Progress Report
UCLA College Writing II Requirement
1998-2004

Submitted to Judith L. Smith
Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education
by the Writing II Implementation Committee
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The UCLA College instituted a second undergraduate writing requirement (Writing II) in the fall of 1998, effective for freshmen entering Fall Quarter 1999. Additionally, the College established the Writing II Implementation Committee to both execute this new requirement and oversee its development thereafter. On October 16, 2003, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Judith L. Smith, requested a report from the Chair of the implementation committee, Professor Ross Shideler, on the progress of the College Writing II requirement from 1998 to the present. Specifically, Vice Provost Smith requested information about, and recommendations for improvement in, the following areas:

- The administration of the Writing II requirement.
- The number of Writing II courses approved by the implementation committee, as well as information on the departments and programs offering them.
- Patterns of student enrollment in Writing II courses.
- Writing II graduate student instructor (GSI) training and mentoring.
- Faculty engagement and consultation.
- Faculty, GSI and student experiences with the Writing II requirement.

The following report was prepared during AY 2003-04 and presents the findings of the Writing II Implementation Committee with regard to the background of the Writing II Program, its administration, the experiences of its various participants, and the program's overall strengths and weaknesses.

Writing II Program Accomplishments

Since its implementation in Fall 1999, the Writing II Program has achieved the following:

- Established criteria for courses satisfying the Writing II requirement.
- Allocated $250,000 yearly to cover the costs of Writing II administration, course development, GSI hiring, and course releases for Writing Programs instructors who provide GSI mentoring and training.
- Developed and approved 52 courses for Writing II credit. The area breakdown of these courses is as follows:
    - ➢ 36 quarter-long humanities-centered courses offered by the Humanities Division and College Honors Program;
    - ➢ 3 quarter-long history courses offered by the Social Sciences Division;
    - ➢ 2 quarter-long life-science centered courses offered by Life Sciences and the College Honors Program; and
    - ➢ 11 freshman clusters.
- Offered 153 Writing II courses from 1999-2004 enrolling 19,447 students.
- Increased capacity such that 100% of students satisfy Writing II by the end of their junior year with 50% of those students satisfying the requirement by the end of their first year.
- Established, with Writing Programs, workshops that have provided over 150 GSIs engaged in the teaching of quarter-long and cluster Writing II courses with training and mentoring in writing instruction.

Recommendations for Improvement of Writing II

After careful study of the findings relating to the experiences of faculty, GSIs, and students in Writing II courses, as well as various individuals involved in the administration of the College's second writing requirement, the Writing II Implementation Committee recommends the following changes:

- Development of some systematic method for the assessment of student learning outcomes in Writing II courses. At the very least, the Committee believes that the university's standard evaluation of course instruction survey forms should include questions that ask students to reflect on their writing experience in Writing II courses, e.g. the degree to which they feel they receive feedback on their written work and improve their writing skills.

- Implementation of a new cluster course evaluation form that will be administered in AY 2004-05. This form will specifically address writing assignments in the clusters and the degree to which students feel that they successfully met Writing II aims and practices.

- Revision of existing Writing II course guidelines to communicate better the pedagogy behind the College's second writing requirement and to allow fewer pages of writing in favor of more opportunities for student revision of written work.

- Improvements in the Writing II training and mentoring for faculty and GSIs. These include:
  - Better cooperation between Writing Programs consultants and faculty in the training and mentoring of GSIs.
  - Stronger collaboration between Writing Programs consultants and freshman cluster instructional teams in the development of writing assignments and teaching prompts.
  - More attention to the teaching of content and writing as a unified experience extending to both lectures and discussion sections.
  - Workshops that bring together new Writing II faculty and GSIs with colleagues who have prior experience in the teaching of writing intensive courses.
  - Increasing awareness of options on campus for dealing with plagiarism and students who have serious writing deficiencies.

- Development of science-centered Writing II courses in the College's Honors and Freshman Cluster Programs.

- Implementation of a requirement that Summer Session Writing II courses be taught only by faculty and GSIs who have experience teaching writing instruction.

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OVERVIEW

UCLA COLLEGE WRITING II REQUIREMENT PROGRESS REPORT

On October 16, 2003, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Judith L. Smith, wrote the Chair of the Writing II Implementation Committee, Professor Ross Shideler, and requested an update on the progress of the UCLA College Writing II requirement. In her letter to Professor Shideler, Vice Provost Smith requested information on the following:

- The course approval process adopted by the Writing II Implementation Committee and any recommendations for its improvement.
- The number of Writing II courses approved by the Implementation Committee, as well as information on the departments and programs that are offering them.
- Other professional schools at UCLA that have adopted the Writing I and II composition requirements.
- Patterns of student enrollment in the Writing II courses.
- Faculty, graduate student instructor (GSIs), and student experiences with the Writing II requirement.
- The training that GSIs are receiving to prepare them to teach Writing II courses and any recommendations for its improvement.

The following report is intended to provide the Vice Provost with an analysis and overview of the UCLA College's progress-to-date in implementing a second undergraduate writing requirement. This report has been prepared by Professor Ross Shideler and M. Gregory Kendrick, Director of the Freshman Cluster Program, in collaboration with the following individuals: Judith Lacertosa, Executive Coordinator of the College FEC, Leigh Harris, Writing II TA Coordinator, Bruce Beiderwell, Director, Writing Programs, Marc Levis-Fitzgerald, Director, Office of Undergraduate Evaluation and Research, and Karen Jarsky, General Education Evaluation Coordinator. It summarizes Writing II historical materials, curricular information, and student enrollment data gathered since the inception of the second writing requirement in 1999, as well as information from a series of Writing II faculty, lecturer, and GSI focus groups conducted during Fall Quarter 2003 and Winter Quarter 2004.

The report is presented in six sections designed to provide the reader with information about the background of the Writing II program, its administration, the experiences of its various participants, and the program's overall strengths and weaknesses. The six sections are as follows:

Section One—Background on the Writing II Requirement

Section One discusses the historical background of the College Writing II requirement, as well as its aims and implementation.

Section Two—Administration of the Writing II Requirement

Section Two provides an overview of the College Writing II program's administrative oversight, course approval process, enrollment, and funding from 1999 to the present.

Section Three—Writing II in the Humanities and Social Sciences

Section Three describes the effort to develop and teach Writing II courses in the Humanities and Social Sciences. This section analyzes the number and distribution of north campus Writing II courses, the training developed to prepare the instructors teaching these classes, and the experiences of the students, GSIs, and faculty who have participated in Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II courses. The findings in this section are based on reports from Leigh Harris, Writing II TA Coordinator, student evaluation of instruction data from Fall 2003, and GSI and faculty focus groups conducted during the fall and winter quarters of 2003-04.

Section Four—Writing II in the Natural Sciences

Section Four describes the effort to develop and teach Writing II courses in the Natural Sciences. It specifically addresses the experiences of Dr. Cheryl Kerfeld integrating Writing II aims and practices into the Life Sciences core, as well as a Honors Collegium life science-centered courses, and is based on her reports describing these efforts.

Section Five—Writing II in the Freshman Clusters

Section Five describes the effort to integrate Writing II aims and practices into the Freshman Cluster Program. This section examines cluster GSI Writing II training, as well as the Writing II experience of cluster students, GSIs and faculty. The findings in this section are based on reports from Rachel Fretz and Susan Griffin, Writing Programs lecturers and cluster Writing II consultants, student evaluation of instructional data from Fall 2003, and GSI and faculty focus groups conducted during the fall and winter quarters of 2003-04.

Section Six—Recommendations

Section Four concludes the report with recommendations aimed at improving the UCLA College Writing II requirement.

SECTION ONE
BACKGROUND OF THE WRITING II REQUIREMENT

In March 1997, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Judith L. Smith, and Dean of Humanities, Pauline Yu, convened a UCLA College Committee on the General Education (GE) Writing Requirement. The charge of this committee was to design a plan to implement the proposal of the Workgroup on General Education to incorporate the College's English Composition requirement into a GE cluster program.[1] As envisioned by the General Education workgroup, the College's English composition requirement would be subsumed into a 2-unit supplementary course that would be integrated into a series of required GE cluster courses for freshmen.

Under the chairmanship of Professor Emeritus, Paul Sheats, the GE Writing Requirement Committee began its evaluation of the GE Workgroup's proposal by first conducting a survey of composition instruction at UCLA and across the UC system. In an Interim Report, dated June 20, 1997, (See **Appendix A**) the committee reported that this survey found UCLA standing "last among her sister campuses in the time devoted to freshman writing instruction."[2] The survey also found that the writing requirements of UCLA's College of Letters and Science were less rigorous than those of the university's School of the Arts and Architecture and School of Theater, Film, and Television, each of which required at least two quarters of writing instruction for all undergraduates. On the basis of these findings, the committee concluded that the proposed incorporation of a 2-unit writing supplement into a set of required GE cluster courses "would not strengthen writing instruction at UCLA and might indeed weaken it."[3]

As an alternative to the writing proposal of the GE workgroup, the committee recommended the expansion of the existing College freshman composition requirement to two 5-unit courses that would be included within a new General Education curriculum and be required of all undergraduates at UCLA. As envisioned by the committee these courses would be taken by students during their freshman and sophomore years and would be arranged sequentially in order to establish and then build upon fundamental writing skills. The committee also recommended that courses selected to satisfy this composition requirement follow specific writing instruction course format and content guidelines and be monitored by a subcommittee of a Senate body charged with GE oversight. To ensure effective writing instruction in these new composition courses, the committee also recommended that training and mentoring be provided to their faculty and TAs by senior instructors from Writing Programs.

Following the issuance of its interim report, the chairship of the GE Writing Requirement Committee passed to Professor Thomas Wortham, Chair of the English Department. Under Professor Wortham, three subcommittees were established to focus on issues of GSI training, budget, and the format and content of courses that would be developed to satisfy the committee's proposed College writing requirements. The membership of the committee was also expanded to include representatives from the English TA training program, English 4 faculty, and several non-literature based humanities departments that would clearly have a stake in implementing an expanded writing requirement.

