

# PANELISTS STATEMENTS

AC 2002: The Six

WAC

*WAC 2002:  
The Sixth National Writing Across the Curriculum Conference*

## **Panelists' Position Statements on Writing the Future:**

Sixth National Writing across the Curriculum Conference

March 7-9, 2002

Panelists addressing four critical questions about the future of writing and communication across the curriculum were invited to contribute a two-page statement supplementing their remarks for conference participants. Several chose to do so. The responses are organized according to the question the panel was asked to discuss.

### ***Thursday Plenary: Processes for Thinking about WAC's Future***

**Chris Thaiss**, Professor, George Mason University

**Carl Lovitt**, Associate Dean, Pennsylvania State University

**Julie Zeleznik**, Ph.D. Student, Iowa State University

**Carol Holder**, Professor and Past Director, California State University Institute for Teaching and Learning

**Linda Driskill**, Professor, Rice University

### ***Panel 1: What Leadership, Goals, and Policies Can Ensure That Students Communicate Well in Multicultural Environments and International Commerce?***

**Neal Lane**, University Professor, Rice University. Formerly National Science Advisor to President Clinton

**Rebecca Burnett**, University Professor, Iowa State University

**Elaine Maimon**, Campus CEO, Arizona State University West

### ***Panel 2a and 3a: What Must Be Done to Ensure That College Students Communicate Well in Their Fields?***

**Chris Anson**, Professor, North Carolina State University

**Edmund Segner**, President and Chief of Staff, EOG Resources, Inc.

**Michael Pemberton**, President, National Writing Centers Association; Georgia Southern University

**David Joliffe**, Professor, DePaul University

### ***Panels 2b and 3b: What Must Be Done to Integrate K-12 Students' Writing and Learning?***

**Wanda Bamberg**, Aldine Independent School District, Houston, TX

**Viola Garcia**, School Board Member, Aldine Independent School District, and Assistant Professor, University of Houston Downtown

### ***Panel 4: How Can Technology and Intellectual Property Provisions Enhance Writing across the Curriculum***

**Elizabeth Tebeaux**, Professor and Director of Distance Education, Texas A&M University System.

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## PANELISTS' STATEMENTS

### Thursday Plenary Panel: Processes for Thinking about WAC's Future

Chris Thaiss, Professor, George Mason University  
George Mason University

#### Starting or Restarting WAC in 2002

##### *WAC Is Always Planning Anew*

WAC and all communication across the curriculum programs go through cycles—of funding, of leadership, of changes in reporting, of growth. There are always new faculty and new students, new courses, programs, technologies, institutional initiatives. Programs always must adapt, so, in a sense, every program is starting or restarting. The process is frustrating, but energizing.

##### *Building on the Strong National Foundation*

WAC builders in 2002 have so many resources to help them, from myriad school-based websites to a large and varied body of professional books and articles, to these national conferences, to an array of WAC-relevant sessions (including the WAC special interest group) at the Conference on College Composition and Communication and other conferences, to the WAC-L discussion forum, to a small army of experienced program directors to serve as consultants. Most important, anyone starting or restarting WAC now has colleagues and often administrators who are familiar with WAC concepts and practices through their experience as students or teachers elsewhere. There will still be moments when one feels alone in the struggle, but there are many ways to get practical assistance and moral support.

##### *Building from Strength in the School*

Because of the strong and widespread national base, anyone starting a WAC initiative now already has at least some campus supporters and knowledgeable allies. Even thirty years ago, before that base was built, every school had a core of faculty across disciplines who respected the power of writing to learn and felt responsible for helping to educate students as writers. Identifying this core and encouraging their efforts through meetings or workshops, or by creating a writing committee made up of these faculty, was important in the past and is important now. These faculty not only provide evidence of the viability of practices, but will be principal change agents in disciplinary cultures. Finding ways to recognize and reward their contributions will be a key task for the program builder.

##### *Not the Expert, but the Researcher*

Most WAC initiators still come from English or writing departments, or from writing or teaching excellence centers. On the one hand, this background gives them credibility with faculty and administrators on matters of writing and teaching; on the other, it limits their perceived relevance and knowledge within disciplinary cultures. Thus, faculty may give a hearing to ideas for teaching with writing, but will resist or try to circumvent making changes that they feel are imposed by outsiders. Hence, rather than accept too readily the role of the

“expert,” the program builder needs to become a student or “researcher” of the contexts in which others teach and learn, collaborate with faculty to identify teaching and learning goals, then suggest concepts and techniques that might help meet these goals. As in all other types of professional development, the objective is to increase expertise across the community, not to keep it in a few hands. This spreading of wealth is essential not only to the vitality of the program but also to ensure continuity of leadership when the initiators move on to other projects.

#### *Build WAC as Part of Other, Funded Initiatives*

Since the first wave of federal, state, and private grants to WAC in the 1970's and early 80's, most WAC initiatives have survived or been started with funds earmarked or shared with other objectives: e.g., general education reform, new technologies, literacy for special populations, speaking across the curriculum, science education, service learning, critical thinking, statewide assessments, public school/university articulation, to name a few. These collaborations work because the most basic WAC concepts and most popular strategies accord so well with many learning goals, and the proficient use of language is central to almost all such programs. “Starting or restarting” WAC (or CAC or SWAC) in any learning setting in 2002 will almost surely mean linking with other funded or fundable projects, the names of which may take precedence in the local context (e.g., “technology across the curriculum.” Such collaborations usually make each contributor stronger.

#### *Stress Follow-through and Ongoing Assessment*

Even at the outset, WAC initiators should be looking toward long-term success—and its measurement—even if goals are modest. A proposal for a faculty workshop should include a plan and schedule for getting those teachers back together and for documenting their teaching innovations. In designing a new “WI” course, faculty should conceive how they'll assess the new techniques and have evidence for modifying the course the next time it's offered. Thinking about follow-through and assessment allow program planners to estimate realistically their costs in time and money; it also makes any project more attractive to financial and personal support. Thinking for the long term might mean that initial plans will need to be scaled back, but the sacrifice might be worth it if there can be less anxiety and more satisfaction for the participants, and if there's a more easily measurable outcome that can ensure the life of the effort.

**Carl R. Lovitt**  
Associate Dean  
Pennsylvania State University

## **A Comprehensive Plan to Ensure the Vitality of a Communication Across the Curriculum (CAC) Program**

In theory, establishing a successful CAC program should be what our colleagues in business like to call a “no brainer.” Dedicated to helping students become more effective communicators and to enhancing student learning through communication, CAC programs address two widely shared objectives in education. Educators and employers in all fields concur about the importance of improving students’ communication skills, and teachers in all disciplines increasingly espouse the active learning strategies that have long been the hallmark of CAC theory. But the pursuit of essential objectives offers no assurance that CAC programs will have the desired impact on student learning nor does it ensure the enduring vitality of such programs when confronting shifting academic priorities, competition for limited resources, and increasing demands placed on faculty. To ensure that their objectives decisively influence practices within academic institutions, CAC programs must play on their two potentially greatest strengths: **the ability to build consensus and the ability to adapt to changing conditions and environments.**

To ensure widespread ownership in the program, building and reaffirming consensus must become an integral and ongoing strategy in planning and administering a CAC program. One of the greatest dangers facing CAC programs is the perception in other disciplines that faculty in English and speech programs are intent on setting educational priorities or dictating teaching practices in other fields. For this reason, the initial decision about where to house a CAC program and to whom the program director reports can have a decisive impact on how faculty throughout the institution interpret the program’s agenda. Because situating the program within a speech or English department may inadvertently fuel suspicion or resentment, it may be strategically prudent to avoid affiliating the program with a particular department in favor of having the program director report to an administrator in the offices of Academic Affairs or Undergraduate Education. However strategically sound, the decision not to affiliate CAC with a particular department nevertheless carries its own risks in an institutional structure that typically relegates decision-making authority to departments and disciplinary colleges. To remain a player in such an environment, interdisciplinary programs such as CAC must ensure that departments and colleges recognize the goals of CAC as integral to their own missions.

A first step in garnering support for the goals of CAC is to involve faculty from other disciplines in designing and overseeing the program. Many WAC and CAC programs have been successful in securing institution-wide buy-in by establishing interdisciplinary advisory or governing boards with broad representation from different departments and colleges. If used actively to agree on program goals and objectives, to establish priorities, and to set program agendas, such boards can play a critical role in building support for the program’s mission. Another essential tactic in building consensus is to translate the tacit endorsement of the CAC program’s objectives into explicit departmental and institutional goals.

