

**Liberal Studies**

**Report on C1 (First Year Composition) Course Assessment**

**June 2006**

Prepared by:

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## I. Introduction

This report assesses teaching and assessment practices in First Year Composition (FYC) as part of the ongoing review of the Liberal Studies Program (LSP). Our assessment is based on the required assessment components outlined in the LSP document (second revision, January 2006).

### *Goals for This Report.*

- 1) Compare LSP learning goals and guidelines for the C1 Writing Core to FYC learning outcomes and mission;
- 2) Identify any discrepancies/similarities between LSP and FYC guidelines;
- 3) Identify methods of teaching and assessment in FYC;
- 4) Determine whether standards for teaching methods are followed by FYC instructors, and assess student learning based on these methods;
- 5) Determine effectiveness of assessment methods in FYC;
- 6) Identify strengths, areas for change, and general recommendations for goals, teaching and assessment methods in FYC.

### *Summary of Findings.*

The following page (Figure 1) provides an overview and summary of the fundamental assessment of syllabi, portfolios, and faculty in FYC. The model for this table was provided by the Offices of Assessment and Academic Affairs.

**Figure 1. CI (First Year Composition) Assessment Summary**

<b><i>Liberal Studies Objective for CI</i></b>	<b># of FYC syllabi addressing each goal</b> (out of 31 in 101; 26 in 102)	<b>% of FYC students below or above competency level<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Survey results from FYC faculty addressing each goal</b> (69 faculty surveys completed; 44 in fall, 25 in spring)
<i>Students will communicate clearly in written forms appropriate to an audience by interpreting and using written data</i>	101: 6 address in assignments; 5 in syllabus. 102: 26 address in assignments; 16 in syllabus	101: 36% at or above; 64% below 102: 51% at or above; 49% below [“Research” results]	101: 96% of faculty require at least one major assignment with primary research; 87% require at least one major assignment with secondary research. 102: 97% of faculty require at least one major assignment with primary research, 100% require at least one major assignment with secondary research.
<i>Students will communicate clearly in written forms appropriate to an audience by reading with comprehension</i>	101: 6 address in assignments, 13 in syllabus. 102: 26 address in assignments; 18 in syllabus	101: No data available 102: 75% at or above; 25% below [“Reading” results]	101: 97% of faculty require at least one critical reading; 94% assess students on their reading skill. 102: 100% of faculty require at least one critical reading; 88% assess students on their reading skill.
<i>Students will communicate clearly in written forms appropriate to an audience by writing clearly, coherently, and effectively</i>	101: 8 address in assignments, 23 in syllabus 102: 26 address in assignments; 22 in syllabus	101: 81% at or above; 19% below 102: 76% at or above; 24% below [“Product” results]	101: 100% of faculty require at least two major writing assignments; 100% emphasize process and editing through use of drafts, etc. 102: 100% of faculty require at least two major writing assignments; 97% emphasize process/editing through drafts, etc.
<i>General comments concerning syllabi:</i>			
<p><b>Strengths:</b> Variety of approaches and materials used, commitment and enthusiasm of faculty, use of one-on-one conferences, use of explicit learning outcomes, use of technology and electronic classrooms, emphasis on research, emphasis on process and editing.</p> <p><b>Opportunities for Growth/Change:</b> Some discrepancies in syllabi content, including schedules and learning outcomes.</p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b> Ensure all syllabi contain semester schedules, a set of unified learning outcomes, and more detail on grading and assignments. Broaden in-class readings and give FYC faculty more input on choice of Freshman Summer Reading text. Emphasize research further. Ensure that faculty teach a maximum of three sections of FYC per semester.</p>			
<i>General comments concerning student work:</i>			
<p><b>Strengths:</b> FYC Program’s use and assessment of portfolios, overall student performance. (The majority of students appear to perform at or above competency level in almost all areas except research.)</p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b> The procedures for portfolio assessment need to be updated and simplified. Numbers presented in this report may not accurately represent actual student performance. See full report for more details.</p>			

<sup>1</sup> Numbers in this column were taken directly from the FYC Program Director’s annual report, a detailed document with a variety of areas scored. Percentages in this column were taken from the FYC score criteria that most closely reflected those in the LSP guidelines. A copy of the FYC Program Director’s full report is available in the English Department.

## II. Comparison of LSP Document and FYC Mission and Goals

The committee compared the FYC Philosophy Statement and Learning Outcomes for English 101 and 102 (see Attachments 3 and 4) to the general “learning goals” of Liberal Studies, and the following goals for the C1 Writing Core, as outlined in the LSP document:

- 1) Students will communicate clearly in written forms appropriate to an audience by interpreting and using written data.
- 2) Students will communicate clearly in written forms appropriate to an audience by reading with comprehension.
- 3) Students will communicate clearly in written forms appropriate to an audience by writing clearly, coherently and effectively.

The FYC Philosophy and Learning Outcomes relate and show similarities to the LSP document in the following ways:

### Unified threads/common themes:

- All focus on the importance of and connections between writing, reading, thinking, analyzing and researching.
- All focus on learning as a method of discovery, exploring, and critical thinking.
- All focus on the importance for students to be able to engage in self-assessment and be able to recognize results achieved.
- All focus on the importance of “research” in writing/learning.
- All focus on the need to write to appropriate models based on the purpose of the assignment/audience, as well as the importance of reading critically.

### Other comments:

FYC Philosophy and FYC Learning Outcomes also contain some similar common threads such as viewing writing as an ongoing process.

The FYC Philosophy uniquely focuses on the delivery/materials of instruction, stating that students should be given not only a broad variety of texts (subject matter and genre), but also visual and auditory documents.

The FYC Program recently approved (May 2006) a new Mission Statement, Philosophy, and set of learning outcomes that address LSP guidelines even more effectively than do the current program documents. (See Attachment 4.)

The committee did not find any discrepancies between LSP goals/requirements and those of the FYC program.

