



*A Community  
of Writers*



TEXAS A&M  
UNIVERSITY  
CENTRAL TEXAS™

**QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN**  
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# Contents

<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Section 1. QEP Topic Identification and Justification.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Phase I: Selecting a QEP Topic Area .....	5
Phase II: Targeting QEP to Address a Gap in Student Learning .....	5
Phase III: Plan Development .....	6
<b>Section 2. QEP Goals and Outcomes .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Section 3. Scholarly Foundations.....</b>	<b>10</b>
Introduction.....	10
The Emergence of WAC and WID Programs .....	11
WAC and WID: A Distinction Without a Difference? .....	11
Writing as a Way of Knowing and Doing Within the Disciplines .....	12
Components of Successful WAC/WID Programs .....	13
Writing Intensive Courses.....	13
Faculty Workshops.....	14
Importance of a Partnership Between the Library and the WID Program.....	14
Importance of Collaboration Between the Writing Center and the WID Program.....	16
New Initiative for High Impact Writing Instruction .....	19
Connecting Deep Learning Experiences to a WID Initiative.....	20
<b>Section 4. QEP Implementation Plan .....</b>	<b>22</b>
Goal 1 – Student Learning Goal .....	22
Writing Intensive Courses.....	22
Early Writing Intensive Courses.....	23
Role of Library and Implementation of Embedded Librarians.....	23
Role of Writing Center and Implementation of Writing Tutors.....	24
Goal 2 – Institutional Goal .....	25
Faculty Development Writing Instruction Workshops.....	25
Early Writing Intensive Course Development.....	26
Faculty Writing Liaisons.....	27
Goal 3 – Aspirational Goal.....	27
High-Impact Practices Development Grants.....	27
Reflective Writing and Experiential Learning Transcripts.....	28
<b>Section 5. Assessment.....</b>	<b>32</b>
Assessment Roles.....	32
Assessment Measures .....	32
Assessment of the Student Learning Goal .....	32

Overview of Student Learning Goal and Assessment Methods.....	32
Multi-State Collaborative (MSC). ....	33
A&M–Central Texas Value-Added Writing Assessment. ....	34
<i>ETS Proficiency Profile</i> . ....	35
National Survey of Student Engagement and Other Surveys.....	36
Assessment of the Institutional Goal .....	37
Overview of the Institutional Goal and Assessment Methods.....	37
Assessment of Knowledge and Practice. ....	37
Perceptions of Increased Competence.....	38
Engagement with Faculty Leaders/Peer Mentors.....	38
Assessment of the Aspirational Goal.....	38
Overview of the Aspirational Goal and Assessment Methods. ....	38
Experiential Transcripts. ....	38
Focus Groups. ....	39
FSSE. ....	39
Alumni Survey.....	39
Resource Prioritization.....	39
Conclusion.....	39
<b>Section 6. Resources</b> .....	40
Human and Administrative.....	40
Fiscal .....	40
<b>References</b> .....	42
Appendix A: FCTL Offerings (2017-18) .....	45
Appendix B: Assessment Plan.....	50
Appendix C: Written Communication Value Rubric .....	63
Appendix D: Quality Enhancement Plan Data Collection Schedule .....	65
Appendix E: Position Descriptions.....	66
Appendix F: Organizational Chart .....	68

# Executive Summary

## **Texas A&M University–Central Texas Quality Enhancement Plan: *A Community of Writers***

As an upper-level institution with a diverse student population, Texas A&M University–Central Texas faces many unique challenges when it comes to writing instruction. Students come to A&M–Central Texas with varying levels of preparation for writing in academia, especially within their chosen disciplines. As a result, the A&M–Central Texas Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)—*A Community of Writers*—will focus on a Writing in the Disciplines (WID) approach. The focus area was identified as a gap in student learning, as student scores on the 2013 ETS exam in writing were at the 50th percentile. Furthermore, the unique nature of A&M–Central Texas—made unique both by the courses offered and its largely nontraditional student body—makes written communication a skill of paramount importance for socializing students in their chosen disciplines and future professions.

The student learning goal, which is the primary goal for the A&M–Central Texas QEP in support of the academic master plan mission and university mission, is to graduate proficient writers with the knowledge and skills essential to writing in a variety of disciplinary contexts. By focusing on a WID approach, A&M–Central Texas will emphasize the various academic and professional contexts in which students will engage throughout their academic and professional careers. The main focus will be to improve the existing Writing Intensive (WI) course structure, as well as to develop Early Writing Intensive (EWI) courses for each discipline focused on discipline-specific writing instruction, extensive formative and summative assessment, and multiple opportunities to revise. Additionally, faculty will be afforded the opportunity to choose from a variety of writing instruction support services. Each course will be assigned a tutor from the University Writing Center (UWC) and an embedded librarian

from the University Library to assist faculty and work directly with students.

The institutional goal for the A&M–Central Texas QEP is to support faculty in offering effective writing instruction. To facilitate classrooms that foster the development of student writing and create a culture that stimulates the development of student writing, the UWC, in collaboration with the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL), will provide training, resources, and additional professional development to the university faculty. Key components in fulfilling this goal are the development of Faculty Writing Liaisons and annual faculty development workshops. Select faculty from each discipline will be given the opportunity to become Faculty Writing Liaisons, receiving extensive training in writing instruction and eventually mentoring other faculty members. The UWC and the FCTL will also host a series of annual faculty development workshops that will emphasize understanding WI courses and WID concepts, as well as focus on other vital areas of writing instruction—such as best practices in formative assessment, rubric development techniques, facilitating classroom workshops, teaching strategies for revision, and implementing ePortfolios.

A&M–Central Texas' third goal, our aspirational goal, is to create a culture that fosters the development of student writing through deep learning experiences. Writing instruction is currently emphasized in the institution's WI courses; however, writing should permeate the entire student experience. Therefore, the QEP will promote deep learning experiences (Beattie, Collins, & McInnes, 1997) as platforms to support written communication. The high-impact educational practices (HIPs) identified by Kuh (2008) provide an initial pool of deep learning strategies that many A&M–Central Texas faculty are currently utilizing. Additionally, effective implementation of HIPs often provides an opportunity to support written communication, such as reflection in service-learning or

manuscript preparation in undergraduate research. In order to foster the development and inclusion of HIPs by faculty, A&M–Central Texas will establish grants that support faculty utilization of HIPs that specifically reinforce written communication. Students will have the opportunity to demonstrate their reflective writing skills and experiences utilizing an experiential transcript. Additionally, expanding the institution’s current experiential transcript to include reflective prompts will increase the reach and impact of the QEP to all corners of the institution.

A&M–Central Texas undergoes a rigorous assessment cycle for all its 25 baccalaureate degrees and 18 graduate degrees; when the QEP is approved, it too will take part in the university-wide commitment to continuous improvement under the coordination of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. The outcomes for the student learning goal will be primarily assessed through data received from the Multi-State Collaborative (MSC), as well as the A&M–Central Texas Value-Added Writing Assessment, an in-house initiative that—similar to the MSC—draws

upon the Written Communication VALUE Rubric. Assessment of the institutional goal outcomes will focus on usage statistics, faculty feedback for the various faculty development opportunities and initiatives being implemented, as well as the current programmatic assessment of the WI courses predicated upon syllabi reviews, evaluation of formative assessment practices, and classroom observations. The aspirational goal’s outcomes will be assessed by employing the Written Communication VALUE Rubric and providing students with technical and contextual feedback prior to the provision of credit.

The A&M–Central Texas QEP addresses a significant and measurable need for improved writing instruction across the university. As an upper-level institution, it is essential that students gain the written communication skills and abilities needed to succeed in academia and beyond. Cultivating a “Community of Writers” will create a culture of writing at A&M–Central Texas that will improve student writing throughout the university.

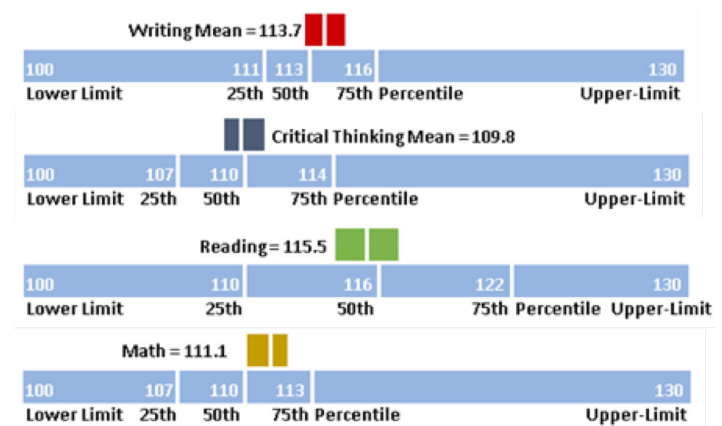
## SECTION 1.

# QEP Topic Identification and Justification

## Phase I: Selecting a QEP Topic Area

In early January 2016, leaders from Academic and Student Affairs<sup>1</sup> met to identify possible QEP topics that would yield the most profound impact on an emerging university community. Recognizing the vast array of possible topics—ranging from integrative and applied learning, intellectual and practical skills, personal and social responsibility, and civic and community engagement—the group chose to direct the considerable resources that would be invested in the chosen QEP into enhancing academic programs within the university rather than bolstering areas in which the community already excels, such as civic engagement and social responsibility. Namely, they examined empirical and anecdotal evidence accumulated over the past five years to identify articulable and measurable areas in need of student improvement. In particular, upon examining Texas A&M University–Central Texas student performance on the *ETS Proficiency Profile* in 2013 compared to national averages,<sup>2</sup> three topics emerged as areas in which real improvement might be possible across the campus: Written Communication, Critical Thinking, and Quantitative Reasoning.

Student scores in all three areas fell just below or at the 50th percentile range, representing gaps in student learning and opportunities for institutional improvement. As a new institution, A&M–Central Texas is in the early stages of establishing institutional assessment practices, and the ETS is one of the few metrics available to the institution at this time. The ETS data was supported by indirect measures from



National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE), as well as anecdotal evidence shared by teaching faculty, the University Writing Center (UWC), the University Library, and the Tutoring Center on campus.

## Phase II: Targeting QEP to Address a Gap in Student Learning

At spring convocation in mid-January, the Provost introduced the three potential QEP topics and presented a timeline for the SACSCOC accreditation reaffirmation process and development of the QEP. She announced her intention to enlist volunteers to serve on the Quality Enhancement Plan Topic and Concept Paper Committee, whose mission would be to create concept papers in a white paper format for each of the identified competencies. The call for volunteers was formally issued via email in March,<sup>3</sup> and 17 members of the campus community were chosen from dozens of volunteers to participate. This diverse group of appointed faculty, staff, and students was chosen for its comprehensive representation of

1 Dr. Peg Gray-Vickrey; Dr. Troy Courville; Dr. Richard Schilke; Dr. Morgan Lewing; Mr. Paul York  
 2 ETS Exam Data A&M–Central Texas Summary  
 3 QEP Concept Papers – Call for Volunteers (email)

the university community, including professors from the College of Arts & Sciences, the College of Business Administration, and the College of Education, along with the constituents from the University Library, the UWC, Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL), Graduate Studies, the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL), Academic Advising, Enrollment Services, Information Technology (IT), and Student Affairs. Three concept paper groups were formed, one for each of the identified topics, with an attempt to bring together members' expertise for each competency. Each concept paper provided a definition of its competency, addressed a defined learning domain, suggested supportive high-impact educational practices (HIPs), along with potential learning outcomes and assessment, and demonstrated how the topic integrates and complements the university mission and strategic plan. The goal was to provide the university community with additional insight into why the identified competencies and learning domains are important and relevant to A&M–Central Texas and to assess the viability of a QEP on each proposed topic area.

The three concept papers were distributed campus-wide for review on June 6, 2016, along with QEP Guidelines which outlined indicators of an acceptable plan. Faculty and staff were asked to review the concept papers and to indicate on the accompanying survey which topic most successfully addressed the area of greatest need<sup>4</sup> and which articulated plan more closely aligned with institutional planning efforts, established a strong relationship to institutional needs, detailed student learning outcomes tied directly to institutional needs, and established a clear relationship between activities of QEP and the improvement of student learning. The survey was available throughout the month of June, and community feedback was requested during that time. When the votes were tallied, Written Communication received 49% of the vote,<sup>5</sup> followed by 38% for Critical Thinking, and 13% for Quantitative

Reasoning. The QEP Topic and Concept Paper Committee recommended to the Provost the adoption of Written Communication, recognizing the strong institutional preference for this topic, coupled with the data documenting academic performance and student perception of need. In addition, the existing university infrastructures could be strengthened to support the Written Communication QEP and the foundation that was established in the A&M–Central Texas Academic Master Plan, "Vision 2020."

### Phase III: Plan Development

In accordance with the recommendation of the committee and the university community, Written Communication was embraced as the QEP topic for A&M–Central Texas. The Written Communication-Enhancement Initiative, as set forth in the concept paper, is

designed to improve students' writing skills across the University... to help ensure that students' written communication skills can be effectively applied to the digital environment. Written communication... is essential to nearly all areas of academic endeavor and is directly aligned with the mission of the University.<sup>6</sup>

During the Fall 2016 convocation, the Provost announced Written Communication as the QEP topic and notified the faculty, staff, and students in attendance that she would send out an email soliciting volunteers to serve on the QEP Development Task Force, who would then be tasked with identifying specific themes and goals, determining learning outcomes, and developing a comprehensive implementation and assessment plan for the Written Communication QEP. The Provost sent an email to A&M–Central Texas faculty and staff on August 23, 2016 asking for volunteers who had an interest in both HIPs and improving student learning in the area of writing to serve on the QEP Development Task Force.<sup>7</sup>

4 QEP Concept Paper Survey – Call for Feedback (email)

5 Survey 1 Results

6 Written Communication-Enhancement Initiative QEP Concept Paper

7 QEP Development Task Force – Call for Volunteers (email)

Members of the QEP Development Task Force were appointed by the Provost. As with the QEP Topic Selection Committee, the Task Force is intentionally representative of each academic college, and reflective of Student Affairs, academic advising, and both the UWC and the University Library. In addition to the newly appointed director of the UWC, the director of the FCTL, and a representative from the University Library, the other eight volunteers chosen represent strong writers with unique expertise and experience in the area of written communication. The QEP Development Task Force convened for their first meeting in mid-September 2016 and began benchmarking previous QEPs that emphasized written communication.

In mid-October, the committee members formulated five themes and three broad goals they felt encapsulated a potential framework for the Written Communication QEP. These themes and goals were presented to the university community for feedback: “A Community of Writers,” “Warriors Write Well,” “Writing by Example,” “Writing Warriors,” and “Write for Life – Developing Lifelong Writing Skills.” University faculty received an email from the Provost in early November requesting feedback about the potential QEP themes and goals articulated by the QEP Task

Force Committee.<sup>8</sup> The respondents were asked to rank the five themes in order of their favorite to least favorite and then provide comments about the themes and goals. From the five themes, 39.4% of faculty respondents chose “A Community of Writers.”<sup>9</sup> The QEP Development Task Force discussed the results of the poll and affirmed the top choice. This theme will provide infrastructure upon which to build a strong, community-based plan, to facilitate branding and community buy-in, and to begin to take hold in the culture of the university.

Throughout the remainder of the QEP development process, the committee emphasized communication and feedback. In addition to the previously mentioned methods, the QEP focus and goals were discussed at each convocation from spring of 2016 to spring of 2018, and in the fall of 2017 members of the committee discussed the plan with the President’s Executive Council, Faculty Senate, Staff Council, Student Government Association, the three academic colleges, Student Affairs, the UWC, the University Library, and other support areas. Furthermore, in the fall of 2017 feedback was solicited from the director of the University Writing Center at Texas A&M University-San Antonio.

8 QEP Potential Themes and Broad Goals – Request for Feedback (email)

9 Themes and Goals Survey Feedback

## SECTION 2.

## QEP Goals and Outcomes

The theme of the QEP, *A Community of Writers*, was established in response to a demonstrated gap in student learning. The *ETS Proficiency Profile* data revealed our institutional scores fell slightly above the mean, but in the lower end of the 50th percentile. The plan aligns with the university's core values of *knowledge*, providing “educational experiences to encourage lifelong learning and intellectual curiosity” and collaboration, developing and maintaining “partnerships to serve the needs of our students, faculty, staff, and external stakeholders.”<sup>1</sup> Some of our most valued stakeholders are local employers. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers' *Job Outlook 2016* (2015), 70.2% of employers identified writing as a key attribute they look for on a candidate's résumé. Therefore, not only will students improve their favorability as they apply for jobs, but regional employers will benefit as the university graduates more accomplished writers.

The QEP Development Task Force identified outcomes that will expand programs that provide students with rich, focused, and meaningful opportunities to write, and that will enhance faculty support and incentive to create a robust writing program. There are three articulated goals of *A Community of Writers* that frame the plan within a student learning, institutional, and aspirational context. The first goal directly addresses student learning in the area of written communication and is based on the VALUE Rubric developed by the Association of American Colleges & Universities ([AAC&U], 2009). Next, the institutional goal addresses how faculty can be supported in terms of delivering exemplary writing instruction. The aspirational goal attempts to philosophically expand written communication and writing instruction beyond writing intensive (WI) courses and throughout the student experience by promoting deeper learning experiences, such as HIPs (Kuh, 2008), as mean-

ingful platforms to intentionally infuse writing into the culture at A&M–Central Texas.

**Student Learning Goal:** Graduate proficient writers with the knowledge and skills essential to writing in a variety of disciplinary contexts

1. Upon graduation, undergraduate students will be able to produce writing that demonstrates understanding and awareness of audience, purpose, and disciplinary contexts
2. Upon graduation, undergraduate students will be able to produce writing that demonstrates understanding of genre expectations and disciplinary writing conventions and skillfully integrates sources
3. Upon graduation, undergraduate students will be able to control grammar, syntax, and mechanics in communicating ideas with clarity and concision for their intended audience

**Institutional Goal:** Support faculty in offering effective writing instruction

1. Faculty will engage in effective writing instruction
2. Faculty will engage in effective development of courses that foster student writing
3. Faculty will engage with faculty leaders and peer mentors regarding effective practices in writing instruction

**Aspirational Goal:** Create a culture that fosters the development of student writing through deep learning experiences

1. Students and faculty will value writing through deep learning experiences
2. The University will prioritize resources for writing instruction

Though expressed as separate goals, the three are intertwined and completely reciprocal, each serving

1 Texas A&M University–Central Texas Academic Master Plan “Vision 2020”

to achieve one overarching goal of elevating the level of writing achieved by our students. The institutional goal nurtures a culture in which the activities involved with enhancing student writing abilities become central, prestigious, and satisfying, a source of reward and pride for faculty and staff within the community. Faculty are given the opportunity to expand their own

knowledge, showcase their expertise, and collaborate with each other and with students. Certainly, the student learning goal thrives in that network of embedded support, giving clear, articulate voice for students to communicate and reflect upon the unique experiences created in the aspirational goal.

Table 2.1 illustrates how closely the QEP outcomes and goals align with the Academic Master Plan:

### Mapping the QEP Goals to the Academic Master Plan Priorities

	<b>Goal 1:</b> Graduate proficient writers with the knowledge and skills essential to writing in a variety of disciplinary contexts	<b>Goal 2:</b> Support faculty in offering effective writing instruction	<b>Goal 3:</b> Create a culture that fosters the development of student writing through deep learning experiences
<b>Priority 1:</b> A&M–Central Texas will be known for quality academic programs that are carefully selected to respond to regional needs.	X		
<b>Priority 2:</b> Promote a culture that celebrates faculty excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service.		X	X
<b>Priority 3:</b> Foster an environment of scholastic achievement and student success.	X	X	X
<b>Priority 4:</b> Texas A&M University–Central Texas will increase enrollment of academically qualified students to fulfill our mission of contributing to the economic transformation of our region.			X
<b>Priority 5:</b> Texas A&M University–Central Texas will be known as a leader in community engagement and community-based research.			X

## SECTION 3.

# Scholarly Foundations

## Introduction

Writing permeates the intellectual endeavors of academia, influencing every facet of the scholarly work that is undertaken. As a result, it is imperative for students to acquire the language skills that are necessary for academic success. As David Bartholomae (1986) aptly surmises, the student “has to learn to speak our language, to speak as we do, to try on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing that define the discourse of our community” (p. 4). Writing plays a role in academia beyond the mere communication of knowledge; writing, at its core, is a way of demonstrating the discursive abilities that enable one to engage in conversation with scholarly peers. As students learn to compose in a particular discipline, they become involved in the active process of understanding the epistemological foundations of that particular discipline (Bazerman, 2000; Carter, 2007; McLeod, 1987; Russell, 1995).