On March 10, 1998, Professor Wortham forwarded to Vice Provost Smith and Dean Yu the final recommendations of the GE Writing Requirement Committee (See **Appendix A**). Expanding on the proposals of their interim report, the committee recommended that the College adopt a writing requirement that would consist of two courses, GE Writing I and GE Writing II, to be taught largely, though not exclusively, by humanities departments and programs. Both courses would have to be passed with a grade of "C" or better and, though students could satisfy Writing I either through examinations or AP coursework, the Writing II requirement would have to be satisfied at UCLA through successful

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[1]Interim Report of the Committee on the General Education Writing Requirement, June 20, 1997, page 1.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

completion of a course designated for Writing II credit by the College's FEC.[*] Other recommendations of the committee were as follows:

- GE Writing I would be satisfied by English Composition 3 or ESL 36, which would be revised to become 5-unit courses.

- GE Writing II courses would use the subject matter of courses given by departments or programs to teach expository writing appropriate to the discipline or field in question. A GE Advisory Committee would recommend to the Undergraduate Council (UgC) particular courses that qualified for GE Writing II credit.

- Writing Programs faculty would participate in the training of TAs and in teaching GE Writing II.

- TAs assigned to GE Writing I courses would receive training and mentoring similar to what the UCLA Writing Programs provided graduate student instructors in English Composition 3. TAs assigned to Writing II courses would take 495 seminars developed collaboratively by faculty from their departments and the Writing Programs. Development seminars would also be developed by Writing Programs to support faculty teaching in Writing I and II courses.

In addition to these recommendations, the committee also issued a set of proposed *Guidelines for GE Writing II Courses* that included the following:

- The purpose of a Writing II course would be to teach students to write effectively in a given discipline, i.e., to understand a discipline's "rhetorical modes" and to use that understanding to write logical and persuasive arguments that analyze evidence, describe research, and evaluate differences of ideology, theory, and perspective.

- Students in these courses should write three to four analytical papers resulting in at least twenty pages of revised work.

- Writing II courses should be offered in a variety of formats, from lecture classes with multiple sections to single-class courses.

- Reading assignments should be appropriate to a course whose central objective is to teach disciplinary writing skills.

- Students should be evaluated according to the quality of their writing in a discipline.

- When appropriate, Writing II courses should take advantage of new technologies.

These recommendations were forwarded by Vice Provost Smith and Dean Yu to Professor Robert Watson, Chair of the College Faculty Executive Committee. In light of the complexity of the proposed GE reforms and the controversy surrounding them, Vice Provost Smith and Dean Yu also asked the FEC at this time to consider promoting the proposed expansion of the College's writing requirement ahead of the other general education reform proposals. At its April 1998 meeting, the College FEC voted unanimously to approve the committee's recommendation for an expanded College writing requirement, as well as its guidelines for Writing II courses. Further, while the FEC agreed that the proposed Writing II courses could be applied to GE requirements and also count as preparation courses for a major, Writing II, like Writing I, would be advanced as a basic skills College-wide requirement independent of any changes in the College's general education curriculum.

In June 1998, the faculty of the College voted overwhelmingly in favor of the FEC's proposal for an expanded College-wide writing requirement (see **Appendix A** for College Regulation). This College vote was followed by Legislative Assembly ratification of the new composition requirements on November 17, 1998. Shortly thereafter, the College FEC convened an ad hoc Writing II Implementation

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[*]Transfer students with 90 units or more who had completed the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum were exempted from the College's new writing requirement

Committee to implement the new requirement for freshmen entering Fall 1999 and oversee its progress thereafter. The next section considers the work of this committee from 1999 to the present.

It should also be noted here that two of the professional schools, Theater, Film, and Television (TFT) and Arts and Architecture (SOAA), required their undergraduates to complete two courses in English composition (*English Composition and Rhetoric* and *Critical Reading and Writing*) prior to the College's adoption of an advanced writing requirement. During 2003-04, these schools, with the approval of the Legislative Assembly, revised their general education curricula as part of the ongoing effort by UCLA to provide all of its undergraduates with a common GE framework and list of approved courses carrying GE credit. As part of this revision effort, both schools renamed their required composition courses Writing I and Writing II and made them part of their general school, as opposed to general education, requirements. As with the College, the Writing II requirement in these schools must be satisfied at UCLA through completion of an advanced writing course from a list of courses approved by the Writing II Implementation Committee.

SECTION TWO

ADMINISTRATION OF THE WRITING II REQUIREMENT

In the fall of 1998, the Writing II Implementation Committee was charged with the following tasks by the College FEC:

- Establish the criteria for courses satisfying the Writing II requirement.

- Inventory existing courses that could be modified to satisfy the Writing II requirement in order to assure an adequate number of such courses by the 1999-00 AY.

- Create procedures for evaluating the training of TAs and the teaching of writing in Writing II courses.

The Writing II Implementation Committee has worked to address these charges from 1999 to the present under the leadership of the English Department's Professor Robert N. Watson, Committee Chair from 1998-2000, and the Comparative Literature Department's Professor Ross Shideler, Committee Chair from 2000 through Spring 2004. Beginning in October 2004, Robert N. Watson, Professor of English, will serve as Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Innovations with administrative oversight of the Writing II Program and it's implementation committee.

Criteria for Writing II Courses

Using the recommendations of their predecessors on the GE Writing Requirement Committee as a guide, the Writing II Committee adopted a series of guidelines for Writing II courses (see **Appendix B**) that were predicated on the principle that a Writing II course should use the subject matter of courses given by departments or programs to teach students *to write effectively in a given discipline* (my emphasis). Unlike a Writing I course where the focus would be very much on the rhetoric of the sentence and the structure of paragraphs and essays as a whole, a Writing II course would use writing exercises as a means of not only improving student composition, but also teaching students to understand how a discipline uses writing "to make logical and persuasive arguments, analyze evidence, describe research, and evaluate differences of ideology, theory, and perspective."[4] In addition to this focus on disciplinary "rhetorical modes," the committee also made the following stipulations regarding courses carrying Writing II credit:

- A Writing II course should require its students to write three to four analytical papers resulting in at least twenty pages of revised work. Revised work is defined as giving students the opportunity to write a second, perhaps a third, draft based on an instructor's evaluation of a previous draft.

- Writing II courses should be offered in a variety of formats, from lecture classes with multiple sections to single-class courses. Both lectures and discussions should address rhetorical topics and student writing as well as the assigned reading. Reading assignments should be appropriate to a course whose central objective is to teach disciplinary writing skills, and assignments should introduce students to the discipline's various genres and modes of discourse.

- Writing II courses should take advantage, where appropriate, of new technologies.

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[4]From the Winter 1999 Writing II Implementation Committee *Guidelines and Recommendations for Writing II Courses*.

In addition to these course guidelines, the committee addressed the issue of GSI training, mentoring, and workload in Writing II courses, and touched on the need for faculty writing instruction as well. Specifically, the committee recommended that:

- GSIs assigned to Writing II courses also take seminars, developed collaboratively by faculty from their departments and Writing Programs, for the purpose of preparing them to teach writing in their disciplines.

- Sections for both Writing I and II courses have no more than twenty students and each instructor should be responsible for only one section.

- Writing Programs faculty participate in the teaching of Writing II courses, and also in the training of the TAs for these classes.

- Faculty development seminars, with Writing Programs participation, be created to support faculty members teaching in the Writing courses.

Development and Enrollment in Writing II Courses 1999-2004

A number of courses—English 4, Humanities 2A-D, English 100, and four Honors Collegium writing seminars—had been identified by the GE Writing Requirement Committee as appropriate for Writing II credit. These courses alone, however, could not provide adequate instruction for all College undergraduates, and there was an expectation that additional Writing II courses would need to be developed. Further, while these additional course offerings might be entirely new, both the GE Writing Committee and the College FEC anticipated that these courses would likely be existing lower-division classes adapted to provide intensive training in writing. There was also an expectation that these new Writing II courses would come almost entirely from the Humanities and Social Science divisions of the College.

To insure that there would be adequate Writing II instruction for the College's undergraduates, the Writing II Implementation Committee sent out a call in February 1999 to all departments in Letters and Science for course proposals to meet the Writing II requirement. This call also notified departments that the College would provide general education funds to hire additional graduate student instructors for any of their large lecture/discussion section classes that were reconfigured to provide writing instruction for students. This step was taken so that GSIs in these courses would only have to supervise students in one section (rather than the usual two), with no more than twenty students. Departments were also informed that their GSIs would receive prior training and continuing support in writing instruction from faculty in Writing Programs. As a result of this call, the Implementation Committee received 31 proposals and selected 27 of these to be offered in 1999-00.

In addition to more traditional quarter-long Writing II courses, the Freshman Cluster Program proposed in 2002 to add Writing II credit to the eight GE cluster courses that were to be offered in 2002-03. Under the terms of this proposal, students who completed Writing I by the end of winter quarter of their first year and the *entire* yearlong sequence of cluster courses would satisfy their Writing II requirement. To ensure that student writing in these courses met the pedagogical aims of Writing II, the proposal stipulated that the cluster coordinators would work with Writing Programs consultants to modify their courses in such a way that their writing assignments would provide opportunities for revision and skills development during fall and winter quarters, in order to prepare students to write a culminating final paper in their spring seminars. The proposal also mandated eleven hours of writing instruction training for new cluster GSIs through a yearlong series of intensive workshops and individual mentoring sessions with Writing Programs consultants.

At its April 22, 2002 meeting, the Writing II Implementation Committee endorsed the cluster program's proposal and voted unanimously to approve Writing II credit for the eight GE

clusters being offered in Fall 2003. The courses approved were: M1CW *The Global Environment: A Multidisciplinary Perspective*; 20CW *Interracial Dynamics in American Culture, Society, and Literature*; 21CW *The History of Modern Thought*; 22CW *Towards a World Economy: The Perils and Promise of Globalization*; 24CW *Work, Labor, and Social Justice in the U.S.*; 70CW *The Evolution of the Cosmos and Life*; 71CW *Biotechnology and Society*; and 80CW *Frontiers in Human Aging: Biomedical, Social, and Policy Perspectives*. During Winter Quarter 2003, the committee approved three additional clusters—23CW *Inside the Performing Arts: Interdisciplinary Explorations of Performance in Society and Culture*; 25CW *Politics, Society, and Urban Culture in East Asia*; and 60W *The United States, 1960-74: History, Politics, and Culture*—for Writing II credit during the 2003-04 AY. To date, eleven of the twelve freshman clusters that have been developed are approved for Writing II credit.[*]

The following table shows the numbers of Writing II courses that have been developed and offered, as well their total student enrollments from 1999 to 2004.

