

First-Year Undergraduate Experience (FYE) Committee Report April 30, 2009

Committee Members: Erik Craft, Joanna Drell, Joe Essid, Al Goethals, Libby Gruner (chair), April Hill, Dan Palazzolo, Carol Wittig, Joan Neff (ex officio)

The strategic plan calls for us to “provide an innovative shared first-year academic experience for all undergraduates.” This should come in the context of “an academic enterprise that will be connected, innovative, rigorous, and personal,” and that “has, as a foundation of its undergraduate curriculum, an unwavering commitment to the liberal arts.” With this as our charge, the committee on the first-year academic experience presents the following proposals as a first step towards reinvigorating the curriculum. The first-year experience is critical both for developing habits of mind that will carry forward throughout a student’s career, and for focusing attention on transferable academic skills, including critical reading and thinking, and the ability to write and speak clearly and effectively.

We envision a first year academic experience that will

- expand students’ understanding of the world
- enhance their ability to read and think critically
- enhance their ability to communicate effectively, in writing, speech, and other appropriate forms
- develop the fundamentals of information literacy and library research
- provide the opportunity for students to work closely with a faculty mentor

These goals focus our attention on the importance of a liberal arts curriculum: it combines an emphasis on important skills (thinking, reading, communicating) with a concern for developing intellectual curiosity. We thus call for a first-year program that draws on the strengths of the University of Richmond—its size, which allows for personal connections between faculty and students; its many schools, which offer a variety of ways of interpreting the world; its world class faculty—in order to develop our students as open-minded, life-long learners with a sense of purpose in their education.

The committee was convened in February as part of the ad hoc curriculum task force. We received the Provost’s charge, as follows: “Goal 1 of Principle I of the Strategic Plan is to ‘Capitalize on interdisciplinary and cross-school connections to provide students a distinctive experience.’ Action step (viii) states ‘To ensure implementation of these action steps, establish and charge a representative ad hoc faculty task force to propose a revised undergraduate first-year experience, general education framework, and upper-division curricular opportunities consistent with an integrated academic enterprise.’ The task force will have representation from all five schools and three subgroups to match the three-point charge. Delivery dates for recommendations will be staggered with the first being for the first-year experience tentatively due in Spring 2009.” Thus charged, we held our first meeting Monday, February 23 and have met at least weekly since that date (with the exception of Spring Break week).

Members of the committee began by reading and discussing sections of Derek Bok’s *Our Underachieving Colleges* (Princeton, 2006), along with a variety of other materials. A list of materials and reports consulted is available as Appendix 5. During our first month of meetings we focused primarily on developing a list of goals for the first-year experience. These goals are of course central to the entire liberal arts experience, but the first year must be foundational in helping to meet these goals.

Recognizing that many models for first-year curricula exist to fulfill the goals we identified, the committee focused primarily on commonalities we found among them: in order to achieve our goals, any model adopted will require a significant commitment of time, money, and energy on the part of faculty, staff, and administration. Appendix 6 details our deliberations about support and administration; here we highlight the central finding, that the FYE will become a signature program of the university, and will require rhetorical and material support commensurate with the program’s importance and reflective of our commitment to it. The establishment of the faculty development center (action step I.2.i in *The Richmond Promise*) will be an essential part of any of these models, as faculty come together to share their expertise and experiences in order to develop courses of appropriate rigor and depth.

The committee developed three models for a first-year academic experience. Each is detailed in an appendix; below, we highlight the salient features of each model and its relationship to our goals. All models assume a two-semester sequence of courses for all first-year students. All models also assume that the current English 103 (Expository Writing) requirement will be replaced by increased attention to reading, thinking, writing, and other communication skills throughout the first year and indeed the general education curriculum.¹ Courses in the FYE will therefore not only cover content but dedicate some class time to the processes of writing and other forms of communication as well. (See Appendix 7 for more on some models for incorporating writing into content-area courses.) The committee examined many models and considered a variety of options, including one-semester options, but concluded that the goals set out initially would best be served by a two-semester experience.