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Discussions about student learning outcomes, which are increasingly occurring at the levels of programs, departments, colleges, and institutions, often with reference to assessment or accreditation, provide optimal contexts to affirm communication ability as an essential skill for all students. Members of CAC advisory boards and CAC administrators who participate in such discussions may help ensure that communication is widely identified as a learning outcome in assessment plans and in both departmental and institutional strategic plans. Faculty who have contributed to identifying communication as an academic priority are far more likely to support the goals of a CAC program than when such priorities are imposed by administrative fiat. Further, identifying CAC goals as departmental and institutional priorities gives the program leverage in competing for resources.

Cultivating relationships with organizations that employ your institution's graduates provides another important avenue for building consensus around the goals of a CAC program. The value that employers place on effective communication has been well documented by research, as has the widespread dissatisfaction of employers with the communication skills of college graduates. Whenever employers speak with faculty and students in the disciplines about the skills that they seek in graduates, they invariably identify communication as a high priority. Representatives from CAC programs may take an active role in promoting such interactions, either through exchanges with program advisory boards about the specific communication skills appropriate for different disciplines, panel discussions about communication in the workplace, or classroom visits by invited speakers from the business community. (Cultivating such relationships with the business community may also yield dividends in the form of financial support for communication-based programs. Academic programs in fields such as business and engineering have received grants and even endowments from businesses and individuals to improve their graduates' communication skills. CAC programs can play an active role in helping their colleagues in other disciplines to develop such funding proposals. CAC administrators may also work with the Development Office in approaching donors who may be willing to support programs to improve students' communication skills.)

Maintaining relationships with working professionals also enables CAC programs to keep up to date on workplace communication practices, which is essential to ensure the programs' institutional vitality. Given their commitment to student learning, CAC programs must also stay on the cutting edge of pedagogy. Communication technologies, for example, have not only redefined the skills needed to communicate effectively in the workplace but also significantly enhanced the opportunities to engage students in communication activities. To remain viable, CAC must have the flexibility to upgrade or even redesign its programs to ensure their relevance and currency. Over time, CAC programs that settle into a familiar and predictable pattern of workshops and brown-bag lunches may experience a drop-off in participation from all but a loyal core of faculty. CAC program administrators must remain alert to new opportunities to engage faculty in their programs and to enhance the support that faculty and students receive to engage in communication-intensive activities, which might entail supporting faculty who serve as communication consultants to colleagues in other disciplines, training and supporting a cadre of student communication tutors or fellows, awarding small grants for conducting research on communication in the disciplines or for developing communication-intensive courses, organizing small groups of faculty who meet periodically to discuss teaching and learning topics in which they are particularly interested

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(e.g., conducting classroom-based research, assigning student portfolios, enhancing student learning with technology, etc.), or scheduling colloquia where faculty showcase communication activities in their courses.

Just as CAC programs must avoid formulaic programming, so must they resist a niche or stand-alone mentality within the institution. CAC programs must never be allowed to become monolithic. Because communication is integral to all fields and because communication activities can enhance student learning across the curriculum, CAC has a potential contribution to make to any academic initiative. As Barbara Walvoord has understood, the future of CAC depends on its effectiveness in reaching out to other initiatives and forming alliances, on its ability to define how it can support and enhance the goals of other undertakings, whether this entails partnering on program offerings with the institution's Center for Teaching and Learning; helping service learning, learning community, or first-year seminar initiatives to design and integrate communication assignments; working with faculty in the disciplines on developing communication-intensive capstone courses; or assisting with the assessment of efforts throughout the institution to improve students' communication skills. One important caveat, though: CAC programs that cross boundaries must understand and respect the values of other academic cultures, which includes the right to define issues and set priorities on their own turf. CAC programs that come across as dogmatic or intransigent—however much confidence they may have in their research, theory, or pedagogy—may restrict their ability to influence meaningful change within academic institutions.

Finally, ensuring the vitality of a CAC program ultimately depends on regular communication. Such communication may take the form of a user-friendly web site that presents current information about the program and provides links to resources that support writing and speaking across the curriculum. Some programs publish regular newsletters that report on program activities, feature items about faculty members who integrate communication activities in their courses, and offer tips for teaching communication-intensive courses. Still others publish annual reports that summarize program activities during the year. At the very least, CAC program administrators should prepare periodic reports for the administrators to whom they report about program activities and about any assessment activities relating to the program. Documenting and publicizing the efforts of CAC programs to enhance students' communication abilities and their learning will go a long way toward ensuring institutional support for the program.

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**Julie Zeleznik**

Ph.D. Student  
Iowa State University

**What are issues involved in planning the work of a writing and communication program?**

As a Ph.D. student in the Rhetoric and Professional Communication program in the English department at Iowa State University, I have participated as a researcher in two communication-across-the-curriculum programs: ISUComm, a university-wide initiative promoting exceptional student outcomes in communication across the disciplines, and an agronomy/English learning community integrating two pairs of upper-level courses: Agronomy 356 Soil, Water, and Fertilizer Management and English 309 Report and Proposal Writing.

For me, these experiences are valuable not only because of the research results they have yielded, but also because both have enabled me to reflect on my role as a graduate student researcher and to ponder those roles held by graduate students—as teachers, students, peer mentors, researchers, assistant directors—in other WAC initiatives.

I believe that a critical issue involved in planning the work of a WAC program is that graduate students continue to be positively engaged (in multiple ways) in a program's initiation and evolution, and that opportunities are provided for graduate students and faculty to reflect critically on this engagement.

To tackle this issue, I first identify two primary roadblocks to positive graduate student engagement in WAC programs. I then discuss two experiences of my own that favorably complicate the role of the graduate student researcher, and I conclude by suggesting ways graduate students can adopt more meaningful roles in WAC classrooms and programs.

**Roadblocks to critical involvement in WAC**

Two of the primary roadblocks that impede graduate students' positive engagement in WAC initiatives are time and voice. Frequently graduate students have roles in WAC initiatives, but often these roles are fleeting—they begin and are completed in one semester, one year, or two years. While we may continue our involvement as faculty after we graduate, as graduate students, we are not involved in WAC initiatives for very long. Because our involvement is transient, we often either do not stop to share our reflections about our experiences or we believe that others will not want to listen. Consequently, little published work exists by graduate students about the many responsibilities we have in WAC classrooms and programs.

While our participation in WAC may be fleeting, graduate students do have many roles in WAC initiatives; often, however, we occupy these roles without a voice. That is, as students, teachers, peer mentors, assistant directors, or researchers in WAC classrooms or in WAC programs, graduate students' critiques and analyses often go either unspoken or unheard. This voicelessness deters both our own intellectual and professional growth and the development of the WAC initiative itself. This voicelessness also negates the possibility of a meaningful mentoring relationship with faculty who participate in the initiative—a graduate student-faculty collaboration that should be characterized by a reciprocal sharing of ideas and of credit.



While the roadblock of time may be an inevitable byproduct of being a graduate student who participates in WAC initiatives, the roadblock of voice does not need to be. I next provide two instances of “having a voice,” which are culled from my experiences as a graduate student researcher.

### **Examples of my critical involvement as a WAC researcher**

As a graduate student researcher for the ISUComm initiative, I collaborated with the program's assessment committee, comprised of faculty from across the curriculum, to devise a study to assess faculty and workplace professionals' perceptions about oral, written, visual, and electronic communication education at Iowa State University. In carrying out this study, I worked with two other graduate students—Patricia Harms, also from the Rhetoric and Professional Communication program in the English Department, and Robert Reason from the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. We worked closely with the chair of the assessment committee, a rhetoric and professional communication faculty member, Rebecca Burnett.

I had a voice in this university-wide CAC initiative because my role went beyond data collection to design and presentation. For instance, while our graduate student research team collected the bulk of the data (i.e., surveyed over 2,500 teaching faculty and graduate students; conducted faculty focus groups in all seven undergraduate colleges; interviewed over 90 workplace professionals about their communication practices and needs), we also helped to shape the overall study's research design, we analyzed the results, and we collaborated on the presentation of our findings to the university community at the first ISUComm Symposium. My voice shaped the ways this CAC initiative was assessed and the ways the research was shared with faculty and students.

As a learning community researcher, my research site was comprised of an integrated, cross-disciplinary classroom—Agronomy 356 Soil, Water, and Fertilizer Management and English 309 Report and Proposal Writing. I worked on a five-person teaching/research team: three teaching faculty (two agronomy professors and one English professor) and a fellow researcher (my dissertation director). As the primary researcher, I assessed the ways student attitudes, processes (e.g., problem-solving, writing and revising, and so on), and performance were affected by their participation in the learning community.

I had a voice in this CAC learning community because my relationships with the faculty on the research/teaching team were characterized by collegiality and mentorship. In terms of collegiality, I saw professional behavior modeled in multiple settings, and I saw members of our team reinforce the importance of establishing friendships and providing time for personal concerns. Intermingled with this collegiality was a strong sense of mentorship. That is, the team encouraged and supported me in new tasks—for example, developing skills in utilizing statistical analyses, designing conference posters, and collaborating with team members on conference presentations and articles. Moreover, because our teaching/research team was comprised of faculty from two disciplines and because each member holds different perspectives about research, theory, and pedagogy, I am introduced to both. Because of this, I have a fresh perspective concerning the way those outside of the professional communication field view what we do—in terms of pedagogy and research.