### III. Summary and Evaluation of Teaching and Assessment Methods in FYC

This section summarizes and evaluates the chief methods used by FYC faculty to teach and assess students. The committee used three major tools for this evaluation: data compiled from a survey completed by FYC faculty in both the fall and spring semesters; 57 course syllabi (31 from English 101, 26 from English 102); and the FYC Program Director's annual report<sup>2</sup>. The Director's report contained information about student portfolios, as well as numerical and qualitative data about these portfolios.

#### *Syllabi.*

Overall, the syllabi and assignments submitted reflect both FYC and LSP goals and objectives. Although not all syllabi explicitly agreed with these governing documents—syllabi for 101 were particularly weak in this area—all teaching materials submitted addressed the three LSP criteria in some fashion. All syllabi clearly illustrate writing/reading assignments that generate these main goals, and the majority contained explicit course outcome statements that reflect FYC and LSP criteria. (See Figure 1 on page 2 for totals.)

The committee also reviewed all syllabi with the following essential categories in mind: Outcomes/Learning Objectives, Attendance Policies, Participation Policies, Grade/Percentages, Class Schedules, Behavior Expectations, Academic Honesty Policies, Deadline/Late Work, Variety of Assignments: Writing vs. Reading, Required Materials and Summer Reading Text.

The committee found that the vast majority of FYC syllabi do contain the above-mentioned items. All contain some sort of Learning Goals/Course Objectives section. (See Recommendations.) All syllabi also included a list of required materials/texts. Nearly all syllabi contained attendance policies, grades/percentages, academic honesty policies, and deadline/late work policies. The categories that were the “least” represented were: Participation Policies, Course Schedules, and Behavioral Expectations. Lastly, few 101 syllabi, and almost none from 102, mentioned the integration of the WCU summer reading text. (See Recommendations.)

#### *Teaching Methods/Faculty Surveys.*

In order to assess pedagogical practices, FYC faculty were asked in both semesters of the 2005-2006 academic year to fill out an anonymous survey about their teaching and assessment methods. (See Attachment 1 for a copy of the survey.) *All current FYC faculty submitted at least one syllabus and filled out at least one survey in the spring or fall.* The majority submitted syllabi and completed surveys in both semesters.

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<sup>2</sup> A copy of the FYC Program Director's full report is available in the English Department.

Overall, faculty responses on the survey indicate that the day-to-day teaching and assessment methods in FYC courses meet LSP and FYC guidelines. For a full breakdown of survey results, see Attachment 2. For more information, see the sections on Strengths and Recommendations on pages 9 through 12.

### Summary of Faculty Survey Data

#### *Methods*

- Survey results indicate that the vast majority of FYC faculty employ teaching methods that coincide with FYC and LSP guidelines. (See Figure 1 on page 2.)
- Survey results also indicate that the vast majority of FYC faculty employ teaching methods that coincide with their own syllabi.
- Only 18% of responding faculty were tenure or tenure-track, and of those, very few taught more than one section of 101 or 102 in a given semester. The vast majority of FYC courses are taught by “visiting” faculty or TAs. Almost all visiting faculty teach at least two, and sometimes as many as four, FYC courses per semester.
- According to the survey results, 78% of FYC faculty require that their students meet with the instructor at least once per semester for a one-on-one, personal conference.
- All faculty indicated that they focus on in-class discussion and try to minimize formal lectures.
- Over 95% of respondents indicated that they have their students do some form of writing in class (in addition to major papers assigned and completed outside of class).
- Over 70% of faculty have their students meet and work in an electronic environment at least once per week. Virtually all FYC classes meet in an electronic classroom at least once a month.
- Virtually all FYC courses include at least one major assignment that contains an element of formal research.
- All FYC faculty specifically and carefully address process and editing skill, and virtually all require drafts and proof of editing with all major assignments.

#### *Assessment*

- 84% of responding faculty indicated that students are expected to participate in class discussion, and are assessed on this participation.
- All FYC faculty assign a minimum of two major writing assignments per semester that are worth at least ten percent of the students’ semester grade. Over 80% of faculty also assign at least one major assignment worth less than ten percent.
- Fewer FYC faculty require and assess group writing. Over half of FYC faculty do not assign or assess major group-writing projects.
- All FYC faculty assign critical readings, and over 90% assess student reading.
- The vast majority of FYC faculty responses indicate that students are assessed repeatedly and effectively on their abilities in the three areas outlined in the LSP document.

### ***Portfolios.***

Each semester, all students in FYC courses compile an end-of-course portfolio containing the elements listed below. These portfolios are graded by the instructor, then submitted to the English Department. Portfolios, and thereby program, faculty, and student performance, are then assessed by means of a random sampling. During mandatory faculty assessment retreats, portfolios are read twice by two different FYC faculty and evaluated according to a rubric designed by the FYC program. (Rubric criteria coincide with LSP goals.)

According to the FYC Director's annual report, the portfolio includes:

- A cover letter in which students self-assess themselves as writers and the finished compositions in the portfolio. Students are encouraged to make special note of any changes that have occurred over the semester.
- Two compositions developed over time and with revision.
  - A copy of the instructor's assignment serves as a cover sheet for each composition
  - One of these compositions includes evidence of all process—all writing involved in its creation—a chronological organization of notes, drafts, revisions, and feedback from other students and/or the instructor
  - One of these compositions evidences work with outside sources (primary research in 101; secondary in 102, with optional primary).
- A third piece of writing composed entirely in class.

The Scoring Rubric used to assess portfolios consists of four parts that relate to FYC program goals. The elements in this rubric coincide with both FYC and LSP learning outcomes. These elements include critical reading and thinking skills, research skill, and a variety of factors that indicate facility with the written word.

In order to assess the effectiveness of teaching methods via these portfolios, the committee reviewed the data compiled by the FYC Program Director. This data outlined student performance and indicated the extent to which FYC guidelines and teaching methods led to the success, performance and actual learning of students in FYC courses.