I. The Core Course

The Core course is truly an innovative academic experience, combining elements of a “great books” course focused on exploring human experience, the development of close reading skills, and the excitement of shared discovery in a year-long course. For almost twenty years the Core course has been a signature program of the university, the only course all entering students are required to take, and it has drawn faculty from across the university, involving all five schools and many different departments. The course is organized around common, fundamental issues in human experience, such as the claims that culture makes on our lives and the varying roles that a sense of self plays in making sense of the world. It pursues these questions through a common syllabus of readings drawn from a wide range of historical periods, cultures and modes of discourse—from the ancient to the contemporary, from the East to the West, from literature and philosophy to natural history and social analysis. Students generally stay with the same professor and classmates throughout the first year.

In order for the current Core course to achieve the goals the committee identified, we would need to reduce the class size to enable increased attention to communication skills and to incorporate a library research component. (See Appendix 1 for complete rationale.)

2. “Core Plus One”

The Core Plus One Special Topic Seminar model seeks to achieve the goals of the first year experience by complementing a one semester common syllabus seminar (similar to the current Core course) with a one semester special topic seminar developed by individual faculty and chosen by the students. We envision a sequence whereby every first-year student would take the Common/Core course in the fall term and students would choose a special topic seminar from a menu of options offered for the spring. While both common syllabus and topic seminar courses are common in first-year experiences, this plan innovates by combining both models within a framework of small classes and frequent faculty contact.

The common syllabus in the fall allows for a consistency of approach to the skills of thinking, reading, and communicating, as well as retaining the valuable community-building experience of involving an entire entering class in a common course. The spring semester seminar could build on these skills and also incorporate a library research component. Seminars could have an interdisciplinary component, could be team taught, could be coupled with advising, and could—with additional support from the relevant units—incorporate experiential learning, community-based learning, or an international experience. (See Appendix 2 for proposal and rationale.)

Note: Faculty may teach either the common seminar in the fall or a special topic seminar in the spring, or both. Thus, the sequence allows at least some faculty and students to stay together for the entire first year, and we imagine that a portion of students and faculty will exercise this option.

3. Two Seminar Sequence

The two seminar model, like the other models, would be centered on a common set of goals and directives to enhance students’ abilities in reading, thinking, and communicating. A seminars program would give all faculty the opportunity to teach ideas and topics that they are most passionate about and provide students with choices during their first year. (See Appendix 3 for proposal and rationale.)

¹ English 103 would not be eliminated, but would no longer be required. We anticipate that a very small number of students—perhaps 30-40—would elect the course in the first few years of the new curriculum.

In this proposal, students would take two first-year seminar courses, one in the fall and the other in the spring. They would choose their seminars from a list of clustered offerings such as: “Science, Technology, Society,” “Self and Community,” “Individuals and the World,” and “Exploring Ideas.” Students would be required to choose courses in two different areas to ensure some breadth of experience. Library research, developmental writing, and additional communication skills would be built into both semesters of the program. It might be possible for groups of faculty to propose clusters of courses together, courses that might resemble the current Core course or that might be linked by theme or topic; however, the two seminar model does not include a single common experience for all entering students.

Alternatively, any of these plans could be implemented in a one-semester FYE format. Though a one-semester requirement does not permit the same degree of practice possible in a two-semester sequence, it could begin a process to be continued in other General Education classes. If this model were chosen, we would work with those crafting a revised General Education curriculum to build upon the framework provided by the seminar, to continue the development of communication, information literacy, and understanding of the world.

The committee recognizes that each model has both strengths and weaknesses, and that there are trade-offs among them. What they have in common, however, is a shared focus on student learning, a willingness to experiment, and a desire to involve the entire undergraduate faculty. We invite your further discussion of these models, and look forward to a vote to determine the framework that guides our deliberations on course development over the summer and fall.