While graduate student-faculty collaborations are defining experiences in graduate study, what are potentially dynamic and rewarding professional relationships are often never given the chance to flourish. For WAC programs to truly succeed they should offer everyone—not just faculty and undergraduates—multiple opportunities to teach, learn, and communicate across disciplines. To conclude, I suggest ways graduate students can take advantage of these opportunities and adopt more meaningful roles in WAC classrooms and programs.

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**Ways graduate students can become critically involved**

While each graduate student and every situation presents unique challenges, I suggest the following ways we can become more actively engaged in WAC initiatives:

- ♦ *Reach out to other graduate students.* Graduate students across the disciplines are involved in teaching and assessing the oral, written, and visual communication work of undergraduates. Graduate students who are already involved in WAC programs can often teach others strategies they can use to better present and assess communication; we, in turn, can learn valuable lessons about the ways communication is used in other disciplines.
- ♦ *Create forums to discuss pedagogy and share research.* While graduate students can take advantage of national forums (such as this conference) to discuss pedagogy and present research, we can also make use of others closer to home. Department or university conferences provide good places to share ideas while peers in one's own program often offer the most immediate and useful network.
- ♦ *Start a conversation about graduate student roles.* Graduate students have many venues in which to start a dialogue about their participation in WAC initiatives. For instance, graduate classes about pedagogy, methodology and research design, or theory all touch on the issues of graduate student roles. Campus centers for teaching excellence, writing centers, and WAC program offices also can offer the right environment to start such a conversation.

I present these three suggestions as possible strategies to more actively engage graduate students across the disciplines in CAC classrooms and programs. While many others exist, I believe that finding which are best for you or for the graduate students in your program is a critical issue in planning and implementing the work of on-going and future CAC initiatives.

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**Carol Holder**

Professor

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

**Writing in the Disciplines: A Planning Process**

What do we need to know, and who should be involved, in planning or renovating a writing across the curriculum program? What follows is an outline of tasks and ideas offered to stimulate thinking about a process and a program design. The ideas are based to some extent on research, but primarily on more than twenty years' work planning, implementing, and constantly modifying a writing in the disciplines program at one university, Cal Poly Pomona; collaborating with colleagues directing projects on other campuses of the Cal State system; and, over the years, providing assistance to other colleges and universities, public and private, with different missions, degree offerings, and admissions criteria. Back in 1979 I was fortunate to have many campus colleagues who wanted to participate in planning, and I took advantage of every opportunity to learn from the WAC "pioneers" who were most generous with sharing materials and methods at national conferences.

In a nutshell (and numbered to connect with the elaboration that follows), here's an approach to planning a writing (or language) across the curriculum program:

(1) Working with colleagues, (2) assess your current writing program, (3) identify problems to solve and improvements to make, (4) design a program to meet these goals and objectives, (5) design an evaluation to measure the achievements and effectiveness of your program, (6) calculate resources required (people, time, funds) by this program, and secure these resources or modify your program to fit resources available.

(1) "Colleagues" include composition faculty (at least one), teachers of business and technical writing, ESL faculty, directors of writing labs and tutoring programs, faculty from a variety of disciplines, director of faculty development, someone from instructional technology and the grants office, students, off-campus experts (such as employers of graduates), and a dean or two.

(2) "The current writing program" includes **writing courses** (in English and other departments), **support programs** (learning centers, writing labs, library services, computer labs, teaching assistants, locally-produced guidebooks and handbooks on writing, etc.), **campus-wide requirements** (entrance requirements, placement exams, required writing courses, senior theses, proficiency exams for graduation, and campus or departmental policies regarding writing).

(3) Identify problems to be solved and improvements needed through analysis of the quality, quantity, and types of student writing as well as analysis of current faculty efforts (the quality, quantity, and types of writing assignments and responses to student writing). In addition to using data from any writing assessments (placement and proficiency tests, if there are such), you can gather information with a **student questionnaire or interviews**:

How much and how frequently do students write?

How much time per week do they spend writing?

What kind of writing (notes, journals, essays, reports) do they do?

To whom do they turn for help with writing assignments?

Do they think they need more help?  
Do they have difficulty understanding assigned reading?  
How much do they revise papers in the process of writing them?  
What do they think are their strengths and weaknesses as writers?  
What has helped them most become better writers?

and with a **faculty questionnaire or interviews:**

How much and what kind of writing do faculty assign?  
What kinds of writing are central to the discipline or profession?  
Are assignments primarily tests of subject mastery or do faculty use writing as a means of learning—of making discoveries, connections, etc.?)  
How are assignments presented? (Collect samples: Do faculty provide clear instructions and evaluation criteria? What skills/abilities/knowledge do the assignments assume?)  
When are papers due?  
What do faculty perceive as the most troublesome problems with student writing?  
What kinds of comments do faculty make on student papers? (Collect samples.)  
How much time do faculty spend grading? Do they have assistance?  
Would faculty attend workshops to learn how to assign and evaluate writing more effectively and efficiently?

Also, it would help to know what employers and graduate schools say about the preparation of your students for professional or scholarly writing tasks.

Formulate goals from an analysis of the information gathered: e.g., to improve student writing (and reading); to improve learning, thinking, problem-solving; to reinforce the principles taught in freshman composition; to teach the conventions of writing and modes of inquiry and problem-solving for different disciplines; to prepare students for professional writing tasks; to help specific groups of students, etc. Describe in terms as specific as possible the attitudes and the writing skills and proficiencies students should demonstrate through or upon completion of general education and the major.

- (4) Before tackling program design, identify (through consultation and discussion) the **assumptions** or premises on which you will design or modify your cross-curricular writing program. For example: Do all departments, programs, faculty take some responsibility for student language skills? What's the value of writing in courses in the discipline? What's the difference between teaching writing and assigning or using writing? How do students become better writers and more active readers? What's the effect or impact of faculty work (designing assignments and responding to writing) on student performance? Are there courses in which writing and reading have no roles? Do students need certain writing skills to succeed after graduation? What are they? What do faculty need to know? What approaches are effective in this setting in changing faculty attitudes and instructional methods (regulations, policies, personnel evaluation, seminars and workshops, etc.)?

Working from models and structures in existing writing across the curriculum programs (widely available in print, on the web, and from directors projects elsewhere), **design a program** for your campus, tailored to the needs, mission, and assumptions identified above:

- a) What forms of support and professional development will be available to faculty? (Workshops? One-on-one consultation? Guidebooks and sample assignments? A resource library and website? Fund for travel to conferences and workshops elsewhere?)
- b) What's the ideal timing for elements like workshops?
- c) What topics are essential to include in the faculty development component? (e.g. help with assignment design? handling the paper load? working with non-native speakers? connecting reading, speaking, and writing? developing evaluation criteria? understanding composing processes? dealing with plagiarism? writing online? classroom research to assess the impact of new assignments? etc.)
- d) How will the program keep faculty engaged and enthusiastic about developing new approaches to writing in their courses? Will there be on-going seminars and discussions? follow-up appointments and interviews? collections of assignments that work? opportunities to share what they are doing and learning?
- e) What forms of support will be available to students who need additional instruction or assistance beyond what the faculty member giving the assignment can or is willing to provide? writing assistants assigned to the course? tutorials in a writing center? online assistance with assignments? new writing courses (adjunct courses or courses for specific disciplines)?

(5) Plan program **evaluation** from the start. How will you know if you are achieving your goals? How will you determine if curriculum, instruction, or support programs need modification? For example: If a goal is to change faculty attitudes toward assigning writing, how will you discover if you have been successful? How will you document and analyze any changes in assigning and evaluating writing? If a goal is for students to achieve certain levels of competence as writers at various points in their programs, how will you know if students are getting there and what problems or shortcomings remain? If a goal is for students to be prepared for writing tasks in professional contexts, how can you find out if they are, or what they are missing? If a component of the program involves writing tutors, what would be strong indicators of their effectiveness in assisting students? If the goal is to improve learning through writing, how will you know if new writing activities are enhancing learning?

(6) Calculate the **resources** (fiscal and human) needed to launch and maintain the program. Will the campus need to hire a project director, writing instructors, tutors, external consultants? Will the campus need to house and staff a new writing center and/or online support for writing in all disciplines? Will there be a need for incentives or compensation for faculty to work on new courses and new modes of instruction? What about computers, equipment, supplies? Or funds for coffee breaks and lunches during workshops? How much

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funding should be available to support faculty participation in national conferences to report results of their experiments with writing and to learn from the experiences of faculty elsewhere? What expenses are associated with evaluation and assessment?