Table 1. Writing II Course Development and Enrollment 1999-2004

Year	Approved Courses	Courses Offered	Enrollment
1999-00	27	21	2790
2000-01	6	27	3032
2001-02	10	27	3781
2002-03	7	38	4887
2003-04	2	40	4987
Totals	**52***	**153**	**19,477**

* Includes 41 stand alone courses and 11 cluster courses)

As originally anticipated, the vast majority of the courses approved for Writing II credit since the initiation of the requirement in 1999 do indeed come from the Humanities and Social Sciences (See **Appendix C** for a chart listing all approved Writing II courses). Notable exceptions have been Life Sciences 2W, which was offered in 2000-01, HC 45W *Writing About Life Sciences*, and the freshman clusters with substantial scientific content, i.e., *The Global Environment*; *Evolution of the Cosmos and Life*; *Biotechnology and Society*; and *Frontiers in Human Aging*.

Enrollment Management

Writing II was designed as a requirement to be completed by all incoming freshmen during their undergraduate academic careers at UCLA. Students may not test out of the requirement and only one course (English 4W) is accepted through articulation from other institutions and may be taken during summer terms while a student is enrolled at UCLA. Students are encouraged to complete the requirement by the end of the sophomore year, before beginning upper-division coursework.

Over the past five years, the Writing II Implementation Committee has tried to certify enough Writing II courses to meet student need. Several policies and procedures also facilitate early compliance and persistence:

- Granted *impacted* course status for all Writing II courses (effective Fall 2002);
- Mounted a concerted effort to direct students away from the primary Writing II course, English 4W, and toward other certified courses;
- Added a "Writing Intensive" transcript notation;

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[*]The twelfth, 50ABC *Perception and Illusion: Cognitive Psychology, Literature, and Art*, has not been offered since AY 2000-01.

- Approved GE Clusters to carry Writing II credit (effective Fall 2002) - cluster students must complete the three-quarter cluster sequence and complete the Writing I requirement by the end of the winter quarter;
- Placed *holds* on the fall Registration Packets for students who have not completed the requirement by the beginning of fall of the student's third year.

Extensive publicity was required to encourage enrollment in Writing II courses other than English 4W. A misconception existed among counselors and students that English 4W was the only course that would be accepted and/or recognized by graduate, medical and professional schools admission offices as evidence of completion of an advanced writing course. This precipitated the "Writing Intensive" notation and an aggressive correspondence campaign with graduate, medical and professional schools about the quality and nature of the newly certified Writing II courses.

As a result of all these combined measures, over 50% of the freshman class now satisfies the Writing II requirement during their first year on campus and most complete the requirement before the end of their third year. Some students take more than one Writing II course; thus, the percentages above 100% appear in the table below as the cohort progresses through its 4 or 5-year tenure at UCLA.

Table 2. Estimated Percentage of Freshman (FR) Cohorts Completing the Writing II Requirement

FR Cohorts	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Fall 1999	31%	69%	100%	109%	111%
Fall 2000	----	30%	82%	98%	105%
Fall 2001	----	----	41%	83%	99%
Fall 2002^	----	----	----	55%	83%
Fall 2003	----	----	----	----	58%

**^*GE Clusters certified to satisfy the Writing II Requirement.*

Currently there appears to be an adequate number of Writing II courses and appropriate policies in place to meet student need and to ensure that they are able to complete the requirement in a timely manner. However, freshmen, who entered in the fall of 2002 and were not in a cluster course, are required to take a second Writing II course or GE seminar to satisfy their College General Education requirements. While 83% of this cohort appears to have satisfied their Writing II requirement by the end of the sophomore year, it is not clear how many have taken or plan to take a second Writing II course to satisfy their seminar/second Writing II course requirement. Further data is needed to determine whether there are a sufficient number of Writing II courses if a high percentage of the non-cluster students decide to enroll in a second Writing II rather than a general education seminar.

GSI Training

In addition to the development of Writing II courses, the Writing II Implementation Committee worked closely with Writing Programs over the last five years to provide training for GSIs leading Writing II discussion sections and lower division seminars. A key figure in this effort was Dr. Cynthia Merrill who designed and coordinated the training workshops offered by Writing Programs for Writing II GSIs. As a result of Dr. Merrill's efforts, over 150 graduate student instructors engaged in the teaching of both quarter-long and cluster Writing II course offerings have received training and mentoring in writing instruction. More information regarding Writing II TA training and faculty consultation is included in the sections dealing with the efforts to introduce the requirement into humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and freshman cluster courses.

Funding for Writing II

Funding for Writing II course development and TA training over the last five years has been provided by the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education from permanent money that was earmarked by former Chancellor Charles F. Young for the purpose of supporting the College's efforts to improve general education. Out of these funds, a yearly allocation of $250,000 is used to cover FTE costs for additional sections of English Composition 3 to satisfy the Writing I requirement, as well as additional TAs for Writing II courses to supplement departmental allocations so that each TA is responsible for only one 20-student section. These funds are also used to cover course releases for Writing Programs instructors who provide TA writing assistance and mentoring through training programs and individual consultation. Table 3 summarizes these expenditures over the last five years:

Table 3. Writing II Program Expenditures - 2000-05

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	Projected 2004-05
Writing Programs Transition Costs	$107,550	$53,775	$107,550	$54,600	$0
Writing Programs Consultation)	$31,125	$31,125	$24,071	$23,448	$55,581
Writing II Instructors	$127,292	$112,242	$151,808	$168,604	$176,896
Administrative Costs (S&E)	$6,511	$6,544	$6,544	$4,700	$9,489
Total	**$272,478**	**$203,686**	**$289,973**	**$251,352**	**$241,966**

- **Writing Programs Transition Costs.** Includes funding transferred to Writing Programs to pay for English 3 sections (Writing I) needed in the transition period of implementing a second writing requirement in the College. This increased need for English 3 sections occurred when the Comparative Literature series was shifted from satisfying Writing I to Writing II. These transition funds were designed to give Writing Programs time to adjust their course assignments to accommodate the Writing I enrollment needs, including shifting some upper division instruction to these lower division courses, and this transition period was completed at the end of 2003-04.

- **Writing Programs Consultation.** Includes funding transferred to Writing Programs for course releases to WP lecturers to train graduate student instructors to lead Writing II sections, to advise the Writing II Implementation Committee on best practices in writing instruction, to consult with faculty coordinators from the Freshman Cluster Program on how to implement Writing II in clusters, and to provide a yearly assessment report on Writing II instruction.

- **Writing II Instruction.** Includes funds for graduate student instructors (TAs) to supplement departmental allocations in Writing II courses so that each TA is responsible for only one 20-student section and can thus provide students with intensive writing instruction. The TAs are trained to provide writing assistance and mentoring through a TA training program coordinate.

- **Administrative Costs (S&E).** Includes administrative stipends and a small budget for "supplies and expenses."

Writing II Assessment

The Writing II Implementation Committee has always recognized the importance of assessing the Writing II initiative for the sake of both improving the instruction that students receive in this area and providing information to scholars and teachers of writing pedagogy. The committee has found, however, that the assessment of writing instruction is extraordinarily difficult and complex, partly because each sample of writing is unique and each reader brings different criteria to bear on it. Evaluation strategies that involve the creation of portfolios of student written work in different Writing II courses, while promising, are expensive and difficult to coordinate. Consequently, aside from the standard Evaluation of Course Instruction surveys that are administered in all courses at UCLA, the committee has made little headway in this area.

SECTION THREE
WRITING II IN THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Overview

This section addresses the effort to develop and teach Writing II courses in the Humanities and Social Sciences. It looks at the number and distribution of Writing II courses in these subject areas and the training developed to prepare their instructors. This section also attempts to provide the reader with some sense of the overall experience of the students, GSIs, and faculty who are participating in the Writing II course offerings of the Humanities and Social Sciences Divisions.

The findings in this section are based in part on the April 2004 report of Dr. Leigh Harris, Writing Programs GSI Coordinator for non-cluster Writing II courses, on her training and mentoring program for graduate students and faculty teaching in the Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II classes from Fall Quarter 2002 through Spring Quarter 2004 (See **Appendix D**). This report details Dr. Harris' efforts to assist new and continuing GSIs in a wide range of Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II courses with the challenges of planning sections, preparing assignments, revising papers, and evaluating student work. Her report also details her collaboration with new and continuing Writing II faculty to ensure the ongoing quality of writing instruction in their courses; and it closes with her reflections on some of the challenges that she has experienced in her efforts to implement Writing II goals at the course level.

This section also includes data from the Evaluation of Course Instruction forms that were distributed to students in the various Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II courses offered in Fall Quarter 2003. In an effort to get some sense of the student experience in these classes, their instructors were asked to append three additional questions to the standard faculty and GSI Evaluation of Course Instruction forms. These questions were formulated by Ross Shideler, M. Gregory Kendrick, Judith Lacertosa, Leigh Harris, and Karen Jarsky, and were intended to solicit from students the extent to which they felt their courses had achieved certain Writing II aims. The three questions were as follows:

To what extent do you feel that:

- You received adequate feedback on your written work?
- The written assignments helped you better understand the course subject matter?
- Your writing skills improved as a result of this course?

Mean and median statistical summaries of the student responses to these questions were provided to the members of the Writing II report workgroup by the Office of Instructional Development.

In addition to this student data, this section also includes information collected during the fall and winter quarters of 2003-04 from three focus groups engaged in the teaching of Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II courses. One of these focus groups was comprised of six Writing II GSIs who had participated in Dr. Harris' training and mentoring program. The second group included nine faculty members teaching Writing II courses who had also collaborated with Dr. Harris. The third focus group was comprised of GSIs teaching Writing II courses that do not participate in the Writing Programs TA Training and Mentoring for Writing II, i.e., Comparative Literature, English, Philosophy, and Writing Programs. The participants in all three of these groups were asked about the following issues (a complete Discussion Guide is included in **Appendix E**):

- Their experiences in teaching a Writing II course.
- Their evaluation of the Writing II guidelines and the challenges that they faced implementing them in their courses.
- Their efforts to integrate writing instruction with the subject matter of the course;
- Their evaluation of GSI Writing II training.

- Their overall judgment of the Writing II experience, as well as recommendations for the future of the program.

The focus groups were audio-taped and transcribed. Following transcription, the interviewers' read and re-read the transcripts and prepared summary overviews of key themes that emerged from the focus group sessions. Selected quotes by unidentified focus group participants were included in the summaries to illustrate the different themes. Given the small sample interviewed in these focus groups, the reader is strongly cautioned against generalizing these differences to the general population of Writing II instructors.

Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II Courses, Student Enrollment and Evaluation

As of AY 2003-04, 41 quarter-long courses and 10 freshman clusters have been approved for Writing II credit. Among the quarter-long offerings, all but two—Honors 45W *Writing About Life Sciences* and Life Science 2W *Cells, Tissues, and Organs*—are Humanities and Social Sciences courses. Thirty-six of the remaining 39 quarter-long courses address humanities-centered subjects and are offered by the Humanities Division and the College Honors Program, while the remaining three deal with historical subjects and methodologies and are offered by the College's Social Sciences Division.

Humanities Writing II courses are offered by the departments of Applied Linguistics, Classics, Comparative Literature, Asian Languages and Cultures (formerly East Asian Languages and Cultures), English, French and Francophone Studies, Germanic Languages, Honors, Musicology, Philosophy, the Scandinavian Section, and Slavic Languages and Literatures. The three Social Sciences Writing II courses are offered by Asian American Studies and the History Department. UCLA's Writing Programs also offers an Academic Writing 100W course. For the course numbers and titles of these Writing II offerings see **Appendix C**.

Given the fact that freshman clusters were not approved for Writing II credit during the initial years of the College's expanded writing requirement, it can be safely assumed that the overwhelming majority of the 4,448 students who satisfied Writing II during Academic Years 2000-01 and 2001-02 were enrolled in one of the aforementioned Humanities and Social Sciences courses. Of the 4,887 students enrolled in Writing II courses in 2002-03, 3,690 were accommodated in one of the College's Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II offerings, while the remaining 1197 satisfied their requirement by completing one of the College's clusters. As anticipated by the General Education Writing Committee, Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II courses have indeed been the principal vehicles through which the College's students have satisfied their Writing II requirement.

Evaluation of the quality of instruction that students are receiving in Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II courses has been limited to the university's standard Office of Instructional Development (OID) Evaluation of Instruction Program survey. These surveys have been administered in all Writing II approved courses over the last six years by the departments and programs offering the classes. Because course evaluations are traditionally sent to the department of the faculty instructor, Writing Programs and consequently, the Implementation Committee, have not received copies of these surveys and therefore lacked the ability to perform a comprehensive review of the survey results.

Other than this standard OID survey, no other systematic attempt has been undertaken to assess the student experience in the Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II courses. Additionally, the standard evaluation surveys are gauged to register student attitudes towards the instructors of these courses, they do not address the degree to which these classes are achieving the instructional aims specified by both the College FEC and the Implementation Committee. Specifically, they do not actually ask students if these courses are providing them with adequate feedback on their written work, furthering their understanding of different disciplinary rhetorical modes, or improving their overall writing skills.

In an effort to get some sense of how effective Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II courses have been in achieving these instructional aims, the Writing II report workgroup asked the Fall 2003 instructors

in these courses to append three non-standard questions to their end-of-term Evaluation of Instruction surveys. These were:

To what extent do you feel that:

- You received adequate feedback on your written work?
- The written assignments helped you better understand the course subject matter?
- Your writing skills improved as a result of this course?

Due to the lateness of this request (it was made literally at the end of the fall quarter), only 13 of the Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II courses were able to solicit student responses to the these questions. Courses with sections receiving these questions: English Composition 100W, Asian American 10W; English 4W (and English 4HW); Comparative Literature 2AW; Comparative Literature 2CW; and Scandinavian 50W. Both the mean and median responses of the 492 students enrolled in these courses to the three questions were overwhelmingly positive, ranging between 7 and 8 which are in the high end of the standard survey numbers (1 being lowest and 9 highest).

On the basis of this decidedly limited and ad hoc survey, it would appear that for a great many UCLA undergraduates Writing II courses in the Humanities and Social Sciences do provide adequate feedback on student written work, strengthen student understanding of different disciplinary discourses, and improve student writing skills. This said, it is obvious that a more systematic assessment of the student experience in these courses is needed. At the very least, the Committee believes that the standard evaluation of course instruction survey forms that are administered in these courses each quarter should include the non-standard questions suggested by the Writing II report workgroup.

Writing II GSI Training and Mentoring and Faculty Consultation

The original guidelines adopted by the Writing II Implementation Committee require that graduate student assistants who are teaching in Writing II courses must receive training in writing instruction. Further, this training should be provided through collaborative efforts between the departments offering the Writing II courses and instructors associated with Writing Programs. With regard to the faculty teaching these courses, the committee's guidelines also envisioned some kind of arrangement wherein Writing Programs instructors would lend support to Writing II faculty with seminars on writing instruction or through a process of regular consultation.

Writing Programs Administered Training and Mentoring

In the case of Writing II courses in the Humanities and the Social Sciences, GSI training and faculty consultation is not addressed in a uniform manner. GSIs and faculty teaching Writing II courses in Applied Linguistics, Asian Languages and Cultures, French and Francophone Studies, Germanic Languages, Musicology, Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, the Scandinavian Section, Slavic Languages and Literatures, Asian American Studies, and History participate in a training and mentoring program that is coordinated by Dr. Leigh Harris of Writing Programs. In this program, Dr. Harris provides eleven hours of writing instruction and consultation for new Writing II GSIs, and at least two hours of mentoring supervision for continuing Writing II GSIs, each quarter. The training for new Writing II GSIs includes nine hours of group work on such matters as section planning; pre-writing and critical reading exercises; incorporating disciplinary conventions into writing assignments; peer review; and evaluating student written work. In the two-hour mentoring portion of her program, Dr. Harris meets with each GSI for an hour during the quarter to discuss their evaluation of student writing. The other hour is spent with the GSI teams of the different Writing II courses discussing questions related to the teaching of writing in their discussion sections.

In addition to the training that she provides for GSIs in the Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II courses, Dr. Harris also meets on a regular basis with the new and continuing faculty members that are teaching these classes. In these meetings, she addresses Writing II expectations and tries to help faculty

achieve those aims through their reading selections, writing assignments, and revision schedules. Where possible, Dr. Harris also tries to attend the faculty member's regularly scheduled GSI meetings to facilitate the development of writing assignments and essay exam questions.

In her report addressing her efforts to provide Writing II training and mentoring support for Humanities and Social Sciences GSIs and faculty (See **Appendix D**), Dr. Harris expresses overall satisfaction with the level of assistance that she has been able to provide graduate students in the program. Her experiences with faculty consultation, however, have been decidedly more mixed. While she reports that some faculty have welcomed her collaboration and worked closely with her to integrate the writing goals of their classes into both the lectures and discussion sections of their courses, others have tended to regard her as an unwelcome imposition. In this latter scenario, she indicates that her work with faculty has been largely "perfunctory" and the writing portion of the course has essentially been left to the teaching fellows to address in their discussion sections.

In the Writing II focus group that was comprised of GSIs who had worked with Dr. Harris, teaching fellows indicated that they found the training helpful. They particularly valued the mentoring sessions, which gave them an opportunity to review their instructional experience with a writing specialist. As one GSI noted:

> *You meet once again later in the quarter so you're kind of re-visiting the same issues with some practical experience.*

One problem that was mentioned, however, was the need to schedule Writing II training sessions in such a way that the information in them can be effectively integrated into course assignments and syllabi. One of the participants in the focus group addressed this in the following way:

> *I think the training was great....One of my only issues with it was that because we're on a 10 week quarter system here, and it wasn't until the second week that we finished all the training, the quarter's almost halfway over, the students have already turned in a paper or two and we're still trying to figure out what we're doing.*[*]

In the focus group comprised of faculty who have taught in the Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II courses, there was general agreement on the need for GSI training and mentoring in writing instruction, particularly in light of the fact that:

> *One of the things that we never talk about as faculty is that nobody ever taught us how to teach, and certainly nobody ever taught us how to teach writing. And it's a big problem.*

Faculty did note, however, that they had heard different responses by GSIs to the Writing II training provided by Writing Programs, with some graduate students expressing satisfaction with the experience, and others resenting it. The faculty in the group offered possible reasons for the aversion expressed by some GSIs to the training, noting that much of the grumbling in this area came from continuing Writing II GSIs and those who spent extra hours with faculty each week addressing the writing assignments in their classes. Faculty also concurred with sentiments from the GSI focus group that the Writing II training should probably start earlier so as to give graduate students more time to integrate the aims and guidelines of the program into their discussion sections.

With regard to the question of how faculty could be better assisted in designing and teaching Writing II courses, there was a consensus in the group about the desirability of bringing new Writing II faculty together with faculty who had previously taught Writing II courses. Some of the faculty remarks on this point were as follows:

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[*]Dr. Cynthia Merrill, Coordinator of Writing II TA Training from 1999-2002, initially held the training prior to the beginning of the academic year. However, graduate students undergoing these sessions indicated that they felt the training was more effective if it was done in tandem with their teaching.

I think that one of the important things for people that are putting together these courses for the first time is to come and talk to one of us that have, or a couple of us that have done it.

I would like to actually have some kinds of forum for discussion with other people to sort of figure out—to get suggestions of other ways of organizing it[a Writing II course] and things that—I just hit upon things myself, but I think some kind of dialogue with other people who are facing similar challenges would be helpful.

By and large, however, faculty were very positive in their remarks about the training and mentoring efforts of Dr. Harris and Writing Programs. Typical of these were the following:

I just think my [graduate] students have learned a lot about writing and they [Writing Programs] just contributed a lot to the whole class. I'm really happy with the contribution that Writing II has made to the whole program. So, that's a really great resource.

They're [Writing Programs] also there to mentor and help students when they need help or suggestions or to talk about things, so it's a great sort of triangle, with the professor, the TAs and the writing program. That's been my experience.

GSI Training and Mentoring Outside of Writing Programs

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, GSI and faculty training and mentoring in Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II is not uniform. Writing II courses in Comparative Literature, English, Philosophy, and Writing Programs do not participate in Dr. Harris' training and mentoring program. The reason for this is that GSIs in these departments and programs ostensibly receive extensive training in writing instruction, and their faculty see themselves as proficient in teaching the rhetorical modes of their disciplines.

In the focus group with GSIs responsible for Writing II instruction in these departments, however, there was a general lack of awareness of any requirement for explicit Writing II training (or of Writing II Course Guidelines for that matter). While several GSIs in this group did mention departmental coursework in general pedagogy, which included some elements of writing instruction, they also noted that this training was short, cursory, and could have been better.

We have a TAC, or TA training course that covers over a quarter. And during that course we talk about Writing II requirements, and we usually had a writing instructor, a person from writing programs, come in to talk about the requirements. But those classes are pretty short, and that was one day.