According to the FYC Program Director's report, students in FYC courses generally perform at or above competency level in the areas outlined by FYC and LSP. (See Figure 1 on page 2 for a summary of this data.) The director's report indicates the following:

- A comparison of Potential and Real Average Scores on student performance in the portfolio show only a small negative difference between these scores. The actual average student score was approximately four points below the potential average score of 50.
- In English 101, 81% of students performed at or above competency level overall. Student performance on product/writing ability was similar, with 81% scoring at or above competency level. Student performance on research was much lower, with only 36% scoring at or above competency level.
- In English 102, 62 % of students performed at or above competency level overall. Product/writing ability scores were higher, with 76% scoring at or above competency level. 51% of students scored at or above competency level in the area of research.
- Student performance was higher in the 2005-2006 academic year than previous years in virtually all areas.

In summary it appears, according to the program director's report, that FYC's strengths are in teaching process, teaching the finished product, and in assuring the overall quality of a semester's worth of work (in the whole portfolio). Work is needed in the areas of teaching research skills, self-assessment, and, to a lesser extent, reading and reasoning. These areas are all integrally tied to students' abilities to do creative and analytical thinking and analysis, as well as close reading. (These areas of concern are addressed in FYC's new mission statement, supporting philosophies, and curriculum—to be implemented in the Fall of 2006.)

One possible explanation for lower research competency scores may be the fact that students and faculty alike are learning to deal with the vastness and reliability of internet sources. In addition, as 101 focuses heavily on developing students' voices, students have less occasion to integrate source material than they do in 102. Further, the wide range of scores on individual portfolios regarding research seems to indicate faculty's own difficulty in assessing research skills. Lastly, some problems with the actual data and scoring of portfolios may have resulted in inaccurate scores.

Other results seem to indicate a lack of student ability with meta-cognition and critical reading. This is not surprising for first-year students, as more experience is required for such a skill. There is also an indication that faculty need training in teaching these skills.

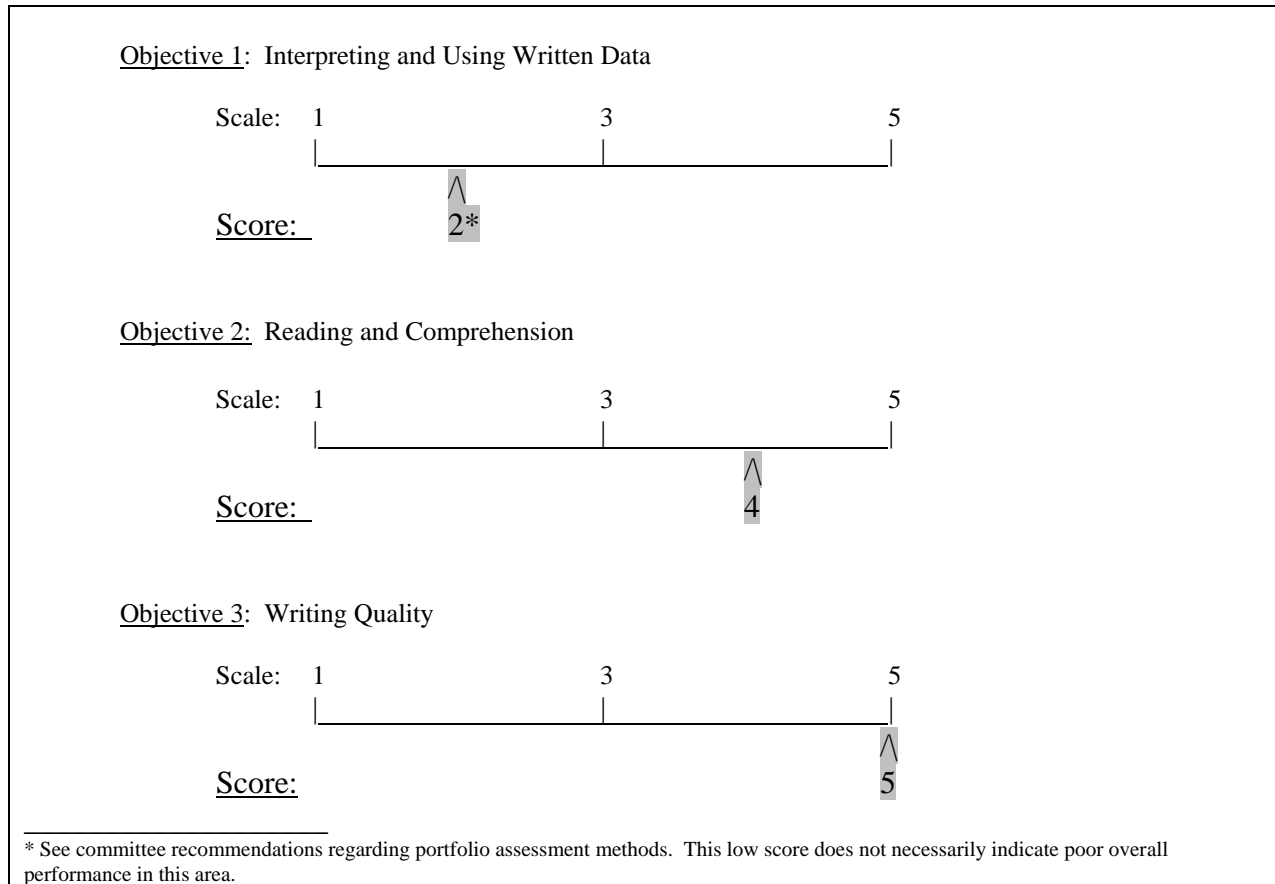
### ***Other Methods of Assessment.***

In addition to the three major areas detailed above, the committee found that the FYC program also employs a variety of other means for monitoring the teaching and assessment practices in FYC courses. These include, but are not limited to:

- Faculty retreats and training sessions on pedagogy and developing course materials;
- A mentorship program for TAs and all new faculty;
- Tracking forms to determine the number of students who fail FYC courses, and the reasons for these failures;
- The FYC Committee, which actively reviews all program materials and procedures;
- Involvement by the FYC Program Director, including class visits and informal assistance.