Even though many campuses and systems are seeing cuts in funding to instructional programs, often in tandem with increased enrollments, most on campus and off understand the value of writing and the need for regular, frequent opportunities to write in order for students to develop confidence and competence in a variety of writing tasks. We can succeed in making the case for funding for a writing across the curriculum program, though we often are faced with administrators, faculty, and others who may be dismayed to learn of the on-going need for these programs – to engage new tenure-track and adjunct faculty, and to address persistent and sometimes new challenges. Our students change, the tools we use for research and writing change, and the very nature of text is changing with web publishing. Even those of us who direct “mature” writing across the curriculum programs revisit the structure, staffing, and goals of our programs in order to meet new needs and solve new or intractable problems. Revision in the basic sense – re-seeing – applies as much to writing across the curriculum as to writing itself.

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**Linda Driskill**

Professor and Director, Cain Project in Engineering  
and Professional Communication  
Rice University

### **Negotiation: Crucial for Planning and Developing W/CAC Programs That “Get to YES”**

New technologies and a nearly global economy are forming an ever larger system in which writing and communication will be the zone of interaction. Ordinary individuals, not just executives and diplomats, will interact there. Zones of intercultural interaction can be fraught with difficulty, competition, even deadly hostility. As educators, we want our students to benefit from international communication and be successful, ethical participants. However, as Tom Friedman detailed in *The Lexus and The Olive Tree*, people experience tension between their desires for emerging opportunities and their comfort with past, or local ways of doing things. Our writing and communication practices are deeply rooted in our cultures. Writing and communication across the curriculum programs have helped students develop articulate voices while increasing their learning. It may also enable them to construct their knowledge in conversations across the world and to appreciate and negotiate differences. Planning how to prepare students for dealing with these tensions and for weaving stakeholders' diverse purposes into long-lasting, productive relationships will not be easy.

However, I believe the planning and negotiating are worth doing. Without planning and negotiating, success is not likely. The more distant the target, the easier to miss the mark. If starting writing across the curriculum programs were easy, there would be many more programs. It's useful to ask why there aren't more schools and colleges with successful programs?

The principal answers don't lie with individual teachers, but with the larger systems in which classrooms exist. We've been using systems theory to analyze the problems of businesses and institutions for several decades, but we often think of teachers as autonomous agents. But however talented and dedicated they may be, they are still heavily affected by everything from mandated curricula, high stakes testing, and cramped classrooms, to rigid scheduling. Benefiting from writing and communicating across the curriculum requires that we find ways to change the system—that means different policies, funding, and reward structures.

The colleges and universities whose names are connected to major programs (and I'll mention only a few) such as Cornell, Clemson, and Sam Houston State University have benefited from gifts from foundations or wealthy individual donors; or like the University of Missouri or Notre Dame, they have found governance and funding processes that overcome intensely hierarchical, competitive traditional power structures. Whether one finds oneself in the happy situation of spending a generous gift wisely or interacting within a supportive governance structure, the four basic steps of the Harvard Negotiation Process are still valuable. The Harvard process is familiar in John Fischer and Peter Ury's *Getting to YES*,

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which has been a bestseller for two decades. I will show just a few ways in which these principles apply to planning for W/CAC.

Fischer and Ury's four principles of "Getting to YES" make nearly any system we may encounter function more beneficially for everyone concerned:

1. Separate people from the problem. Focus at first on participants' purposes, not what they propose. Find out "why" they chose their initial positions. Don't judge, above all, don't judge THEM. Reflect what you think you hear them saying. Others won't listen to you if you haven't heard them. At first, other faculty members' ideas about how writing can be taught or learned, how communication is involved in their own field, the range of assignments, and so on may cause them to hold a limited view of what a WAC or CAC program could be. This stage helps you probe for others' goals, find common ground, and discover allies.
2. Plan the best alternative to a negotiated agreement. (Fischer and Ury call it a "BATNA.") It's crucial to know the cost of not reaching agreement—to you and to the other stakeholders. Indeed, knowing the alternatives may generate additional options. For example, knowing the budget for or the number of students a writing center might ordinarily serve without a WAC program will help people think about how much more productive the center might be if it were contributing to specific curricular goals or to specific personal or professional goals students value.
3. In a separate time period, propose possibilities for mutual benefit. Don't evaluate ideas at this stage; come up with as many combinations and variations as you can. Put off the evaluation until later. Acknowledge the options without committing to them: "I can see that as one way to accomplish the purposes you've mentioned; I'm not agreeing to that yet, but I can see what you're saying."
4. Devise principled criteria for judging the options and apply them. "Giving in" or accepting a compromise that can't stand the test of implementation merely postpones collapse or conflict and won't build a long-lasting relationship. You don't have to be rule bound, but university politics are notoriously furious, especially if resources are scarce. For example, it's important to decide separately, in advance, whether it is more important in your institution to use your funds to support all students equally or to support the learning of a few students exceptionally well so as to demonstrate the capabilities of an excellent, well staffed program.

To ensure successful classrooms and successful students, first, we will have to be leaders and negotiate for policies and programs. That's the first step in preparing students to negotiate with their peers between their Lexus and their olive trees, those late twentieth century tokens of the future.



***Panel 1: What Leadership, Goals, and Policies Can Ensure Students Communicate Well in Multicultural Environments and International Commerce?***

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**Neal Lane**

University Professor

Rice University

Formerly Science Advisor to President Clinton

**What Leadership, Goals, and Policies Can Ensure Students Communicate Well in Multicultural Environments and International Commerce?**

I am delighted to be included in this WAC conference and to be able to participate on this panel of distinguished individuals who truly understand the art of writing and teaching writing. I look forward to hearing from them and learning.

Perhaps I can contribute to our discussion some impressions about writing, based on my time in Washington. I served in the Clinton Administration as Director of the National Science Foundation (1993-98) and, in the White House, as Assistant to the President for Science and Technology, colloquially known as "Science Advisor" (1998-2001). In the latter job, I also served as Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), in the White House. In both jobs, I had the opportunity to work with extraordinary people, all of whom were very smart and good with words.

The President's time is very precious. And, for that reason, in the White House, everyone else's time is precious as well. The words – spoken and written – are important. The President will form opinions, make decisions, set policy, and even chart a new course for the Nation, based in large part on what he reads and hears. Moreover, his words are important. He will convince the Congress, American people, and Foreign leaders of the correctness of his positions by what he says in his speeches and interviews and what he and others on his staff write in the thousands of communications issued by the White House each year.

Much of my time, and my staff's time, in the White House was spent writing: weekly reports to the President; memos on special topics to the President, Vice President, or senior staff; drafts of speeches for the President or Vice President; executive orders and directives; press releases; testimony to Congress; and responses to Congressional questions; reports issued by the White House; my own speeches; other work of my office, OSTP; and many others.

The White House works well when the members of the staff work well as a team. All speeches, letters, other documents involve many writers and many ideas and words competing for a place in the final piece. One's ability to get along with others is key to

Let me just list some impressions, based on my experiences in Washington. Many of these are simply good common sense. But, perhaps it is useful to include them. I'll put these

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impressions in the form of “guidance” that I would share with a new member of the staff on his or her first day on the job.

### **Guidance for New Staff**

- The words matter. If you want to hear the President say the words you have written – and set the policy you advocate – you have to get the words right, so the speechwriter can use them. Otherwise, they fall to the cutting room floor. Yes, the good ideas matter; but unless those good ideas are presented well, it is all for naught. (By the way, this is true not only for the President of the United States, but as well for members of Congress, Governors, corporate CEO’s and upper-level managers of all kinds.)
- Understand the purpose and value of what you are writing. Who needs to read it? How will they read it? You should consider that your readers may not get past the first few paragraphs. So make sure your point is made in those first paragraphs. But choose your words carefully, and entice the reader to read more.
- Recognize that you are writing as a member of a team. Respect the ideas and schedules of others. If you promise something by 2pm, today, don’t miss that deadline. Your colleagues will not have time to wait. You will miss the opportunity to make your input, you will have made their job harder, and they may not ask again.
- When writing speeches (and some written communication as well), learn all you can about the occasion, locale, and the audience. You want the speech to resonate with that audience. The listeners need to feel that the speaker knows them, speaks to them in a language they understand, thinks they are important, and brings substantive issues to their attention.
- Never underestimate the value of being honest, clear, succinct, interesting, and when appropriate, amusing. Tasteful humor is a valuable asset to any sort of personal relations.
- Never miss an opportunity to be positive, to credit the audience/reader for something important that they have done. People like to be recognized for their accomplishments, stature, efforts. But, take care not to patronize.

Often – increasingly often, these days – your audience will be a person or group in or from a different part of the world – or a special culture right here at home. The reader or listener should know that you understand their culture and that you are making a special effort to connect. If you speak or write their language, that is excellent. But, even if you don’t, the audience must know that you respect them and are sensitive to their culture.