Well we had that in the 495A and B course. The A course is just for general teaching…The 495B right now is for the writing class. It was helpful. I felt like it could have been more helpful…if maybe there been more contact with people currently teaching the class we were going to teach…. I think that sort of feedback doesn't happen enough.

Future Directions in Writing II GSI and Faculty Training and Mentoring

On the basis of both Dr. Harris' report and the faculty/GSI focus groups, there appear to be a number of ways in which the training and mentoring of Writing II instructors in the Humanities and Social Sciences could be made more effective. These are:

- All faculty working in Writing II courses that participate in Writing Programs GSI training and mentoring should cooperate with that program's GSI Coordinator to insure that the teaching of content and writing is a unified enterprise extending into both lectures and discussion sections.

- Greater efforts should be made to organize workshops and/or forums that bring new Writing II faculty together with their colleagues who have designed and taught these courses in the past.

- GSIs in all Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II courses would benefit from training sessions that bring them together with colleagues who have already taught in these courses.

Overall GSI Experience in Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II Courses

Aside from the effectiveness of the training that they were receiving to prepare them to teach writing in their courses, Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II GSIs also addressed other aspects of the Writing II experience in their focus groups. These areas and the GSI response to them were as follows:

Blending of Content and Writing Instruction

There was a sense among the GSIs that the writing instruction and the course content do not always blend together very well in their courses. Indeed, the GSIs were unclear about how integrated these two aspects of the course—writing and content—were supposed to be. GSIs attributed the confusion in this area to their faculty supervisors who appear more interested in the content they are covering in their courses than to the student writing assignments. Some of the GSIs suggested that the faculty might address this problem by paring down their lecture material and allowing more time in the discussion sections to cover the writing curriculum. Others also noted the importance of faculty addressing the ways in which the writing and the course content are integrated in their lectures.

Whatever the appropriate balance between content and writing, however, all of the GSIs noted that with course content <u>and</u> writing, there was a lot to cover in their sections. Some typical remarks about this were as follows:

> *I mean you're covering Soviet civilization, i.e., history, politics, literature, arts, and you know, the students kind of need both a writing section and a discussion section for the content. And there's this tension that you have because you're actually becoming responsible for both.*

> *Discussion section seems to just fly by. So, to cover all the material from the course and then to cover some writing stuff is kind of overwhelming sometimes.*

Course Assignments and the Writing II Guidelines

GSIs expressed frustration that the writing assignments created by their faculty did not always follow the guidelines set out in their Writing Programs training.

> *I don't know what type of training the faculty is given, but it was kind of frustrating that we went through this writing seminar and we became familiar with what makes a good prompt or what to avoid, how to direct students, how to kind of talk about writing, and it seemed like the faculty had not received the same information. So it was kind of like we were not being supported by them.*

> *Our prompts this quarter have been exactly like the examples of bad prompts.*

> *Another suggestion might be, at a minimum that the writing assignments should be run by somebody like Leigh Harris.*

The GSIs in the focus group agreed that 20 pages of writing was manageable over the course of a quarter, particularly if it was administered in the form of three 3 to 4 page papers that were revised. Ultimately, the GSIs were of the opinion that it was the feedback and re-write process, rather than the amount of pages written, that was of greatest value for their students. As one of the participants noted:

> *So I think perhaps reducing the page limit and having less pressure for doing so many different assignments might be useful for them. Because they get a lot out of the re-write. And it's something that makes the class special and worthwhile for them.*

Reflections on Student Abilities and Improvement

The GSI focus groups felt strongly that the Writing II experience helped their students improve their writing and also learn the content of the course better; if for no other reason than the fact that they had to do the reading to do the papers.

> *They know more because they are so freaked out about the papers that they're always doing the readings and on-time. So you have these discussion sections with students that have all read the book and all have something to say. It's really kind of amazing. I mean, that's kind of a bonus of having all these constant assignments is that it really keeps them on their toes.*

There was great concern among these GSIs, however, for students whose writing skills were not up to the demands of the course. Not only were these students often overwhelmed by the requirements of the course, but working with them consumed an enormous amount of GSI time and energy. GSIs also expressed confusion with regard to how they were supposed to handle students whose writing was less than adequate to the expectations of a Writing II class. The following remarks underscore this concern:

> *The weakest students are generally not good writers. They're having trouble getting through the readings, they're having trouble articulating their ideas in general, they don't know how to talk about ideas. They're not getting it. I think they're just kind of out there.*

> *I certainly enjoy grading the students' papers and helping them through it and that sort of thing, but when people have intractable problems; I just don't know quite how to go about solving them other than to say "Go to the writing center."*

Overall Faculty Experience in Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II Courses

The faculty focus group was also asked to address the same areas as those addressed by the GSIs in their groups. Their reactions were as follows:

Blending of Content and Writing Instruction

Faculty found the integration of Writing II components with the subject matter of their courses to be terribly challenging. Typical of their comments on this subject were the following:

> *To me the greatest difficulty of this course is integrating the writing component with the intellectual component. And that has been something that I have struggled with ever since I began.*

> *For us, I feel one of the issues is they can't write their first paper until they've completed a certain amount of reading....Then we have the other assignments week after week after week. And then it's just boom, boom, boom. And so they need...a certain amount of foundation in the content before they can start writing, and that pushes everything back a bit.*

> *My primary difficulty I think is---how to tie the current reading to the writing, which is always sort of after the reading and then we've gone on to something else.*

The faculty members in the group also agreed that the ideal situation is for course content and writing to be covered in both the lecture and discussion sections of their courses. However, because the burden of writing instruction falls on the shoulders of their GSIs, faculty felt that little content is actually covered in the discussion sections, which, in turn, increases pressure on them to address the subject matter of the course in their lectures. One faculty member addressed this quite clearly in the following remark:

> *My TAs spend pretty much all their time teaching writing and no time doing discussion. So the content of the course tends to, I wouldn't say it disappears, but—and I, in principle, don't talk*

about writing in lecture because I'm trying to talk about content. The students do a lot of reading, but the kind of discussion which they need to come to grips with it, they're not getting it in the writing.

Course Assignments and Writing II Guidelines

With regard to Writing II assignments in their courses, faculty expressed a strong desire to see less emphasis in the guidelines on quantity (at least 20 pages of writing) and more on the need for revision of student written work. Typical of this sentiment are the following comments:

Twenty pages rewritten is too much writing....And our TAs all agree....So I would say in my experience I would like to, if it were possible, to go down to something like fifteen pages.

I think the problem is structure, the way I have it now anyway is ...to write a first draft, it gets revised by the suggestions of the TA and then they revise it. They should do that twice.

There's no time because of the way the quarter is set up....What you need is fewer pages done over more.

Reflections on Student Abilities and Improvement

As with their GSIs, faculty were very concerned about the substantial variation in writing abilities among their students, with some lacking basic composition and English skills. Aside from wondering how these students managed to make it into a Writing II class, faculty were really at a loss as to how to help students with serious writing deficiencies.

On the whole, however, faculty were enthusiastic about their Writing II courses and believe that they are having a substantial impact on student writing skills. Speaking to this point were the following remarks:

If you're asking what I think the students ultimately get out of it, I would say in particular the students have a better sense of structure of an essay. Obviously it's not perfect, but they really do seem in general to me to have a much more sophisticated understanding of that than they had before.

I think it encourages the drafting process, because I know when it was just me teaching it and I had basically the same assignments, unless students came to me and asked for extra help, I didn't have the time to take them through the drafting process.... So I feel having TAs has been a tremendous help for me in terms of them doing the work of the process part of writing that I didn't have time for.

I want to say that I have taught this same course as a non-writing class and as a writing class, and it's interesting to me that I prefer the writing class....I enjoy it more and the students get more out of it....First of all, because they have to write a paper every week, they are engaged with the material more fully because they make it their own on a continuing basis.

I also think in general they're not afraid of writing, you know, as they are when they come in and they don't hate it like they do.

Indeed, as a result of their experiences with Writing II, the faculty expressed strong support for increased funding and administrative support for the program.

Issues and Concerns in Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II Instruction

The focus groups with Writing II Humanities and Social Sciences faculty and GSIs highlighted a number of areas of concern that the Implementation Committee may wish to address in the future. These are:

- The need for closer collaboration between faculty and GSIs in the teaching of content and writing instruction in Writing II courses. In her report (See **Appendix D**), Dr. Harris recommends noting this more strongly in the official *Guidelines and Recommendations for Writing II Courses* by inserting a statement to the effect that "both lectures and discussions should address rhetorical topics and writing as well as the assigned reading."

- Reducing the number of recommended pages of writing over the course of a quarter in order to give students more opportunities to revise their written work.

- Providing faculty and GSIs with options for helping students that have writing deficiencies.

SECTION FOUR
WRITING II IN THE NATURAL SCIENCES

Overview

The section addresses the College's efforts to introduce Writing II aims and practices into natural science courses, specifically those in the Life Sciences Core. It is largely based on a report by Dr. Cheryl Kerfeld (See **Appendix F**), an instructor in the Life Sciences division, which chronicles her efforts to integrate Writing II aims and practices into the Life Sciences Core, as well as a Honors Collegium life science-centered course.

Life Sciences 2W

Life Sciences 2W (LS2W) was developed by Dr. Cheryl Kerfeld during AY 1999-00 and offered for the first time during the Spring Quarter of that year. A writing intensive version of the *Cells, Tissues and Organs* core course in Life Sciences, it featured a twice weekly lecture and a number of discussion sections/labs. In her lectures, Dr. Kerfeld integrated writing instruction into the life sciences content of the course by continually drawing analogies between writing and biological organization. Dr. Kerfeld also required her students to draft, revise and write a research report on a metabolism laboratory experiment, and complete a number of web-based writing practice assignments involving work with scientific verbs, nouns, adjectives, and analysis of the principles for organizing the content of scientific manuscripts.

Supervision of student writing instruction in LS2W was largely handled by teams of GSIs in the discussion/laboratory sections of the course. These teams were comprised of a GSI recruited from the north campus departments of Applied Linguistics and History, and a graduate student from one of the Life Sciences disciplines. The north campus GSIs were largely responsible for the grading of the research papers and other discussion section writing assignments, while their colleagues from the Life Sciences attended to the preparation and supervision of student laboratory experiments.

Student evaluations for LS2W were largely positive and the course was offered a second time in Spring 2001. This second offering of the course proved more problematic than its predecessor. A change by the Life Sciences core in the sequence of laboratory experiments wreaked havoc with the research report assignment that had been developed in the preceding year. Added to this were problems with GSIs, student anxiety about grades being dependent on mastery of course content and writing ability, and a clerical error that resulted in half of the class receiving incorrect, and relatively low grades. As a result of this experience, the third offering of the course in Winter 2002 was canceled due to insufficient enrollment.

