

DEVELOPING STATEMENTS OF GUIDELINES AND GOALS FOR BASIC WRITING PROGRAMS: A CLUSTER

Introduction

Statements of guidelines and goals are critical documents in the academy. They articulate formally what faculty think is essential in programs and courses and make public the objectives and reasoning behind educational plans. Such documents have various uses. They represent programs to administrators, provide a basis for training teachers, and inform students and the wider public about the nature of programs. To create a statement of guidelines and goals, faculty must engage in considered thinking and discussion and reach consensus.

Statements of guidelines and goals can confer legitimacy on basic writing by providing self-definition. Such statements both describe what happens in classrooms and prescribe what should happen. Writers of these statements confront the interesting task of identifying what differentiates basic writing from freshman composition and what is common to both courses. Constructing a statement of guidelines and goals is a challenging rhetorical task because such statements address multiple audiences and are often composed and revised by several groups; further, such statements must articulate with other courses in the first-year writing sequence and writing program definitional statements, as well as institutional mission statements.

The cluster of three articles that follows originally formed a panel, "Mission Statements and Basic Writing" presented at the Conference of College Composition and Communication convention in Chicago, Illinois, March 2002, and chaired by Karen Uehling. Designed so that readers may compare the effects of local conditions, this cluster of articles will examine statements of guidelines and goals from three diverse institutions: Chabot College, a public community college in northern California; Boise State University, a six-year western urban state university, and the University of Minnesota-General College, an alternate college program of a Midwestern urban university. Each author helped to construct the statement on his or her campus. The statement documents are included with each article, and each author describes and explains the documents as well as the process of creation. We hope to open up a dialogue on this critical process.

-- Karen S. Uehling