At A&M–Central Texas, the role of written communication reflects the unique features of the university as an institute of higher education. Notably, only upper-level and graduate courses are offered by A&M–Central Texas, which means that undergraduate students complete their general education requirements at another institution, and many students attend several institutions prior to enrolling at A&M–Central Texas. The student body has several unique features when compared with the larger population of traditional-aged undergraduates across the country. The average A&M–Central Texas student is nontraditional by age, and many do not begin upper-level coursework until several years after taking general education requirements. Also, a significant portion of students are affiliated with the military,<sup>1</sup> and many prefer courses be taught in an online or accelerated format

to accommodate deployments and other demands on their schedules. The unique structure of A&M–Central Texas, with its unique student body, makes written communication a skill of paramount importance for socializing students in their chosen disciplines and future professions. Students are not writing simply to demonstrate knowledge; they are writing to acquire and create knowledge, and to develop skills that will make them valuable contributors to their particular fields of study.

Since A&M–Central Texas plays such an integral role in preparing its students to become active and productive members of various intellectual communities, our QEP focuses primarily on Writing in the Disciplines (WID). By emphasizing the importance of written communication across the various disciplines and the vital role that writing plays in the creation and dissemination of knowledge, we can better prepare our students to participate in the intellectual challenges they will encounter in their specific disciplinary communities. Crucial to the WID approach will be an emphasis on the WI course structure—in particular the creation of the Early Writing Intensive (EWI) courses for each major discipline—within the disciplines and a sustained focus on improving the support provided by the UWC, FCTL, and the University Library. These academic support services will be the core pillars of our WID approach.

Through the creation of EWI courses in each discipline, students will be given the opportunity to receive discipline-specific writing instruction early in their course of study at A&M–Central Texas, allowing them to gain a solid foundation in writing for their disciplines as they begin their academic careers at A&M–Central Texas. Furthermore, the UWC, FCTL, and University Library will provide individual writing instruction tailored to disciplinary practices (UWC),

<sup>1</sup> In Fall 2017, we enrolled 121 active duty, 720 veteran, and 117 spouse and 163 child dependent students.

faculty development to improve disciplinary writing instruction (FCTL), and substantial support for disciplinary research practices (University Library). Such a structure will ensure that students are capable of improving their writing proficiency by developing the understanding and skills essential to writing in a variety of disciplinary contexts.

We will discuss the scholarly bases for choosing the WID approach for writing instruction, four components of successful WAC/WID programs that we have chosen to incorporate (WI courses, faculty workshops, library partnerships, and writing center collaborations), and our decision to implement a new initiative for high impact writing instruction.

## The Emergence of WAC and WID Programs

Historically, the emergence of writing classes and writing instruction, along with development of the field of Rhetoric and Composition, has frequently been tethered to the emergence of new student populations in the academy, and the perception that this change in admitted students highlighted a literacy crisis in America (Berlin, 1987; Carino, 1995; Russell, 1994). Although writing across the curriculum (WAC) programs emerged in the mid-1970s, David Russell closely associates the emergence of the WAC movement with the open admissions movement and the “literacy crisis” that appeared in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Open admissions policies were frequently depicted as admitting students who were not academically prepared for college, especially in the area of writing. The performance of students tested for writing on the 1974 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) led to the term “literacy crisis,” which became the focus of an article in *Newsweek* titled: “Why Johnny Can’t Write.” With ever more students being granted access to a collegiate education, by number and by profile, there was a deepening concern about literacy levels in the population as a whole, compelling colleges and universities to develop ways to assist underprepared students (Carino, 1995; Russell, 1994).

American universities, drawing upon British traditions, adopted the term WAC to demonstrate that writing

instruction was integrated throughout the curriculum to address the widespread literacy crisis presented by their student populations. Beaver College and Michigan Technological University housed two of the most influential WAC programs that developed during this period of the late 1960s and through the mid-1980s (Russell, 1994). After the WAC approach was implemented, the WID movement began to emerge in the mid- to late-1980s and was highly influenced by the work of Carolyn Miller, Charles Bazerman, and Greg Myers. Carolyn Miller’s (1984) groundbreaking article, “Genre as Social Action,” redefined genre as “typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations” (p. 159). For Miller, “if genre represents action, it must involve situation and motive, because human action, whether symbolic or otherwise, is interpretable only against the context of a situation and through the attributing of motives” (p. 152). Instead of viewing genre as a mere classification system, Miller defined genre as being inherently tethered to the actions rhetors were trying to accomplish within a particular context.

Charles Bazerman’s research examined writing in specific disciplines, in particular the scientific community, and provided further support that writing was not a generalizable skill, but intrinsically linked to the goals, actions, values, and epistemological foundations of the discourse communities in which writing resides. As a result, colleges and universities began to emphasize writing instruction that was integrated into the specific disciplines and/or various discourse communities.

## WAC and WID: A Distinction Without a Difference?

Although WAC and WID are often closely associated with one another, there can be distinct differences between them. Susan McLeod (1987) articulates two distinct approaches to WAC, one that she terms “cognitive” and the other as “rhetorical.” The cognitive approach emphasizes the manner in which writing can be “a mode of thinking and learning” (p. 20). McLeod notes that “One of the most powerful ways of building and changing these knowledge structures is through writing, through explaining things to ourselves

in a conscious way before we explain things to others” (p. 20). According to this approach, writing is a way of thinking; it is a method of discovering what we know. McLeod associates this approach most closely with writing activities such as journaling and ungraded assignments. In contrast, the rhetorical approach emphasizes the social aspects of writing, acknowledging that it is always a context-bound activity. According to McLeod, “This philosophy sees writing in a particular discipline as a form of social behavior in that discipline, and sees academic writing as a discourse community into which we must introduce our students, much as we try to make newcomers feel at home in conversations among our friends” (p. 20).

The distinction between cognitive and rhetorical approaches is often viewed as the distinction between “writing to learn” and “learning to write” (Ochsner & Fowler, 2004). The former uses writing as a conduit to learning; the latter emphasizes learning to write within a specific context. McLeod (1987) advocates, however, against a complete separation of the two approaches, noting that “the two philosophical approaches are different only in emphasis, not in kind” (p. 21). She believes that the programs emphasizing “writing to learn” do not necessarily contradict writing for specific audiences in specific disciplines, nor do programs that emphasize “learning to write in the disciplines” automatically undermine the importance of writing for learning. For McLeod, they are compatible; however, the language of WID—learning to write in the disciplines—will be the focal point of the A&M–Central Texas QEP. Since, by the time students reach A&M–Central Texas, they are primarily focusing on coursework for their majors, an emphasis on learning to write in their respective disciplines will be the key component of the QEP’s initiatives.

## **Writing as a Way of Knowing and Doing Within the Disciplines**

While some aspects of writing are generalizable, the characteristics that constitute quality writing in specific disciplines can vary significantly from one discipline to another (Bazerman, 2000; Carter, 2007; Russell, 1995). In essence, writing is not an autonomous skill that can be universalized across the disciplines;

hence, success in writing varies across discourse communities and in various contexts. Michael Carter (2007) views a generalized approach to writing instruction as “writing outside the disciplines,” whereas “writing in the disciplines” focuses on the “integrative relationship between writing and knowing” (p. 386). Thus, for Carter, “One way of understanding the distinction I am drawing between writing outside and writing in the disciplines is the difference between knowledge and knowing, that is, disciplines as repositories and delivery systems for relatively static content knowledge versus disciplines as active ways of knowing” (p. 387). WID focuses on the manner in which writing actively contributes to knowledge production within a field.

David Russell draws upon activity theory to illustrate the importance of writing being immersed in particular activity systems. Activity systems consist of a subject (a person or a group of people attempting to accomplish a goal), an object or objective (the goal or task they are trying to accomplish), and tools, of which language and writing are mediational tools used to accomplish specific tasks (Russell, 1995). According to Russell, writing cannot be learned in a decontextualized fashion. Instead, “one acquires the genres (typified semiotic means) used by some activity field as one interacts with people involved in the activity field and the material objects and signs those people use (including those marks on a surface that we call writing)” (Russell, 1995, p. 56). Thus, for Russell (1995), “writing does not exist apart from its uses, for it is a tool for accomplishing object(ive)s beyond itself” (p. 57). As a result, generalized writing instruction is rather limited since it does not immerse students in authentic contexts that allow them to use writing to achieve particular objectives relevant to their discipline.

Russell (1995) draws upon sports to provide an apt metaphor for his contentions. He notes that ball handling is a skill that spans various athletic endeavors, but “there is no autonomous, generalizable skill called ball using or ball handling that can be learned and then applied to all ball games” (p. 57). While developing skills in one sport may allow for greater ease in learning similar skills in another sport, ball handling

varies according to the particular activity in which a player is engaged. An athlete adept at dribbling a basketball might be able to transfer some premises to dribbling a soccer ball; however, the two are discrete activities and rely on separate parts of the body (hands and feet, respectively) to accomplish the task. Writing, for Russell, is the same in that some skills may transfer, but learning to write well in a discipline requires being immersed in the particular activities of that discipline. We learn ball handling in the context of specific sports; we learn to write in the context of specific disciplinary activities (Russell, 1995).

As students continue their academic journeys at A&M–Central Texas, a WID approach to writing instruction will aid them in learning to write well in their disciplines by immersing them in the activity systems of their chosen disciplines. Students can receive writing instruction that is relevant and pertinent to their particular area of study in disciplinary contexts that provide writing instruction and activities that reflect authentic discursive practices within their field. This instruction will allow them to learn genre conventions, methods of evidentiary support, organizational strategies, argumentation styles, approaches to formatting, etc. while engaging in genuine academic endeavors within their fields. To facilitate this approach, the QEP for A&M–Central Texas will draw upon the practices of successful WAC/WID programs.

## Components of Successful WAC/WID Programs

In “The State of WAC/WID in 2010: Methods and Results of the U.S. Survey of the International WAC/WID Mapping Project,” Chris Thaiss and Tara Porter identified several components of WAC/WID programs that emerged as more prominent in long-standing programs and could be seen as best practices. The key components that emerged were:

- » WI courses
- » Faculty Workshops
- » Partnerships between WAC/WID programs and libraries
- » Collaboration between the WAC/WID program and the writing center on a university’s campus

Each of these trends is crucial to developing successful and long-standing WAC/WID programs and each will be implemented by the A&M–Central Texas QEP.

## WRITING INTENSIVE COURSES

The presence of courses designated as WI was one of the most profound features that long-standing WAC/WID programs shared in common. Thaiss and Porter found that 52% of institutions with WAC/WID programs of less than five years duration had WI courses, yet institutions with longer-standing programs of six to ten years reported a higher rate of 65% that had WI courses (p. 561). As a result of these encouraging data, the QEP for A&M–Central Texas endorses the completion of two WI courses for each student—one at the beginning of the student’s coursework (EWI courses) in his or her selected discipline and the second near the student’s graduation.

Michelle Ballif (2006), chair of the successful Writing Intensive Program (WIP) at the University of Georgia, observed that “to teach writing is to teach the ‘ways of knowing’ unique to any discipline” and affirmed that the “most effective way to improve student writing is to do so within the context of disciplinary demands under the tutelage of committed faculty across the campus, who are willing and able to ‘articulate’ those conventions.” Not only do WIP classes promote writing and research in the discipline, but the program trains graduate students to serve as writing coaches to support WIP courses. After nine years of the program, a majority of the students enrolled in these courses returned positive feedback affirming that the program’s goal of writing improvement was realized (Ballif, 2006). Students appreciated having the opportunity to gain experience with writing within their disciplines, and reported that because of the program’s emphasis on revision, their writing processes improved along with their writing.

Additionally, WI programs established in disciplines outside of the humanities can be extremely valuable. Carnes, Awang, and Smith (2015) designed a WI business course to address their students’ poor writing skills, observing that lack of writing ability limits opportunities in the workforce, as “effective writing is fundamental in today’s professional environment”

(p.2). The authors recognized that WI courses, incorporating writing assignments that promote a deeper understanding of course content, were the best way to address the decline in student writing proficiency. Likewise, Ahlawat, Miller, and Shahid (2011), recognized the importance of writing and research involved in the daily practice of accounting, as “accountants in public practice conduct research, write memos, prepare reports, and often make presentations of solutions to client problems” (p. 46). These skills, mastering the specific type of research and format of the writing, vary across each discipline, which makes it crucial that each discipline—and every discipline—hosts its own WI course.

### **FACULTY WORKSHOPS**

Another notable component of successful WAC/WID programs is the offering of faculty workshops. A striking 87% of long-standing programs featured faculty development workshops focused on writing instruction, compared to the lower rate of 78% of all participating programs in the survey that included WI instruction workshops (Thaiss & Porter, 2010, p. 561). At A&M–Central Texas, the FCTL, in conjunction with the UWC, will adopt this best practice by developing faculty workshops designed to be an integral part of our QEP’s strategy.

Courtney Werner (2013) observed that many faculty members, even those in English departments, have not received training in writing pedagogy (p. 81). Anthony Paré (2010) aptly observed that “the ability to write well does not confer the ability to teach others to write” (p. 108). Faculty workshops can help faculty members articulate what it means to write well—even what “writing well” means. Werner recommends that university writing centers “act as faculty development centers for writing instruction, hosting various faculty development opportunities,” (Werner, p. 81) and providing workshops, teaming with the university’s English department and the office that facilitates faculty teaching and excellence (in our case, the FCTL). The UWC at A&M–Central Texas, directed by a faculty member, partners with the FCTL to offer faculty writing workshops and can foster “cross-pollination and interdisciplinary discussion” (Werner, p. 83).

Carol Rutz, director of the writing program at Carleton College, reported marked faculty buy-in after introducing a faculty-development program incorporating faculty workshops for writing. As a result of the program, she observed faculty making changes to their classes, including “being clear with students about learning goals and expectations, encouraging drafts, scaffolding assignments, encouraging help-seeking, using rubrics to assess learning, helping students work with numerical data and visual material, responding in a timely manner to student work, and providing exemplars” (Rutz, Condon, Iverson, Manduca, & Willett, p. 46). Another striking result observed at Carleton College is that the effects of the program extended “beyond the workshop participants, and [led] to the establishment of a culture that supports reflective, scholarly teaching. It’s in the drinking water” (Rutz et al., p. 47). A&M–Central Texas is striving for just this cultural change.

### **IMPORTANCE OF A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE LIBRARY AND THE WID PROGRAM**

Fostering and promoting partnerships between the WAC/WID program and an institution’s library is another practice that has proven beneficial. Among long-standing programs, 48% reported a strong connection between the WAC/WID program and the university library (Thaiss & Porter, 2010, p. 560). For this reason, the University Library at A&M–Central Texas will play a major role in the development and implementation of the QEP.

A vital component of our student learning goal to facilitate an understanding of genre expectations and disciplinary writing conventions is ensuring that students have the indispensable tools and ability to implement research strategies, synthesis of outside sources, and skillful integration of evidentiary support specific to their disciplines. The literature upholds our belief that academic libraries provide the perfect venue for targeted librarian instruction—including embedding librarians within classes—to address these skills.

There have been many studies documenting the positive impact that librarian-faculty collaboration has on efforts to improve student writing. There have

also been many studies discussing the successful and increasingly common practice of incorporating embedded librarians in research-heavy classes. The librarians at A&M–Central Texas have been expanding their embedded librarian program over the past three years, a program that involves assigning one librarian to deeply engage within a single class, online or in person, to encourage more active participation of librarians in courses. The librarian collaborates with the faculty member to target specific needs for the class, often through the learning management system, one-on-one meetings with students, online chat sessions, and prerecorded tutorials. This program is perfectly suited for writing courses, especially those with a discipline-specific research component, as librarians familiar with the syllabus and the subject matter can provide timely assistance for precisely the question at hand.

Squibb and Mikkelsen (2016) examined a course-embedded approach to information literacy in a collaboration between University of California (UC) librarians and faculty in an introductory composition curriculum and found that all faculty involved in the pilot agreed students were “more able to engage with research,” and most found that students were more able to “demonstrate persistence in information finding, formulate stronger research questions, and select more suitable resources for their assignments” than students not exposed to the embedded model (p. 170). This librarian presence integrated directly in the classroom reinforces and supplements the discipline-specific research skills which are being taught by faculty instructors, providing hands-on instruction for searching within discipline-specific databases, utilizing specific citation styles, and providing direct research guidance.

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) published the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* in 2015, which serves as a guideline for the development of information literacy instruction in academic libraries throughout the country. The *Framework* views research as inquiry, and scholarship as conversation (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2015). The collaborative pairing of an embedded librarian and a writing

center tutor in each WID course, where students are engaging in discipline-specific research and are discovering nuanced and complex ways of writing about their scholarship, allows for more avenues and opportunities for conversation, communication, and analysis.

A&M–Central Texas intends to capitalize on the literature documenting a strong connection between the existence of a strong information literacy program provided by librarians and improved writing success among students. In a study at a mid-size comprehensive university, Shao and Purpur (2016) examined precisely this association between student information literacy skills and their writing abilities. They found that students “who had higher information literacy scores tended to do better both in writing and their overall performance in a class.” (p. 673) Interestingly, the study suggests that students who have only been exposed to one-shot library instruction sessions, with no further personalized or formal librarian interaction, do not necessarily exhibit increased information literacy skills (Shao, 2016); however, the course-embedded approach at UC described by Squibb and Mikkelsen (2016) does seem to have a demonstrable impact on student information literacy and writing improvement.

A&M–Central Texas’ QEP is designed to utilize the university’s considerable resources by engaging the expertise of both an embedded librarian and an embedded writing tutor in each WI class. Eschewing the less effective model of exposing students to the library and its resources through isolated one-shot library instruction and separately inviting students to visit the UWC for writing instruction/enhancement, we instead intend to utilize an embedded librarian and writing tutor model. This will not only provide ongoing research and writing assistance to students targeting each specific writing assignment, but will allow librarians and writing center tutors to enter into individualized conversations and will facilitate a deeper understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each student. We believe this will have a significant impact on information literacy and writing quality.

Librarians and writing center tutors at Central College, a four-year liberal arts college in Iowa, were embed-

ded both physically and through their learning management system in their first-year seminar classes. Attesting to the success of this collaboration, Pagnac, Bradfield, Boertje, McMahon, and Teets (2014) assert that “the integration of information literacy into this first-year seminar, and intentional partnerships between librarians, tutors, professors and students, acquaint students with research strategies and citation practices and has been an integral part of [the class] since its inception” in 2009 (p. 39). The model at Central College is very similar to the one that we propose: pairing an embedded librarian and writing center tutor in each WI course, both collaborating with the WID instructor. While they are still developing their quantitative assessment of their program, the authors of the study describe their experience as illustrating “that embedding [writing] tutors and librarians makes a significant difference to [their] students, the end goal of the faculty at Central College and the impetus behind the development of the [program]” (Pagnac et al., 2014, p.44). This collaboration is successful because writing center tutors and librarians share a belief that the value in writing and research is in the process rather than solely the product; both share interest in critical literacy and the way meaning is made; and they both have the ability to engage students across disciplines rather than within a particular department.