Efforts by Dr. Kerfeld to reconfigure LS2W as a separate 2-unit course that combined the laboratory content of LS2 with writing instruction proved unsuccessful. While Life Science faculty were supportive of this approach because it brought writing into the curriculum without requiring them to address it in their lectures, the Writing II committee ultimately rejected this version of LS2W because they felt it was essentially an adjunct rather than a stand-alone course.

Dr. Kerfeld notes in her report that the prospects for future offerings of a LS2W course do not look particularly bright. Some of the reasons that she cites for this are:

- A lack of consensus among Life Sciences faculty as to how best to give their students writing instruction.
- A firm belief on the part of many Life Sciences faculty that writing instruction is exclusively the responsibility of Writing Programs and the north campus departments.
- The difficulty and expense of recruiting GSI teams from both north and south campus departments to supervise LS2W laboratories and writing instruction.

Efforts by Dr. Kerfeld to give Life Sciences students writing instruction through smaller Honors Collegium seminars have proven more successful. One such course, HC 45W *Writing About Life Sciences*, which integrates humanities and science content, has been well received by the Life Sciences students enrolled in it (see **Appendix F** for more information on this course offering).

Aside from these Honors offerings, however, there does not at this time appear to be much interest among south campus faculty in the development of Writing II courses in the natural sciences. A more likely candidate for this kind of course development might lie in the science-centered cluster courses, which are addressed in the next section.

SECTION FIVE
WRITING II IN THE FRESHMAN CLUSTERS

Overview

This section addresses the effort to integrate Writing II aims and practices into the Freshman Cluster Program from 2002 to the present. It addresses the rationale for allowing students to satisfy their Writing II requirement through clusters, and the expectations of the Writing II Implementation Committee regarding the written work in these courses. This section also examines the cluster GSI Writing II training program that has been developed with Writing Programs over the last two years, and it provides the reader with some limited assessment information regarding the overall Writing II experience of the students, GSIs, and faculty working in these courses.

The findings in this section are based in part on an April 2004 report of Drs. Rachel Fretz and Susan Griffin of Writing Programs on their training and mentoring program for graduate students and faculty teaching in the clusters from Fall Quarter 2002 through Spring Quarter 2004 (See **Appendix G**). This report details Drs. Fretz and Griffin's efforts to assist cluster GSIs with the challenges of preparing writing assignments, revising papers, and evaluating student written work. Their report also details their collaboration with new and continuing Writing II faculty to ensure the ongoing quality of writing instruction in their courses. It closes with their reflections on some of the challenges that they have experienced in their efforts to implement Writing II goals in the Freshman Cluster Program.

This section also includes data from the Evaluation of Course Instruction forms that were distributed to cluster students at the end of Fall Quarter 2003. In an effort to get some sense of the student experience in these classes, cluster coordinators were asked to append three additional questions to the standard faculty Evaluation of Course Instruction forms for their courses.

In addition to this student data, this section also includes information collected during the fall and winter quarters of 2003-04 from two focus groups engaged in cluster teaching. One of these focus groups was comprised of five GSIs who had participated in the Writing Programs freshman cluster Writing II training and mentoring program. The second group included four faculty cluster coordinators who had collaborated with Dr. Griffin and Dr. Fretz over the last two years on Writing II matters. The participants in both of these groups were asked about the following issues (a complete Discussion Guide is included in **Appendix E**):

- Their experiences in teaching a Writing II course;
- Their evaluation of the Writing II guidelines and the challenges that they faced implementing them in their courses;
- Their efforts to integrate writing instruction with the subject matter of their course;
- Their evaluation of GSI Writing II training; and
- Their overall judgment of the Writing II experience, as well as recommendations for the future of the program.

The focus groups were audio-taped and transcribed. Following transcription, the interviewers read and re-read the transcripts and prepared summary overviews of key themes that emerged from the focus group sessions. Selected quotes by unidentified focus group participants were included in the summaries to illustrate the different themes. Given the small sample interviewed in these focus groups, the reader is strongly cautioned against generalizing these differences to the general population of Writing II cluster instructors.

Writing II in the Freshman Cluster Courses: Student Enrollment and Evaluation Fall 2002-Present

In the two years since clusters were designated for Writing II credit, 2532 freshmen will have satisfied their second writing requirement by completing a cluster course. Of these students, 1197 satisfied their Writing II requirement in the eight clusters offered during the 2002-03 AY. An additional 1335 cluster freshmen will receive Writing II credit in 2003-04, following their completion of the spring cluster seminars that are being offered by this year's ten clusters.

The student experience in the cluster program has been the focus of a five-year assessment effort stretching from 1999 to 2003. Unfortunately, clusters were not approved for Writing II credit until the final year of this period and the standard assessment instruments did not include questions pertaining to Writing II aims and instructional methods. Consequently, we do not have any evaluation information with regard to whether or not these courses are providing students with adequate feedback on their written work, furthering their understanding of different disciplinary rhetorical modes, or improving their overall writing skills.

In an effort to get some sense of how effective cluster courses have been in achieving these instructional aims, the Writing II report workgroup asked the Fall 2003 instructors in these courses to append three nonstandard questions to their end-of-term Evaluation of Instruction surveys. These questions were formulated by Ross Shideler, M. Gregory Kendrick, Judith Lacertosa, Leigh Harris, and Karen Jarsky, and were intended to solicit from cluster students the extent to which they felt their courses had achieved certain Writing II aims. The three questions were as follows:

To What Extent Do You Feel That:

- You received adequate feedback on your written work?
- The written assignments helped you better understand the course subject matter?
- Your writing skills improved as a result of this course?

Despite the lateness of this request (it was made literally at the end of the fall quarter), all ten of the clusters were able to solicit student responses to the abovementioned questions. The ten cluster courses enrolled a total of 1494 students

Both the mean and median responses of the 1494 students enrolled in these courses to the three questions were largely positive. In all of the clusters, student scores were in the 7 or higher range (1 being lowest and 9 highest) with regard to the first two questions, i.e., receiving adequate feedback on written work and writing assignments contributing to a better understanding of course content. On the third question relating to the improvement of student writing skills, scores ranged from 5 (medium) to 6 (medium high). Given the fact that the writing experience in these courses extends across the entire year, these numbers do not provide a complete picture of student attitudes regarding Writing II in the clusters.

On the basis of this decidedly limited and ad hoc survey, it would appear that even after only one quarter cluster freshmen believe they are getting adequate feedback on their written work, learning more about the subject matter of their clusters from their written assignments, and improving their writing skills. This said, it is obvious that a more systematic assessment of the student experience in the clusters is needed. At the very least, the Committee believes that the standard evaluation of course instruction survey forms that are administered in the clusters each quarter should include the non-standard questions suggested by the Writing II report workgroup.

Writing II GSI Training and Mentoring and Faculty Consultation in the Clusters

The Writing II Implementation Committee approved the freshman clusters for Writing II credit with the stipulation that graduate student instructors assigned to these courses would undergo 11 hours of mandatory prescribed training in writing instruction. This training was to be provided by Writing

Programs consultants and include a series of intensive workshops, meetings with the cluster instructional teams to discuss course writing assignments, and individual mentoring sessions. As envisioned in the proposal put forward by the Freshman Cluster Program, this required training would be achieved in the following manner:

- *A Cluster GSI Orientation Writing II Workshop during the Spring Quarter (3 hours)*
- *A Cluster Kick-Off Luncheon Training Workshop (2 hours)*
- *A Fall Quarter Cluster Instructional Team Writing Session (2 hours)*
- *A Winter Quarter Cluster Instructional Team Writing Session (1 hour)*
- *A Seminar Development Writing Workshop (2 hours)*
- *Individual GSI Consultation (1 hour)*

Over the last two years (2002-03 and 2003-04), Drs. Rachel Fretz and Susan Griffin, Lecturers in Writing Programs, have worked closely with the Freshman Cluster Program administrative team to implement the cluster GSI training program that was adopted by the Implementation Committee. Towards that end, they have prepared and conducted as a team three workshops for the cluster GSIs during the spring, fall and winter quarters of each academic year. They also split the clusters into two groups for team meetings and individual consultations with Dr. Fretz working with the more humanities-oriented cluster courses and Dr. Griffin taking those that were more science-oriented (for a more specific breakdown, see **Appendix G**).

As detailed in their report, Drs. Fretz and Griffin use their workshops to introduce cluster GSIs to the various challenges that are attendant on teaching freshman students the conventions of academic writing. During the spring and fall workshops, they use actual cluster assignments to get GSIs to think about pre-writing and critical reading exercises, ways of incorporating disciplinary conventions into student written work, peer review, and the evaluation of student writing. In the winter, they work with the GSIs to help them develop research assignments and final paper projects for their spring seminars.

Drs. Fretz and Griffin's report also details the particulars of their consultation work with the different cluster instructional teams. This involves a number of meetings throughout the fall and winter quarters where they collaborate with the faculty and GSIs of each course. The purpose of these meetings is to address particular writing issues such as refining assignments for greater clarity, creating in-process writing activities, and coaching the type of feedback GSIs give to students for each stage of their written work. They note that these team sessions are most effective when the coordinator of a cluster has worked closely with them, updating them on course goals and assignments, and scheduling instructional team writing sessions in a timely manner. This kind of collaboration was particularly effective in the *Interracial Dynamics* and *Biotechnology and Society* clusters, where Drs. Fretz and Griffin were invited to meet with cluster faculty and GSIs on a regular, sometimes weekly, basis. While they acknowledge that such close collaboration is not easily replicated with all clusters because of time constraints, they nonetheless stress the critical importance of engaging faculty teaching team members in discussions about writing instruction throughout the year. They also recommended ongoing interaction between Writing Programs consultants and cluster instructional teams to ensure that both parties develop a deeper understanding of Writing II aims and methods, an understanding which they believe will lead to more "innovative and excellent instruction for students."

Finally, Drs. Fretz and Griffin report that the most rewarding aspect of their consulting work with the clusters has been the individual consultations that they conduct with GSIs during the winter quarter. In these hour-long consultation sessions, they report that the GSIs have all used the allotted time to discuss in detail the writing assignments that they have planned for their spring seminars. They have found these sessions productive, and they see in them ample evidence of the success of the cluster training program in making GSIs aware of good writing pedagogy. Further, they believe that the writing materials developed in these seminars will serve as good examples of how Writing II can be incorporated into the cluster model.