Appendices:

1. Core Course rationale
2. Core plus one special topic seminar proposal
3. Two seminar proposal
4. Possible seminar topics for proposals 2 & 3
5. List of materials and reports consulted; open meetings held
6. FYE support and administration
7. WPA outcomes for a first-year composition course

Appendix 1: The Core Course

(taken from Core website: <http://core.richmond.edu/why/index.html>)

The Core Course has three overlapping aims:

- * to expand students' knowledge and understanding of different ways in which thinkers and writers have interpreted human experience;
- * to develop students' ability to engage and compare texts through reading, thinking, writing, and discussing; and
- * to establish a foundation for conversations on serious questions, among both students and faculty, that extend beyond the course itself.

How does it endeavor to achieve these aims?

The course pursues the first aim by assigning texts that display a wide array of perspectives on the meaning of life. The guiding assumption is that the examination of a variety of approaches to common human problems will give students a more sophisticated understanding of what is involved in making thoughtful sense out of experience. All of the texts in the course tend to focus on similar basic questions: Where did we come from? Where are we going? Why do people behave the way they do? To whom or to what do we owe responsibility? But since the writers of these texts look at these questions from varying vantage points (they live in different times and places, occupy different social positions, have different physical constitutions), they don't treat them in the same way. In trying to comprehend why this writer sees the world this way, while that writer sees it that way, students should not only discover new possibilities for interpreting experience, but also develop a sensitivity to the challenges interpretation must confront. Whether they agree with them or not, the exercise of thinking through various writers' visions of the world should give students a better understanding of the grounds for, and implications of, their own views.

The course pursues the second aim by having students do hard thinking about hard books. The guiding assumption here is that one of the best ways to learn to read, think, and express oneself well is to study the work of proven good readers, thinkers, and writers. By analyzing how gifted people think through tough problems on paper—by getting into conversations about such matters—one gets better at the job oneself. So instead of asking students to master a specific body of information, this course asks them to read and interpret a series of complex texts. The point is not to learn facts and formulas (although students will learn many new things), but to develop skills: how to absorb difficult material relatively quickly; how to see the way a text works; how to fashion clear, subtle, persuasive arguments for a position. Toward such ends, the course requires students to do considerable reading, conversing, and writing. Classes are kept small so that they will feel free to join in discussion and enjoy an instructor's close attention to their intellectual growth.

The course pursues the third aim by maintaining a common syllabus for all sections and drawing its instructors from the entire University faculty. Because every first-year student is pretty much reading the same book at the same time (and more than likely a lot of upper-class students have read the book too), there is always something substantial for students to talk about, not just in class, but in the dining center and residence hall. Should we buy this argument for political reform? Should we love or hate this character? What exactly is this writer trying to say? And because the course is not the property of one department, there are faculty all over the University who are in on the discussion. The fact that faculty from a great variety of disciplines will approach the common material in different ways should enrich conversations about that material: Students can learn much by comparing the approach taken in their own section with that taken in others. By nourishing this common conversation, the course provides an important undergirding for all other courses at the University: No matter what course a student is taking, the instructor knows that the members of the class have read certain books and discussed certain issues that can serve as a common point of reference for what he or she has to say.

While the above rationale taken from the Core Course website addresses the significant goals and achievements of the Core Course, we also note that the Core Course in its current incarnation satisfies most, but not all, of the goals we have set out for an FYE. The Core Course admirably expands students' understanding of the world, enhances their ability to read and think critically, and offers them the unique opportunity to work closely with a faculty mentor over the course of a single year. Library research is not part of the Core Course as it is currently structured; nor does every section pay equal attention to writing and other communication skills. Our task as a committee, should this model be endorsed by a majority of the faculty, will be to work with the current Core syllabus and advisory committees to determine the best ways to revise the Core Course to satisfy the goals of our committee and of the Richmond Promise.

Appendix 2: Core Plus One Special Topic Seminar

The Core Plus One Special Topic Seminar model seeks to achieve the goals of the first year experience by complementing a one semester common syllabus seminar (similar to the current Core course) with a one semester special topic seminar developed by individual faculty and chosen by the students. We envision a sequence whereby the Core course would be taken by every first year student in the fall term and students would choose a special topic seminar from a menu of options offered in the spring.