#### IV. Overall Effectiveness of Practices and Assessment in FYC

Figure 2. General Scores for Each LSP Objective



#### ***Strengths.***

Overall the committee found that the FYC Program not only meets but exceeds LSP goals for teaching and assessment. In particular, we noted the following strengths

- *Firm and productive definition.* The FYC Program is well defined and actively employs an impressive set of goals. (See Attachments 3 and 4.) These goals go well above and beyond the guidelines set in the LSP document. Further, FYC Program faculty and staff regularly review and update their governing and individual goals and learning outcomes, ensuring that the program always stays efficient and accurately addresses student need.
- *Variety of approaches and materials.* Although they are governed by an impressive philosophy and mission, not all FYC courses are the same. Rather than being a “cookie-cutter” course with a common syllabus, FYC courses instead reflect the personality of individual students and faculty. Instructors adhere to program goals, but do so using creative and inspired methods. The materials and data reviewed appeared by and large to be extremely effective.

- *Commitment and enthusiasm of faculty.* In spite of the fact that most FYC instructors are visiting faculty with limited benefits and salaries, these faculty show an attention to detail and overall commitment to their students that is rare indeed. For example, the fact that repeated personal, one-on-one conferencing is so common in these labor-intensive courses indicates the faculty's genuine interest in their students.
- *Use of technology and electronic classrooms.* While celebrating and encouraging individuality among students and faculty, FYC Program faculty still manage to stay current and move with the times. Electronic environments and materials have been a standard part of most FYC classes since the mid-1990s, and the program continues to improve in this area. The FYC Program Director's plans for subsequent academic years indicates a commitment to expanding the FYC curriculum so that students increase their competency and comfort with technology.
- *Emphasis on process and editing.* FYC course materials and governing documents all reflect a strong commitment to improving students' editing ability. This extensive use of process undoubtedly contributes to critical thinking and reading skill, as well as students' own assessment of themselves and their work.
- *Performance.* Overall, the teaching and assessment methods of the FYC Program exceeded the expectations of the committee, and clearly illustrated goals and practices well above and beyond the required elements outlined in the LSP document.

### ***Areas for Growth and Change.***

Although our review showed that the FYC Program is generally very strong in its systems and practices, the committee did notice some minor issues with teaching and assessment. These were:

#### Teaching:

- Some discrepancies in syllabi/no consistent set of policies and outcomes;
- Lack of course schedules or semester plans in some syllabi;
- Infrequent use of the Freshman Summer Reading text;
- Insufficient emphasis on teaching of research practices and critical reading;
- High workload for Visiting Lecturers (80% faculty) teaching FYC.

#### Assessment:

- Insufficient methods for assessing students' reading and research abilities;
- Outdated and confusing content and format of freshman portfolios;
- Ineffective methods for assessing student portfolios. The rubric and scoring methods for portfolios may not accurately assess student performance. For example, portfolio "random" samplings are not random, and include student portfolios who have failed FYC courses. While the work of students who fail FYC does need to be examined in order to determine how better to help them, this cannot be done at the same time as the analysis of successful FYC student work.

**Recommendations.**

The table below (Figure 3) outlines the committee’s recommendations for the FYC Program. Many of our recommendations have been or will soon be adopted by the FYC Program, which has made considerable changes in the past semester (Spring 2006). The FYC Program Director’s annual report concurs with virtually everything in the committee’s independent assessment, and the director has already begun to address these issues. Thus, this table indicates whether each of the committee’s recommendations have been implemented and/or targeted for review by FYC.

**Figure 3. Committee Recommendations for First Year Composition**

<b>Committee Recommendation</b>	<b>Identified by FYC?</b>	<b>Means of review or improvement</b>	<b>Implemented ?</b>
Ensure all syllabi contain semester schedules, a set of unified learning outcomes, and more detail on grading, policies, and assignments. [The committee does NOT recommend a common syllabus for all sections of FYC.]	Yes	Workshops on syllabi construction and review of new FYC Mission/Philosophy	Yes— Fall '06
Broaden in-class readings and encourage more critical reading (and assessment thereof).	Yes	Adoption of new FYC textbook, workshops on teaching reading skills	Yes— Fall '06
Give FYC faculty more input on choice of Freshman Summer Reading, thereby increasing its use in FYC.	No	Cannot be implemented by FYC; the Summer Reading is <u>not</u> connected to English or FYC.	No
Emphasize research more carefully and better assess student facility with resource material. [The committee feels FYC faculty should be more explicit in their use of research and critical reading units, rather than making these elements an assumed or secondary part of other assignments and lectures.]	Yes	FYC Director’s annual report addresses methods in detail	Yes— Fall '06
Ensure that faculty teach a maximum of three sections of FYC per semester.	Yes	Unknown; scheduling/workload are beyond the scope of this and FYC Program Director’s review.	No
Revise the standardized contents of the freshman FYC portfolios, and possibly make all portfolios electronic rather than paper files.	Yes	Electronic portfolios and review sessions scheduled	Yes— Fall '06
Overhaul the assessment of portfolios. [The committee feels strongly that the random sampling methods, rubric, and format of assessment retreats are ineffectual and need to be changed considerably.]	Yes	TBD	Yes— 2006-2007
Portfolios from students who <u>failed</u> an FYC course should not be part of the standard assessment, but should be pulled and considered a separate statistical and evaluative group.	Yes	TBD—targeted for review	TBD

## V. *Addendum: Committee Recommendations on LSP Program Assessment Procedures*

In addition to its review of FYC Program teaching and assessment methods, the committee was also able to conduct a short meta-review session regarding the best practices for conducting such a review. Given that many other programs will soon undergo similar assessment, the committee hereby offers the Offices of Assessment and Academic Affairs the following recommendations.