Our QEP targets not just the writing curriculum, but the culture of the university. More and more, the literature emphasizes the need for collaboration between the library, the writing center, and the faculty, because students will not become critical thinkers or competent writers after one assignment, one library session, or even one WI course. Rather, embedding writing tutors and librarians within the class increases the opportunities for students to receive instruction using a variety of modalities and provides more opportunities for practice and reinforcement of lessons. The QEP will foster a culture where students will begin to think about research and writing in a different way—not as a single assignment or process taking place in their classroom, but as a set of skills they are exposed to throughout the university campus. Embedded librarians can help students approach research as a way

to explore and engage in new ideas and challenging texts rather than as simply a way to find “supporting quotes” for pre-formulated ideas.

### **IMPORTANCE OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE WRITING CENTER AND THE WID PROGRAM**

Lastly, cooperation between the WAC/WID program and a university’s writing center on campus can be instrumental in the success of a WAC/WID program. A close connection was found in 75% of long-standing WAC/WID programs, in contrast to only 68% in newer WAC/WID programs (Thaiss & Porter, 2010, p. 560). Our QEP underscores the central role of the UWC at A&M–Central Texas, where it will be the focal point for the WAC/WID initiative.

Much like the WAC/WID movement, the proliferation of writing centers can be traced to open admissions and the perceived literacy crisis of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Most historical scholarship on writing centers traces the origins back to the laboratory method, i.e., a supplement to classroom instruction that focused on individualized instruction outside of the classroom. Eventually, this led to the establishment of writing labs, such as those established at the University of Minnesota and the State University of Iowa in 1934, considered by many scholars to be the first writing centers established at universities (Carino, 1995). Although intended to supplement classroom instruction, many of the earliest writing labs were viewed as subordinate to the classroom, focusing primarily on discrete, skill-based writing instruction, with students frequently completing grammar worksheets or other acontextual tasks.

Over the next few decades, writing labs wavered in popularity. Yet, the most significant proliferation of writing centers across university campuses arose from open admissions policies and the perceived literacy crisis of the 1970s. Elizabeth Boquet (1999) claims that, during this era, “...writing centers were created largely to fix problems that university officials had difficulty even naming, things like increasing enrollment, larger minority populations, and declining (according to the public) literacy skills” (p. 472).

In other words, the increasing number of writing centers emerging through the early 1980s was, in many ways, a response to cultural issues and, as a result, writing centers became tethered to the concept of remediation. Terms such as “remedial,” along with the nomenclature of “lab,” “clinic,” “diagnosis,” etc., positioned writing centers as a place where deficient writers could be “diagnosed” and “cured” of their writing “ailments.” Writing centers, in essence, were the cure for the literacy crisis. In his landmark article, “The Idea of a Writing Center,” Stephen North (1984) diagnosed faculty’s (mis)perceptions of writing centers, citing, “In their minds, clearly, writers fall into three fairly distinct groups: the talented, the average, and the others; and the Writing Center’s only logical *raison d’être* must be to handle those others...” (p. 435). Although faculty perceptions and attitudes of writing centers and their purpose have progressed substantially since North’s remarks in 1984, the vestiges of this remedial heritage are still, unfortunately, present on campuses across the country.

In contrast, the UWC at A&M–Central Texas was created with loftier aspirations than merely fixing “broken” writers. The UWC aims to provide students with a practice audience for their writing that will allow them to develop their writing through the eyes of a reader. Often, writers struggle to connect with and target their particular audience, grappling with questions such as: How will an audience react to their writing? What background knowledge will an audience have? What questions may arise from a specific audience? Will an audience be hesitant to accept the writer’s argument? As Stephen North (1984) notes, “Maybe in a perfect world, all writers would have their own ready-auditor—a teacher, a classmate, a roommate, an editor—who would not only listen but draw them out, ask them questions they would not think to ask themselves. A writing center is an institutional response to this need” (p. 440).

At A&M–Central Texas, the UWC provides students with the practice audience and feedback that can be crucial to successful writing. This service is provided through the conversations we have with students and the questions we ask of them, allowing them to observe how someone else perceives and interacts

with their words. These exchanges enable students to understand that every time they compose, they are composing with a particular audience in mind. By serving as a practice audience for students’ ideas and writing, the UWC tutors are actively engaged conversational partners who can highlight how a text is read and interpreted.

Many scholars view the role of a writing center as intrinsically entwined with WAC/WID initiatives (Harris, 1999; Waldo, 1993; Wallace, 1988). In “The Last Best Place for Writing Across the Curriculum: The Writing Center,” Mark Waldo (1993) envisions a “new breed of writing center” that can support a WAC/WID initiative predicated on four principles: “1) independence from any department; 2) a tenured or tenurable director; 3) highly skilled tutors, themselves teachers and students from various departments; and 4) an ambitious writing-across-the-curriculum consultancy, steeped in the literature on critical thinking, assignment making and writing to learn” (p. 16). The UWC at A&M–Central Texas currently possesses the first three characteristics and, with implementation of its QEP, will expand and improve upon the fourth principle.

The UWC is independent of any department at A&M–Central Texas. While Dr. Bruce Bowles, Jr., the director, is an Assistant Professor of English and in a tenure-track position, the UWC resides in a dedicated space on the fourth floor of Warrior Hall; it is not physically located within any department of the university. In addition to the director, the UWC employs highly skilled tutors who are teachers and students from various departments. Examples are Ms. Phyllis Wheeler, a tutor in the UWC with over 30 years of education experience who is an instructor at A&M–Central Texas in the English program, and Ms. Betty Latham, a recent graduate of A&M–Central Texas’ M.S. in Liberal Studies who tutors in the UWC as well as serving as an adjunct instructor in the Liberal Studies program. Additionally, the undergraduate tutors who comprise the remainder of the staff at the UWC come from a variety of disciplines, with Computer Science, Education, English, History, and Psychology represented. Also, the UWC is actively

seeking tutors from all other disciplines to support its plans for growth.

The aspect of consultancy in the WID approach is addressed by a specific course at A&M–Central Texas, ENGL 4388: Writing Center Pedagogy, which has been designated as the training class for tutors. This three-credit course introduces students to the theory, research, and practices of tutoring writing by engaging them with the prominent scholarship on writing centers while providing practical experience through observations, co-tutoring, and live tutoring hours in the UWC. Students are encouraged to synthesize the scholarship on writing centers with their own experiences to form a comprehensive philosophy of tutoring that is reflective and constantly open to revision. Upon successful completion of this course with a grade of B or better, students are eligible to become tutors for the UWC.

Throughout the course, students actively engage in discussions about genre and disciplinary writing, with multiple class sessions dedicated to genre theory and disciplinary writing to facilitate in-depth investigations into how writing varies across the disciplines. Furthermore, tutors engage with scholarship across a variety of disciplines in order to examine and understand a vast array of disciplinary writing strategies and epistemologies. Additionally, the relationship between theory and practice is emphasized through the lectures and classroom discussions operating in unison with the internship. The internship component begins with students making an appointment with the UWC to review their first assignment; this allows students to experience the UWC through the perspective of a client. During the second eight weeks of the course, students work 1 ½ hours in the UWC. For the first two weeks of their internship, they co-tutor with the veteran tutors of the UWC; for the last six weeks, students tutor on their own, with both the director of the UWC and/or the veteran tutors available for support. The internship experience is discussed extensively in class and connected to the theories the students read. Furthermore, students' final three forum posts pertain to reflection on the internship experience. This internship experience allows students to gain practical experience working with students across a variety

of disciplines that is reinforced through mentorship, class discussions, and classroom activities.

With the implementation of our QEP, the opportunity for students to engage with genre theory and scholarship that reflect the WID approach is expected to increase exponentially. Current and future tutors will be extensively trained in WID theories and practices and will partner with faculty from particular disciplines in order to learn about the disciplinary conventions and best practices. A significant component of the QEP implementation will include tutors who will be assigned to particular departments and/or programs across the university and will be paired with WI classes.

While many scholars have argued that generalist tutors (i.e. tutors not trained in a specific discipline) have their limitations (Dinitz & Harrington, 2014; Kiedaisch & Dinitz, 1993), many prominent writing center scholars advocate that generalist tutors can be specifically trained to be effective when dealing with students outside of their disciplines (Savini, 2011; Summers, 2016; Walker, 1998). Through learning genre analysis and familiarity with certain disciplinary conventions, these tutors can shift from discipline to discipline, providing feedback with an awareness of the audiences for whom these texts are composed—and, in many ways, a practice audience outside of a student's particular discipline can provide valuable insights into a text, offering feedback through the perspective of someone who is less expert which can aid a student in clarifying concepts and strengthening arguments for those less immersed in that student's respective discipline.

Even if specialist tutors (i.e. tutors who are of the particular discipline they tutor in) are the most beneficial, aligning certain tutors with specific students creates significant logistical issues for a writing center, especially a writing center such as the UWC at A&M–Central Texas. The UWC serves a diverse student population of approximately 2,700, has many students who would be unable to dedicate the time to being trained as tutors as a result of outside forces (e.g. family responsibilities, full-time jobs, military deployment, etc.), experiences quicker tutor turn-over as a result of only being an upper-level institution, and has

students that can only attend tutoring consultations at specific times. It would be nearly impossible to keep a trained staff that represented every discipline while maintaining a flexible schedule for the student population. Thus, the generalist approach is not only beneficial due to the aforementioned rationales but is also the most pragmatic approach for the institutional context in which the UWC resides.

Kristen Walker (1998) advocates not viewing the binary between generalist and specialist tutors too strongly, focusing instead on training tutors in genre theory to ensure they will be better able to evaluate discipline-specific discourse and assist the students with this objective. Walker claims:

Genre theory, as it has evolved from social constructionism, provides “generalists” and “specialists” with a tool to analyze discipline-specific discourse. In addition to expanding the theoretical framework of writing center studies, genre theory offers a practical method for incorporating social constructionism into tutor training (p. 28).

Catherine Savini (2011) supports this approach as well. For Savini, even if a tutor does not reside in the same discipline as the client, tutors can draw upon their own experiences of learning to write in the disciplines to better assist their clients. She supports a three-step approach for tutors: “1. disclose their experience with a particular genre and discipline; 2. pose questions focused on genre and discipline; and 3. teach students to seek out and analyze model texts” (p. 3). By learning to better assist students in finding their way to become more proficient with disciplinary writing, Savini offers an outstanding method for addressing disciplinary divides. Savini explains, “This three-pronged approach enables writing consultants, who are also in the process of entering new discourse communities, to impart a strategy for accessing new disciplines” (p. 3). The UWC at A&M–Central Texas will draw upon these strategies in the tutoring course, ENGL 4388: Writing Center Pedagogy, and will incorporate it as a component in the professional development of its tutors, especially as certain tutors are assigned to, and cooperate with, various departments across campus. Tutors will be aligned with disciplines that are identical or similar to

their own, yet will also work closely with the faculty of the discipline to which they are aligned to understand disciplinary conventions and expectations. In addition, faculty university-wide will be encouraged to speak at the UWC for its staff meetings and to interact directly with the UWC’s tutors, as these opportunities can lead to a deeper understanding of disciplinary conventions and writing styles.

Writing centers offer a phenomenal benefit for students—from a practice audience that can engage with their texts and offer the perspective of an engaged reader, to guidance as they mold and sculpt their texts throughout the writing process. The UWC at A&M–Central Texas is uniquely positioned to aid the WID initiative for its QEP by its specific features of autonomy from any department, its tenure-track director, its talented and diverse staff of 12 tutors, and its commitment to improve and expand services across the disciplines. The UWC will play a vital role in improving written communication across the disciplines for the unique student body at A&M–Central Texas for many years to come.

Since these best practices have been identified as prevalent within successful WAC/WID programs, our QEP will place great emphasis on developing and improving all four of these facets at A&M–Central Texas. More importantly, our QEP is designed to ensure that these facets of the institution work in a reciprocal fashion to promote a strong, unified initiative for the WID program across the entire campus.

## **New Initiative for High Impact Writing Instruction**

WI courses are prominent platforms for supporting writing instruction and are critical elements of WID initiatives. However, as an upper-level institution, undergraduate students are typically enrolled at A&M–Central Texas for only four semesters, and this short timeframe necessitates identifying novel approaches for emphasizing writing instruction. Therefore, as an increasing number of faculty at the university begin to engage in HIPs and other deep learning experiences, the QEP will attempt to promote these strategies as methods to support not only discipline-specific content knowledge but also

discipline-specific writing proficiency in alignment with the WID-based focus of the plan.

### **CONNECTING DEEP LEARNING EXPERIENCES TO A WID INITIATIVE**

As previously described, the goal of our QEP is to improve students' written communication by implementing a WID approach, with a specific emphasis on disciplinary writing. In truth, the plan aspires to present writing instruction as a pedagogy that transcends the typical WI course. An integral component of the QEP implementation involves promoting additional deep learning experiences as platforms to foster student writing. Deep learning experiences, as opposed to experiences promoting surface or passive learning, involve more active cognitive processing on behalf of the student. Beattie, Collins, and McInnes (1997) further differentiated deep learning as the learning exhibited by students who "(1) seek to understand the issues and interact critically with the contents of particular teaching materials, (2) relate ideas to previous knowledge and experience and (3) examine the logic of the arguments and relate the evidence presented to the conclusions" (p.3). Surface learning, in contrast, occurs when students "(1) try simply to memorize parts of the content of teaching materials and accept the ideas and information given without question, (2) concentrate on memorizing facts without distinguishing any underlying principles or patterns and (3) are influenced by assessment requirements" (p. 3).

HIPs, as defined by AAC&U, provide deep learning experiences which, as evidenced through volumes of literature, have been shown to increase student engagement and student success (Kuh, 2008). HIPs are encapsulated in 11 specific educational activities that engage students in ways that deepen their learning and foster academic success (Kuh, 2008; Watson, Kuh, Rhodes, Light, & Chen, 2016). There is extensive research that suggests that the best predictor of deep learning for college students is time and energy devoted to purposeful educational activities, such as WI courses, service learning, internships, and other essential learning activities (Kuh, 2008; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2005). Addition-

ally, the very nature of these high impact experiences brings about more active interactions and collaborative learning with peers and faculty in substantive ways (National Survey of Student Engagement [NSSE], 2007; Kuh, 2008). For example, a WI class is considered a HIP, because "students must...put forth more effort, but they also benefit more, especially when they get frequent feedback from both the faculty member and the peer mentor" (NSSE, 2007, p. 7)

In 2008, George Kuh and the AAC&U published research on HIPs and similar strategies that reveal them to increase student learning, retention, and engagement. The research indicates that these practices improve students' higher-order thinking skills, helping them analyze and synthesize what is learned and experienced inside and outside the classroom. Improving students' higher-order thinking skills directly connects to the student learning goal encouraging students to engage in more critical analysis. Kuh (2008) states that HIPs are characterized by several unique features:

- » Students must expend a considerable amount of time and effort
- » Students are provided with a great deal of feedback
- » Students are able to practice what they are learning
- » Students are able to build substantive relationships with faculty and staff
- » Students engage with others that are different than they are
- » Students are provided with an opportunity to engage in deep reflection about themselves and their experiences

More specifically, Kuh (2008) and Watson et al. (2016) identified 11 teaching and learning activities that they describe as HIPs: first-year seminars and experiences; common intellectual experiences; learning communities; writing-intensive courses; collaborative assignments and projects; undergraduate research; diversity/global learning; service learning or community-based learning; internships; capstone courses and projects; and ePortfolios. In practice, the 11 HIPs take on various formats that reflect

institutional priorities—including the characteristics of students—and research consistently shows that HIPs appear beneficial for students from many different backgrounds (Kuh, 2008; Watson et al., 2016).

The literature suggests that activities identified as HIPs can be life-changing for participating students (Kuh, 2008). In fact, the data led to a specific recommendation from George Kuh, the founding director of NSSE (2007), that institutions should aspire to have all students participate in at least two HIPs over the course of their undergraduate years, with one HIP during the first year and the second HIP later,

selected for its application to their selected majors. Since A&M–Central Texas offers undergraduate courses that are exclusively upper-division to students who tend to be nontraditional, our QEP embraces a full range of deep learning experiences that have applications to many different majors, in addition to those designed to deepen the collegiate experience of undergraduate students. While not limited to HIPs, HIPs will provide the university with an initial pool of research-based learning modalities that can assist in expanding faculty and students' value for writing.

SECTION 4.

# QEP Implementation Plan

Admittedly, the goals of the QEP are ambitious. However, the plan is consistent with the current progress and planned development of the university, as the implementation plan includes both the creation of new strategies and the expansion of existing practices. The plan emphasizes four primary avenues of intervention: WI courses (Goal 1), EWI courses (Goal 1), faculty support (Goal 2), and deep learning experiences (Goal 3). The QEP was intentionally designed to harness the university’s developing institutional strengths while providing synchrony between burgeoning initiatives, and at the same time promoting the most responsible utilization of limited resources.

## Goal 1 – Student Learning Goal

The first goal of a satisfactory QEP is the improvement of student learning in a given area. The A&M–Central Texas plan emphasizes the development of students’ written communication skills, and goal one of the QEP aims to improve student writing proficiency by developing the understanding and skills essential to written communication. In alignment with the identified student learning goal, the university will implement two key course-based mechanisms: (a) support the existing structure of WI courses, and (b) establish a new EWI course designation. In summary, EWI courses will provide an early intervention strategy emphasizing foundational skills, while supporting the existing WI courses will further advance discipline-specific written communication.

## WRITING INTENSIVE COURSES

The university recognizes the importance of written communication and currently requires all students to complete four courses designated as “writing intensive” as a requirement for a baccalaureate degree. Two of these WI courses are freshman- and sophomore-level courses and are completed at other institutions, as A&M–Central Texas only offers upper-level and graduate courses. The remaining two are upper-level courses that may be completed at A&M–Central Texas. According to standard administrative procedure 11.99.99.D0.01, “Writing Intensive” courses are those that teach the conventions of writing within a specific discipline or for a specific purpose, focus attention on writing as a process, and encourage students to use writing as a tool for discovery and learning. Furthermore, WI courses are characterized by a range of writing assignments that are worth a significant part of the final grade (either all in one assignment or collectively across related assignments) and must include writing assignments as an integral part of measuring the mastery of the content in a course.

The requirements for WI courses emphasize discipline-specific writing, and the QEP intends to enhance the support for students by reinforcing a direct, evident, and intentional connection between the courses and the UWC and the University Library. In other words, the plan will first support existing WI courses by dedicating a writing tutor and an embedded librarian to each WI course in order to capitalize

WI Courses	EWI Courses	Faculty Support	Deep Learning Experiences
Embedded Librarian	Existing Course Designation Process	Faculty Development Workshops and Resources	HIP Grants Emphasizing Writing
Embedded Tutor	New Course Creation Program	Faculty Liaison	Experiential Transcript Process

upon existing support structures while enhancing the capacity for student learning. This action will also provide students with a more thorough understanding of available resources and professionals with discipline-specific knowledge.

### EARLY WRITING INTENSIVE COURSES

Institutions often seek to develop basic writing skills in first year seminar courses. However, the unique nature of an upper-level institution necessitates a different platform to address foundational writing concepts that will be built upon in subsequent courses. Therefore, academic programs will identify courses that will serve as EWI courses required early in a student's degree plan that will introduce skills necessary to excel in future WI courses. EWI courses will emphasize the following elements:

- » Discipline-Specific Writing Instruction: All students in EWI courses should receive discipline-specific writing instruction that focuses on the epistemological foundations of the discipline, specific genres they will compose in for their discipline, writing conventions for their discipline, organizational methods, proper formatting, and citation.
- » Research Instruction: EWI courses should include extensive instruction with regard to successful research strategies in the discipline, including finding, evaluating, and skillfully integrating sources, appropriate evidence, and data presentation.
- » In-Depth Formative and Summative Assessment: Students in EWI courses will receive extensive formative and summative assessment that promotes teaching and learning by focusing on content, organization, and evidentiary support, along with grammar and proper formatting.
- » Revision: All EWI courses should include multiple drafts of the same assignment and/or repetition of similar assignments in order to allow students to apply the feedback they receive toward meaningful revisions.
- » Encourage ePortfolios: Instructors of EWI courses should be encouraged to utilize ePortfolios so that

students can collect, select, and reflect upon the work they complete throughout the semester.