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**Rebecca Burnett**

Iowa State University, University Professor  
Rice University, Visiting Professor

### **What Leadership, Goals, and Policies Can Ensure Students Communicate Well in Multicultural Environments and International Commerce?**

Let me start where we tell our students to start with what I know, with what I have experienced or observed, with anecdotes that exemplify our need to pay more attention to the multicultural world in which we live. All of the following anecdotes affirm my belief that influencing and changing social policy require influencing and changing what we as WAC/CAC teachers and researchers know best: our families, our communities, our own teaching, our own colleges or universities, our ability to serve as role models, our interaction with the workplace, and, finally, our own research. Social policy should not be something done to us; it should be something we do, something we are activists in shaping.

- ◆ *My first example strikes close to home.* Several years ago, my son, who is a software and hardware designer, was working for a large multinational corporation headquartered in France, where he was often sent on business. On the appropriate Sunday in May, he called me from Paris to say, Happy Mother's Day. During the call, he asked me if I remembered a conversation we had had when he was in high school: I had argued that he needed a fourth year of French more than he needed a second year of calculus. I lost. His message to me now? I had been right. As parents, we can actively encourage our children (and our grandchildren) to become bilingual members of a multicultural community.
  - ◆ *My second example challenges the communities in which we live.* Iowa competes annually with Minnesota for the highest literacy rate in the nation. Unfortunately, being able to read doesn't necessarily influence what is read nor how it is interpreted. On a regular basis, the Iowa Legislature considers and narrowly defeats English only bills. I see an embarrassing irony that literacy doesn't necessarily imbue citizens with an awareness of our multicultural world or a sense of equity. As community citizens, we can actively contribute our voice to the defeat of such legislation.
  - ◆ *My third example forces reconsideration of our own teaching.* I have taught technical communication for a long time, and while, I incorporate examples, e-list discussions, activities, and assignments that encourage an awareness of multicultural and international perspectives, I am nonetheless stereotypically American. Last fall I was teaching an upper-level technical communication class and had the opportunity to invite three Ukrainian teachers into that class for the semester. Two of them are in the United States for a year as members of a Junior Faculty Development Program; one of them is a Ph.D. student in our rhetoric and professional communication program at Iowa State University. Their attendance in my class led to weekly meetings where we discussed the differences and similarities between teaching professional communication in Ukraine and in the United States. In truth, I believe I learned more than they. The result? We have been accepted to present a panel at this year's ATTW conference, a session entitled, Professional Communication in Eastern Europe: Rethinking Exigencies in Course Design, which is serving as a springboard for a co-authored pedagogical article. As teachers, we can actively invite international colleagues to visit our classes and then use these visits as opportunities for provocative discussions.
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- ◆ *My fourth example confronts our own institution's educational practices.* Like many universities, Iowa State University has a multicultural core requirement any three credits from an array of many dozens of courses and a student receives multicultural credit. How did such a policy get approved? Too many committees. Too many Faculty Senate arguments. Too many people giving in to the notion that some requirement is better than no requirement. Does it work that is, do we have evidence that our students are more multiculturally sensitive in any way? No. So a number of faculty members are actively forcing attention to reshaping the multicultural core requirement and to reinstituting a language requirement. As institutional change agents, we can actively lobby for curricular reform both in our own departments and in our institution's core or gen-ed requirements.
- ◆ *My fifth example encourages us to serve as role models.* Last spring, Debby Andrews and I were invited by the Canadian Council of Teachers of Technical Communication as keynote speakers for their annual convention. The conference was in Quebec City. The printed program was in French and in English. Some of the program sessions were in French; some were in English. The conversations flowing around us were as often in French as they were in English. And the first ten minutes of Debby's keynote address was in fluent, idiomatic French. As professionals in the discipline, we can actively model as Debby did what we hope our students will do.
- ◆ *My sixth example asks us to influence workplace practice.* Several years ago our ISU student chapter of the Society for Technical Communication invited the president of a small consulting firm in Manitoba to give a lecture about multiculturalism and internationalism in professional communication. He began with a series of funny incidents now relegated to Web humor, for example about President Carter desiring the Polish people carnally, about cadavers by Fisher and then moved to ways that we, as teachers and practitioners can help students function more effectively in a multicultural, international workplace. As teachers of workplace practitioners, we can actively incorporate assignments and expectations that move students beyond the boundaries of our classrooms to embrace this multicultural, international workplace.
- ◆ *My last example asks us to draw on our skills as researchers.* As researchers, we know that written, oral, and visual language matter. The words and images themselves matter, but equally important are the contexts in which those words and images are created and interpreted and the actions and activities for which those words and images are used. For example, several years ago, I collected data from document design teams in Japan about the ways they organized their technical manuals. Rhetorical theory and activity theory help explain such things as differences in audience expectations, document purposes, and text conventions. As researchers, we can help influence and shape social policy. How? We can provide evidence to confirm and disconfirm lore, evidence that will help us refine our theoretical perspectives, evidence that can advise changes in academic programs and workplace practices.

We can work as change agents and as shapers of policy locally with our own families, communities, teaching, and institutions. We can work as change agents and as shapers of policy globally by doing what we know best contributing to the research.

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**Elaine P. Maimon**

Campus CEO, Provost, and Professor of English  
Arizona State University West

**What Leadership, Goals, and Policies Can Ensure  
Students Communicate Well in Multicultural Environments and International  
Commerce?**

According to one pundit, war teaches international geography to students in the United States. Sadly, this comment evokes the challenges facing educators as we work to ensure that students communicate well in multicultural and international environments. The United States is the one remaining world super power; the English language is informally accepted as a *lingua franca*; and, as a consequence, students in the United States, if left to their own devices, may be shortchanged by attitudes of intellectual and linguistic isolationism. To transform this situation, we must demonstrate educational leadership. Here are my suggestions:

- Work to influence policies so that an educated person will be expected to bring at least two languages to the table.
  - Educate the general public that bilingualism is desirable. Combat political forces that support voter initiatives (like the one that passed overwhelmingly last year in Arizona) to suppress bilingual education in the schools. This issue must be depoliticized.
  - Support efforts in colleges of education to certify teachers in bilingual education—even if you have to call it something else
  - Support dual language programs in elementary schools. These programs work best when a critical mass of students come to school speaking the same first language, Spanish, for example. While the Spanish-speaking children learn English, their English-speaking classmates learn Spanish and then team up to tutor each other. Research shows that dual language programs are more effective than ESL programs in teaching students English, while English-speaking students have the advantage of learning a second language with the help of peers. Neither language has hegemony. Students have early experiences in a multilingual, multicultural environment.
  - On the college level, find new ways to encourage the study of international cultures and second languages
    - Make brief, intensive study trips available, especially for those students who cannot afford the time and money for more extensive trips—e.g., 10-day, one-week, even one-day trips to Mexico
    - Encourage students to travel to other cultures as an incentive for foreign language study, rather than making foreign language study an initial requirement.
    - Use the resources of the Internet to connect students internationally through e-mail exchanges and more elaborate arrangements for real-time communication.
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Just as important as creating an educational environment to promote international understanding is a commitment to multicultural education as it pertains to groups within the United States.

- Encourage the development of multicultural curricula and co-curricular activities as highlighted strategies in your university's strategic plan
- Recruit a multicultural student body, faculty, and administration
- Encourage service learning and other interactions between the classroom and the wider community, e.g., a project of an ASU West freshman learning community to interview Muslims in our community about their responses to September 11.
- Encourage the development of learning communities in which students develop a sense of belonging on campus and a comfort level with classmates from different cultural backgrounds.

Over twenty-five years ago, those of us who developed writing across the curriculum were motivated by a commitment to engage students in learning and communicating across disciplinary boundaries a kind of academic multiculturalism. In 2002, it is clear that principles of writing across the curriculum also inform students mobility across linguistic and multicultural barriers.

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***Panel 2a and 3a: What Must Be Done to Ensure That College Students Communicate Well in Their Fields?***

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**Chris Anson**, Professor, North Carolina State University

**Preparing Students to Communicate Well in Their Fields:  
Agents, Actors, Beneficiaries**

Not a person exists—not a student, teacher, administrator, employer, parent, or member of that vast, opinionated group we call the “general public—who doesn’t believe that college students need to communicate well in their fields. But before any initiative can be launched to work toward that assurance, two fundamental questions need to be answered: First, what do we mean by “communication,” and for what purposes? Second, and perhaps more importantly, who should decide what we mean? The apparent simplicity of these individual questions quickly gives way to a conceptual challenge when we bring them together; but together they must be answered if we’re to work toward curricula and programs that achieve educational excellence in communication.