- *Early notification.* Our review was made much more effective by the fact that the FYC Program was notified well in advance of the review. Faculty surveys were collected in the fall and spring semesters, as well as other materials. Such ongoing tracking over an academic year is highly advisable, as it allows reviewers to compile and analyze more data.
- *Small committees.* While this review process was not a simple one, the committee felt that any more “cooks” would have adulterated the process and made collaboration difficult. FYC is a very large program, but three people were sufficient for the review. It is recommended that at least one reviewer be from outside the department/program in question.
- *Materials.* The committee felt that syllabi, faculty surveys, and the director’s report on student portfolios were sufficient materials for this review. Other programs may have very different means of teaching and assessing their students, however. The committee felt the syllabi were the most illuminating material, and told us the most about the FYC program. The FYC Program Director’s report, while very professional and objective, concerned the committee. We felt that reviewing the Director’s report, without having access to her raw materials and data, created an unnecessary middle man or “filter” through which to examine the program. Future reviewers of other programs may not have the luxury of such a detailed or impartial report.
- *Survey as instrument.* While effective, the faculty survey was very difficult to use at times. Results were calculated via Scantron, which confused some faculty taking the survey and limited numerical analysis. Questions were not in an effective order on the survey form, making the compiling of data confusing. The survey did not address some fundamental questions, such as the differences between tenure-track and visiting faculty; the committee feels this gap is particularly important in Liberal Studies courses, and should be part of any review. In particular, workload issues could be addressed in future program reviews.
- *Orientation and mentoring.* The committee feels that future reviewers should be provided with sample reports and access to others who have already completed similar assessments. A meeting at the beginning of the process with former reviewers and staff from the Office of Assessment or Academic Affairs would provide focus to future assessments.
- *External factors.* The committee identified at least one major issue that is beyond the control of FYC faculty—that of the Freshman Summer Reading program. In fact, the committee noted that there is much external influence on and requests made of FYC faculty by administrators and staff at Western. Such “interference” may be a factor in other Liberal Studies programs, and could be a separate area for review in future program assessments.

## **VI. Attachments**

### **List of Attachments**

1. Faculty Survey
2. Survey Results Tables
3. FYC Mission Statement, Philosophy, and Learning Outcomes for 2004-2005
4. FYC Mission Statement, Philosophy, and Learning Outcomes for 2005-2006

## **Attachment 1:** **Faculty Survey**

To assist the Liberal Studies Committee with the task of assessing the Liberal Studies Program, please take a few minutes to complete this survey instrument. In addition, on a separate sheet, we would welcome any feed back that you might have about this instrument as a Program assessment tool.

Be assured, this instrument is NOT for the purpose of evaluating instruction. The data will be used by the Liberal Studies Committee to assess how well the stated objectives of the Liberal Studies Program are being met.

### **DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

- 1) If you are non-tenure track faculty please fill in the appropriate bubble on the scantron.
  - 1: Graduate Teaching Assistant
  - 2: Part-time Adjunct
  - 3: Visiting Instructor receiving 80% benefits
  - 4: Fixed Term Faculty receiving 100% benefits
  
- 2) If you are tenure track faculty, please fill in the appropriate bubble on the scan-tron.
  - 1: Assistant Professor
  - 2: Associate Professor
  - 3: Professor
  
- 3) Number of English 101 sections you taught this semester.      1      2      3      4

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

- 4) Assessed Writing (10% or more)      0 (A)    1 (B)    2 (C)    3 (D)    4 or more (E)  
Number of graded writing assignments worth 10% or more of the final grade
  
- 5) Assessed Writing (less than 10%)      0 (A)    1 (B)    2 (C)    3 (D)    4 or more (E)  
Number of graded writing assignments worth less than 10% of the final grade
  
- 6) Draft Writing      never (1)    sometimes (2)    often (3)    always (4)  
Are drafts required for each assessed writing assignment?
  
- 7) Assessed Group Writing (10% or more)      0 (A)    1 (B)    2 (C)    3 (D)    4 or more (E)  
Number of graded group writing assignments worth 10% or more of the final grade
  
- 8) Assessed Group Writing (less than 10%)      0 (A)    1 (B)    2 (C)    3 (D)    4 or more (E)  
Number of graded group writing assignments worth less than 10% of the final grade



## **Attachment 2: Survey Results**

### **TOTALS FOR ENGLISH 101**

Total number of surveys completed: **36**

### **DEMOGRAPHICS**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Total/Percentage Answering:</b>			
<b>1) Non-Tenured Faculty</b>	TA:	Adjunct:	VI:	Fixed:
	6/ 17%	0	18/ 50%	4/ 11%
<b>2) Tenured Faculty</b>	Asst:	Assoc:	Prof:	xxxxx
	2/ 6%	1/ 3%	3/ 8%	
<b>3) # of Sections taught:</b>	1:	2:	3:	4:
	14/ 39%	10/ 28%	5/ 14%	6/ 17%

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Total/Percentage Answering:</b>				
	0	1	2	3	4 or more
<b>4) # of Assessed Writings, 10% or more</b>	0	0	4/ 11%	12/ 33%	19/ 53%
<b>5) # of Assessed Writings, less than 10%</b>	7/ 19%	2/ 6%	2/ 6%	12/ 33%	11/ 31%
<b>7) # of Assessed Group Writings, 10% or more</b>	25/ 69%	9/ 25%	1/ 3%	0	0
<b>8) # of Assessed Group Writings, less than 10%</b>	21/ 58%	10/ 28%	2/ 6%	2/ 6%	0
<b>10) # of ungraded writings completed outside of class</b>	5/ 14%	2/ 6%	6/ 17%	8/ 22%	14/ 39%
<b>11) # of Critical Readings</b>	1/ 3%	3/ 8%	2/ 6%	12/ 33%	18/ 50%
<b>13) # of assignments with Primary Research</b>	4/ 11%	15/ 42%	8/ 22%	6/ 17%	2/ 6%
<b>14) # of assignments with Secondary Research</b>	13/ 36%	13/ 36%	5/ 14%	3/ 8%	1/ 3%

Question	Total/Percentage Answering:			
	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
<b>6) Drafts Required for assessed writings</b>	0	2/ 6%	10/ 28%	19/ 53%
<b>9) Drafts Required for assessed group writing</b>	17/ 47%	7/ 19%	2/ 6%	3/ 8%