### ROLE OF LIBRARY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EMBEDDED LIBRARIANS

The University Library has six full-time librarians who serve as subject specialists and who are trained in discipline-specific research instruction. In 2015, the librarians implemented an embedded librarian program, in which subject specialists work directly with a class to assist students in locating, evaluating, and utilizing information. Embedded librarians provide awareness of library databases suited to specific disciplines, finding and evaluating credible sources, identifying keywords, and formulating targeted subject searches. The embedded librarian has a direct connection to the class research goals and can assist with student analysis and use of library resources during the course. This existing program is perfectly suited to address the research instruction element of the WI and EWI courses.

Margaret Dawson, the University Library's outreach and instruction librarian, will be working with WI and EWI faculty to provide tailored library instruction for their classes. In addition to the extensive research guides that already exist for every discipline taught at the university, Ms. Dawson has been creating online tutorials to target learning outcomes as defined by ACRL's *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (2015). Each 2- to 3-minute tutorial focuses on one skill or learning goal, and can be embedded directly into Canvas. In order to ensure that our outreach and instruction librarian has the time necessary to create tutorials, design the scaffolded instruction options, and coordinate an embedded program involving all six subject librarians, we will need to either hire a new part-time librarian or give more hours to an existing librarian, who will perform some of our instruction librarian's other duties. This will free up 10 hours a week of Margaret's time, so that she can work exclusively on QEP-related projects.

In addition to dedicating a subject specialist as an embedded librarian to each WI and EWI course, the University Library will provide a menu of options for scaffolded, tailored instruction, including suggested

tutorials and core offerings for specific disciplines. Librarians will assist faculty in choosing the most appropriate menu items for their class, including:

- » Class instruction, in person or online through WebEx, ideal for discipline-specific guidance
- » One-on-one, in-depth student consultations, suited for assignment-specific guidance
- » Librarian discussion boards on Canvas
- » Weekly “office hours” or similar live help
- » Lessons/modules posted each week on library skills, possibly with a quiz component
- » Mentoring capstone students with their research
- » Librarian recommendations for supplemental content

The University Library currently provides robust research support for A&M-University students. As part of the QEP implementation, we will enhance and focus our services to target the discipline-specific research instruction component of the WI and EWI courses.

### **ROLE OF WRITING CENTER AND IMPLEMENTATION OF WRITING TUTORS**

The UWC currently has two tutors who possess master’s degrees (one an M.A. in English and the other an M.S. in Liberal Studies) and 10 undergraduate tutors representing an array of disciplines including Computer Science, Education, English, History, and Psychology. Additionally, the ENGL 4388: Writing Center Pedagogy class produces tutors who are trained to work with students across the disciplines, and an emphasis is placed on attentiveness to genre and disciplinary conventions. Upon implementation of the QEP, the UWC will take the additional step of aligning the various degree programs—and their corresponding EWI courses and WI courses—with at least one tutor from the UWC.

When possible, the tutor will be aligned with the discipline in which they are completing their degree (e.g. English with English, Psychology with Psychology); when not possible, the tutor will be aligned with a discipline that is similar to the degree s/he is working on (e.g. Computer Science with Business, Psychology with Criminal Justice, etc.). These tutors will attend meetings with faculty from the program

they are aligned with in order to discuss disciplinary conventions, genre expectations, acceptable evidentiary support, etc. within the discipline. These tutors will also collect materials for assisting students in the program from the faculty, in addition to communicating with other tutors in the UWC about writing in that discipline in both formal and informal contexts.

Additionally, whenever possible, the UWC will send tutors aligned with specific programs into the community to offer other services, including UWC presentations, classroom workshops, and “travelling tutors.” Ideally, when the UWC engages in its marketing endeavors at the beginning of each semester, the director of the UWC and the tutor aligned with that specific discipline will work together to complete the introductory UWC presentations. When faculty request workshops tailored to specific needs for their classroom, the director of the UWC and the tutor aligned with that specific discipline will collaborate on those endeavors, as well. Lastly, when travelling tutors (tutors that visit classrooms on peer-review days and aid with the workshop process) are requested for certain classes, the tutor aligned with that discipline will attend whenever possible.

As we implement the QEP, the ENGL 4388: Writing Center Pedagogy course will continue to focus on genre theory and WID scholarship, yet will place a stronger emphasis on these aspects of the curriculum. Training for writing in various disciplines will also become a more substantial part of staff meetings/faculty development; to encourage this, faculty from various disciplines on campus will be invited to speak at these staff meetings. Further staff development initiatives will focus on workshops exploring writing as it pertains to specific disciplines.

The UWC will also begin to host various campus-wide workshops. These workshops will highlight various aspects of writing instruction including—but not limited to—assignment design, managing workshops effectively, formative assessment practices, rubric design, etc. The UWC will continue to work in collaboration with the FCTL to develop, host, and improve upon various faculty development writing instruction workshops and will assist with the Faculty Writing Liaison program.

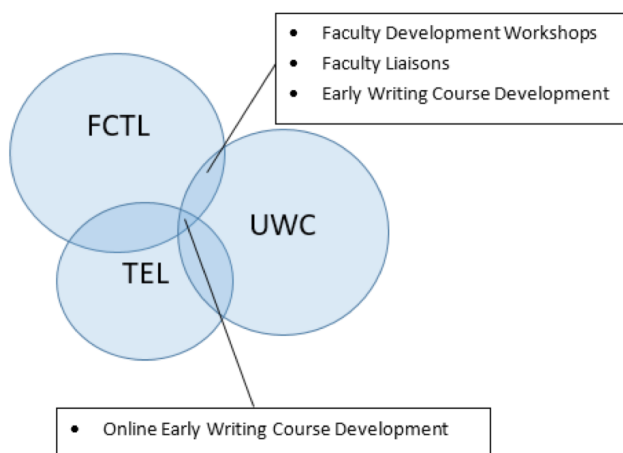
In its third year of existence, the UWC continues to grow and prosper as a major pillar of writing instruction on the A&M–Central Texas campus, while refining its practices towards enhancing disciplinary writing. Ultimately, the goal is to align tutor training, staff development, pedagogical practices, presentations and workshops, and other faculty services with the WID approach adopted by the QEP, allowing students to receive writing instruction at the UWC that is tailored to their particular classes/degree programs.

## Goal 2 – Institutional Goal

The institutional goal is to support faculty in offering effective writing instruction. Described in more detail below, this support for the university faculty encompasses three primary areas:

- » Faculty Development Writing Instruction Workshops
- » EWI Course Development
- » Faculty Writing Liaisons

These three areas augment existing efforts of the FCTL in collaboration with the Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) department. See Appendix A for the schedule of FCTL/TEL offerings for 2017–2018. The institutional goal will be supported by a collaboration between FCTL, TEL, and the UWC.



## FACULTY DEVELOPMENT WRITING INSTRUCTION WORKSHOPS

To support faculty in offering effective writing instruction, the UWC and the FCTL will host a faculty development writing instruction workshop series that augments ongoing professional development opportunities provided by the FCTL. During the first year, when the Faculty Writing Liaisons receive training and provide consultations, the UWC director and tutors, along with the director of the FCTL, will deliver the workshops, with each of the workshops offered once in each modality (on-campus and via web conference) over the course of the year. In subsequent years, the Faculty Writing Liaisons, with the support of the UWC and the FCTL, become additional workshop facilitators; therefore, in year two and beyond, the workshops will be offered once in each modality over the course of every semester. Each workshop will be open to all faculty, full-time and adjunct. Each workshop can be completed individually, or the entire series can be completed for the optional Writing Intensive Instruction Certification. Faculty members who complete all four workshops in the series will receive a certificate of completion and a letter from the directors of the FCTL and UWC that acknowledges their content mastery and service to the institution that can be included in tenure and promotion materials.

The workshop series consists of four 2-hour workshops. Each includes the presentation of key concepts, models of best practice, demonstrations, and opportunities for faculty participants to engage in practical application of the concepts. The workshop series includes:

1. Writing Intensive Courses: Expectations and Strategies for Success
2. Writing in the Disciplines: Expectations and Strategies for Success
3. Early Writing to Senior-level WI: Expectations and Strategies for Success
4. Deeper Learning Experiences: Application of Selected HIPs to WI/WID

The workshops will be held on campus, and will also be offered online through web conferencing for

faculty who are unable to attend the training sessions in person. To accommodate those faculty members who cannot attend on campus or the online sessions, and who wish to review the materials, recordings of the web conferencing sessions will be transcribed for on-demand, asynchronous access. In addition to the faculty development writing instruction workshops series, there will be annual events with guest speakers and related workshops open to all faculty. Topics include strategies for WI courses, WID, academic research writing, WI strategies and the online learning environment, and deep learning experiences. These topics are tentatively scheduled, and will be finalized as availability of external experts is confirmed. Guest Speaker with Workshop topics:

- » Year 1: Writing Intensive Strategies
- » Year 2: Writing in the Disciplines
- » Year 3: Research Strategies & Academic Research Writing
- » Year 4: Writing Intensive Strategies for Online & Blended Delivery
- » Year 5: Deep Learning Experiences & Selected High Impact Practices

## **EARLY WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE DEVELOPMENT**

To support faculty in offering effective writing instruction, we will be enhancing existing WI courses and supporting more HIPS in courses, but our emphasis is on EWI course development. The university has established a special course development stipend to support the development of EWI courses in the major program areas. Because the EWI concept constitutes a new approach at the university, the stipend and concomitant support will assist faculty in adopting this more complex approach to the writing intensive program at A&M–Central Texas. To be eligible, potential EWI course developers must have the support of their program coordinators and their department chairs. During the first QEP year, the directors of the UWC and the FCTL will select two faculty members from this pool of eligible faculty. These two faculty members will create new EWI courses and will be awarded stipends for the course development. The following year, three EWI course developers will

receive a stipend, and thereafter, four EWI course developers will receive stipends annually until 17 EWI courses have been developed with the assistance of the stipends. The stipends will be awarded upon completion of all associated requirements (completed course development per EWI framework and successful peer review). Where the appropriate deans and department chairs determine it to be practical, the stipend for EWI course development can be substituted with a course release or workload credit, or combination of the two.

The EWI course developers are expected to work within the guidelines and framework for EWI courses created by the director of the UWC, in collaboration with the academic programs. The EWI course developers are also expected to have their course development completed within one academic year in order to receive the stipend. Development is staggered so that courses will have time for consultation and support from the TEL Department for any technology components, and sufficient time for peer review by members of their academic programs at faculty discretion.

For online and blended EWI course development, additional consultation support is available through the TEL Department as part of the support TEL provides all faculty members who develop online and blended courses. The TEL Department provides consultation and support services to faculty members to assist them with improving and extending the teaching and learning experience at A&M–Central Texas through the use of state of the art technologies in the classroom and online. In addition, a peer review will be conducted to ensure online and blended EWI courses meet the required Quality Matters (QM) Rubric Standards. The QM Higher Education Rubric Standards are a research-based framework for assessing quality and assisting in the design of online and blended courses for higher education. Master Reviewer and Course Review Manager Certification training for the FCTL director was funded by TEL in 2017 to facilitate the peer review process for online and blended courses at the university. The FCTL director will be responsible for leading this peer review process for online and blended EWI courses with faculty and staff volunteers who are QM certified peer reviewers.

## FACULTY WRITING LIAISONS

To support faculty in offering effective writing instruction, the Faculty Writing Liaisons initiative is designed to provide guidance and support, and to act as a supplemental resource for faculty in the areas of WI courses, WID, and EWI courses. The Faculty Writing Liaisons will also help to foster the development of a community of practice for faculty members in each major program area. Faculty Writing Liaisons will be selected from a pool of faculty engaged in teaching courses in the university's WI courses. Each Faculty Writing Liaison will agree to a two-year or three-year commitment, to allow for overlapping terms. They will also agree to participate in monthly meetings led by the director of the UWC and the director of the FCTL/QEP chair. To facilitate collaboration and enhance faculty support, these meetings will periodically include the director of the University Library and the librarians embedded in the WI courses and EWI courses.

In the first year of their commitment, the Faculty Writing Liaisons will receive training on foundational writing instruction from the director of the UWC and will collaborate with the UWC and the FCTL to provide consultations to their faculty colleagues. In their second year and (where applicable) third year, the Faculty Writing Liaisons will collaborate with the UWC and the FCTL to present workshops for their faculty colleagues on best practices in WI courses, WID, and EWI courses. The Faculty Writing Liaisons will receive annual stipends for their service upon completion of all associated requirements of the initiative. As with the EWI course development, where the appropriate deans and department chairs determine it to be practical, the stipend can be substituted with a course release or workload credit, or combination of the two.

## Goal 3 – Aspirational Goal

Culture, in part, is observed in the habits and rituals that are prevalent and valued within a community. If an institutional value for writing instruction is to become instilled within A&M–Central Texas and the university is to truly become “a community of writers,” writing instruction must become more prevalent and transcend traditional WI courses. Courses that encourage students to develop discipline-specific

writing skills, regardless of modality, typically require more active cognitive processing and are indicative of deep learning experiences (Beattie, Collins, & McInnes, 1997). Established examples of deep learning experiences can be found in HIPs (Kuh, 2008), and many faculty members at A&M–Central Texas have adopted deep learning practices. Therefore, the third goal of the QEP will encourage faculty and student engagement in HIPs that align with discipline-specific written communication, such as project proposals in service-learning or manuscript preparation in undergraduate research. The aspiration is for written communication to become understood by faculty and students as an educational element that permeates the university, not one that is just relegated to WI courses.

## HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

To foster the development of student writing through deep learning and the inclusion of HIPs, the university will establish annual HIPs development grants that will be overseen by the FCTL. The goal of the initiative is for faculty members to develop or augment the use of HIPs in their teaching (in any modality) that demonstrates a clear connection to written communication. The grants will provide funds to individual faculty members or to small teams, and the development will be staggered to allow sufficient time for peer review. Again, for blended and online development, additional support is available through the TEL Department, and an additional peer review to ensure the course meets QM Higher Education Rubric standards will be required. The HIPs development grant will be awarded to projects that involve the following:

- » Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- » Undergraduate Research
- » Diversity/Global Learning
- » Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
- » Capstone Courses and Projects
- » Internships

To be eligible, the proposed HIP activity must be a graded component of the course (i.e., community

engagement is non-optional in service-learning), it must produce a defined deliverable (i.e., written assignment), and it must include a final student reflection assignment. Proposals must clearly articulate the integration of writing instruction and must support one or more of the goals of the university's current Academic Master Plan. Preference will be given to proposals that are:

- » Sustainable
- » Interdisciplinary
- » Collaborative
- » Associated with courses with high Drop/Fail/Withdrawal rates

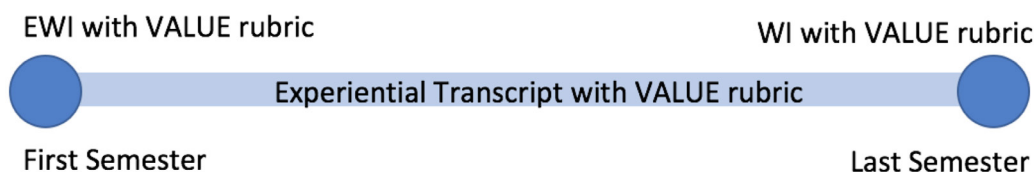
During the first year of the QEP, four grants are available: two in the fall and two in the spring. The number of grants increases by two every year until 12 grants are awarded in the fifth year of the program. Once a proposal has been accepted and funded, all funds must be spent by the end of the academic year. The grant must be used to directly develop or improve a HIP in the course. At the end of the year in which they receive their grant, recipients are required to submit a final report to the FCTL director, share their experiences in the annual faculty brown-bag session devoted to the HIPs development grant recipient experience, and present their project during the annual A&M–Central Texas faculty showcase focused on the HIPs development grant recipients.

## REFLECTIVE WRITING AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING TRANSCRIPTS

Students engage in deep learning experiences in and outside of the classroom, and if written communication is to permeate the student experience, these learning opportunities should be encouraged and accounted for. Student development in co-curricular deep learning experiences or HIPs can be reinforced and encouraged through the utilization of experiential

transcripts that necessitate reflective writing, which has been touted as a meaningful aspect of education for the past century (Dewey, 1910). In order to accomplish this goal, the Division of Student Affairs will expand current tracking and assessment of experiential learning through the enhancement of the experiential transcript process by requiring student reflection in order to receive credit for their engagement. As will be discussed in the assessment section of this document, the experiential transcript process will allow the institution to gauge the equivalency of students' writing outside of the classroom with the expected level of writing inside the classroom from the time of matriculation and a student taking an EWI to the completion of a WI and graduation.

The current process is hosted through Engage, the online Student Affairs platform. Experiential transcripts allow students to more thoroughly demonstrate their skills and experiences in comparison to a traditional course transcript. These transcripts have been highly successful at other institutions, namely Elon University. Though the experiential transcript itself is not a measure of culture, it does provide students with an incentive to engage in deep learning experiences. Following the completion of a deep learning experience, students will be able to add the experience and correlating skills to their transcripts by responding to a narrative prompt. A Student Affairs graduate assistant will then evaluate the prompt through the AAC&U Written Communication VALUE Rubric and provide substantive feedback to the student. Once any necessary revisions are made, the credit will be added to the transcript. The use of the AAC&U Written Communication VALUE rubric is intentional in order to use the same rubric utilized in the classroom setting and will assist the university in providing a consistent measure of student writing inside and outside the classroom.