Although there is relatively broad agreement among cross-curricular communication experts that faculty in specialized disciplines should be among those most heavily recruited to take up the charge of preparing students as communicators in their fields, that agreement doesn’t come without some degree of suspicion or fear. Given over to specialists in the disciplines, is communication reduced to the narrowly vocational, to a kind of “training” for specific occasions, such as writing patient logs or delivering design reports? Format-driven and task-oriented, these “disciplinary texts,” it’s feared, don’t provide a discursive context in which students actively question assumptions, analyze situations, and grow in their critical awareness of their profession and their world. Where is the role of ethics in the chemical engineering project phase report? What compels students to critique the cultural biases in a market analysis and proposal? Where’s the patient in the patient log? Stripped of all that is “humanizing” about the use of language, will pre-professional communication become a set of sterile skills to be put into operation less than thoughtfully and reflectively? Left to their own devices, will the “who” really answer the “what” question in ways that open students’ minds and encourage new awareness of and sensitivity to language in all its forms and uses?

Concerned about this problem, some institutions have chosen to create broadly representative boards, committees, or task forces to ensure that writing and speaking activities in all disciplines meet certain generalized standards, such as diversity of genres; or they require portfolios in which papers come, for example, from courses that have a focus on certain themes, such as the environment. At other institutions, writing-across-the-curriculum workshops provide ideas and strategies to faculty in different disciplines for stretching the kinds of communication experiences they build into their courses. But when they are brought in from beyond the field, these ideas or requirements may seem antithetical to the assumed goals of the faculty asked to implement them, and the result is not the sort of widespread change the leaders had hoped for.

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Mandates, institutional inducements, the requirements of accrediting agencies—none will create lasting improvements in the cross-curricular teaching of communication without what educational theorists refer to as “intrinsic motivation” (Csikszentmihalyi). Without a felt sense, a need to solve self-identified problems, faculty within many departments look on externally determined initiatives with resistance, apathy, or the kind of temporary and half-hearted commitment that comes from the occasional scrutiny of outsiders, even when there may be some new rewards for taking up the cause (see White; Holdstein). Yet to believe in the power of intrinsic motivation, cross-curricular advocates must be ready to accept and support as many answers to the “what” question as the “whos” they pose it to. It will mean, for example, respecting the values and judgments of those within different fields, trusting in their collective wisdom to move beyond discursive myopia when it comes to the framing of outcomes for students’ communication and the curricular methods they hope to use to achieve those outcomes.

At North Carolina State University, we have adopted a program-specific model of curricular improvement in the area of communication. Each department produces a unique set of outcomes for students’ writing and speaking in the major, outcomes that then drive efforts at both assessment and curricular revision. Every department creates a different plan that best meets its own needs and tries to respond to its own self-identified problems. At this time, over eighty departments have created outcomes for writing and speaking, and are now beginning the process of implementation and assessment. Eventually every undergraduate program across NC State’s nine undergraduate colleges will be engaged in a continuous process of program review, assessment, and improvement.

For those of us who are coordinating the effort, accepting this model has meant valuing the ways in which departments decide what it means for students to communicate well. It has meant trusting in the processes of negotiation that take place among a group of professional educators when they ask what it means for their own students to communicate well in their fields. It has meant having faith that if certain visions of language use don’t immediately show up in these professionals’ discussions, someone, at some point, will bring those visions to the table, will ask questions about whether a narrow, task-oriented goal for preparation shouldn’t be enhanced in directions that those who dislike narrow vocationalism might approve of. And it has meant being patient, tolerating a slow movement toward such enhancements when those voices aren’t present or ready to be heard. It has meant listening, asking more questions than providing answers, nudging more than evangelizing. Expertise has come in the form of advice or suggestions when our clients discover something they’d like to try. Replacing what Kazdin and Bootzin (1972) call the “token economies” of extrinsic factors—threats, mandates, good ideas soon lost after the warmth and energy of the faculty-development workshop have faded—is a sense of determination within the department to improve, and an understanding that such improvements happen slowly, over time, from within. Our broad, campus-wide efforts--workshops, brown bags, seminars—have drawn faculty from departments engaged in their own self-determined improvements in ways that have enriched those cross-curricular meetings and made them more meaningful for the participants.

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Surprisingly, faculty in some pre-professional programs are less interested in preparing their students to communicate well in their fields when they graduate than in using writing and speaking to teach habits of mind while they're in school, habits they can take into their professions and personal lives. Communication for these faculty lies in the here-and-now, in the enhancement of educational processes within the major. One floor up, a department may be responding to the collective sense that students aren't closely and critically observing the natural phenomena that preoccupy people in their field. Their writing/speaking solution may be a kind of hybrid genre, a blend of academic journal and professional observation log. One floor down, another department defines one of its learning outcomes as a need for students to stay current with the professional literature after they graduate. To realize this outcome, they use writing and speaking to help students to become more insightful, conscientious readers of work in the field. Each department brings expertise to the task of identifying its students' and its program's needs, and changing accordingly. In this sense, the faculty are seldom pure exemplars of the work that gets done in the industrial and other work settings where many of their own students will seek employment.

By working in what we call the "conditional rhetorical spaces" of academia, which seep into other spaces beyond (Anson & Dannels), faculty in all disciplines have an opportunity to transcend the purely vocational, teaching students not only to communicate well in their fields, but to understand and use writing and speaking generatively, and to provide students with the motivation and tools to work across multiple occupational, social, and academic settings now and in the future.

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**Michael A. Pemberton**

Past President, International Writing Centers Association  
Georgia Southern University

### **What Must Be Done to Ensure that College Students Communicate Well in Their Fields?**

Ensuring that students communicate well in their major fields is a challenging goal for educators, and no single program or set of advisories will succeed in every case. However, I think it's possible to offer a few suggestions that would at least get departments pointed in the right direction. Most of these suggestions require institutional restructurings (or at least internal reassessments of curricular goals and reallocations of resources), but at least one will depend upon the exertion of external pressure.

#### **Internal modifications to pedagogy**

- 1) Demand that students produce significant amounts of writing in their major courses, particularly those in the upper division. It's ludicrous to expect that students will be able to communicate disciplinary knowledge through writing if they're never expected to do so in content-area courses.
- 2) Provide students with real-world writing assignments that force students to grapple with pertinent issues that demand the use of disciplinary discourses. Too much writing in upper-division courses, as Cheryl Geisler and others have shown, requires students to do little more than display factual knowledge or write in generic, pre-disciplinary forms (comparison/contrast, cause/effect, and the like). Raise the bar and use writing assignments to introduce professional challenges.

#### **In order to accomplish these changes, however:**

- 3) Disciplinary faculty must be trained to speak explicitly about rhetorical issues to their students. In particular, they must be shown how to explain the forms and rhetorical expectations of a field -- its genres, its notions of audience, its assumptions about old and new information, etc. -- rather than rely upon students' ability to learn those forms through intuition or osmosis. In short, disciplines have to break away from the apprenticeship model and abandon the model of the Burkean parlor.
  - 4) Teaching Assistants -- especially those with responsibilities for responding to and grading written assignments -- must also be trained in how to do so. This training could be delivered in many forms -- through a campus WAC program, through a university-wide TA orientation and training program, through the writing center, through mentoring, through a department's own training mechanisms. Regardless, departments should see this sort of training as critical to the fulfillment of their own goals and an essential part of standard TA training.
  - 5) Before attempting either of these changes, individual departments in colleges and universities -- in collaboration with their students' potential employers -- must determine specific communicative/learning outcomes for their field and integrate them fully into the curricula. They must ask themselves, "What do we want students to be able to do/produce
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communicatively, and how can we, as members of the discipline, best prepare them to do that?" Once they answer these questions, they must take responsibility for building those communicative outcomes into their own courses, not merely farming them out to generic technical/professional writing courses.

- 6) Foster strong partnerships/relationships between writing centers and major departments. Teach WC consultants about the expectations, discourse, and standards in a field, and invite WC consultants into the classroom to speak with and work with students. Writing centers offer some of the most valuable writing assistance on any campus -- to students and faculty alike -- and that expertise should be tapped whenever possible.

### **External pressures on curriculum and funding**

- 7) Lastly, we have to realize that money drives nearly everything in an institution. Departments and administrators will always ask questions like "What's the bottom line? What's it going to cost? What are the benefits? Is the expense justified?" If employers (and, by implication, donors, underwriters, granting organizations, donors, and the like) truly believe that communications skills are an essential part of their future employee's training, then they've got to put their money where their mouths are. Don't just buy a new building or computer lab or faculty lounge; endow a writing initiative on campus, sponsor a writing contest in a department, put pressure on campus presidents and department heads to make writing an integral part of every discipline, and threaten to withhold donations if they don't. Too many times I've heard CEOs, engineers, scientific researchers, and executives of every stripe lament the poor writing skills of their new employees, recent college graduates all. If they truly think that's a problem, then they should take meaningful steps to do something about it. They might have to skip a rubber-chicken meal at the dedication of yet another computer lab on campus, but the rewards would benefit their companies to a much greater extent.
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**Edmund P. Segner, III,**  
President and Chief of Staff, EOG Resources, Inc.  
Houston, Texas

### **Communication for Success! YES!**

Success in today's business world requires the ability to perform either better or differently or both. While one is in school, one tends to think most importantly about excellence of technical skills. So early in our careers, we each hoped to demonstrate our technical superiority. The competitive reality is that if one's technical skills are not in order one is quickly weeded out. Thus, success often depends upon non-technical factors.