Question	Total/Percentage Answering:	
	Yes	No
<b>12) Critical Readings assessed</b>	34/ 94%	1/ 3%
<b>15) Final Portfolio required</b>	35/ 97%	0

### ACTIVITIES

Question	Total/Percentage Answering:				
	0	1	2	3	4 or more
<b>16) Required out of class conferences per student:</b>	7/ 19%	12/ 33%	10/ 28%	5/ 14%	1/ 3%

Question	Total/Percentage Answering:			
	Never	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
<b>17) Frequency of In Class Discussion</b>	0	0	12/ 33%	19/ 53%
<b>18) Frequency of Instructor Lectures</b>	8/ 22%	14/ 39%	13/ 36%	0
<b>19) Frequency of In Class Writings</b>	0	7/ 19%	16/ 44%	10/ 28%
<b>20) Frequency of In Class Workshop</b>	1/ 3%	14/ 39%	18/ 50%	2/ 6%
<b>21) Frequency of writing in Electronic Environment</b>	1/ 3%	8/ 22%	25/ 69%	1/ 3%

Question	Total/Percentage Answering:	
	Yes	No
<b>22) Students assessed on Class Participation</b>	32/ 89%	2/ 6%

## TOTALS FOR ENGLISH 102

Total number of surveys completed: **33**

### DEMOGRAPHICS

Question	Total/Percentage Answering:			
<b>1) Non-Tenured Faculty</b>	TA:	Adjunct:	VI:	Fixed:
	3/ 9%	0	18/ 55%	4/ 12%
<b>2) Tenured Faculty</b>	Asst:	Assoc:	Prof:	xxxxx
	2/ 6%	1/ 3%	3/ 3%	
<b>3) # of Sections taught:</b>	1:	2:	3:	4:
	13/ 39%	10/ 30%	3/ 9%	5/ 15%

### ASSIGNMENTS

Question	Total/Percentage Answering:				
	0	1	2	3	4 or more
<b>4) # of Assessed Writings, 10% or more</b>	0	0	4/ 12%	11/ 33%	16/ 48%
<b>5) # of Assessed Writings, less than 10%</b>	4/ 12%	3/ 9%	5/ 15%	5/ 15%	13/ 39%
<b>7) # of Assessed Group Writings, 10% or more</b>	17/ 52%	11/ 33%	1/ 33%	0	1/ 3%
<b>8) # of Assessed Group Writings, less than 10%</b>	17/ 52%	8/ 24%	1/ 3%	0	1/ 3%
<b>10) # of ungraded writings completed outside of class</b>	6/ 18%	3/ 9%	2/ 6%	5/ 15%	14/ 42%
<b>11) # of Critical Readings</b>	0	2/ 6%	1/ 3%	6/ 18%	21/ 64%
<b>13) # of assignments with Primary Research</b>	3/ 9%	12/ 36%	6/ 18%	5/ 15%	4/ 12%
<b>14) # of assignments with Secondary Research</b>	0	2/ 6%	8/ 24%	7/ 21%	13/ 39%

Question	Total/Percentage Answering:			
	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
<b>6) Drafts Required for assessed writings</b>	1/ 3%	3/ 9%	12/ 36%	14/ 42%
<b>9) Drafts Required for assessed group writing</b>	15/ 45%	8/ 24%	1/ 3%	2/ 6%

Question	Total/Percentage Answering:	
	Yes	No
12) Critical Readings assessed	29/ 88%	0
15) Final Portfolio required	30/ 91%	0

### ACTIVITIES

Question	Total/Percentage Answering:				
	0	1	2	3	4 or more
16) Required out of class conferences per student:	8/ 24%	10/ 30%	8/ 24%	3/ 9%	1/ 3%

Question	Total/Percentage Answering:			
	Never	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
17) Frequency of In Class Discussion	0	1/ 3%	10/ 30%	20/ 61%
18) Frequency of Instructor Lectures	10/ 30%	9/ 27%	10/ 30%	1/ 3%
19) Frequency of In Class Writings	1/ 3%	4/ 12%	16/ 48%	9/ 27%
20) Frequency of In Class Workshop	1/ 3%	15/ 45%	13/ 39%	1/ 3%
21) Frequency of writing in Electronic Environment	0	6/ 18%	24/ 73%	0

Question	Total/Percentage Answering:	
	Yes	No
22) Students assessed on Class Participation	26/ 79%	2/ 6%

**TOTALS FOR ALL COMPOSITION COURSES, 05 – 06**

Total number of surveys completed: **69**

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Total/Percentage Answering:</b>			
<b>1) Non-Tenured Faculty</b>	TA:	Adjunct:	VI:	Fixed:
	9/ 13%	0	36/ 52%	8/ 12%
<b>2) Tenured Faculty</b>	Asst:	Assoc:	Prof:	xxxxx
	4/ 6%	2/ 3%	6/ 9%	
<b>3)# of Sections taught:</b>	1:	2:	3:	4:
	27/ 39%	20/ 29%	8/ 12%	11/ 16%

**ASSIGNMENTS**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Total/Percentage Answering:</b>				
	0	1	2	3	4 or more
<b>4) # of Assessed Writings, 10% or more</b>	0	0	8/ 12%	23/ 33%	35/ 51%
<b>5) # of Assessed Writings, less than 10%</b>	11/ 16%	5/ 7%	7/ 10%	17/ 25%	24/ 35%
<b>7) # of Assessed Group Writings, 10% or more</b>	42/ 61%	20/ 29%	2/ 3%	0	1/ 1%
<b>8) # of Assessed Group Writings, less than 10%</b>	38/ 55%	18/ 26%	4/ 6%	4/ 6%	1/ 1%
<b>10) # of ungraded writings completed outside of class</b>	11/ 16%	5/ 7%	8/ 12%	13/ 19%	28/ 41%
<b>11) # of Critical Readings</b>	0	5/ 7%	3/ 4%	18/ 26%	39/ 57%
<b>13) # of assignments with Primary Research</b>	7/ 10%	27/ 39%	14/ 20%	11/ 16%	6/ 9%
<b>14) # of assignments with Secondary Research</b>	13/ 19%	15/ 22%	13/ 19%	10/ 14%	14/ 20%