Compared with the current two semester Core requirement, the Core Plus One Special Topic Seminar model would introduce students to a broader range of learning experiences (including a research based writing component), offer students choices, give faculty more flexibility in designing seminars, and involve more faculty in the first-year experience.

Core Seminar	Special Topic Seminar
<p><u>Course Design</u> (Designed like the current Core course)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Common syllabus of a broad theme (TBD) -Close reading and discussion of original texts -Readings from several disciplines and perspectives - Developmental writing assignments based on textual analysis 	<p><u>Course Design</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Faculty design seminars around topics that reflect their interest/expertise -Students choose from a list of courses -Discussion of texts, experiences, or other forms of data -Developmental writing assignments, at least one paper based on research -Possible interdisciplinary component*
<p><u>Administration and Resource Implications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -All faculty eligible -Incentives and support for involvement -1 unit (Fall Semester) -50-55 Sections: expected enrollment (15-16) -Faculty Committee Oversight 	<p><u>Administration and Resource Implications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -All faculty eligible -Incentives and support for involvement -1 unit (Spring Semester) -50-55 Sections: Expected Enrollment (15-16) -Faculty Committee Oversight
<p><u>Advising Option</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Faculty may choose to advise students enrolled in the seminar 	<p><u>Advising Option</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Faculty may choose to advise students enrolled in the seminar

*An interdisciplinary component of the special topic seminar could be achieved in several ways: (1) instructor approaches the topic from more than one disciplinary perspective; (2) a team taught class; (3) a “visiting fellow” (a faculty member from another discipline) takes part in at least one week of the class; or (4) two or more related seminars plan occasionally to meet together.

Under the Core Plus One Model, by the end of the first year, students will have improved their critical reading and communication skills. They will have better writing skills, developed through sequenced assignments, opportunities for revision, and projects that require marshaling various types of evidence (from close reading of texts and library based research). They will have a broader understanding of the world, quite possibly gained through multi-disciplinary perspectives of important issues and questions. Students will also have two opportunities to develop a close relationship with a faculty member in the context of a seminar format.

The model is also highly flexible from an administrative and pedagogical standpoint: either of the seminars could pair students with their advisor; special topic seminars may also be offered for field of study or major credit; seminars may be team taught; and courses may involve community-based learning, or may be coordinated with residential life experiences. Most students will have two different faculty members, one for each of the two seminars, but the model allows a Core course faculty member to keep his/her students together for the entire year, if the Core instructor also teaches a special topic seminar in the spring and the students choose to take it. The experience at other universities indicates that when students list their top three to five choices, a registrar can place nearly all students in one of their desired seminars.

Appendix 3: Two Seminar Sequence

The two seminar proposal is centered on a common set of goals and directives to enhance students' abilities in thinking, reading, and communicating. A seminars program would give all faculty the opportunity to teach ideas and topics that they are most passionate about and provide students with choices during their first year.

Central to this proposal is a belief that there are many ways "to incorporate students into a community of learners from the very start of their collegiate careers." Multiple pedagogies can also provide "the fundamental skills required for subsequent coursework and life." These new seminars create a direct mechanism for faculty and students to engage with the Richmond Promise by offering courses that include components like community-based learning and engagement, interdisciplinary and/or cross-school work, or a focus on international perspectives. It would also be possible for the current Core 101-102 syllabi, with some modifications, to become seminars under this plan. Students who enjoyed their work the fall semester could then continue with the same faculty member in the spring.

Students would choose their seminars from a list of clustered offerings such as: "Science, Technology, Society," "Self and Community," "Individuals and the World," and "Exploring Ideas." Students would be required to choose courses in two different areas to ensure some breadth of experience.

Two courses, rather than one, offer a clear advantage as students make the transition from high school. In small sections and with the personalized attention of a faculty member, seminar students would practice habits of mind needed for general-education and majors courses.