Success for a very few will come from sheer technical brilliance. However for most, the differentiation from others with similar strong technical skills success will come from the ability to communicate. This ability to communicate is not just written but orally as well. It is this combined skill set that we in industry seek. It is quite likely that our future leaders come from among those blessed with the whole array of skills.

As technical education continues to become readily available around the world, the opportunity and quite frankly, the mandate for education in the developed world is that we equip our graduates with the communication and leadership skills that differentiate our graduates from graduates in other parts of the world where technical skills are at least adequate and in many cases excellent. In addition, in many countries the prevailing wages and expectations are significantly less.

So as we think about these needed communication skills what might be some of the less obvious attributes besides the ability to write and speak coherently and with conviction?

1. We need graduates that can translate a physical or quantitative concept and bring across the salient points in such a way that the listener has absorbed the key information and at the same time received technical comfort that the right approaches and assumptions have been made.
2. We need graduates that are comfortable communicating the integration of political, economic or environmental sensitivities with their technical determinations such that feasible solutions for society may be recommended.
3. Given the continued globalization of our society partly due to the commodization of basic technical, construction and manufacturing processes, we as an industry need graduates who will be increasingly comfortable in multiple languages and cultures.

*These attributes will increasingly be desired of our future leaders. Our colleges and universities have the ability and imagination to step up and assist in equipping our next generations of leaders.*

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For most new graduates, success is likely to depend upon communication. Perhaps we can define this success as an ability to not only understand and assimilate the details, but also integrate what is important including external factors. Ultimately, they need to be able to communicate to others this integrated picture in order to lead the organization and society forward.

The good news is that yes, industry is seeking these communication skills, but also that yes, our students want to be able to develop and use these communication skills as well. They want the complete array of formal training and lifetime learning to be a success.

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**David A. Jolliffe**  
Professor of English  
DePaul University

### **What Must Be Done to Ensure that College Students Communicate Well in their Fields?**

I believe faculty teaching writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) or writing-in-the-disciplines (WID) courses need to pay considerably more attention to (a) what genres students are being asked to produce in WAC and WID courses, and (b), more generally, what genre theory can teach us about how genre is connected to knowledge work in higher education and in the world of work beyond academia. In WAC courses, for example, faculty members frequently assign students to write something they label an *essay*, without realizing that the definition of this genre is highly malleable and differs from one field to the next. In WID courses, similarly, faculty members often ask students to write in one of the discipline's preferred genres without helping the students see the genre as a principal tool of the discipline's epistemology and methods.

Faculty members and students alike need to understand that the knowledge work performed and assisted by writing in any field is shaped and constrained by the types of texts that professionals in the field recognize and value. As David Russell points out in *WAC for the New Millennium* (NCTE, 2001), dozens of studies show that the "most crucial choice of tools" for students learning to write in courses across the curriculum and within the disciplines "is that of genre." Effective WAC and WID faculty should, according to Russell, direct students to write in genres that "bring students into contact with the uses of facts and concepts in their (students' and professors' and professionals') worlds." The choice of genres, he suggests, governs, at least in part, the students' motivations for writing, the identities they form through writing, and the processes they employ to write successfully (287).

WAC and WID specialists, and their students, must understand that genres are not simply empty shells into which "contents" can be poured willy-nilly. Instead, genres are psychological and social meaning-making templates that help writers understand rhetorical situations and that give shape to their intellectual work within them. Carolyn Miller first affirmed this principle in her 1983 *Quarterly Journal of Speech* article, "Genre as Social Action": "A rhetorically sound definition of genre must be centered not on the substance or form of the discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish" (151). In a more recent review of genre theory, I have elaborated the principle somewhat:

[T]he concept of genre forms a kind of linchpin in an intellectual community's processes of generating and disseminating information. As she investigates a subject matter appropriate to her field, a scholar typifies and recognizes a recurrent rhetorical situation, and she produces a text that instantiates one of the field's preferred genres, a textual form that requires her to invoke certain *topoi*, create an exigence, effect an appropriate style, and achieve a recognizable purpose. In turn, the genre not only allows the scholar to report

her research, but its conventions and constraints also give structure to the actual investigation she is reporting. ("Genre" 283).

I maintain that this dual function of genre--its ability to help writers recognize recurrent rhetorical situations and its power to shape and constrain knowledge work—needs to sit at the center of WAC and WID pedagogy. Attending to genres and genre theory can help faculty members make decisions about the best and most appropriate types of projects their students should undertake.

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***Panels 2b and 3b: What Must Be Done to Integrate K-12 Students' Writing and Learning?*****Wanda Bamberg**

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction  
Aldine Independent School District

**What Must Be Done to Integrate K-12 Students' Writing and Learning?**

Successful integration of writing and learning first requires a changed paradigm that views writing as part of the learning process and not a set of strategies to lead to a product. This change involves understanding the model of writing to learn through district and individual school support and professional development.

A truly integrated model of instruction is found in a good pre-kindergarten classroom where the focus is oral language development. Students are encouraged to use oral language not only to tell stories, but also to question, comment and wonder at the world around them. "How does a caterpillar become a butterfly?" "I know what a policeman does." "Guess what happened yesterday!" The Pre-K teacher starts with oral language and later records students' words, stories, and questions by writing for them. As students move to kindergarten and first grade, they learn to record their own words. Somewhere in the transition between the oral language focus and recording their own words, writing is relegated to only one realm of the learning environment—what we call language arts or English. Writing is no longer natural but instead an isolated strategy.

Content teachers have viewed writing as an artificial tool to "add" to their subjects. They view their own participation in writing across the curriculum as "doing the English teacher's job." In science, the class may write a lab report, but the writing is viewed as a product, not part of the learning process.

Some integration has occurred through writing training for content area teachers who later successfully integrate writing into their classrooms. But to make the complete shift to full integration, writing must be an integral part of professional development and viewed as a part of learning the content of the course. History Alive is an example of this type of training. One of many interactive strategies for history students is an interactive journal, where students record information, reflect upon the content and then extend their knowledge. The journal might later be used to develop a product, but the writing is not a means to an end; but instead, writing is part the learning process. Writing will be fully integrated when all teachers are trained in writing and learning strategies within their own content training sessions.

Administrative buy-in is critical in this paradigm shift to full writing integration in all classrooms. School districts and schools can promote integration by providing the appropriate amount of support and pressure. The most important administrative support is the high expectation that writing will be integrated in all classrooms. Then the appropriate professional development must be provided to build capacity at all levels. Training should be subject-specific, using writing to learn in each content area. Administrators can provide



appropriate pressure by monitoring implementation of the training and by providing teaching models, follow-up training, technology, and recognition for student and teacher success. Writing in daily work, projects, portfolios, and assessments should also be expectations at the district and campus level.

The Texas accountability system may also aid in the integration process. The state is omitting contrived purposes and modes for writing and moving to more authentic prompts and the opportunity for students to respond to reading, writing or visual representations by mixing modes to share their ideas. Conversations around the state are filled with both excitement and trepidation about the higher standard. What could better prepare students for this higher standard than using writing as learning in all subjects? Writing to learn is critical in the preparation for the next testing cycle. Students who can read critically, reflect, explain and extend their thoughts in writing will be prepared for any assessment or academic requirement.

Writing and learning can be integrated, but educators need to utilize writing as part of the learning process. Also, school and district administrators will need to provide support and pressure to help teachers implement the change.

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**Viola M. Garcia, Ed. D.**

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### **Policy Issues that Impact K-12 Students' Writing and Learning**

There is no question that public schools must become better and that policy issues have to focus on teaching and learning that is meaningful, comprehensive and of interest to parents and to the general public. Particular issues in K-12 settings require special attention. They include: promoting academic achievement and exceptional learning for all students, decreasing the number of school drop-outs, increasing the number of students taking challenging classes, increasing the number of girls taking high-level mathematics and science courses, providing for students with disabilities and for groups of students who are not doing well, securing and retaining well-trained teachers, and increasing parental involvement and participation. Policies that focus on eliminating obstacles that stand in the way of teaching and learning and on meeting these particular challenges may remedy and resolve some of these issues.