	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
GOAL 1	Assign a librarian and writing tutor to each WI course	Assign a librarian and writing tutor to each WI and EWI course	Assign a librarian and writing tutor to each WI and EWI course	Assign a librarian and writing tutor to each WI and EWI course	Assign a librarian and writing tutor to each WI and EWI course
	Work with University Curriculum Committee and Academic Affairs to develop EWI designation process and designate at least 2 new EWI courses	Establish at least 3 new EWI courses	Establish at least 4 new EWI courses	Establish at least 4 new EWI courses	Establish at least 4 new EWI courses
GOAL 2	Identify and train 6 Faculty Writing Liaisons	Identify and train 6 Faculty Writing Liaisons (may be the same liaisons from the preceding year)	Identify and train 6 Faculty Writing Liaisons (may be the same liaisons from the preceding year)	Identify and train 6 Faculty Writing Liaisons (may be the same liaisons from the preceding year)	Identify and train 6 Faculty Writing Liaisons (may be the same liaisons from the preceding year)
	Support creation of new EWI courses (FCTL/UWC)	Support creation of new EWI courses (FCTL/UWC)	Support creation of new EWI courses (FCTL/UWC)	Support creation of new EWI courses (FCTL/UWC)	Support creation of new EWI courses (FCTL/UWC)
	Host national-level speaker and kick-off workshop	Host TAMUS speaker and workshop	Host regional-level speaker and workshop	Host TAMUS speaker and workshop	Host regional-level speaker and workshop
	Begin hosting Faculty Development Writing Intensive Workshop	Improve Faculty Development Writing Intensive Workshop (host each semester)	Improve Faculty Development Writing Intensive Workshop (host each semester)	Improve Faculty Development Writing Intensive Workshop (host each semester)	Improve Faculty Development Writing Intensive Workshop (host each semester)
	Create online tutorials and discipline-specific research/citation guides	Improve online tutorials and discipline-specific research/citation guides	Improve online tutorials and discipline-specific research/citation guides	Improve online tutorials and discipline-specific research/citation guides	Improve online tutorials and discipline-specific research/citation guides
GOAL 3	Fund 4 HIP Faculty Grants	Fund 4 HIP Faculty Grants	Fund 8 HIP Faculty Grants	Fund 10 HIP Faculty Grants	Fund 12 HIP Faculty Grants
	Host faculty Showcase and Faculty Brown-bag sessions focused on HIP Faculty Grant Recipients/projects	Host faculty Showcase and Faculty Brown-bag sessions focused on HIP Faculty Grant Recipients/projects	Host faculty Showcase and Faculty Brown-bag sessions focused on HIP Faculty Grant Recipients/projects	Host faculty Showcase and Faculty Brown-bag sessions focused on HIP Faculty Grant Recipients/projects	Host faculty Showcase and Faculty Brown-bag sessions focused on HIP Faculty Grant Recipients/projects
	Train GA to analyze student experiential reflections	Improve experiential transcript program/process	Improve experiential transcript program/process	Improve experiential transcript program/process	Improve experiential transcript program/process

## Implementation Timeline

ACADEMIC YEAR	RESPONSIBLE AREA	ACTION
2018–2019	Provost UCC/QEP FCTL	Assemble QEP Implementation Committee Establish EWI course Designation (designate 2) Provide HIP Faculty Grants (4)
	UWC/FCTL FCTL FCTL	Implement Faculty Writing Liaison program (6 liaisons trained/funded) Secure additional faculty resource materials for writing instruction Host national-level speaker and kick-off workshop event
	FCTL UWC/FCTL UWC/FCTL	QEP Chair and 1 Faculty Liaison attend WAC/WID conference Increase annual training for Writing Center staff/tutors Begin hosting Faculty Development Writing Intensive Workshop Series
	UWC/Lib Lib SA	Begin assigning each WI course a designated librarian and writing tutor for support Create online tutorials and discipline-specific research/citation guides Hire/Train GA to analyze experiential reflections
	SA FCTL	Identify experiential transcript program/process Faculty Showcase and Faculty Brown-bag sessions focused on HIP Faculty Grant Recipients/projects
2019–2020	UCC/QEP FCTL UWC/FCTL	Designate EWI courses (3) Provide HIP Faculty Grants (6) Improve Faculty Writing Liaison program (6 liaisons trained/funded)
	UWC/FCTL FCTL FCTL	Improve/Host Faculty Development Writing Intensive Workshop Series (each semester) Increase faculty resource materials for writing instruction Host TAMUS speaker and workshop
	FCTL UWC/Lib Lib	QEP Chair and 1 Faculty Liaison attend WAC/WID conference Continue assigning each WI course a designated librarian and writing tutor for support Improve online tutorials and discipline-specific research/citation guides
	SA FCTL	Improve experiential transcript program/process Faculty Showcase and Faculty Brown-bag sessions focused on HIP Faculty Grant Recipients/projects
2020–2021	UCC/QEP FCTL FCTL	Designate EWI courses (4) Provide HIP Faculty Grants (8) Improve Faculty Writing Liaison program (6 liaisons trained/funded)
	FCTL FCTL FCTL	Increase faculty resource materials for writing instruction Host regional-level speaker and workshop QEP Chair and 1 Faculty Liaison attend WAC/WID conference
	Provost UWC/FCTL UWC/Lib	Institutional group attends AAC&U Institute on HIP and Student Success Improve/Host Faculty Development Writing Intensive Workshop Series (each semester) Continue assigning each WI course a designated librarian and writing tutor for support
	Lib SA FCTL	Improve online tutorials and discipline-specific research/citation guides Improve experiential transcript program/process Faculty Showcase and Faculty Brown-bag sessions focused on HIP Faculty Grant Recipients/projects

ACADEMIC YEAR	RESPONSIBLE AREA	ACTION
2021–2022	UCC/QEP FCTL FCTL	Designate EWI courses (4) Provide HIP Faculty Grants (10) Improve Faculty Writing Liaison program (6 liaisons trained/funded)
	FCTL FCTL FCTL	Increase faculty resource materials for writing instruction Host TAMUS speaker and workshop QEP Chair and 1 Faculty Liaison attend WAC/WID conference
	UWC/FCTL UWC/Lib Lib	Improve/Host Faculty Development Writing Intensive Workshop Series (each semester) Continue assigning each WI course a designated librarian and writing tutor for support Improve online tutorials and discipline-specific research/citation guides
	SA FCTL	Improve experiential transcript program/process Faculty Showcase and Faculty Brown-bag sessions focused on HIP Faculty Grant Recipients/projects
2022–2023	UCC/QEP FCTL FCTL	Designate EWI courses (4) Provide HIP Faculty Grants (12) Improve Faculty Writing Liaison program (6 liaisons trained/funded)
	FCTL FCTL FCTL	Increase faculty resource materials for writing instruction Host regional-level speaker and workshop QEP Chair and 1 Faculty Liaison attend WAC/WID conference
	UWC/FCTL UWC/Lib Lib	Improve/Host Faculty Development Writing Intensive Workshop Series (each semester) Continue assigning each WI course a designated librarian and writing tutor for support Improve online tutorials and discipline-specific research/citation guides
	SA FCTL	Improve experiential transcript program/process Faculty Showcase and Faculty Brown-bag sessions focused on HIP Faculty Grant Recipients/projects

## SECTION 5.

# Assessment

The comprehensive assessment of student learning outcomes and operational outcomes over the next five years is critical to reaching the three goals of A&M–Central Texas’ QEP, *A Community of Writers*. Ongoing annual assessment informed the identification and selection of written communication as an area in need of improvement and a focus for the QEP. The QEP assessment processes will be integrated into the established A&M–Central Texas Assessment System, using many of the same measurement instruments, processes, and timelines as other academic programs. A complete assessment plan is available in Appendix B and a data collection plan is available in Appendix D.

## Assessment Roles

Assessment of the expected outcomes is the responsibility of the QEP chair. These efforts are directly supported by the assessment coordinator in Institutional Research and Assessment. The QEP chair will track faculty participation in and satisfaction with QEP faculty development activities. Faculty members in each degree program already deposit student work into the Assessment Artifact Library for submission to the Multi-State Collaborative (MSC). In addition, Institutional Research and Assessment conducts the NSSE and FSSE every other year, and the *ETS Proficiency Profile* each semester. The QEP chair will document the improvements identified from analysis of annual assessment data and, in collaboration with faculty, will draft the QEP Annual Assessment Report. Additionally, the QEP chair will document revisions to assessment procedures in order to continuously assess the effect of the changes to student learning outcomes. Ultimately, the degree to which the A&M–Central Texas’ QEP goals are met will be documented by the QEP chair in the QEP Impact Report.

A&M–Central Texas will use multiple instruments to assess the outcomes for each of the three main goals outlined in our QEP:

- » **Student Learning Goal:** Graduate proficient writers with the knowledge and skills essential to writing in a variety of disciplinary contexts
- » **Institutional Goal:** Support faculty in offering effective writing instruction
- » **Aspirational Goal:** Create a culture that fosters the development of student writing through deep learning experiences

## Assessment Measures

Assessment of the outcomes for each of these goals will consist of quantitative and qualitative assessment, direct and indirect measures, and formative (annual) and summative (five-year) evaluations as specified below in order to ensure a nuanced portrait of the QEP’s impact. The primary goal of our assessment practices is to evaluate the impact the A&M–Central Texas QEP is having on our students, the faculty, and the culture of the campus community in order to identify strengths and areas for improvement, develop successful strategies for improvement, and allocate resources appropriately. The QEP goals, outcomes, measures, findings, and improvement strategies will be tracked in TaskStream, the university’s assessment tool.

## Assessment of the Student Learning Goal

### OVERVIEW OF STUDENT LEARNING GOAL AND ASSESSMENT METHODS.

Our student learning goal—graduate proficient writers with the knowledge and skills essential to writing in a variety of disciplinary contexts—focuses on ensuring that our students improve their writing ability in preparation for the numerous, and varied, contexts

for writing they will encounter in their professional/academic futures while at, and after leaving, A&M–Central Texas. Our focus on a WID model represents this commitment. This goal consists of three student learning outcomes:

1. Upon graduation, undergraduate students will be able to produce writing that demonstrates understanding and awareness of audience, purpose, and disciplinary contexts
2. Upon graduation, undergraduate students will be able to produce writing that demonstrates understanding of genre expectations and disciplinary writing conventions and skillfully integrates sources
3. Upon graduation, undergraduate students will be able to control grammar, syntax, and mechanics in communicating ideas with clarity and concision for their intended audience

These three student learning outcomes will be primarily assessed by drawing upon the data we receive from the MSC and through the A&M–Central Texas Value-Added Writing Assessment. The *ETS Proficiency Profile*, the NSSE, and end-of-course surveys will be used as indirect measures of our success in achieving our overall student learning goal.

Both the MSC and the A&M–Central Texas Value-Added Writing Assessment employ the AAC&U Written Communication VALUE Rubric (See Appendix C) developed by disciplinary experts in writing (Linda Adler-Kassner; Terri Flateby; Susanmarie Harrington; Jean Mach; Noreen O'Connor; Carol Rutz). As Linda Adler-Kassner and Peggy O'Neill (2010) note, the Written Communication VALUE Rubric is tethered to three principles of best assessment practices: the

Written Communication VALUE Rubric, developed by disciplinary professionals, is used with student work produced in authentic classroom contexts (not merely produced for the assessment itself), and emphasizes the value of local assessment, viewing the rubric "... as a beginning for discussions about assessment rather than the end of one" (p. 173). The MSC will provide an external assessment of our students' writing abilities, while the A&M–Central Texas Value-Added Writing Assessment will enable a more local approach focused on growth.

### MULTI-STATE COLLABORATIVE (MSC)

Beginning in 2017, A&M–Central Texas is participating in the Multi-State Collaborative (MSC). According to the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO), the MSC seeks to assess students' performance through "...the use of common rubrics applied by teams of faculty to students' authentic college work—including such things as projects, papers, and research" (State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, 2012). The primary concern of the MSC is validity. By training faculty to evaluate student work produced in authentic classroom contexts, the MSC will be able "...to produce valid data summarizing faculty judgments of students' own work" while also aggregating those results in a manner "...that allows for benchmarking across institutions and states" (SHEEO, 2012). Although localized assessment is valued when assessing writing (Adler-Kassner & O'Neill, 2010; Broad, 2003; Huot, 2002), the QEP Task Force believes it is important to have an external assessment, as well, since it will allow us to draw upon the assessment expertise

**TABLE 1: WRITTEN COMMUNICATION VALUE RUBRIC ASPECTS ALIGNED WITH OUTCOMES**

	Context of and Purpose for Writing	Content Development	Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	Sources and Evidence	Control of Syntax and Mechanics
Outcome #1	X	X			
Outcome #2			X	X	
Outcome #3					X

**TABLE 2: 2016–2017 ACADEMIC YEAR MSC DATA**

<b>Aspect and Overall</b>	<b>Mean Score (Scale 0–4)</b>
Context of and Purpose for Writing	2.4
Content Development	2.2
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	2.2
Sources and Evidence	2.4
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	2.5
Overall	2.3

of faculty across the country and use multiple data points to ensure the validity of our assessment model.

The student learning outcomes for the A&M–Central Texas QEP align with the various aspects of the Written Communication VALUE Rubric; each student learning outcomes aligns with one or more of the aspects measured (see Table 1). Thus, the results A&M–Central Texas receives from the MSC will allow us to evaluate our performance and progress on each of the three learning outcomes.

A&M–Central Texas received an initial set of results from MSC in Spring 2018 for the 2016–2017 academic year. Overall, the MSC rated 116 student artifacts submitted by A&M–Central Texas. These scores will be used as a benchmark for our students' performance (see Table 2).

As Table 2 demonstrates, the MSC results closely mirrored the internally rated artifacts, which rated 56 students. These artifacts received an overall mean of 2.4. The MSC's results fell within one-tenth of a mean score point on all aspects except Control of Syntax and Mechanics, which was the same as the MSC. The differences in the two studies are small and lead us to believe the MSC results will be comparable to our internally rated studies.

Moving forward, the A&M–Central Texas QEP aims to improve every year in each aspect category. The target by the end of the QEP will be for 50% of students to be at Level 3 and 25% of students to be at Level 4. With the implementation of the QEP, writing instruction should improve, especially in regard to writing in the disciplines, allowing for sustained improvement throughout the duration of the QEP.

### **A&M–CENTRAL TEXAS VALUE-ADDED WRITING ASSESSMENT**

Since A&M–Central Texas is an upper-level institution that serves a unique and diverse population of students, many of whom are veterans and/or nontraditional students who will have transferred from a variety of community colleges, the QEP Task Force believes that it is important not only to assess our students' overall performance but the progress they make in their writing ability while at A&M–Central Texas as well. As a result, we have developed the A&M–Central Texas Value-Added Writing Assessment. The A&M–Central Texas Value-Added Writing Assessment will rely on trained and normed A&M–Central Texas faculty to assess artifacts from both the beginning of students' careers at A&M–Central Texas and towards the end of their careers.

This internal assessment will collect artifacts from each incoming class when students take the EWI course required in each discipline (or any other WI course if their discipline does not have an EWI course). Later in the students' careers, near graduation, artifacts will be collected from senior-level WI courses (preferably from the capstone course within their disciplines). The individual student's EWI course artifact and the later artifact collected from that student when s/he nears graduation will be rated concurrently by the same person and compared in order to measure growth.

Every year, A&M–Central Texas enrolls approximately 400–500 students. The QEP Task Force intends to collect 200 artifacts from these students when they enroll in their EWI courses. Considering that some

students will not complete their path to graduation, an estimated sample size of 150 students per incoming class will include artifacts from both the EWIC course and a senior-level course.

Since the purpose of the A&M–Central Texas Value-Added Writing Assessment is to measure growth, students’ final aspect scores and overall score will matter less than the progression they made from their EWIC course through their senior-level course. Table 4 demonstrates how two students could have drastically different overall scores yet still be considered relatively equally successful for the purposes of the A&M–Central Texas Value-Added Writing Assessment. As Table 3 demonstrates, the two students’ overall performance in each aspect—as well as the overall score—deviate substantially. However, both Student 1 and Student 2 showed significant growth and, while Student 1 exhibited more substantial growth, Student 2 entered A&M–Central Texas at a higher level, making that student’s growth quite impressive as well.

The A&M–Central Texas Value-Added Writing Assessment has two primary goals: 1) to increase students’ scores one level or more during their time at A&M–Central Texas, and 2) to have the majority of students’ overall scores be a 3 or 4 upon their graduation from A&M–Central Texas. Furthermore, where sample sizes permit, the Office of Institutional Assessment Research will break down the scores by

age, gender, degree program, and—potentially—by transfer institution.

By breaking down the scores by age, gender, and degree program, we will be able to determine whether certain demographics of students need additional assistance and/or resources to help them develop their writing ability. Additionally, if it is possible to break down the scores by transfer institution, this data can inform collaborations with the community colleges from which students frequently transfer. Overall, the aim of the A&M–Central Texas Value-Added Writing Assessment is to ensure that our students’ writing abilities progress throughout their time at A&M–Central Texas and to determine how to best improve instruction, allocate resources, and collaborate with local community colleges.

### ***ETS PROFICIENCY PROFILE***

In the fall of 2013, A&M–Central Texas administered the *ETS Proficiency Profile* to 173 students. Data were returned on 148 students, with 25 students excluded. The writing portion of the *ETS Proficiency Profile* (2017) consists of 27 multiple-choice questions that measure students’ ability to: 1) “recognize the most grammatically correct revision of a clause, sentence or group of sentences,” 2) “organize units of language for coherence and rhetorical effect,” 3) “recognize and reword figurative language,” and

**TABLE 3: HYPOTHETICAL STUDENT COMPARISON FOR THE A&M–CENTRAL TEXAS VALUE-ADDED WRITING ASSESSMENT**

Aspect and Overall	Student 1 EWIC	Student 1 4000-level	Growth	Student 2 EWIC	Student 2 4000-level	Growth
Context of and Purpose for Writing	2.1	3.1	1.0	2.9	3.7	0.8
Content Development	2.3	3.2	0.9	3.0	3.7	0.7
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	2.1	3.3	1.2	2.7	3.8	1.1
Sources and Evidence	2.0	3.0	1.0	2.8	3.8	1.0
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	1.9	3.0	1.1	3.0	3.6	0.6
Overall	2.08	3.12	1.04	2.88	3.72	0.84

4) “organize elements of writing into larger units of meaning.” These multiple-choice questions are most directly tethered to the third learning outcome, which addresses students’ control over grammar, syntax, and mechanics in communicating ideas with clarity and concision for their intended audiences. While the *ETS Proficiency Profile* can be seen to measure students’ ability to “organize units of language for coherence and rhetorical effect,” and “organize elements of writing into larger units of meaning,” the multiple-choice items are not tethered to a particular rhetorical nor disciplinary context, nor is a specific audience identified. Thus, they do not align perfectly with the first and second outcomes for the QEP.

Scores on the multiple choice section of the 2013 *ETS Proficiency Profile* could range from 100 to 130. A&M–Central Texas students scored an average of 113.70 for the writing portion of the assessment, which placed A&M–Central Texas in the 50th percentile nationally. Moving forward, the *ETS Proficiency Profile* will be administered each semester to students who volunteer to take the assessment, with the goal of reaching the level wherein 80% of students are rated proficient at Level 1, 65% of students are rated proficient at Level 2, and 50% of students are rated proficient at Level 3 by the end of the QEP period.

However, though the *ETS Proficiency Profile* will play a role in assessing the QEP, the QEP Task Force believes that the MSC data—and the A&M–Central Texas Value Added Writing Assessment—provide more valid data since they draw upon authentic student work and, additionally, align better with all three outcomes. Thus, they will take precedence in evaluating A&M–Central Texas students’ performance should any differences occur between these measures and the *ETS Proficiency Profile*. Furthermore, due to the problematic nature of machine-scored essays (Haswell, 2006; NCTE, 2013; Neal, 2011; Perelman, 2012), A&M–Central Texas will not be participating in the optional essay portion of the *ETS Proficiency Profile*.

## NATIONAL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND OTHER SURVEYS

The NSSE (2017) assesses the level to which first year<sup>1</sup> and senior-level students “engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development.” Since A&M–Central Texas already administers the NSSE to its students, the QEP will use data pertaining to the item that asks students to what degree their experiences at this institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in writing clearly and effectively. Our target is for students to respond “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” at a mean at or above our peer groups.

A&M–Central Texas will also add additional questions about writing instruction to the end-of-course surveys administered each semester in every class taught at A&M–Central Texas. The end-of-course survey currently contains items pertaining to writing instruction, and A&M–Central Texas will add these specific items:

1. I made progress in writing for multiple audiences in a variety of different contexts.
2. I made progress in writing for my specific discipline and the genres it requires.
3. I made progress in my ability to skillfully integrate sources.
4. I made progress in using grammar and mechanics in communicating to my intended audience.
5. I made progress in formatting sentences to communicate with clarity and concision to my intended audience.

The first item aligns with the first student learning outcome, the second and third items align with the second student learning outcome, and the fourth and fifth items align with the third student learning outcome. The target will be for 80% of the responding students to perceive substantial or exceptional gains by the end of the duration of the QEP.

Finally, since our goal is to *graduate* proficient writers with the knowledge and skills essential to writing in a variety of disciplinary contexts, we will add questions to the Graduate Survey, which is administered to students at or before commencement ceremonies,

1 Since A&M–Central Texas is an upper-level institution, data for first year students will not be available.

to measure students' perception of their readiness to write in their chosen field. As with the end-of-course surveys, the first item aligns with the first student learning outcome, the second and third items align with the second student learning outcome, and the fourth and fifth items align with the third student learning outcome. The target will be for 80% of students to respond positively.

## Assessment of the Institutional Goal

### OVERVIEW OF THE INSTITUTIONAL GOAL AND ASSESSMENT METHODS

Our institutional goal is to support faculty in offering effective writing instruction. The focus is on supporting faculty in their teaching of writing instruction within individual classes, as well as with their development of courses that foster student writing. This goal consists of three outcomes:

1. Faculty will engage in effective writing instruction
2. Faculty will engage in effective development of courses that foster student writing
3. Faculty will engage with faculty leaders and peer mentors regarding effective practices in writing instruction

These three institutional outcomes will be measured using data collected by the FCTL from internally developed quizzes to determine baseline levels and gains in knowledge for the writing instruction workshops; feedback surveys for the range of faculty development opportunities; peer review scoring rubric for new WI, EWI, and HIPs-infused course developments; QM Higher Education Rubric for online and blended EWI courses; and open-ended reflections for workshops, EWI course development, Writing Liaison consultations, and HIPs development grant experiences. Data are collected continuously, and reviewed and analyzed annually by the FCTL director for continuous improvement of QEP strategies. In addition, the data are part of the annual assessment and continuous improvement of the FCTL program.

### ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

The faculty development writing instruction workshop series consists of four 2-hour workshops designed to increase writing instruction competencies for all faculty members. Each workshop includes the presentation of key concepts, models of best practice, demonstrations, and opportunities for faculty participants to engage in practical application of the concepts. The workshops begin with a pretest for a baseline assessment of writing instruction knowledge related to the topic of each workshop:

1. Writing Intensive Courses: Expectations and Strategies for Success
2. Writing in the Disciplines: Expectations and Strategies for Success
3. Early Writing to Senior-level WI: Expectations and Strategies for Success
4. Deeper Learning Experiences: Application of Selected HIPs to WI/WID

At the conclusion of each workshop, faculty participants will be assessed again using the same instrument—a basic short-answer quiz consisting of 20 questions addressing the content of each specific workshop. For successful completion of the workshop, faculty members must demonstrate a mastery level of 90% or higher on the summative assessment.

The university supports faculty in offering effective writing instruction by providing stipends to support the development of EWI courses and the inclusion of HIPs that support student writing. Effective application of EWI course guidelines will be assessed by the FCTL and UWC directors through a checklist-based syllabi review. WI courses, which are part of an ongoing university effort and therefore will not be supported with a QEP-related stipend, will also be assessed with a checklist-based syllabi review. Courses developed with HIPs development grants will be assessed through a checklist-based syllabi review and faculty process reports. These process reports document faculty activity throughout the development process and include a final reflection at the completion of course development. The reports

are submitted to the FCTL director. They are used to improve the HIPs development grant process and document faculty participant activity. In all three course development processes (EWI, WI, and HIP), the development is expected to be completed and courses are expected to meet the established guidelines within one academic year from beginning the respective course development process. Syllabi reviews will be completed at the end of the course development phase. For newly developed online and blended courses, the QM Higher Education Rubric Standards will be also be applied by the FCTL director at the end of the course development phase as an internal peer review of quality.

### **PERCEPTIONS OF INCREASED COMPETENCE**

Facilitators of all faculty development writing instruction opportunities, including faculty development writing instruction workshops, Writing Liaison consultations, guest speaker workshops, faculty brown-bag sessions, and faculty showcases will encourage participants to complete brief feedback surveys with open-ended reflection questions. We expect that 80% or more of faculty participants in each activity will perceive gains in their writing instruction competencies. For those faculty members who elect to participate in the entire faculty development writing instruction workshop series in order to achieve the Writing Instruction Certificate, there is an additional overarching reflection survey. The expectation is that 80% of the participants will perceive gains in their writing instruction competencies as a result of the workshop series.

### **ENGAGEMENT WITH FACULTY LEADERS/PEER MENTORS**

The primary mechanism for engagement with faculty peers is through the Faculty Writing Liaison initiative. In addition to tracking participation in Writing Liaison-led workshops and consultations, participants will complete open-ended surveys consisting of reflection questions for each formal writing instruction peer interaction. For example, additional questions focused on the impact of the Faculty Writing Liaisons will be added to the faculty development writing instruction

workshop surveys, until the point when/if the Faculty Writing Liaisons lead the workshops independently. In addition, after each consultation, faculty members will receive an email with a brief survey in which they will be asked to reflect on the impact of their engagement with the Faculty Writing Liaison.

## **Assessment of the Aspirational Goal**

### **OVERVIEW OF THE ASPIRATIONAL GOAL AND ASSESSMENT METHODS**

A&M–Central Texas’ third and final goal—create a culture that fosters the development of student writing through deep learning experiences—focuses on changing the culture at A&M–Central Texas to ensure students are engaging in writing at the same level outside of the classroom as that which is expected inside the classroom. This goal consists of two aspirational outcomes:

- » Students and faculty will value writing through deep learning experiences
- » The University will prioritize resources for writing instruction

Cameron and Quinn (2011), discussing organizational culture, argue there is little hope for enduring change in performance without a change in culture. A&M–Central Texas’ third goal is one of aspiration and, as such, it is a goal to challenge the institution to commit to a cultural shift. A&M–Central Texas is committing over half of a million dollars over the next five years to change the current culture of student writing. In a time of constricting budgets, this is not a small commitment. To assess the degree to which the culture changes at A&M–Central Texas throughout the time of this plan, we have identified five indirect measures: experiential transcript credit, focus groups, the FSSE, the alumni survey, and the protected prioritization of funding for writing instruction.

### **EXPERIENTIAL TRANSCRIPTS**

Students will be granted credit on experiential transcripts upon completing reflective prompts which are reviewed by the experiential transcript graduate assistant through the utilization of the VALUE rubric. A&M–Central Texas recognizes that learning does not

occur in a silo and that deeper learning takes place when students are able to apply what is learned in the classroom to experiences outside the classroom. Increased activity on experiential transcripts, a process which itself necessitates written communication, is an indication that we have achieved a culture in which students are engaged in deep learning experiences.

## **FOCUS GROUPS**

Focus groups are a useful tool for gathering data about individuals' perceptions, values, attitudes, opinions, etc. (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004). As culture is significantly difficult to measure, A&M–Central Texas will utilize focus groups to measure the value placed on deep learning experiences by faculty and by students. Students and faculty focus groups will be held on an annual (academic year) basis and will be facilitated by the Division of Student Affairs. Each focus group will consist of no more than 10 individuals in each session. The sessions will be held in on-campus classrooms and will be audio recorded, and responses to identified questions will not be directly tied to any individual participant. To meet the needs of our distance education students, these sessions will be live fed. Participants will be arranged in a semi-circle facing a whiteboard and there will be no barriers between the participants and the facilitator. Participants will be asked to respond to and discuss questions that are pre-identified; however, the moderator(s) will ensure a more open-ended approach to allow for organic discussion on the value of deep learning experiences. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment will analyze and code responses from the focus groups through content analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and provide the data to the Division of Student Affairs. The Division of Student Affairs will subsequently provide appropriate interpretations to the Office of Institutional Research, the QEP implementation group, and other appropriate stakeholders. Included in is a pre-established outline and protocol for the implementation of the focus groups.

## **FSSE**

A&M–Central Texas already participates in and commits to the administration of the FSSE with the

same regularity as the NSSE. Similar to the NSSE, the FSSE focuses on how faculty and instructional staff perceive student engagement. However, the FSSE additionally measures the self-reported importance faculty and instructional staff place on areas of learning and development. A&M–Central Texas will utilize faculty responses to assist us in measuring the cultural emphasis on deep learning experiences and the connection these experiences have on student writing. (See FSSE questions on page 61.)

## **ALUMNI SURVEY**

Alumni are currently presented with questions about their experience at A&M–Central Texas one year after graduation. Institutional Research and Assessment conducts a survey of graduates including questions related to writing instruction that relate to the first outcome to assess the degree to which graduates are achieving the first outcome.

## **RESOURCE PRIORITIZATION**

Our values are demonstrated through the manner in which the university invests time and money, and the university prioritizes resources through its budget process. One outcome of achieving this goal is the prioritization of resources for writing instruction, which is measured by the university successfully funding the QEP budget.

## **Conclusion**

A&M–Central Texas is fully committed to improving writing instruction—especially writing instruction in the disciplines—across the university's campus. This assessment plan is comprehensive and provides a multitude of data points in order to measure the success of the A&M–Central Texas QEP. As a result of the data A&M–Central Texas will collect, we will be able to identify areas of success as well as weaknesses, develop sophisticated strategies for improvement, and allocate resources in the most efficient and effective manner possible. Institutional assessment is vital to continuous improvement and A&M–Central Texas embraces this challenge.

## SECTION 6.

# Resources

## Human and Administrative

The QEP Implementation Committee, consisting of diverse university representation, will be led by Dr. Lisa Bunkowski as chair/project manager and Dr. Bruce Bowles as assistant chair/content expert. Dr. Lisa Bunkowski currently leads faculty development at the institution as the director of the FCTL and reports to the Provost and Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs (see Appendix F). Dr. Bruce Bowles is an assistant professor of English and the director of the recently established UWC. This structure is appropriate for A&M–Central Texas as it allows the chair to focus on the process of the QEP (i.e., administration) while allowing the assistant chair to focus on the topic area of written communication and best inform the process. Furthermore, this structure represents the most responsible strategy of financial stewardship for the institution. The remainder of the QEP implementation team will include faculty, staff, and student representatives from Academic and Student Affairs appointed by the Provost in the summer of 2018. See Appendix E for position descriptions.

## Fiscal

The fiscal resources necessary for the QEP are \$583,850.00 over a five-year span, as described in table 4.1. The expenses have been approved by the university's executive leadership, and the funds have been identified and secured. These fiscal resources will provide an administrative stipend for the QEP chair and allocated funding for the FCTL, Institutional Research and Assessment, Student Affairs, University Library, and UWC in order to support new or significantly expanded programs and initiatives. In addition, the plan will complement other recently funded directives established prior to the QEP, such as the recent formation of the UWC, which creates a more focused and cost-effective strategy for enhancing student learning at the institution.

**TABLE 4.1 BUDGET**

	TOTAL	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
<b>Administration</b>						
QEP Chair Stipend	\$50,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
<b>Library</b>						
Embedded Librarian (library reimbursement)	75,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
<b>Writing Center</b>						
WID Training	4,500	900	900	900	900	900
Degreed Tutor Salaries (2)	50,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Writing Workshops	4,500	900	900	900	900	900
<i>Subtotal</i>	59,000	11,800	11,800	11,800	11,800	11,800
<b>Assessment</b>						
VALUE Rubric Training	1,000	1,000				
Rater Pay	29,850	3,750	3,750	7,450	7,450	7,450
Graduate Assistant: Institutional Research and Assessment	75,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
<i>Subtotal</i>	105,850	19,750	18,750	22,450	22,450	22,450
<b>Faculty Center</b>						
High-Impact Practice Grants	80,000	8,000	12,000	16,000	20,000	24,000
Faculty Writing Liaison Stipend (1 per college)	30,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
EWI Course Development Stipend	34,000	4,000	6,000	8,000	8,000	8,000
Faculty Writing Resources	1,500	500	250	250	250	250
Guest Speakers and Workshops	15,000	7,000	1,500	2,500	1,500	2,500
FCTL Staff Training	1,000	200	200	200	200	200
Conference Attendance	27,500	5,500	5,500	5,500	5,500	5,500
AAC&U Institute on HIP and Student Success	15,000			15,000		
<i>Subtotal</i>	203,000	31,200	31,450	53,450	41,450	46,450
<b>Student Affairs</b>						
Experiential Transcript Graduate Assistant	75,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Experiential Transcript Software Upgrade	15,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
<i>Subtotal</i>	90,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000
<b>Total</b>	\$583,850	\$105,750	\$105,000	\$130,700	\$118,700	\$123,700

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## APPENDIX A

## FCTL Offerings (2017-18)

FACULTY CENTER FOR TEACHING & LEARNING (FCTL) 2017–2018			
Faculty Development Series		New Faculty Series	
Fall			
<b>Canvas Webinars: (60-minutes each), multiple offerings</b>	various	<b>Orientation (4-hours) Friday, Sept. 8, 8am-12pm</b>	9/8 Bernie Beck LH
» Course Basics		Dr. Marc's welcome to the new faculty; intro-	
» Leveraging Modules		duction to university resources; Orientation to	
» Gradebook & Speedgrader		student support services; orientation to faculty	
» Managing Quizzes		development and support services	
<b>Creating Accessible Documents (120-minutes)</b>	9/12 & 9/14 WH 110		
Trainer: Steven Hill.			
Training on how to create accessible documents. All content produced by the university should be accessible, from the various admission forms to classroom content.			
<b>Accessibility Panel Discussion (90-minutes)</b>	9/21 Bernie Beck LH		
Panel Members: Steven Hill, Shailen Singh, Richard Schilke			
Panel Discussion followed by Q&A.			
Key Issues: legal concerns, compliance, resources			
<b>Webinar: Projecting your online persona via video (30-minutes + resources)</b>	10/17	<b>Promotion &amp; Tenure (2-hours) Friday, Oct. 6, 9:00am-10:30am</b>	10/6 WH 403
Hosted by University of Central Florida.		Session with Dr. Peg Gray-Vickrey, expectations and planning for academic careers at A&M–Central Texas	
In this seminar, you will learn how to effectively integrate video into your online course. An instructional designer and teaching faculty member describe the ease of video creation, leading to the joy of teaching and deep learning. Choose from a variety of teaching methods and video scenarios that best portrays your unique online persona.			

<b>Accessibility Panel Discussion (90-minutes)</b>	11/10 Online Zoom		
Panel Members: Steven Hill, Shailen Singh, Richard Schilke, Sara Dierk Panel Discussion followed by Q&A. Key Issues: legal concerns, compliance, resources			
<b>Teaching Online Faculty Showcase (90-minutes): Teaching with Canvas</b>	11/30 Online Zoom	<b>Service (2-hours) Friday, Friday, Nov. 3, 9am-11am</b>	11/3 (post-poned)
Panel Members: Julia Berrios, Laresa Trusty, Dr. Barb Altman, Sara Dierk Canvas tool or functionality. Leave with new skills and ideas! Modules, VeriCite, Rubrics, Gradebook, Accommodations, Inbox, Comments, Blended Course Design.		Guest(s) from Faculty Senate to talk about Committees; Dr. Lewing to talk about Service Learning; Grad & Undergrad offices to talk about Service recognition	
<b>Spring</b>			
<b>Copyright Panel Discussion</b>	1/30 Bernie Beck LH	<b>Mini Orientation (1-hour)</b>	Jan/Feb TBD
Panel Members: Lisa Hopkins, Dr. Allen Redmon, and Sara Dierk. Come and learn about the issues, with an opportunity to ask questions. This will be open for virtual participation.		Virtual meeting – targeting new faculty and adjunct faculty, with the Provost, TEL, and College representatives.	
<b>Difficult Dialogue: Civil Discourse (90-minutes), Part 2</b>	TBD	<b>Teaching (2-hours) Friday, 9am-11am</b>	Feb TBD
Focus on the Online classroom Managing online classroom conflict, incivility, and controversial topics Panel of experienced faculty and BIT members Panel discussion followed by Q&A.		College leaders - invite Deans and Department Chairs to share what they are looking for when they evaluate teaching; Paul Turcotte will discuss student evaluations of courses/faculty; Share resources and faculty experts will discuss student engagement strategies and instructor presence; Grad & Undergrad offices will discuss Teaching recognition	
<b>Teaching Online Faculty Showcase (90-minutes): Using Peer Review</b>	TBD	<b>Scholarship (2-hours) Friday, 9am-11am</b>	March TBD
Learn from your colleagues! Come see what is working well for peer review. Learn from our resident faculty experts, and share your favorite tool or functionality for making peer review a successful activity. Leave with new skills and ideas!		IRB leaders to discuss research proposal process; Dr. Schilke will discuss using Canvas and Qualtrics to collect data; Grad & Undergrad offices will discuss Research recognition and Grants	

**Teaching Challenges brown-bag (90-min-utes): Grade Inflation** TBD

Topic: Grade Inflation. What is it? Are there alternatives? What are the strategies to address it? Share your experience and learn from your colleagues!

**Teaching Challenges brown-bag (90-minutes): Feedback** TBD

Topic: Feedback. What do we mean by “timely and substantive” feedback? How do we provide this to students without creating an overwhelming workload for ourselves? Share your experience and learn from your colleagues!

**Service (2-hours) Friday, Friday, 9am-11am**

April  
TBD

Guest(s) from Faculty Senate will discuss Committees; Dr. Lewing will discuss Service Learning; Grad & Undergrad offices will discuss Service recognition

**Modules/Resources available on-demand in Canvas, in the FCTL Community**

**Accessibility:**

Recordings from panel discussion, how-to resources, scholarly readings, and tutorials, and 20-Minute Mentor Commons presentation links.

**Adult Learners:**

Overview of Andragogy, defined by Malcolm Knowles. Video content and scholarly readings.

**Assessment:**

Various university resource sites and tool-boxes on assessment, scholarly readings, and 20-Minute Mentor Commons presentation links.

**Civility:**

Scholarly readings, and 20-Minute Mentor Commons presentation links.

**Classroom Management:**

Scholarly readings, and 20-Minute Mentor Commons presentation links.

**Copyright:**

Supporting materials from previous university presentations on copyright, link to University Library LibGuide on Copyright and Fair Use, and 20-Minute Mentor Commons presentation links.

**Feedback & Grading:**

Scholarly readings, and 20-Minute Mentor Commons presentation links.

**High Impact Practices & Active Learning:**

Various university resource sites, AAC&U site, scholarly readings, and 20-Minute Mentor Commons presentation links.

**Instructor Presence & Communication:**

Podcast, videos, and 20-Minute Mentor Commons presentation links.

**Learning Analytics:**

Scholarly readings.

**Lecture or Not?**

Podcast, blog post, and 20-Minute Mentor Commons presentation links.

**Online Course Development - getting started**

Video (supplements training courses noted below)

**Quality Assurance:**

Quality Matters materials, Online Learning Consortium Quality Scorecard Suite, additional quality rubrics.

**Social Media:**

Scholarly readings.

**Student Engagement:**

Scholarly readings, videos, and 20-Minute Mentor Commons presentation links.

**Using Rubrics:**

Scholarly readings, and 20-Minute Mentor Commons presentation links.

**Workload:**

Scholarly readings, and 20-Minute Mentor Commons presentation links.

**Training Courses available on-demand in Canvas:****FCTL-101 Canvas Minimum Requirements**

Faculty will master the following tasks

- » The Canvas Interface
- » Changing Your Account Settings
- » Canvas Commons Load a University Master Course Template
- » Editing and Setting the Home Page
- » Loading a File to Your Course
- » Linking Your Syllabus
- » Publishing Your Course

This course is designed for faculty teaching face-to-face who need to meet the SAP *Minimum Online Expectations* training requirement. It is offered online through Canvas. This course is facilitated by our Canvas experts, the Instructional Design Services team, of the Technology Enhanced Learning Department.

**FCTL-104 Teaching Online**

The main goal of this course is to help prepare faculty members to tackle online teaching activities.

Upon completion of this orientation, faculty members will

- » Demonstrate competency in aligning measurable learning objectives, assessments, and activities; engaging students in learning; creating appropriate assessments of student learning; and in effective use of course technology
- » Identify resources for help, support, and technical assistance
- » Reflect on the application of course materials to their teaching

This course covers the first three items of the *Faculty Requirements for Online Teaching* SAP:

- a. Aligning measurable learning objectives, assessments, and activities
  - b. Engaging students in learning
  - c. Creating appropriate assessments of student learning
- This course is facilitated by the Faculty Center for Teaching & Learning.

**FCTL-102 Canvas Course Facilitator**

Faculty will master the following tasks

- » The Canvas Interface
- » Changing Your Account Settings
- » Canvas Commons Load a University Master Course Template
- » Editing and Setting the Home Page
- » Loading a File to Your Course
- » Linking Your Syllabus
- » Publishing Your Course
- » Create a Module
- » Edit a Content Page
- » Edit Assignments
- » Edit Discussion Settings
- » Create a Quiz
- » Conversations (the Inbox)
- » Student View
- » Grading Student Work
- » Submit Facilitator's Training Completion Exercise

This course covers the last item of the *Faculty Requirements for Online Teaching* SAP:

- d. Integrating emerging technologies into the design and delivers of online courses.

This course is facilitated by the Instructional Design Services team.

## APPENDIX B

## Assessment Plan

**Mission:** The A&M–Central Texas Quality Enhancement Plan, *A Community of Writers*, elevates the level of writing achieved by our students.

### Goals and Expected Outcomes

**Student Learning Goal:** Graduate proficient writers with the knowledge and skills essential to writing in a variety of disciplinary contexts.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** Upon graduation, undergraduate students will be able to...