Features and Outline of the Program:

- Two First-Year Seminars, with a maximum of 16 enrolled in each, would replace the current Core 101-102, Eng. 103, and Library 100/101 sequence.
- Seminars would be proposed by faculty and approved by a Committee. All seminars would need to meet minimum requirements for written work, reading, and pedagogical approaches.
- Faculty from all schools would have the opportunity to teach ideas and topics relevant to their interests and expertise.
- Seminars permit courses in many different subject areas and are driven by developmental goals rather than content.
- Library/information skills and library-based research could be integrated into both seminars
- Seminars could include components of community-based learning/engagement, multi-disciplinary perspectives, international education, etc.
- Some seminars might satisfy an additional General-Education requirement, but they would require an additional approval process.
- Some current Gen-Ed classes, or even Core 101-102, might easily be transformed into seminars, making it likely that faculty could "ramp up" for the program quickly.
- The Committee for the seminars program would need to insure that such courses are not merely 100-level versions of 200-level courses and that all seminars would be driven by goals, not disciplinary content.
- Eng. 103 would remain an elective, with a few sections on the books, for writers wishing additional practice. Bridge-to-Success students would be paired, during the first year, with a writing tutor and could enroll in an elective section of Eng. 103.

Appendix 4: Potential Seminar Topics for Options 2 & 3

What follows are very brief descriptions of possible seminar topics. Topics and categories would be subject to change, revision, and approval by the FYE committee.

- Sex: a study of biological, psychological, sociological, and historical perspectives on reproduction and the human body.
- Evolving: this course will evaluate evolutionary thinking from historical and modern perspectives. An emphasis on ways evolution has influenced science, society and the environment will be examined.
- Wabi Sabi Baby: this course will explore typological versus variational thinking and how these models of perfection and imperfection influence the ways humans see the world.
- Personal Genomes: This course will evaluate how the Human Genome Project has opened the door for personal genomics. The implications for genetic engineering and other genome altering therapeutics will be examined. A study of genetic determinism and societal perspectives in an age of personal genomics will be explored.
- The Science of Politics: How do science and politics mix? To what extent do political considerations affect government decisions about scientific discovery and use of scientific data to solve public problems?
- Psychoanalysis and behaviorism: Examines the works of Freud, B.F Skinner and others with the respect to the determinants of human behavior and human welfare. Any number of Freud's works (e.g., *The psychopathology of everyday life*; *Beyond the pleasure principle*) and books such as *Walden Two* by Skinner, *Behaviorism* by J.B. Watson, *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* by Karen Horney, or *Escape From Freedom* by Erich Fromm might be included.
- Crime and Criminals: "Law and Order" vs. Law and Order: Focuses on a comparison of popular media portrayals of crime and criminals versus empirical research in the social and behavioral sciences. Could include novels, popular books written by and about those who have committed crimes, films, TV shows, etc., and empirical research published in social and behavioral science journals, books, and online government documents.
- Democracy in America: Taken from the title of de Tocqueville's famous book, this seminar could revisit de Tocqueville's analysis in light of the developments in theory and practice of democracy in the past 150 years.
- The Entitlement Society: An economic, political, and cultural analysis of the causes and consequences of entitlements (rights and government policies) in the United States.
- American Education in/and Literature and Film: The seminar explores both the depiction of the educational system within literature and film (in such classics as *Catcher in the Rye*, *The Dead Poets' Society* and *Up the Down Staircase*) and also explores the uses of literature and film in contemporary K-12 standards-based education: what are the implications of No Child Left Behind and Virginia's Standards of Learning for the study of literature and film? This seminar could include a community-based learning component of tutoring in Richmond Public Schools.
- The constitution, slavery, and secession: This seminar examines arguments about slavery, states' rights, and secession from the founding forward (the declaration, the articles of confederation, the constitution), during Washington's first administration, during the compromises of 1820 and 1850, and during the election of 1860 and the secession crisis, and so forth. Texts by Jefferson and Madison, Webster, Clay and Calhoun, Lincoln, Douglas and Taney, etc.
- American Exceptionalism: Historical, political, and sociological explanations for the manner and extent to which America differs from other western democracies.
- American History via Fiction and Economics: This seminar investigates important topics in American History: the Civil War, Water Navigation, Immigration, late nineteenth-century populism, the Great Depression, and Civil Rights. These issues will be studied by reading both economics articles and selections from classics in American literature (*Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *My Antonia*, *The Jungle*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Grapes of Wrath*, and others.) This seminar provides two different methods of understanding key events in our country's past and is an excellent complement for students enrolled concurrently in Principles of Macroeconomics.
- The Road: A range of fiction and films, mostly American though a few from other nations, that explore how writers and film-makers have reacted to roads and cars. Writers include Kerouac, Ballard, Steinbeck; films will include *Thelma and Louise*, *The Wild One*, and *The Road Warrior*. Writing assignments will be