Question	Total/Percentage Answering:			
	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
<b>6) Drafts Required for assessed writings</b>	1/ 1%	5/ 7%	22/ 32%	33/ 48%
<b>9) Drafts Required for assessed group writing</b>	32/ 46%	15/ 22%	3/ 4%	5/ 7%

Question	Total/Percentage Answering:	
	Yes	No
<b>12) Critical Readings assessed</b>	63/ 91%	1/ 1%
<b>15) Final Portfolio required</b>	65 94%	0

### ACTIVITIES

Question	Total/Percentage Answering:				
	0	1	2	3	4 or more
<b>16) Required out of class conferences per student:</b>	15/ 22%	22/ 32%	18/ 26%	8/ 12%	2/ 3%

Question	Total/Percentage Answering:			
	Never	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
<b>17) Frequency of In Class Discussion</b>	0	1/ 1%	22/ 32%	38/ 55%
<b>18) Frequency of Instructor Lectures</b>	18/ 26%	23/ 33%	23/ 33%	1/ 1%
<b>19) Frequency of In Class Writings</b>	1/ 1%	11/ 16%	32/ 46%	19/ 28%
<b>20) Frequency of In Class Workshop</b>	2/ 3%	29/ 42%	31/ 45%	3/ 4%
<b>21) Frequency of writing in Electronic Environment</b>	1/ 1%	14/ 20%	49/ 71%	1/ 1%

Question	Total/Percentage Answering:	
	Yes	No
<b>22) Students assessed on Class Participation</b>	58/ 84%	4/ 6%

## **Attachment 3: FYC Learning Outcomes for 2005-2006 Academic Year**

*(Taken from the 2005-2006 FYC Faculty Handbook)*

### **The Mission**

Western's FYC Program approaches writing as a multi-faceted act of the mind that focuses on many concepts: writing is process; writing is product; writing is communication; writing is composing with words; and writing is a tool for other acts of the mind. Because our goal is to provide the best undergraduate education possible, we commit to provide students with a better understanding of writing as a life long learning process. First-Year Composition faculty (Visiting Instructors, Visiting Assistant Professors, Graduate Teaching Assistants, Tenured and Tenure-track faculty alike) work to provide students with instruction that values writing with both an academic and real world application in mind; we strive to instill in first-year writers the knowledge that writing is a tool. It is a personal, collaborative, and social action. Thus, the mission of the two-semester FYC sequence is to prepare students for the complexities of writing in terms of process, product, communication, critical thinking, and reasoning they will continue to use throughout their academic lives and well beyond.

### **Learning Outcomes**

In 1999, the national Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA) endorsed a set of learning outcomes. They outline "the common knowledge, skills, and attitudes sought by first year composition programs in American postsecondary education." Our program has used these WPA Learning Outcomes (included for reference at the end of this section) as well as information gathered through our portfolio-based program assessment retreats to generate Learning Outcomes distinctive to each course in the FYC's two-semester sequence. Part of the Liberal Studies Core Curriculum, both courses are designed to help students understand writing in both an academic and real world context. While our program encourages instructors to find creative methods of structuring their individual sections, we have designed the following learning outcomes to promote consistency across the sections. Western's FYC Program advocates these outcomes for all students in all sections of English 101 and 102 and intends for them to inform course development.

### **ENGLISH 101 LEARNING OUTCOMES**

#### **ESSENTIAL PREMISES:**

- Writing, reading, thinking, and researching are all acts of an inquiring mind. They aid each other and cannot be completely separated.
- Rhetoric, in its most global definition, is the use of language.
- Process is recursive and repetitive.
- Revision is not just making a piece "better"; it is making it different.
- "Research" is something writers do and then include in their writing. Primary research is first-hand gathering of one's own information. Secondary research is finding info secondhand from other writers who have gathered and included it in their writing. Secondary research is often more meaningful, relevant, and understandable when accompanied by or following primary research.

#### **STUDENTS WHO HAVE COMPLETED ENGLISH 101 WILL BE ABLE TO:**

- I. Engage in writing as a process for the purpose of exploring and developing thinking.
- II. Engage in writing as product for the purpose of communicating thinking.
- III. Engage in primary research for the purpose of expanding thinking and writing.
- IV. Engage in self-assessment of the writing process, product, and purpose for the purpose of writing more effectively in subsequent academic, professional, and civic rhetorical situations.

#### **I. Engage in writing as a process:**

- o Approach writing with an inquiring attitude of being curious and getting interested.

- o Develop strategies for prompting, discovering, and pulling along initial ideas and inquiry.
- o Develop strategies for revising content of and approach to writing (often called “global” or “bones” revision).
- o Develop strategies for revising structure and sentences (often called “local” or “muscle” revision).
- o Develop strategies for editing grammar, punctuation, and mechanics (often called “cosmetic” or “skin” revision).
- o Develop strategies for proofreading that yield virtually error-free writing (again, “cosmetic” or “skin” revision).
- o Develop an understanding of editing and proofreading as different from writing yet crucial to written communication.
- o Develop the ability to get useful feedback on writing and to give the same.
- o Adapt writing process to be flexible for a variety of rhetorical situations (situations that may vary in audience, context, or genre).

**II. Engage in writing as a product with these characteristics:**

- o Interest and insight in topic
- o Intention to communicate
- o Workable focus
- o Readable structure
- o Development (with information, detail, example, description, etc.)
- o Voice in sentences of style and variety
- o Accurate editing (grammar, punctuation, mechanics)
- o Virtually error-free (no mistakes or misspellings)

**III. Engage in primary research:**

- o Take active role of researcher.
- o Identify question about which to inquire.
- o Adopt method(s) to gather information relevant to inquiry.
- o Incorporate findings of research in written communication.
- o Use accurate internal documentation.
- o Compile accurate works cited or consulted.
- o Follow guidelines for ethical and honest work.