1. produce writing that demonstrates understanding and awareness of audience, purpose, and disciplinary contexts
2. produce writing that demonstrates understanding of genre expectations and disciplinary writing conventions and skillfully integrates sources
3. control grammar, syntax, and mechanics in communicating ideas with clarity and concision for their intended audience

**Institutional Goal:** Support faculty in offering effective writing instruction.

**Operational Outcomes:** Faculty will

1. engage in effective writing instruction
2. engage in effective development of courses that foster student writing
3. engage with faculty leaders and peer mentors regarding effective practices in writing instruction

**Aspirational Goal:** Create a culture that fosters the development of student writing through deep learning experiences.

**Operational Outcomes:**

1. Students and faculty will value writing through deep learning experiences
2. The University will prioritize resources for writing instruction

### Assessment Plan

#### STUDENT LEARNING GOAL

##### Student Learning Outcome 1

##### **Measure 1. MSC Rated VALUE Rubric – Aspects 1 and 2**

**Description:** The AAC&U Written Communication VALUE Rubric, developed by disciplinary experts in writing (Linda Adler-Kassner; Terri Flateby; Susan-marie Harrington; Jean Mach; Noreen O'Connor; Carol Rutz), includes five aspects: 1) context of and purpose for writing, 2) content development, 3) genre and disciplinary conventions, 4) sources and evidence, and 5) control of syntax and mechanics. Raters apply the rubric to students' work drawn from authentic classroom contexts.

**Process:** Faculty submit student artifacts from Writing Intensive (WI) courses. Teams of expertly trained faculty across the country apply the first two aspects of the rubric, which align with the first outcome, to assess the degree to which students are achieving the outcome.

**When:** Faculty submit artifacts each semester and Institutional Research and Assessment submits the work to the Multi-State Collaborative (MSC) each spring.

**Responsible Persons:** Faculty and Institutional Research and Assessment

**Target:** 25% of those rated will score a 4, and an additional 50% will score a 3.

**Baseline:** Aspect 1: 30% scored a 3 and 15% scored a 4; and Aspect 2: 25% scored a 3 and 8% scored a 4.

##### **Measure 2. Value-Added VALUE Rubric – Aspects 1 and 2**

**Description:** The AAC&U Written Communication VALUE Rubric, developed by disciplinary experts in writing (Linda Adler-Kassner; Terri Flateby; Susan-

marie Harrington; Jean Mach; Noreen O'Connor; Carol Rutz), includes five aspects: 1) context of and purpose for writing, 2) content development, 3) genre and disciplinary conventions, 4) sources and evidence, and 5) control of syntax and mechanics. Raters apply the rubric to students' work drawn from authentic classroom contexts.

**Process:** Faculty submit student artifacts from Early Writing Intensive (EWI) courses and senior-level WI courses, preferably capstone courses. Teams of A&M–Central Texas faculty apply the first two aspects of the rubric, which align with the first outcome, to assess the degree to which student are achieving the outcome. Raters evaluate a student's work from the EWI course paired with work from a senior-level WI course. These artifacts will be assessed simultaneously in order to measure the level of student growth in regard to the first outcome.

**When:** Faculty submit artifacts each semester, Institutional Research and Assessment pairs the artifacts and coordinates raters each spring.

**Responsible Persons:** Faculty and Institutional Research and Assessment

**Target:** 80% of students will increase one level between the EWI course and WI course.

**Baseline:** None

### ***Measure 3. NSSE – Writing Clearly and Effectively***

**Description:** The NSSE assesses the level to which senior-level students “engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development.” The item on the NSSE which examines students' perceptions as to what degree their experiences at this institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in writing clearly and effectively measures students' perceptions of the overall writing instruction they received while at A&M–Central Texas.

**Process:** Institutional Research and Assessment invites graduating seniors to participate in the NSSE, which aligns with the first outcome, to assess the degree to which students are achieving the outcome.

**When:** Every other spring, graduating students are administered the NSSE.

**Responsible Persons:** Institutional Research and Assessment

**Target:** Students will respond “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” at a mean at or above our peer groups.

**Baseline:** In 2017, 83% responded “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” compared to 74% for our Carnegie class peers. In 2015, 77% responded “Quite a Bit” or “Very Much” compared to 74% for our Carnegie class peers.

### ***Measure 4. End-of-Course Surveys – Additional Question 1***

**Description:** Students respond to questions at the end of each course (EWI and WI) indicating whether they made no apparent, slight, moderate, substantial, or exceptional progress.

1. I made progress in writing for multiple audiences in a variety of different contexts.
2. I made progress in writing for my specific discipline and the genres it requires.
3. I made progress in my ability to skillfully integrate sources.
4. I made progress in using grammar and mechanics in communicating to my intended audience.
5. I made progress in formatting sentences to communicate with clarity and concision to my intended audience.

**Process:** Institutional Research and Assessment conducts end-of-course surveys asking students questions related to student writing. The first question aligns with the first outcome, to assess the degree to which students are achieving the outcome.

**When:** Surveys are administered to students at the end of each EWI and WI course.

**Responsible Persons:** Institutional Research and Assessment

**Target:** 80% of students will perceive substantial or exceptional gains.

**Baseline:** None

### **Measure 5. Graduation Survey – Writing Instruction Questions 1 and 2**

**Description:** Graduates respond to questions on the graduation survey at graduation and indicate they agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, disagree.

1. My education at A&M–Central Texas prepared me to meet the written communication challenges I will face in my intended academic and professional career.
2. The writing instruction I received at A&M–Central Texas prepared me to address multiple audiences in a variety of different academic and professional contexts.
3. My education at A&M–Central Texas prepared me to compose effectively in the particular academic discipline and professional field I will enter.
4. My education at A&M–Central Texas prepared me to conduct successful research in my intended academic discipline and professional field.
5. I am confident in my ability to compose in a grammatically correct manner that is clear and concise.
6. My greatest strengths as a writer are...

**Process:** Career and Professional Development conducts graduation surveys asking students questions related to writing instruction. The first two questions align with the first outcome, to assess the degree to which students are achieving the outcome.

**When:** Surveys are administered to students at or before commencement ceremonies.

**Responsible Persons:** Career and Professional Development

**Target:** 80% of students will respond positively.

**Baseline:** None

### **Student Learning Outcome 2**

#### **Measure 1. MSC Rated VALUE Rubric – Aspects 3 and 4**

**Description:** The AAC&U Written Communication VALUE Rubric, developed by disciplinary experts in writing (Linda Adler-Kassner; Terri Flateby; Susanmarie Harrington; Jean Mach; Noreen O'Connor; Carol Rutz), includes five aspects: 1) context of and purpose for writing, 2) content development, 3) genre and disciplinary conventions, 4) sources and evidence, and 5) control of syntax and mechanics. Raters apply the rubric to students' work drawn from authentic classroom contexts.

**Process:** Faculty submit student artifacts from WI courses. Teams of expertly trained faculty across the country apply the third and fourth aspects of the rubric, which align with the second outcome, to assess the degree to which students are achieving the outcome.

**When:** Faculty submit artifacts each semester and Institutional Research and Assessment submits the work to the MSC each spring.

**Responsible Persons:** Faculty and Institutional Research and Assessment

**Target:** 25% of those rated will score a 4, and an additional 50% will score a 3.

**Baseline:** Aspect 3: 18% scored a 3 and 11% scored a 4; and Aspect 4: 26% scored a 3 and 11% scored a 4.

#### **Measure 2. Value-Added VALUE Rubric – Aspects 3 and 4**

**Description:** The AAC&U Written Communication VALUE Rubric, developed by disciplinary experts in writing (Linda Adler-Kassner; Terri Flateby; Susanmarie Harrington; Jean Mach; Noreen O'Connor; Carol Rutz), includes five aspects: 1) context of and purpose for writing, 2) content development, 3) genre and disciplinary conventions, 4) sources and evidence, and 5) control of syntax and mechanics. Raters apply the rubric to students' work drawn from authentic classroom contexts.

**Process:** Faculty submit student artifacts from EWI courses and senior-level WI courses, preferably capstone courses. Teams of A&M–Central Texas faculty apply the third and fourth aspects of the rubric, which align with the second outcome, to assess the degree to which students are achieving the outcome. Raters evaluate a student’s work from the EWI course class paired with work from a senior-level WI course. These artifacts will be assessed simultaneously in order to measure the level of student growth in regard to the outcome.

**When:** Faculty submit artifacts each semester, Institutional Research and Assessment pairs the artifact and coordinates raters each spring.

**Responsible Persons:** Faculty and Institutional Research and Assessment

**Target:** 80% of students will increase one level between the EWI course and WI course.

**Baseline:** None

### ***Measure 3. End-of-Course Surveys – Additional Questions 2 and 3***

**Description:** Students respond to questions at the end of each course (EWI and WI) indicating whether they made no apparent, slight, moderate, substantial, or exceptional progress.

1. I made progress in writing for multiple audiences in a variety of different contexts.
2. I made progress in writing for my specific discipline and the genres it requires.
3. I made progress in my ability to skillfully integrate sources.
4. I made progress in using grammar and mechanics in communicating to my intended audience.
5. I made progress in formatting sentences to communicate with clarity and concision to my intended audience.

**Process:** Institutional Research and Assessment conducts end-of-course surveys asking students questions related to student writing. The second and third questions align with the second outcome, to assess the degree to which students are achieving the outcome.

**When:** Surveys are administered to students at the end of each EWI and WI course.

**Responsible Persons:** Institutional Research and Assessment

**Target:** 80% of students will perceive substantial or exceptional gains.

**Baseline:** None

### ***Measure 4. Graduation Survey – Writing Instruction Questions 3 and 4***

**Description:** Graduates respond to questions on the graduation survey at graduation and indicate they agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, disagree.

1. My education at A&M–Central Texas prepared me to meet the written communication challenges I will face in my intended academic and professional career.
2. The writing instruction I received at A&M–Central Texas prepared me to address multiple audiences in a variety of different academic and professional contexts.
3. My education at A&M–Central Texas prepared me to compose effectively in the particular academic discipline and professional field I will enter.
4. My education at A&M–Central Texas prepared me to conduct successful research in my intended academic discipline and professional field.
5. I am confident in my ability to compose in a grammatically correct manner that is clear and concise.
6. My greatest strengths as a writer are...

**Process:** Career and Professional Development conducts graduation surveys asking students questions related to writing instruction. The third and fourth questions align to the second outcome, to assess the degree to which students are achieving the outcome.

**When:** Surveys are administered to students at or before commencement ceremonies.

**Responsible Persons:** Career and Professional Development

**Target:** 80% of students will respond positively.

**Baseline:** None

### Student Learning Outcome 3

#### **Measure 1. MSC Rated VALUE Rubric – Aspect 5**

**Description:** The AAC&U Written Communication VALUE Rubric, developed by disciplinary experts in writing (Linda Adler-Kassner; Terri Flateby; Susanmarie Harrington; Jean Mach; Noreen O'Connor; Carol Rutz), includes five aspects: 1) context of and purpose for writing, 2) content development, 3) genre and disciplinary conventions, 4) sources and evidence, and 5) control of syntax and mechanics. Raters apply the rubric to students' work drawn from authentic classroom contexts.

**Process:** Faculty submit student artifacts from WI courses. Teams of expertly trained faculty across the country apply the fifth aspect of the rubric, which aligns with the third outcome, to assess the degree to which students are achieving the outcome.

**When:** Faculty submit artifacts each semester and Institutional Research and Assessment submits the work to the MSC each spring.

**Responsible Persons:** Faculty and Institutional Research and Assessment

**Target:** 25% of those rated will score a 4, and an additional 50% will score a 3.

**Baseline:** Aspect 5: 35% scored a 3 and 9% scored a 4.

#### **Measure 2. Value-Added VALUE Rubric – Aspect 5**

**Description:** The AAC&U Written Communication VALUE Rubric, developed by disciplinary experts in writing (Linda Adler-Kassner; Terri Flateby; Susanmarie Harrington; Jean Mach; Noreen O'Connor; Carol Rutz), includes five aspects: 1) context of and purpose for writing, 2) content development, 3) genre and disciplinary conventions, 4) sources and evidence, and 5) control of syntax and mechanics. Raters apply the rubric to students' work drawn from authentic classroom contexts.

**Process:** Faculty submit student artifacts from EWI courses and senior-level WI courses, preferably

capstone courses. Teams of A&M–Central Texas faculty apply the fifth aspect of the rubric, which aligns with the third outcome, to assess the degree to which student are achieving the outcome. Raters evaluate a student's work from the EWI course paired with work from a senior-level WI course. These artifacts will be assessed simultaneously in order to measure the level of student growth in regard to the outcome.

**When:** Faculty submit artifacts each semester, Institutional Research and Assessment pairs the artifact and coordinates raters each spring.

**Responsible Persons:** Faculty and Institutional Research and Assessment

**Target:** 80% of students will increase one level between the EWI course and WI course.

**Baseline:** None

#### **Measure 3. ETS Proficiency Profile – Writing**

**Description:** The *ETS Proficiency Profile* consists of 27 multiple-choice questions that most accurately measure a student's ability to "recognize the most grammatically correct revision of a clause, sentence or group of sentences" and "recognize and reword figurative language." This measure allows A&M–Central Texas to assess control of grammar, syntax, and mechanics in communicating ideas with clarity and concision.

**Process:** Institutional Research and Assessment invites graduating seniors to participate in the *ETS Proficiency Profile*, which aligns most closely with the third outcome, to assess the degree to which students are achieving the outcome.

**When:** Every semester graduating students are administered the *ETS Proficiency Profile*.

**Responsible Persons:** Institutional Research and Assessment

**Target:** 80% of students will achieve proficiency at Level 1, 65% at Level 2, and 50% at Level 3.

**Baseline:** In 2013, 55% of students were proficient at Level 1, 13% at Level 2, and 5% at Level 3. In 2017, 47% of students were proficient at Level 1, 5% at Level 2, and 0% at Level 3.

#### **Measure 4. End-of-Course Surveys – Additional Questions 4 and 5**

**Description:** Students respond to questions at the end of each course (early writing intensive and writing intensive) indicating they made no apparent, slight, moderate, substantial, or exceptional progress.

1. I made progress in writing for multiple audiences in a variety of different contexts.
2. I made progress in writing for my specific discipline and the genres it requires.
3. I made progress in my ability to skillfully integrate sources.
4. I made progress in using grammar and mechanics in communicating to my intended audience.
5. I made progress in formatting sentences to communicate with clarity and concision to my intended audience.

**Process:** Institutional Research and Assessment conducts end-of-course surveys asking students questions related to student writing. The fourth and fifth questions align with the third outcome, to assess the degree to which students are achieving the outcome.

**When:** Surveys are administered to students at the end of each EWI and WI course.

**Responsible Persons:** Institutional Research and Assessment

**Target:** 80% of students will perceive substantial or exceptional gains.

**Baseline:** None

#### **Measure 5. Graduation Survey – Writing Instruction Question 4**

**Description:** Graduates respond to questions on the graduation survey at graduation and indicate they agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, disagree.

1. My education at A&M–Central Texas prepared me to meet the written communication challenges I will face in my intended academic and professional career.

2. The writing instruction I received at A&M–Central Texas prepared me to address multiple audiences in a variety of different academic and professional contexts.
3. My education at A&M–Central Texas prepared me to compose effectively in the particular academic discipline and professional field I will enter.
4. My education at A&M–Central Texas prepared me to conduct successful research in my intended academic discipline and professional field.
5. I am confident in my ability to compose in a grammatically correct manner that is clear and concise.
6. My greatest strengths as a writer are...

**Process:** Career and Professional Development conducts graduation surveys asking students questions related to writing instruction. The fifth question aligns to the third outcome, to assess the degree to which students are achieving the outcome.

**When:** Surveys are administered to students at or before commencement ceremonies.

**Responsible Persons:** Career and Professional Development

**Target:** 80% of students will respond positively.

**Baseline:** None

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#### **Strategies to Achieve the Goal**

- » Develop EWI courses for each discipline focused on discipline-specific writing instruction, extensive formative and summative assessment, and multiple opportunities to revise
- » Focusing on a Writing in the Disciplines (WID) approach
- » Emphasize the various academic and professional contexts in which students will engage throughout their academic and professional careers
- » Improve existing Writing Intensive (WI) course structure
- » Afford faculty a variety of writing instruction support services
- » Assign a tutor from the University Writing Center (UWC)

- » Assign each WI and EWI course an embedded librarian from the University Library to assist faculty and work directly with students
- » Review syllabi for opportunities to improve writing instruction
- » Evaluate the timing of writing instruction in programs
- » Conduct faculty and student focus groups to identify trends in writing instruction

## INSTITUTIONAL GOAL

### Operational Outcome 1

#### **Measure 1. Faculty Development Workshops – Writing Instruction (Competencies)**

**Description:** Faculty respond to 20-question quizzes created by workshop developers and subject matter experts relating to workshop expected outcomes.

**Process:** The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) and the UWC host faculty development writing instruction workshops designed to increase writing instruction competencies for all faculty members. Workshop presenters administer the quizzes and deliver the responses to the QEP chair, who compiles the results. The quizzes align with the first outcome, to assess the degree to which faculty are achieving the outcome.

**When:** Quizzes are administered to faculty at the completion of the workshops.

**Responsible Persons:** QEP chair and workshop presenters

**Target:** Faculty will correctly respond to 90% of workshop assessment questions.

**Baseline:** None

#### **Measure 2. Faculty Development Workshop Perceptions – Writing Instruction (Perceptions of Value/Impact)**

**Description:** Faculty respond to open-ended surveys consisting of reflection questions for each writing instruction opportunity. Writing Instruction Feedback Reflection Survey (Faculty brown-bag sessions; Faculty showcases; Guest speaker workshops).

1. As a result of the presentation, do you feel you have increased your understanding of writing instruction concepts and strategies? Yes/No
2. As a result of the presentation, do you feel you have increased your confidence in teaching writing to your students? Yes/No
3. Did you find the facilitator to be prepared and helpful during the presentation? Yes/No
4. What part(s) of the presentation did you find most informative and useful?
5. What part(s) of the presentation needs revision or improvement?

**Process:** Facilitators of writing instruction opportunities encourage faculty to complete an evaluation at the completion of each session, which includes an assessment of the faculty member's perceptions of their gains in writing instruction competencies. Facilitators deliver the responses to the QEP chair, who compiles the results. The surveys align with the first outcome, to assess the degree to which faculty are achieving the outcome.

**When:** Surveys are administered to faculty at the completion of writing instruction opportunities.

**Responsible Persons:** QEP chair and workshop presenters

**Target:** 80% of faculty will perceive gains in writing instruction competencies

**Baseline:** None

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### Operational Outcome 2

#### **Measure 1. Writing Intensive Course Development**

**Description:** Writing Intensive Course Syllabi Checklist. Syllabi must demonstrate all required WI course components.

1. The course has a range of writing assignments that are worth a significant part of the final grade. These are all in one assignment or collectively across related assignments.
2. Writing assignments are an integral part of measuring the mastery of the content in the course.

3. The course syllabus explains the nature of a writing intensive course.
4. Writing assignments are tied to specific course objectives and outcomes.
5. The course syllabus indicates expected turn-around time for instructor's feedback on submitted writing assignments.
6. At least one assignment involves revision, or all assignments are sequenced in such a way that students can improve the quality of their submissions.

**Process:** The FCTL applies the checklist to syllabi for all WI courses and works with faculty to ensure the six WI criteria are reflected.

**When:** Syllabi are reviewed within one year of awarding the grant. The checklists align with the second outcome, to assess the degree to which faculty are achieving the outcome.

**Responsible Persons:** Director of FCTL and faculty

**Target:** All new WI courses will include the items on the checklist.

**Baseline:** None

### ***Measure 2. Early Writing Intensive Course Development***

**Description:** Early Writing Intensive Course Syllabi Checklist. Syllabi must demonstrate all required EWI course components. The checklist will be further refined as EWI course requirements are finalized.