- Hell!: an exploration of the concept of a punitive afterlife, through reading and exploration of Dante's *Inferno*, the Book of Revelation, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Michelangelo's "Last Judgment," Rodin's "Gates of Hell," and other depictions of hell in literature, art, and religion.
- Culture Wars in American Politics: How have issues like abortion, gay rights, gun control, and religious freedom shaped political campaigns and elections?
- Who is Afraid of Rush Limbaugh?: The seminar will chart the evolution of liberal and conservative political ideologies and their currency in today's news media.

Appendix 5

Materials and reports consulted by FYE committee

- *Our Underachieving Colleges*, Derek Bok (Princeton, 2006)
- Fall semester 08 Core survey
- last two years of year-end Core Course surveys
- results of visits to Cornell & Stanford first-year writing programs
- review of first-year programs at a variety of liberal arts and comprehensive institutions
- data on Core course grades, enrollments, and staffing
- NSSE data on writing
- 13 postings to anonymous internet forum
- WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition (attached as appendix 7)
- Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Writing Instruction (March 19, 2007; available online: http://provost.richmond.edu/committees/Curriculum_Review.htm)
- TFUGE Curriculum Proposal (March, 2006; available online: http://provost.richmond.edu/committees/Curriculum_Review.htm)
- report from Institute for FY Seminar Leadership, Asheville, NC, April 2009

Open Forums and Other Meetings of the FYE committee

- 7 open forums (total attendance: approximately 65)
- Meetings with Westhampton & Richmond Student Government Associations
- Meetings with A&S Academic Council, Business School Academic Council, JSLS Faculty, A&S Faculty
- various ad hoc and formal meetings with representatives of other constituencies, including Student Development, International Education, Civic Engagement, Common Ground, Core Course Coordinators, Advising, and others

Appendix 6: FYE Administration, Support, and Implementation Process

The FYE committee discussed a variety of issues pertaining to the implementation of the first-year experience. As a result of our deliberations, we developed a series of recommendations pertaining to the administration, support and implementation process for the first-year experience, irrespective of which model the faculty endorses.

Administration

The FYE should be administered by a Coordinator, supported by an advisory board elected from among the participating faculty. The advisory board and coordinator will be responsible for reviewing course proposals to ensure consistency of expectations among sections and clear adherence to course goals. There may also be a syllabus committee to oversee a common syllabus, if we select such a model. The Coordinator, who will serve a three-year renewable term, should receive reassigned time and a stipend for administering the program, much like other program coordinators and chairs. His/her responsibilities will include running the seminar for new faculty, scheduling, and coordinating with other departments and programs.

Support

The program will require three kinds of support: direct support to the program (release time, funding, etc.); support for departments and programs participating in the program (such as “points” towards new faculty lines and/or post-docs); and support for faculty teaching in the program (stipends for initial participation, reassigned time while preparing to teach, faculty learning communities, recognition towards tenure and promotion, preferential scheduling, etc.).

Direct Support to the Program

1. Perhaps most important is strong rhetorical support for the program at every level. As a signature program of the university, the FYE should be highlighted in admissions materials and in the university’s external and internal communications.

2. We also strongly recommend that a system be developed to “account” for the time of faculty participating in the program. While such time need not be “charged against” the program, it will be important to acknowledge and reward departments supplying faculty for the program. Some universities and colleges have developed “point” systems whereby departments earn new faculty lines based on the number of their faculty who participate in an FYE; others may have post-doctoral fellows positions that can be assigned to departments bearing a heavier load of participation. We recommend developing both these options.

