Non-Consent Agenda Item:
Approval to change General Education Writing Guidelines to Policy

Effective Date:
Spring 2016 for all Tier One/Two courses.

Proposed General Education Writing Policy

The University recognizes that writing is a basic way of learning as well as a means of ordering and communicating knowledge. In General Education courses, writing engages students actively with the body of facts, ideas, and theories they interact with in the disciplines. It helps students develop a critical appreciation of the ways in which knowledge is acquired and applied. To this end, writing assignments should be relevant to the discipline and the course.

Tier Two course instructors may assume that students have taken First-year Composition, but Tier One course instructors should assume that most students have not completed this requirement.

The following policies for integrating writing assignments are applied during approval and re-approval evaluations of Tier One and Tier Two courses. The University-wide General Education Committee will look for specifics when evaluating course proposals; sample assignments are helpful during course evaluation.

• Writing assignments, both formal and informal, are integrated into the course requirements through more than one means. Some examples are written papers, laboratory reports, abstracts, quizzes, examinations, journals, ungraded writing assignments, writing during the class session, and writing in small groups. Examinations and quizzes alone are not enough, even though they may include essay questions.
• Writing assignments emphasize critical inquiry – including skills of gathering, interpreting, and evaluating information appropriate to the area of study – through attention to the process of writing. Practice of various strategies, such as focusing ideas, drafting, revising, critical reading, and research using outside sources, support the writing process.
• Writing assignments are evaluated for format, organization, style, grammar, and punctuation, as well as content and participation in the scholarly conversation.
• At least one writing assignment involves a revision process in which students receive instructor and/or peer feedback on a first draft and make substantive revisions before submitting a subsequent draft for grading.
• Writing assignments may vary in number and length, but must add up to a minimum of 10 pages or 2500 words over the term. One or more writing assignments of at least 750 words must be done outside of the class session.

Rationale for the Change:
• A recent assessment of student writing at the UA revealed that no difference existed in the quality of writing between freshmen and seniors.
• Writing should be prioritized in the General Education Curriculum to ensure that students’ writing skills improve.
• In practice, the UWGEC has long required new General Education courses to satisfy all “writing intensive guidelines” for approval.
• Consolidation and clarification of the writing guidelines includes examples of how writing assignments can be integrated into General Education coursework.
• Revisions support the mission of The Writing Program’s First-Year Writing (Composition) courses and General Education Writing Across the Curriculum.
Approvals:

University-wide General Education Committee 5/13/15
Undergraduate Council: 10/13/15
Graduate Council: N/A
Academic Deans: 10/20/15
Administrative Review: 10/26/15
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