Policy makers have the responsibility for the focus and the direction in goal setting and for promoting educational excellence in meeting the district goals. Inherent in this responsibility is the expectation that there is accountability for work done in the schools. School operations are considered a democratic process and increasing the discretion of the schools to adopt and modify programs and offerings while insulating them from the dangers of politics is important for policy makers to consider. As schools are regulated, politically sensitive settings conducive to the power of outside forces, it is important that policies that may reduce the discretion of schools be monitored. It is helpful that policies not impede or constrain schools' capacities to build well functioning teams based on informal cooperation. It is also important to alleviate bureaucratic tangles that keep teachers from teaching and students from learning. Site Based Decision Making (SBDM) committees actively participate in setting local goals and objectives based on identified needs and on broader district-wide goals. As participants in the schools implement these plans, it is expected that teachers and staff buy into the need for new or existing programs to meet the set goals.

Goal setting and rethinking and restructuring schools and school programs should be based on ongoing assessment and research-based findings. A number of important related elements have to be considered if schools are to meet the expectations set by policy makers and the community. It is necessary to have a committed school staff as well as the administration's commitment to investments in the professional development of the teachers and the staff. Any restructuring or program implementation efforts must include teachers and parents alike, as they are the ones who will implement the changes or the expectations. Probably the most important element in fostering change in the classroom is in developing the capacity of the classroom teacher to do his/her job well. Why do teachers do what they do? Do they do it because they believe that it is the best way to do the job or because they are expected to do it a particular way? Policy makers might consider a reform model designed to enhance the

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instructional expertise of the classroom teacher and one that connects special-program teachers with classroom teachers.

Reliance on assessment measures (formal and informal) that guide instruction is a mark of an effective classroom teacher, and successful teachers set instructional goals based on student needs. Teachers have the capacity to identify struggling readers and writers, underachievers, potential dropouts, exceptional students and a host of other challenges. Intuitive, successful teachers also understand that writing can be a tool to improve reading, thinking and learning in the classroom. Writing is a process of composing in language familiar to the student. It is a thinking process as well as a process of using language. Writers must select and organize ideas, think about them in their mind, and turn them into language. Writing fosters language fluency, syntactic development, and the ability to communicate more effectively with others. By inviting students to write frequently, teachers provide opportunities for them to express their own unique ways of knowing, of understanding, and of being understood. This becomes critical for struggling students who grasp for assistance, for validation, and for opportunities to express who they are.

Writing allows students to approach knowledge from their own perspective by applying their own language skills and their own background knowledge to what they are learning. Writing produces complete involvement at the task at hand. Integrating reading and writing in content areas reduces fragmentation of the school day for students, but particularly for struggling students. Teachers who rely on ongoing assessment, who have adequate training and developed understandings of how critical thinking skills are developed through reading, writing, speaking and listening activities are the persons who most greatly influence student achievement, success, and validation which allow students to succeed in school. Goal setting that does not include elements of thinking and thinking processes for students results in lowered expectations for students and possibilities for non-engagement and eventual problems. Teachers who do not understand this basic premise cannot be forced to understand it simply because there is a policy in place that forces them to implement it. They must be one with the policy if they are to implement it effectively.

In order to support an effective literacy program that includes reading, thinking and writing, school districts should provide the mechanism by which teachers collaborate with each other to assess these needs for themselves and to determine that neither they nor the students will be successful without them. They also need adequate resources and successful teacher models in each building to develop strong literacy and learning understandings and to meet daily challenges. Teacher training opportunities start with basic understandings and offer scaffolded development. Investments in literacy materials is important, as students will be more likely to read and write if they have books in their hands. Expanded instructional time for those who need it – extended day, extended year opportunities- allow not only the teacher, but also the students to have opportunities for growth. A teacher who buys into the goals and expectations more effectively impacts students than one who reluctantly and unenthusiastically implements a program because it is expected. Adequate funding for human resources, material resources, and the ongoing updating and developing are critical to the success of any program efforts – like planting the seed, nurturing, weeding, watering and

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caring for a plant. Schools can become better only if policies allow teachers and students to build their own capacity to be and do better.

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***Panel 4: How Can Technology and Intellectual Property Provisions Enhance Writing across the Curriculum*****Elizabeth Tebeaux**

Director of Distance Education and Professor of English  
Texas A&M University

**Virtual WAC****The Rationale**

Writing Across the Curriculum via cyberspace—or virtual WAC—is likely going to be the direction in which WAC as well as university writing centers move. The rationale: (1) writing resources must be accessible any time any place for both students and those faculty integrating writing assignments into their courses. The World Wide Web has created expectations of 24x7 access. Students are increasingly becoming accustomed to computer-based instruction and are less reliant on face-to-face discussion than students five years ago. Students will increasingly expect computer-based instruction, as the number of students who have grown up without computers will continue to shrink. (2) Given the cost constraints faced by universities, WAC programs will not be high priority items. Technology can reduce the need for more staff, fringe benefits, and dedicated work space. When demand for WAC and UWC services increases, software and websites can be cheaper than traditional infrastructure. Virtual WAC does not supplant face-to-face work with faculty and students, but it does provide a cost-effective supplement.

**The Benefits of Virtual Storage**

Universities that provide both writing centers and WAC can make the best use of these units through virtual storage of material needed by both faculty developing/grading assignments and by students who need help in different areas of writing.

Training graduate students across disciplines to assist faculty with evaluation of written assignments can be facilitated by storing instructional materials on the WAC web site. These materials can be easily revised, new material added, old material deleted. Sensitive material can be copy-protected.

Faculty who wish to include writing-intensive assignments need help in developing those assignments as well as in knowing how to evaluate the work. Faculty developing assignments need resource material. Virtual storage of guidelines for making writing assignments and grading/evaluation rubrics can provide self-help.

The WAC site should provide email access to the WAC staff.

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**What to Store Virtually**

- Items for faculty in Word or pdf form. Example material: abstracts, sample reports, assignments with sample responses.
- Discussion of how to develop abstracts, how to write introductions, how to answer essay questions
- Guidelines on how to evaluate writing assignments integrated into classes.
- Templates for evaluating and grading different types of written assignments.
- Guidelines for using copyright material found on the WAC site.
- Rules on usage, sentence structure, and main punctuation marks with exercises.
- List of workshops and services offered by WAC and WC staff.
- Notices and announcements
- Threaded discussions about various writing issues. Students and faculty can post/answer questions.

**The Electronic Reserve Room**

Many faculty have examples of writing in their discipline that they believe to be particularly effective. These can be archived in electronic reserve rooms for use by students in that class for that semester.

**Intellectual Property Issues and Virtual WAC**

Cyberspace, despite its ease of access, creates intellectual property issues. The best game plan is to anticipate and develop the WAC website with IP issues covered. Because of the rich range of materials that can be made available via the web site, copy right issues are critical:

- Contact the office on your campus about your plans for a virtual WAC or UWC site. Ask for any existing permission forms used by the university.
  - Be sure the university's WAC site shows that it is copyrighted with clear ownership by the university. Because all material on the website becomes a fixed medium, material on the website is automatically protected by copyright. However, you want everyone to know that the copyright holder is the university. .
  - Have students and staff who work in WAC or in the UWC sign work for-hire agreements. Their employment terms need to show that they are expected to contribute to the development of the web site, and their work becomes the property of the university, even if they may still continue to use it in their own teaching (but not in texts they may write.) WAC employee handbook needs to make the rules clear.
  - If you wish to use any student material on the website, be sure to have the student sign a release form.
  - Be sure to include the source on all material used on the WAC/UWC wet sites.
  - If faculty have copyrighted material they wish to use as examples for writing assignments in their classes, give them two choices: seek permission from the journal/publication that owns the copyright—often authors retain copyrights to their articles but not their texts. Or, establish a virtual reading room for that course for that
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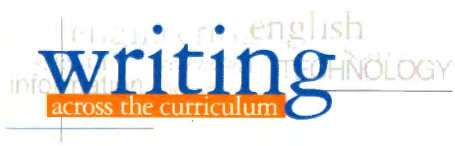
semester. In some universities, the library has staff who place materials online for use by students in a course for a specific semester.

- Encourage faculty to link their portal pages to the WAC web site, if your university has a portal system.
- Be sure to get permission from the publisher before you place usage, sentence structure, punctuation, etc. material taken from workbooks. If the university is using one or more texts produced by the company, additional materials available for online use may be available from the publisher.
- In short, avoid use of any material on the WAC web site unless you have permission to use it or it comes under the rubric of “fair use.”
- Try to avoid getting bogged down in copyright/ownership policies. Doing so undercuts the mission of WAC and the university writing center—to help students improve their writing and to involve faculty in the process.

**Resource**

For an efficient, clearly-worded guide to IP in cyberspace, see the following material prepared by Georgia Harper, Office of General Counsel for the University of Texas System: <http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/intellectualproperty/distance.htm>

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