each semester, and the WI-Focus board chair maintains a schedule of when all courses must submit applications for re-certification.

   c) Reviewing proposals

   Yes. Each application is reviewed by the WI-Focus Board Chair; if corrections or additions are needed, the Coordinator works directly with the faculty member. Once the application is complete, the other five WI Committee members review, comment on (or not), and approve the application. If the WI Committee comments require further revisions, the WI Coordinator works directly with the faculty member. If not, the certification is approved. For his or her reference in future applications, all WI Committee comments are included in the approval letter to the faculty member.

   d) Approving the designation of courses as writing-intensive

   Yes. Courses are reviewed in relation to specific WI hallmarks and may be returned to the proposer if there is any concern about meeting those hallmarks or other aspects of the proposal. Initial certification for a new course is for a period of three years, contingent on completion of specific WI evaluations by students each time the course is taught, periodic submission of writing samples for embedded assessment, and participation in the yearly WI Instructor meetings. Re-certification is good for five years.

   e) Notifying appropriate personnel of such designations

   Yes. Faculty members are notified of concerns (see d. above) as well as, by letter, of their successful completion of the application process. That information is also conveyed to those preparing the schedule and registration guides.

3. Does the program offer an option for WI designations that extend beyond a single semester? If yes, please add a brief description of the option. [added Spring 1998]

   Yes; see (d) above)

III. EVALUATION PROCEDURES

1. Is there a program of evaluation that assesses WI courses to see if they are doing what they are supposed to do—help students improve their writing?

   WI courses are assessed in at least two ways: by student evaluations, which must be completed in addition to other possible evaluations (e.g., general course evaluations, or DE evaluations), and through periodic assessment (usually every two years) of student writing samples, which are evaluated based on a common rubric by WI faculty. I have also begun a “norming” session that follows the yearly WI Instructor meeting.
2. Do program supervisors monitor the progress of students as they move through WI courses?

This is not done systematically. However, the periodic assessment of writing samples does give a general overview in the aggregate of how students are doing as sophomores.

IV. FACULTY TRAINING PROGRAM

1. Are training programs in WI course instruction required or provided for faculty who want to participate in them?

The College does not have a formal training program. There is, however, a strong culture of peer support and mentoring, and the WI Coordinator and those who review applications also provide substantial feedback.

2. Are orientation sessions provided at the beginning of each semester for instructors new to WI course instruction?

See above.

3. Are resources provided for instructors who want or need help in planning and teaching WI courses?

Yes. As noted above, this is done primarily through a strong faculty network and peer support.

*If you have additional information for the committee, please submit it with this form.*