3. The program will also require a budget for an ongoing faculty development seminar and summer workshops, which should be stipended. Faculty preparing to teach in the FYE will participate in a spring-semester seminar (reassigned time) or a stipended summer workshop (or possibly both). These seminars and workshops may cover such topics as:

- writing pedagogy
- critical reading pedagogy
- library research and information literacy
- syllabus design and assignment sequencing
- assessment as an instructional tool
- teaching a diverse student population
- teaching about diversity
- student participation and oral performance
- content coverage for a common syllabus
- engaged pedagogy through community-based learning
- student development issues (UR students after 5, teaching millennials, the 18-year-old brain, etc.)
- advising and residential life

The Coordinator will orchestrate these workshops with support from the new Faculty Development Center, the Writing Center, the Speech Center, Boatwright Library, the Academic Skills Center, Student Development, the Center for Civic Engagement, and Common Ground. The primary purpose of the seminars and workshops,

however, will be to share and develop faculty expertise—to connect faculty with each other in the service of a common goal.

4. The program will coordinate faculty learning communities for faculty engaged in similar courses (either a common syllabus or theme-linked seminars). The faculty learning communities will also be supported by the Faculty Development Center and other relevant units.
5. The program will also rely heavily on other units, such as the Writing and Speech Centers, which may thus require increased budgets to cover new initiatives.
6. The program will also require a budget for administrative support (including a full-time administrative assistant), web development, curricular materials (books and other texts), copying, etc

Support for Departments and Programs

1. While participation from specific departments will vary depending on the model selected and the size of the department, all departments in all the undergraduate schools should be able to participate in the FYE. Initially, larger departments and departments that have already participated heavily in the Core course may provide more sections of the FYE, but our goal is to enable all undergraduate faculty to participate. This will require some creative staffing solutions and financial support, preferably through full-time faculty lines (either new tenure-track lines or post-doctoral fellows). We recommend that all requests for new and reassigned faculty lines should include a consideration of their impact on the FYE.
2. Individual departments may wish to consider whether FYE offered through their department should also be eligible for elective credit within their major and/or minor programs.
3. Depending upon the model selected, it is likely that some, if not all, sections of FYE may also satisfy some additional requirements of the general education curriculum.

Support for Individual Faculty

1. Faculty participating in a spring-semester seminar should receive reassigned time and a stipend for their participation. Summer workshops should also be stipended.
2. Faculty will need to work closely with their seminar/workshop groups and develop faculty learning communities out of these groups for ongoing support.
3. A library liaison should be assigned to each section of the FYE to provide support for library research and information literacy instruction.
4. Writing (and perhaps speech) fellows should be provided to serve as “First Year Fellows.” These advanced students with a particular interest in the FYE will be trained to work closely with faculty to help their students with writing and communication skills, and perhaps other aspects of the first year experience.
5. Participation in the FYE should be taken into account in annual reviews and tenure & promotion decisions.
6. Faculty who choose to combine advising, community-based learning, or a residential learning option with their FYE should receive additional financial and administrative support for these efforts.

Implementation Process

FYE course enrollments should be limited to 15-16 students. Estimating a class size of 800, we will require 53-55 sections per semester. If the faculty vote to endorse the Core Plus One model or the Two-Seminar Sequence model, it will be necessary to phase in the development of the new FYE over the course of several years while the existing Core Course continues to be offered during the transition period.

Appendix 7: WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition

Adopted by the Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA), April 2000

For further information about the development of the Outcomes Statement, please see

<http://comppile.tamucc.edu/WPAoutcomes/continue.html>

For further information about the Council of Writing Program Administrators, please see

<http://www.wpacouncil.org>

A version of this statement was published in WPA: Writing Program Administration 23.1/2 (fall/winter 1999): 59-66

Introduction

This statement describes the common knowledge, skills, and attitudes sought by first-year composition programs in American postsecondary education. To some extent, we seek to regularize what can be expected to be taught in first-year composition; to this end the document is not merely a compilation or summary of what currently takes place. Rather, the following statement articulates what composition teachers nationwide have learned from practice, research, and theory. This document intentionally defines only "outcomes," or types of results, and not "standards," or precise levels of achievement. The setting of standards should be left to specific institutions or specific groups of institutions.