The GSIs who participated in the focus group on Writing II in the clusters indicated that they found the training provided by Drs. Fretz and Griffin to be very helpful, and they also expressed appreciation for the opportunity to work with writing specialists throughout the year.   As one noted:

> *Something I found really helpful is that they actually led us through an exercise about how to grade papers and that there are differences between editing a paper and giving helpful commentary on the structure of the paper.*

The GSIs also felt that the team sessions with the consultants were also quite helpful, particularly when they provided specific exercises that they could use in the teaching of their writing assignments. One GSI commented:

> *Susan's our writing liaison person and she came in and met with us and gave us a really neat list of different exercises to try. For example, having them read a paragraph…three times… in the first paragraph you have to describe the paragraph not using any of the same language or words. And then you have to do it again not using any words in the first two and then again, and getting them to think about it. These are exercises that I'll be using for next quarter. But it was really difficult to figure out how to incorporate some of these things without having concrete exercises to refer to in the first quarter.*

One point on which there was a consensus among the GSIs was that they would like the consultants to provide them with more specific exercises and prompts that actually tell them what to cover vis-à-vis writing each week. Typical of this sentiment were the following remarks:

> *We had a couple of meetings with Rachel Fretz where she was trying to inspire us to come up with our own exercises for teaching, and what would be so nice would be if she just gave us a list of exercises—"try this" you know in a very simple format so we could just go to the list and "Okay, this week I'll do this" for our in-class exercise, rather than trying to spend an hour and a half of my own time coming up with something. That's very hard, especially since it's not my interest.*
>
> *I'm one that would sacrifice more time to have more training, but I think for me it was, the thing I didn't have enough time for was the little steps along the way, the little prep things along the way, like…"let's do this one step at a time."*
>
> *That list of exercises would be great because, as you said, we're not composition teachers, we don't have time to think about how can I effectively incorporate this. Unless it's obvious to me like, "Oh, we're talking about thesis statements, let's just have them talk about the thesis statements in the articles this week."*
>
> *And with our workload. I even think, "are you kidding, read a list?" That's 10 minutes!*

The cluster faculty focus group expressed strong support and positive comments for the Writing Programs consultants. Three of the four members of this group who had worked closely with Susan Griffin made a point of noting her contributions to their GSIs and in ensuring the success of Writing II in their clusters.

> *One thing about having the Writing II as part of the course, really has been the incredible help of Sue Griffith…. She has given us ideas on how to handle writing assignments, and…to reduce the burden for the TAs. They shouldn't have to necessarily grade every assignment. We have them sometimes exchange papers, critique each other. So she gave us all kinds of creative ideas to include more writing but not with increasing the burden on the TAs. So that, I think, having us be part of the Writing II program with the faculty assistance that we're getting has been really fantastic!*

Oh, definitely having Susan as an advisor has been a real plus. As I said, we were doing writing before, but suggestions–she's taught so many writing workshops, and she has a wealth of experience, you know, how to vary it, make it more exciting. Different kinds of assignments, different ways of grading. So that the TAs didn't have to…necessarily you know, worry about every assignment….So ways of really structuring the writing in a more organized way, a more user friendly way. It didn't really affect anything that we did in terms of teaching and themes and all that. But it really made it a more meaningful experience to have the writing, you know, come from a person who has so much experience.

Overall GSI Experience with Writing II in the Clusters

In addition to discussing the effectiveness of their Writing II training, cluster GSIs also addressed other aspects of the Writing II experience in their focus group. The following addresses these areas of discussion:

Blending of Content and Writing Instruction

As with the GSIs in the Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II courses, cluster GSIs did not feel that the writing curriculum and the course content always blended together very smoothly. Indeed, in the cluster GSI focus group there was a sense that the writing instruction was something of an "add on" and that the focus of their courses was definitely more on course content. Some of their remarks on this issue were as follows:

It seems like an add-on to me. I teach a section, I teach the theater, and then I have to separate a little bit and suddenly teach a writing course for 35 minutes.

I've been seeing it [writing instruction and content] too much as separate things. I think I've been having a hard time getting them to work together.

The cluster GSIs attributed some of the confusion in this area to the fact that their students are largely ignorant of the subject matter of their courses, and are also unfamiliar with interdisciplinary approaches to the study of their cluster topics. Consequently, the GSIs have to focus a considerable amount of their time in discussion sections on issues of content. As one GSI noted:

The content is tough for them [the students]. A lot of things they're hearing for the first time and our [cluster]…has inputs from so many different disciplines, and it goes over so many different issues and so many different perspectives in just one quarter. It becomes very difficult for them.

The material that they have, as you were pointing out, is so difficult, in one two-hour session to teach the Oresteia *from beginning to end and provide the background of Greek theater and teach Writing II just seems ridiculous, but that's what I had to do.*

GSIs also noted that another factor making it difficult to achieve a balance between content and writing instruction in the clusters is the fact that writing is not the principal focus of their faculty colleagues. In part, this is due to the complexity of these courses and the efforts of the faculty to address a wide range of pedagogical and logistical issues during the course of a quarter. As one GSI pointed out:

It [writing] is pretty absent from our discussions with the faculty in our regular weekly meeting. But our cluster's so complicated because we're going to performances all over the city and arranging for buses and waivers and there's so much stuff to discuss in the meeting with regard to that , that we really don't have a lot of time to talk about writing. I mean, they're [the faculty] both concerned about the writing, but that's not first and foremost on their minds.

There was also a sense among the GSIs that cluster faculty were more focused on issues of content rather than writing because the vast majority of them have never taught composition courses. While this was understandable, the GSIs still felt that faculty should make more effort to address writing in their lectures.

Professors I think could take a little more of the load here in terms of structuring the class such that maybe a lecture or two is about "here's how we expect a paper to look for this class." It doesn't have to be a full lecture.

Course Assignments and Writing II Guidelines

Unlike their colleagues in the Humanities and Social Sciences Writing II classes, cluster GSIs were largely satisfied with the writing assignments in their courses. To a large degree this was because many of these individuals taught with faculty teams that gave them considerable authority over the development, implementation, and grading of writing instruction in their discussion sections. Consequently, it was easier for these GSIs to follow the guidelines set out in their Writing Programs training.

It should be noted, however, that some of the GSIs in the focus group did work in clusters where faculty took a more hands-on approach to the development and teaching of writing. These GSIs also expressed satisfaction with their cluster writing assignments, and they attributed their positive experience in this area to the fact that their cluster faculty had developed well-thought out lesson plans for the Writing II component of their courses. As one of these GSIs noted:

And so you know it was laid out for us, week one, what is evidence, week two, what's a thesis, week three—you know. One week we had a peer review edit workshop. So it was kind of laid out for us. We didn't have to think about "How can I incorporate Writing II" because it was already there.

This idea of having a tightly structured cluster Writing II component with a clearly delineated set of weekly writing exercises and prompts was very well received by all of the cluster GSIs in the focus group. There was a feeling that this would not only help considerably with course workload, but also assist those GSIs who neither hale from literary disciplines nor plan to teach composition. The consensus on this was summed up in the following remark:

I think the main point that's emerged is...having a very clear agenda from week to week with specific suggestions—not reams of articles to read, but say "This week, try this." And it's something you can read in five minutes to say "Okay, I"ll do that in class today and work on that particular problem." But if it's just kind of helter skelter and addressing whatever you feel like addressing and I have to come up with some sort of exercise, then I have to sit and think for half an hour, 40 minutes, "how will I solve this problem?" Whereas there's probably an exercise that's already been developed by somebody, so if they just gave it to me it would just take two minutes for me to figure it out. It would be better.

The GSIs in the cluster focus group also agreed that the required 20 pages of writing was manageable, particularly over the course of a year. They also agreed with their colleagues in non-cluster Writing II courses that the feedback and re-write process was extremely valuable for their students.

Reflections on Student Abilities and Improvement

Cluster GSIs felt strongly that the Writing II experience helped their students improve their writing, but were less convinced that it contributed to their comprehension of course content. Two comments that were typical on this score were the following:

I think it [Writing II] has helped them—some of them learned to read better and I think also write better. So it has helped them, but what I'm saying is that it can help them much more.

I would keep it, but...I don't think it helped them understand the material better. I think there are other things we did to help them try to get through that a little better.

Like their colleagues in other courses, cluster GSIs were greatly concerned about students whose writing skills were not up to the demands of the course. They agreed that working with these students consumed

considerable time and energy, and they were equally confused about how they were supposed to handle students whose writing was less than adequate to the expectations of a Writing II course. The following remarks underscore this concern:

> *I had some wonderful students who wrote very well, those are easy to grade. But a C or a D student, after you go through the whole thing and really explain why you have a D, was very time consuming. And of course some of these students are the ones who just don't come in and see me. Those students are a problem.*

> *You know what I would love to have—I have no idea how this would work administratively, but— is a blackball for Writing II. To be able to say, "Yes, this student passed the class with a B, but, hell no that Writing II requirement was nothing like adequate. Because it's true, I have students who are just that—brilliant and get the material, and yet, you know, they cannot write a sentence.*

Overall Faculty Experience with Writing II in the Clusters

The cluster faculty focus group was also asked to address the same areas as those addressed by the cluster GSIs. Their responses are summarized below:

Blending of Content and Writing Instruction

There was agreement among the faculty coordinators that clusters and Writing II were a good fit. Faculty cited two reasons for this sentiment: 1) Intensive writing was already a component in all of the clusters and the incorporation of Writing II aims and guidelines was a logical development; and 2) Writing II is intended to familiarize students with the rhetorical modes of different disciplines, an aim that meshes well with the efforts of cluster faculty to introduce their students to interdisciplinary approaches to complex topics. Typical of this sentiment were the following remarks:

> *Somewhere there's a bunch of documents that talk about the clusters, you know, when they were started and the writing and involvement of libraries and everything....So...it [the cluster program] was already doing that [writing] because it was built in the planning of the definition of what the clusters were supposed to be doing. And this was way before Writing II.*

> *I suppose the difference is making administrative changes and counting things and making sure that writing assignments...fit in with the Writing II guidelines.*

> *I feel like the clusters are a natural fit for Writing II...in the sense that you're bringing together different disciplines and the students typically need to know what's at stake in writing...within as well as across the disciplines....So I think it really is a good fit aside from the fact that we were always doing a lot of writing already and...probably could have qualified for Writing II. Every department, including the south campus, technically is supposed to be offering a Writing II course just based in their own discipline or area of study. It's the writing for that field. And I feel like the clusters are a natural fit for Writing II as well in a sense that you're bringing together different disciplines and, you know, the students...need to know what's at stake in writing within as well as across the disciplines.*

At the same time, faculty acknowledged that the greatest challenge they face with Writing II is adapting it to the interdisciplinary focus of their clusters. Faculty in these courses already face considerable challenges trying to mesh their different disciplinary languages, methods, and teaching philosophies in a way that is coherent to themselves and their students. Trying to find an interdisciplinary approach to writing assignments adds yet another level of complexity to already very complex courses. Two comments that underscore this challenge are the following:

> *With Writing II or without Writing II it's the same challenge I think. It's the interdisciplinary nature of the course. As you were saying faculty from different corners of the campus come from*

totally different backgrounds and are trying to merge approaches and pick the appropriate level of complexity to deal with.