1. The course has a range of writing assignments that are worth a significant part of the final grade. These are all in one assignment or collectively across related assignments.
2. Writing assignments are an integral part of measuring the mastery of the content in the course.
3. The course syllabus explains the nature of a writing intensive course.
4. Writing assignments are tied to specific course objectives and outcomes.
5. The course syllabus indicates expected turn-around time for instructor's feedback on submitted writing assignments.

6. At least one assignment involves revision, or all assignments are sequenced in such a way that students can improve the quality of their submissions.

**Process:** The FCTL applies the checklist to syllabi for all EWI courses and works with faculty to ensure the six EWI course criteria are reflected. The checklists align with the second outcome, to assess the degree to which faculty are achieving the outcome.

**When:** Syllabi are reviewed within one year of awarding the grant.

**Responsible Persons:** Director of FCTL and faculty

**Target:** All new EWI courses will include the items on the checklist.

**Baseline:** None

### ***Measure 3. High-Impact Practices in Course Development***

**Description:** HIPs Course Development Grant Recipients Checklist. Courses developed must include HIP activities that:

1. are a graded component of the courses
2. produce a written deliverable
3. are tied to specific course objectives and outcomes
4. involve a final student reflection assignment based on the HIP activity

**Process:** The FCTL and UWC issue HIPs development grants to encourage faculty to include HIPs that directly support student writing when developing or revising courses. The FCTL conducts a syllabi review (checklist), faculty process reports and compile the results. The checklists align with the second outcome, to assess the degree to which faculty are achieving the outcome.

**When:** Syllabi are reviewed within one year of awarding the grant.

**Responsible Persons:** Director of FCTL

**Target:** Syllabi for courses developed through HIPs development grants meet the guidelines.

**Baseline:** None

#### **Measure 4. Writing Instruction Course Development Activity Reflections**

**Description:** Faculty respond to open-ended surveys consisting of reflection questions for each writing instruction opportunity. Various Course Development (WI, EWI, HIP) Presentations Survey (Faculty brown-bag sessions; Faculty showcases; Guest speaker/workshops).

1. As a result of the presentation, do you feel you have increased your understanding of developing courses that effectively foster student writing? Yes/No
2. As a result of the presentation, do you feel you have increased your confidence in developing courses that effectively foster student writing? Yes/No
3. Did you find the facilitator to be prepared and helpful during the presentation? Yes/No
4. What part(s) of the presentation did you find most informative and useful?
5. What part(s) of the presentation needs revision or improvement?

**Process:** Facilitators of writing instruction opportunities encourage faculty to complete an evaluation at the completion of each session, which includes an assessment of the faculty member's perceptions of their gains in writing instruction competencies. Facilitators deliver the responses to the QEP chair, who compiles the results. The surveys align with the second outcome, to assess the degree to which faculty are achieving the outcome.

**When:** Surveys are administered to faculty at the completion of writing instruction opportunities.

**Responsible Persons:** QEP chair and workshop presenters

**Target:** 80% of faculty will perceive gains in learning.

**Baseline:** None

#### **Operational Outcome 3**

##### **Measure 1. Faculty Writing Liaison Faculty Development Workshops**

**Description:** Faculty respond to open-ended surveys consisting of reflection questions for each writing instruction opportunity with additional questions focused on the impact of the Faculty Writing Liaisons until the point when/if they lead the workshop independently.

**Writing Instruction Workshop Surveys** (\*\*with Faculty Writing Liaison participation prior to them taking on full facilitation duties)

1. As a result of the workshop, do you feel you have increased your understanding of writing instruction concepts and strategies? Yes/No
2. As a result of the workshop, do you feel you have increased your confidence in teaching writing to your students? Yes/No
3. Did you find the facilitator to be prepared and helpful during the presentation? Yes/No
4. What part(s) of the workshop did you find most informative and useful?
5. What part(s) of the workshop needs revision or improvement?
6. \*\*Did you find the Faculty Writing Liaison to be prepared and helpful during the presentation? Yes/No
7. \*\*As a result of the Faculty Writing Liaison's participation, do you feel you have increased your understanding of writing instruction concepts and strategies? Yes/No
8. \*\*As a result of the Faculty Writing Liaison's participation, do you feel you have increased your confidence in teaching writing to your students? Yes/No
9. \*\*What aspects of the Faculty Writing Liaison's participation did you find most informative and useful?
10. \*\*What aspects of the Faculty Writing Liaison's participation, do you feel need revision or improvement?

**Writing Instruction Workshop Series Survey.**

1. As a result of the writing instruction workshop series, do you feel you have increased your understanding of writing instruction concepts and strategies? Yes/No
2. As a result of the writing instruction workshop series, do you feel you have increased your confidence in teaching writing to your students? Yes/No
3. What part(s) of the workshop series did you find most informative and useful?
4. What part(s) of the workshop series needs revision or improvement?

**Process:** Facilitators of writing instruction opportunities encourage faculty to complete an evaluation at the completion of each session, which includes an assessment of the faculty member's perceptions of their gains in writing instruction competencies. Facilitators deliver the responses to the QEP chair, who compiles the results. The surveys align with the third outcome, to assess the degree to which faculty are achieving the outcome.

**When:** Surveys are administered to faculty at the completion of writing instruction opportunities. The Faculty Writing Liaisons will begin assisting with the facilitation of the faculty development writing instruction workshop series in academic year 2019.

**Responsible Persons:** QEP chair and workshop presenters

**Target:** 80% of faculty participants will perceive gains in writing instruction competencies as a result of engagement with the Faculty Writing Liaisons.

**Baseline:** None

**Measure 2. Faculty Writing Liaison Consultations**

**Description:** Faculty respond to open-ended surveys consisting of reflection questions for each writing instruction consultation. Faculty Writing Liaison Consultation Feedback Survey

1. As a result of the Faculty Writing Liaison consultation, do you feel you have increased your understanding of writing instruction concepts and strategies? Yes/No

2. As a result of the Faculty Writing Liaison consultation, do you feel you have increased your confidence in teaching writing to your students? Yes/No
3. Did you actively engage in the consultation? Yes/No
4. Did you find the Faculty Writing Liaison to be prepared and helpful during the presentation? Yes/No
5. What part(s) of the consultation or consultation process did you find most informative and useful?
6. What part(s) of the consultation or consultation process needs revision or improvement?

**Process:** The Faculty Writing Liaisons offer consultations in writing instruction and ask the consulted faculty to complete the survey. The survey responses are delivered to the director of FCTL, who compiles the results. The surveys align with the third outcome, to assess the degree to which faculty are achieving the outcome.

**When:** Surveys are administered at the completion of each consultation.

**Responsible Person:** Director of the FCTL and Faculty Writing Liaisons

**Target:** 80% of faculty participants will perceive gains in writing instruction competencies as a result of engagement with the Faculty Writing Liaisons.

**Baseline:** None

**Strategies to Achieve the Goal**

- » Feedback surveys (including open-text responses) for workshops, speakers, EWI course development, and HIPs grant application process
- » Facilitate classrooms that foster the development of student writing
- » Create a culture that stimulates the development of student writing
- » Provide the university faculty training, resources, and additional professional development facilitated by the UWC and the FCTL
- » Develop Faculty Writing Liaisons from select faculty members from each discipline by providing

extensive training in writing instructions and eventual mentoring of other faculty members

- » Provide an annual series of faculty development workshops to emphasize the understanding of WI courses and WID concepts, as well as focus on other vital areas of writing instruction, such as best practices in formative assessment, rubric development techniques, facilitating classroom workshops, teaching strategies for revision, and implementing ePortfolios
- » Supplement QEP resources with Technology-Enhanced Learning resources for online and blended courses

## ASPIRATIONAL GOAL

### Operational Outcome 1

#### *Measure 1. Experiential Transcripts*

**Description:** Students receive the opportunity to submit reflective and other writings to earn credit on experiential transcripts. This measure tracks frequency of awards and aligns with the outcome.

**Process:** Students submit reflections to Student Affairs, who applies the VALUE rubric. Students must meet a minimal rubric score to receive credit. The number of awards are reported to the QEP chair. This measure aligns with the first outcome, to assess the degree to which students are achieving the outcome.

**When:** Students continuously submit reflection papers and the experiential transcript graduate assistant continuously applies the rubric and grants credit.

**Responsible Persons:** QEP chair and Student Affairs experiential transcript graduate assistant

**Target:** 75% of students will have at least one credit on their experiential transcript.

**Baseline:** None

#### *Measure 2. Focus Groups*

**Description:** Faculty and Student Focus Group Questions. Focus groups, consisting of 10 people per session, will be held on campus with a live feed to include distance education students. Participants will form a semi-circle facing a whiteboard and facilitator,

with no barriers between the participants and the facilitator. Facilitators will ensure an open-ended approach to allow for organic discussion on the topic asking participants the following prompts:

1. Describe the current culture of student writing at A&M–Central Texas
2. Define a deep learning experience or high impact practice
3. Describe how deep learning experiences are infused into courses at A&M–Central Texas.
4. List the deep learning experiences you engaged in this year.
5. Describe the university's support in engaging students in deep learning experiences.
6. Describe the importance deep learning experiences play in enhancing undergraduate learning at A&M–Central Texas.
7. After considering the purpose of the focus group, discuss anything missed.

**Process:** Focus groups will be used to measure the value of deep learning experiences of faculty and students. Sessions will be audio recorded and transcribed to mask the respondents' identities. Institutional Research and Assessment will analyze and code responses. Student Affairs will interpret the data and provide an analysis to the QEP chair. These perceptions align with the first outcome, to assess the degree to which the institution is achieving the outcome.

**When:** Focus groups will be held each academic year

**Responsible Persons:** QEP chair, director of Institutional Research and Assessment, and Student Affairs experiential transcript graduate assistant

**Target:** Increasingly positive shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices toward writing instruction.

**Baseline:** None

#### *Measure 3. Faculty Survey of Student Engagement*

**Description:** The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) complements the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which is administered

to undergraduate students. This instructional staff version focuses on instructional staff perceptions of how often students engage in different activities; the importance instructional staff place on various areas of learning and development; the nature and frequency of instructional staff-student interactions; and how instructional staff organize their time, both in and out of the classroom. The FSSE is designed to measure instructional staff expectations for student engagement in educational practices that are empirically linked with high levels of learning and development.

### FSSE Questions

How important is it to you that undergraduates at your institution do the following before they graduate?

- 1.a Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement
  - 1.b Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group
  - 1.e Work with a faculty member on a research project
  - 1.f Complete a culminating senior experience
  - 1.g Participate in a community-based (service-learning) project
  - 2.c How important is it to you that your institution increases its emphasis on students using learning support services?
  - 10.g In your undergraduate courses, to what extent do you provide feedback to students on drafts or works in progress?
- In your selected course section, how important is it to you that the typical student do the following?
- 22.b Prepare two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in
  - 23.a Combine ideas from different courses when completing assignments
  - 23.b Connect their learning to societal problems or issues
  - 23.g Connect ideas from your course to their prior experiences and knowledge
  - 24.h In your selected course section, about what percent of class time is spent on the experiential

activities (labs, field work, clinical or field placements, etc.)?

28.a Does your selected course section include assigned papers, reports, or other writing tasks? Yes or No

29.a To what extent do you structure your selected course section so that students learn and develop writing clearly and effectively?

**Process:** Institutional Research and Assessment invites faculty to participate in the FSSE, which aligns with the first outcome, to assess the degree to which the institution is achieving the outcome.

**When:** Every other spring, faculty are administered the FSSE.

**Responsible Persons:** Institutional Research and Assessment

**Target:** 80% of faculty who taught courses with a required paper respond to the selected questions with “Very Important” or “Important.”

**Baseline:** In 2015, 69% of faculty responses to the selected questions were “Very Important” or “Important” and 74% in 2017.

### Measure 4. Alumni Survey – Writing Instruction Questions

**Description:** Alumni are presented the following questions one year after graduation and indicate they agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, disagree.

1. My education at A&M–Central Texas prepared me to meet the written communication challenges I have faced in my academic and professional career.
2. The writing instruction I received at A&M–Central Texas prepared me to address multiple audiences in a variety of different academic and professional contexts.
3. My education at A&M–Central Texas prepared me to compose effectively in the particular academic discipline and professional field I have entered.

4. My education at A&M–Central Texas prepared me to conduct successful research in my intended academic discipline and professional field.
5. I am confident in my ability to compose in a grammatically correct manner that is clear and concise.
6. My greatest strengths as a writer are...

**Process:** Institutional Research and Assessment Conducts alumni surveys asking graduates questions related to writing instruction, which relate to the first outcome, to assess the degree to which graduates are achieving the first outcome.

**When:** Surveys are administered to graduates one year after graduation

**Responsible Persons:** Institutional Research and Assessment

**Target:** 80% of students will respond positively to the subject questions.

**Baseline:** None

## Operational Outcome 2

### Funding for Writing Instruction

**Description:** Universities of all ages and sizes face difficulties in prioritizing resources. Effective budgeting processes direct funds to the most highly valued initiatives. Funding for writing instruction initiatives signifies the cultural impact of the QEP on the university.

**Process:** The university conducts budget hearings each spring in which competing initiatives for funding are presented for consideration, which include evidence-based strategies from assessment. The Budget Review Committee prioritizes the initiatives based on the presentations and the president of the university makes the final determination.

**When:** Each Spring

**Responsible Persons:** QEP chair

**Target:** The university will fully fund and effectively use the funding defined in the QEP for writing instruction initiatives.

**Baseline:** None

## Strategies to Achieve the Goal

- » Establish grants for faculty that include HIPS in their teaching, regardless of modality
- » Provide students the opportunity to demonstrate their reflective writing skills and experience utilizing an experiential transcript
- » Increase the reach and impact of the QEP to all corners of the institution by engaging Student Affairs staff in the tracking and assessment of HIPs through experiential learning

## DEFINITIONS

**Goals** state what you, your colleagues, or your college aim to achieve (Let's go this way).

**Outcomes** are goals that refer to a destination rather than the path taken to get there—the end rather than the means, the outcome rather than the process. A goal that truly describes an outcome explains why we do what we do.

**Learning outcomes** describe how students will be different because of a learning experience and specifically are the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind that students take with them from a learning experience.

**Objectives** can describe detailed aspects of goals or describe tasks to be accomplished to achieve the goal—a means to the end, the process leading to the outcome.

**Competencies and proficiencies** are terms used to describe learning outcomes or objectives and typically refer to skills rather than knowledge, values, or attitudes.

**Performance indicators** are quantitative measures of overall student performance or other aspects of college performance.

**Standards and benchmarks** are the specific targets against which we gauge success in achieving an outcome.

## APPENDIX C

# Written Communication Value Rubric

*for more information, please contact [value@aacu.org](mailto:value@aacu.org)*

## DEFINITION

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

*Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.*

	CAPSTONE	MILESTONES		BENCHMARK
	4	3	2	1
<b>Context of and Purpose for Writing</b> <i>Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).</i>	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience).
<b>Content Development</b>	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.

<b>Genre and Disciplinary Conventions</b> Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and/or academic fields (please see glossary).	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices	Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.
<b>Sources and Evidence</b>	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.
<b>Control of Syntax and Mechanics</b>	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.

## APPENDIX D

# Quality Enhancement Plan

## Data Collection Schedule

FREQUENCY	ITEM	RESPONSIBLE
<b>Course</b>	Early Writing Intensive Course Artifacts	Faculty
	End-of-Course Surveys	Institutional Research and Assessment
	Writing Intensive Course Artifacts	Faculty
<b>Semester</b>	Alumni Survey	Institutional Research and Assessment
	<i>ETS Proficiency Profile</i>	Institutional Research and Assessment
	Extra- and Co-Curricular Reflection Artifacts	Experiential Transcript Graduate Assistant
	Faculty Development Workshop Quizzes	Workshop Presenters
	Faculty Writing Liaison Consultation Feedback Survey	Faculty Writing Liaisons
	Graduation Survey	Career and Professional Development
	Various Course Development (WI, EWI, HIP) Presentation Surveys	Workshop Presenters
	Writing Instruction Feedback Reflection Surveys	Workshop Presenters
	Writing Instruction Workshop Surveys	Workshop Presenters
<b>Annually</b>	Early Writing Intensive Course Syllabi Checklist	Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning
	Faculty Focus Group Transcripts	Experiential Transcript Graduate Assistant
	HIP Course Development Grant Recipients Checklist	Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning
	Writing Instruction Workshop Series Survey	Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning
	Writing Intensive Course Syllabi Checklist	Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning
<b>Biennially</b>	Faculty Survey of Student Engagement	Institutional Research and Assessment
	National Survey for Student Engagement	Institutional Research and Assessment

## APPENDIX E

# Position Descriptions

## QEP Chair

Serves as the direct source of administrative oversight for Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) and leads the QEP Committee. The QEP Chair reports directly to the Provost and is awarded a stipend for responsibilities surpassing their normal duties. This position directly reports to the Provost/ Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Ensures adherence to SACSCOC standards and guidelines throughout the QEP implementation process
2. Leads the QEP Implementation Committee and ensures successful implementation of the plan
3. Collaborates with the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment to ensure effective evaluation of the QEP in preparation for the impact report
4. Appropriately disseminates QEP progress to university administration, faculty, staff, students, and community constituencies

## QEP Implementation Committee

QEP Chair (ex-officio)

UWC Director (ex-officio)

Research and Assessment Representative

Student Affairs Representative

University Library Representative

College of Arts & Sciences Representative

College of Business Administration Representative

College of Education Representative

Faculty at-large Representative

Faculty at-large Representative

Faculty at-large Representative

Student Representative

## Institutional Research and Assessment QEP Graduate Assistant

Serves as the primary Institutional Research and Assessment (IRA) support person for the A&M–Central Texas Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) and reports to the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment. The IRA QEP Graduate Assistant (GA) supports activities of the QEP Director and the QEP Implementation Committee. The IRA QEP GA works closely with College faculty and Institutional Research and Assessment.

### ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

- » Administers and proctors assessment instruments, such as the *ETS Proficiency Profile*, National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE), End-of-Course surveys, scoring rubrics, and student and faculty surveys, and compiles and calculates data for the QEP Implementation Committee, in collaboration with Institutional Research and Assessment.
- » In collaboration with Institutional Research and Assessment, prepares the first draft of the QEP Annual Assessment Report.
- » Supports the QEP Director in preparing the QEP Impact Report.

### QUALIFICATIONS

#### Minimum Qualifications:

- » Bachelor's degree in education, business, psychology, or field related to the QEP.
- » Enrolled at least part-time in a graduate program at Texas A&M University–Central Texas
- » Experience working in an educational setting.
- » Experience with or willingness to learn SAS.
- » Skills in quantitative and qualitative analysis.

**Preferred Qualifications:**

- » Bachelor's degree in education, business, psychology, or field related to the QEP.
- » Enrolled at least part-time in a graduate program at Texas A&M University–Central Texas
- » Experience with SACSCOC's QEP process.
- » Educational assessment experience.

**REPORTING LINE**

Reports to the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment

## **Experiential Transcript Graduate Assistant: Office of Civic & Student Engagement**

Reporting to the Assistant Director of Student & Civic Engagement, the Experiential Transcript Graduate Assistant promotes the office's efforts to support the A&M–Central Texas Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).

Graduate Assistant-Non-Teaching-Professional (GANTs) are responsible for working on project in collaboration with or under the direction of a faculty or staff member. Duties assigned may include gathering, organizing, and analyzing student written reflections and other administrative activities related to the QEP.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

- » Administers and proctors assessment instruments, such as a written communication rubric, and provides students with substantive feedback regarding written reflections.
- » Assists students, faculty, and staff to develop relationships with area contacts for experiential learning opportunities.
- » In collaboration with the Assistant Director of Student & Civic Engagement, works with organizations and businesses to confirm student experiences.

**QUALIFICATIONS****Minimum Qualifications:**

- » Bachelor's degree in education, business, psychology, or field related to the QEP
- » Enrolled in at least six (6) hours in a graduate program at A&M–Central Texas and in good standing
- » Experience working in an educational setting
- » Excellent written communication skills

**Preferred Qualifications:**

- » Educational assessment experience
- » Substantial coursework in English, composition, or similar field

## APPENDIX F

## Organizational Chart