Learning to write is a complex process, both individual and social, that takes place over time with continued practice and informed guidance. Therefore, it is important that teachers, administrators, and a concerned public do not imagine that these outcomes can be taught in reduced or simple ways. Helping students demonstrate these outcomes requires expert understanding of how students actually learn to write. For this reason we expect the primary audience for this document to be well-prepared college writing teachers and college writing program administrators. In some places, we have chosen to write in their professional language. Among such readers, terms such as "rhetorical" and "genre" convey a rich meaning that is not easily simplified. While we have also aimed at writing a document that the general public can understand, in limited cases we have aimed first at communicating effectively with expert writing teachers and writing program administrators.

These statements describe only what we expect to find at the end of first-year composition, at most schools a required general education course or sequence of courses. As writers move beyond first-year composition, their writing abilities do not merely improve. Rather, students' abilities not only diversify along disciplinary and professional lines but also move into whole new levels where expected outcomes expand, multiply, and diverge. For this reason, each statement of outcomes for first-year composition is followed by suggestions for further work that builds on these outcomes.

Rhetorical Knowledge

By the end of first year composition, students should

- * Focus on a purpose
- * Respond to the needs of different audiences
- * Respond appropriately to different kinds of rhetorical situations
- * Use conventions of format and structure appropriate to the rhetorical situation
- * Adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality
- * Understand how genres shape reading and writing
- * Write in several genres

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- * The main features of writing in their fields
- * The main uses of writing in their fields
- * The expectations of readers in their fields

Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing

By the end of first year composition, students should

- * Use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating
- * Understand a writing assignment as a series of tasks, including finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing appropriate primary and secondary sources
- * Integrate their own ideas with those of others
- * Understand the relationships among language, knowledge, and power

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- * The uses of writing as a critical thinking method
- * The interactions among critical thinking, critical reading, and writing
- * The relationships among language, knowledge, and power in their fields

Processes

By the end of first year composition, students should

- * Be aware that it usually takes multiple drafts to create and complete a successful text
- * Develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proof-reading
- * Understand writing as an open process that permits writers to use later invention and re-thinking to revise their work
- * Understand the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes
- * Learn to critique their own and others' works
- * Learn to balance the advantages of relying on others with the responsibility of doing their part
- * Use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- * To build final results in stages
- * To review work-in-progress in collaborative peer groups for purposes other than editing
- * To save extensive editing for later parts of the writing process
- * To apply the technologies commonly used to research and communicate within their fields

Knowledge of Conventions

By the end of first year composition, students should

- * Learn common formats for different kinds of texts
- * Develop knowledge of genre conventions ranging from structure and paragraphing to tone and mechanics
- * Practice appropriate means of documenting their work
- * Control such surface features as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- * The conventions of usage, specialized vocabulary, format, and documentation in their fields
- * Strategies through which better control of conventions can be achieved

Composing in Electronic Environments

As has become clear over the last twenty years, writing in the 21st-century involves the use of digital technologies for several purposes, from drafting to peer reviewing to editing. Therefore, although the kinds of composing processes and texts expected from students vary across programs and institutions, there are nonetheless common expectations.

By the end of first-year composition, students should:

- * Use electronic environments for drafting, reviewing, revising, editing, and sharing texts
- * Locate, evaluate, organize, and use research material collected from electronic sources, including scholarly library databases; other official databases (e.g., federal government databases); and informal electronic networks and internet sources
- * Understand and exploit the differences in the rhetorical strategies and in the affordances available for both print and electronic composing processes and texts

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- * How to engage in the electronic research and composing processes common in their fields
- * How to disseminate texts in both print and electronic forms in their fields