To me the biggest challenge from the faculty side in some ways was initially getting the faculty to be brave enough to kind of just open themselves up to letting everybody have a go at whatever they were proposing to have students write about. I think it created a different dynamic when it came to generating the writing assignments than we'd otherwise have expected.
What we started thinking about were issues of methodology and vocabulary and how those things aren't the same across all the disciplines....Writing II almost forced us to put the issue on the table...What happened is other faculty at the table started saying, "I don't really get what you're trying to ask. And I'm not a freshman, or a non-major, but if I'm not getting it...."

Course Assignments and Writing II Guidelines

Cluster faculty indicated different degrees of involvement with regard to the structuring of Writing II assignments. While some faculty worked directly with each other to develop topics and ideas for writing instruction, others gave more latitude to their GSI.

We don't have faculty choosing topics. I basically go to the TAs...And then they get together. And they almost always choose to do 90% of what we did the year before, because it's so logical and progressive...we don't let the faculty meddle with it. [As faculty coordinator] I'm involved with the TAs structuring the assignments and getting them ready. But the other faculty don't get involved in it.

Major assignments that you formally ask them [students] to do and hand in, those are the things that the faculty develop with consultation from the TAs.

Faculty did not have problems with the 20-page Writing II requirement, but there was a general consensus that there needed to be more leeway in the area of revised writing. While faculty agreed with their colleagues in other courses that there needs to be more focus on writing revision and feedback, there was also concern about the burdens that this places on the cluster GSIs. Typical of this concern are the following comments:

Our first paper in the fall, we allowed for that [revision]. We had them hand in Version One. We gave them a lot of feedback based on Susan Griffin's suggestions. And then they had an opportunity to hand it back with all those changes. And that was what they got graded on. We did that for the first paper. Of course, that's a luxury that we can't afford to after that.

My sense from Writing II is one of their favorite strategies, and they advocate all the time, is conferencing after students have written something....We tried to introduce the idea at the first year of Writing II last year. And we found that the TAs couldn't handle the extra workload....And I think given the number of students that are involved in the way the course is set up...that can't work in this context.

Finally, cluster faculty expressed a desire to see more assignments aimed at getting their students engaged in the research aspect of writing. While some of the clusters have developed their writing assignments in tandem with College librarians, others are finding this difficult to achieve given the size of their classes and the logistical issues involved. Everyone agreed that there should be greater coordination between the Writing II and library literacy objectives in the cluster program.

Reflections on Student Abilities and Improvement

There was a general consensus among the faculty that Writing II did, in fact, improve their students' writing and research abilities. They also reported that their conversations with their GSIs confirmed this feeling. The following comments speak to this point:

Those TAs who did speak up, seemed to indicate that there was an improvement in the student writing by the end of the winter quarter. That they didn't see that kind of development the year before.

And the seminars report back that...by that time they've been through the fall and winter, they don't have so much of a problem with techniques, and they can take advantage of just their skills...I don't know about writing per se...but at least research skills, and paper formation skills are something they definitely get.

Cluster faculty were less concerned about disparities in student writing skills than with issues of plagiarism.

We had a big problem with plagiarism and in fact I got right here we're going to use turnitin.com this year. That's the service where your students turn it in to the web-based service and web-based service tells you whether it's original or not.....For the last three years I've had this and huge, huge gobs of my time administering, you know, disciplinary actions. And I don't want to do it anymore.

As with their colleagues in non-cluster courses, cluster faculty expressed support for Writing II and also emphasized the need for more resources to support the program.

Issues and Concerns in Freshman Cluster Writing II Instruction

The focus groups with cluster faculty and GSIs highlighted a number of areas of concern. Among them were the following:

- While cluster faculty feel that their course writing assignments and content are well integrated, their GSIs believed that cluster writing exercises could be better structured so as to more effectively teach both course subject matter and composition skills.
- Cluster GSIs also expressed strong support for tightly focused writing assignments and prompts that essentially lay out for them what they are supposed to address in their sections each week.
- Faculty would like more assistance dealing with problems of student plagiarism and GSIs would appreciate more options for helping students that have writing deficiencies.

SECTION SIX
RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants in Writing II courses, as well as various individuals involved in the administration of the College's second writing requirement, contributed to the preparation of this report and made a number of suggestions aimed at improving Writing II assessment, course guidelines, faculty engagement, GSI training, and summer session course offerings. After a careful study of the findings presented in this report, the Writing II Implementation Committee concurs that changes do need to be made in these areas and recommends the following:

Assessment

With the exception of the university's standard OID Evaluation of Instruction Program survey, no systematic attempt has been made to assess student learning outcomes in Writing II courses. Further, even the standard evaluation surveys do not address the degree to which Writing II classes are achieving the instructional aims specified by both the College FEC and the Implementation Committee. At the very least, the Writing II Implementation Committee believes that the university's standard evaluation of course instruction survey forms for Writing II classes should include the questions suggested by the Writing II report workgroup, i.e., to what extent do the students in these courses feel that:

- They received adequate feedback on their written work.
- The written assignments helped them better understand the course subject matter.
- Their writing skills were improved as a result of taking the course.

It should be noted that OID is currently working with the Freshman Cluster Program to develop a new cluster course evaluation form that will be administered in AY 2004-05. This form will specifically address writing assignments in the clusters and the degree to which students feel that they successfully met Writing II aims and practices.

Guidelines and Recommendations for Writing II Courses

The Committee concurs with a number of recommendations for revisions in the official guidelines for Writing II courses that were made by Dr. Leigh Harris in her report (See **Appendix D**). These revisions are as follows:

- In recognition of the interdisciplinary nature of many Writing II courses, the guidelines should state that the second writing requirement is intended to not only teach students to write effectively in a given discipline, but also to increase their awareness of disciplinary conventions.

- The guidelines should stress that both lectures and discussion sections need to address rhetorical topics and student writing as well as the assigned reading.

- The guidelines should be revised to allow quarter-long Writing II courses to require fewer pages of writing in favor of more opportunities for student revision of written work.

- Additional language should be drafted to better communicate the pedagogy behind Writing II.

Faculty and GSI Development, Training, and Mentoring

The Committee also concurs with a number of recommendations that emerged out of the focus groups and individual reports on Writing II training and mentoring for faculty and GSIs. Specifically, the Committee embraces the following proposals aimed at providing better support for the instructors of Writing II courses:

- To better assist faculty and GSIs in their response to and evaluation of student written work, the Committee will prepare an instructional pamphlet that can be used in both stand alone and cluster

Writing II courses. This pamphlet will provide instructors with a uniform set of revision symbols, a listing of the most common student writing problems, and a set of sample exercises and/or prompts that instructors can use in addressing those problems.

- Faculty need to cooperate closely with the Writing Programs consultants who have been assigned to train and mentor their GSIs. Specifically, they need to work with these individuals to find better ways of integrating the teaching of content and writing as a unified experience that extends into both lectures and discussion sections.

- Workshops and/or forums should be organized for the purpose of bringing new Writing II faculty and GSIs together with colleagues who have prior experience in designing and teaching writing intensive courses.

- Faculty and GSIs need to be better apprised of the different options that are available on campus for students who require assistance in dealing with writing deficiencies.

- Writing Programs should work with instructional teams in the different clusters to create tightly focused writing assignments and prompts to assist cluster GSIs with writing instruction in their weekly discussion sections.

Writing II in the Sciences

For a variety of reasons, the integration of Writing II aims and practices into existing Natural Science courses has not been successful. The Committee recommends instead that efforts be directed at developing science-centered Writing II courses in the College's Honors and Freshman Cluster programs.

Writing II in Summer Sessions

Concern was expressed that Writing II courses taught in Summer Sessions are not as rigorous as their regular-quarter counterparts. It was noted that summer Writing II GSIs and faculty do not benefit from training and/or consultation work with a Writing Programs consultant during the summer months. Further, the ability of GSIs to provide thoughtful feedback on twenty pages of prose, as well as the student's opportunity to revise those twenty pages, is difficult in a ten-week quarter and probably unworkable in a six-week summer session. At the very least, the Committee recommends that:

- Summer Session Writing II courses should be taught by faculty and GSIs who have experience teaching writing instruction.

- Summer Session GSIs should be advanced teaching fellows who have received writing instruction training and have experience teaching Writing II classes.

APPENDIX A

HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

- Interim Report of the Committee on the General Education Writing Requirement, June 20, 1997
- Final Report of the Committee on the General Education Writing Requirement, March 10, 1998
- Text of College Writing II Requirement Regulation

APPENDIX B

Writing II Implementation Committee Guidelines and Recommendations for Writing II Courses

APPENDIX C

Writing II Courses
1998-Present

APPENDIX D

Writing II Training and Mentoring Program and Faculty Consultation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, Fall Quarter through Spring Quarter 2004

Submitted by Dr. Leigh Harris, Writing Programs
Non-Cluster Writing II TA Coordinator

APPENDIX E

ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTS & INSTRUMENTS

- Writing II Evaluation
- Graduate Student Instructors
- Focus Group Discussion Guide
- Writing II Evaluation
- Faculty Focus Group Discussion Guide

APPENDIX F

Summary of Efforts to Integrate Writing II into the Life Sciences
Submitted by Dr. Cheryl Kerfeld

APPENDIX G

Writing II Consulting in the Freshman Cluster Courses, 2002-04
Submitted by Dr. Susan Griffin and Dr. Rachel Fretz
Writing II Consultants, Writing Programs

APPENDIX H

Writing II Implementation Committee Members

2000-2005