**IV. Engage in self-assessment of process, product, and purpose in writing:**

- o Describe process(es) and what works and needs work in them.
- o Describe products and what works and needs work in them.
- o Describe purposes and what works and needs work in them.
- o Describe effects of process, product, and process on each other during this course of study.

**ENGLISH 102 LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**ESSENTIAL PREMISES:**

- English 101’s essential premises and learning outcomes are required groundwork for English 102.
- Reading is an act of interpretation, whatever the text.
- Reasoning is required of writers and readers who aim to be effective in academic, professional, and civic communication.
- Argumentation is not a verbal fight using any rhetorical strategy as fair game until someone wins and someone else loses. Argumentation is intelligent, informed communication about matter of disagreement, dependent on sound reasoning, that may result in change for both writer and reader. Everything is an argument in that all rhetoric (all uses of language) carries purpose or intention, even if subconsciously.
- Research is an act that can be carried out by any writer in any rhetorical situation. Writers can conduct and incorporate research in any genre for any audience.

**STUDENTS WHO HAVE COMPLETED ENGLISH 102 WILL BE ABLE TO:**

- I. Engage in reading as a process of interpretation for the purpose of developing thinking.
- II. Engage in reasoning for the purpose of effective communication (written or read).
- III. Engage in writing for the purpose of communicating results of thinking, reading, and researching.
- IV. Engage in primary and secondary research for the purpose of expanding thinking, reading, and writing.
- V. Engage in self-assessment of reading, reasoning, and research with emphasis on metacognition for the purpose of doing them all more effectively in subsequent academic, professional, and civic rhetorical situations.

**I. Engage in reading (building on engaging in writing as a process in English 101):**

- o Read texts with an inquiring attitude of being curious and getting interested.
- o Write to assist reading (for example, writing annotations, summaries, and marginal notes and questions).
- o Read to assist re-thinking currently held ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge.
- o Read to find out what other people think and how they write about it.

**II. Engage in reasoning (building on engaging in writing as a product in English 101):**

- o Analyze own and others' writing for argumentative purposes (what argument is being made and why).
- o Analyze own and others' writing for argumentative strategies (how the argument gets made) including strategies for developing common ground and avoiding logical fallacies.

**III. Engage in secondary research (building on engaging in primary research in English 101):**

- o Identify text or web sources by using search methods recommended by instructors and librarians (including use of library databases).
- o Know the difference between a website and a text available electronically.
- o Assess sources for relevance, credibility, and usefulness (do not limit usefulness only to sources that support; also consider sources that show disagreements and the relevance or context of the inquiry).
- o Select most appropriate sources for the rhetorical situation.
- o Use accurate internal documentation.
- o Compile accurate works cited or consulted.
- o Follow guidelines for ethical and honest work.

**IV. Engage in writing (building on characteristics of written products in English 101):**

- o Incorporate research findings in written communication.
- o Integrate others' information and ideas in a way that contributes to but does not take over the writer's info and ideas.
- o Integrate use of quotes, summaries, and paraphrases in a way that blends with the writer's own sentences.
- o Distinguish clearly and accurately the writer's information or ideas from those of someone else.

**V. Engage in self-assessment (building on self-assessment in English 101):**

- o Describe process of reading and assess results achieved.
- o Describe products of reasoning and assess results achieved.
- o Describe process of research and assess results achieved.
- o Describe products that communicate research findings and assess results achieved.
- o Describe interactions among writing, reading, thinking, and researching and assess results achieved.

**Attachment 4:  
Current FYC Mission Statement, Philosophy, and Learning Outcomes  
(Approved May 2006)**

**FYC Mission Statement**

FYC educates students to enter life's conversations and negotiate choices and actions through writing, reading, critical thinking, and collaboration. We expose students to diverse cultures, lifestyles, opinions, and ideas through free and open exchanges. We encourage students to accept the challenges and risks of this intellectual work in a respectful environment.

**FYC Philosophy**

The First-Year Composition Program (FYC) at Western Carolina University advocates the following:

**Students**

1. We believe that students should connect the writing they do for FYC courses and their personal, economic, cultural, social, and professional lives.
2. We believe students should acquire skills in critical/analytical thinking, reading and writing.
3. We believe students should engage in both the personal and creative connections to writing and reading.
4. We believe students should understand the significance of both experiential and referential writing.
5. We believe students should read a broad variety of texts, including but not limited to, poetry and prose, essays in various disciplines, historical and contemporary documents, and visual and auditory documents.
6. We believe students should possess the ability to assess the validity and appropriateness of all information they acquire.
7. We believe students should respect writing as a process that applies to all areas of their academic and post-academic lives.
8. We believe students should recognize the value of both the practical and technical side of writing. This includes grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and document design.
9. We believe in the value of the first-year experience and therefore will make every effort to connect with students in a meaningful and mentoring fashion.
10. We believe in the student's right to his or her own voice.

**University**

11. We believe in the benefits of a program of Writing Across the Curriculum and, in doing so, intend to reinforce the writing and reading necessary in disciplines across the university.
12. We believe that FYC is just the first step in students' experience in learning the value of written communication and that the skills we impart in FYC courses should be reinforced in other disciplines.

**Faculty**

13. We believe that FYC faculty are a valuable force in the lives of this university and its students.
14. We believe in the rights of all FYC faculty to make a fair and competitive wage, have a fair and competitive workload, and participate in a fair and competitive benefits and contracts package.
15. We believe in the rights of all FYC faculty to have fair and equal representation in all university and departmental matters that directly affect them.
16. We believe all FYC faculty should have the benefits of professional development opportunities in order to keep WCU in the vanguard of current Composition Studies.
17. We believe in academic freedom for all faculty.

### **Program student learning outcomes – 2006-2007**

FYC completed a revision of student learning outcomes during the previous academic year. These learning outcomes will be in effect for the fall 2006 school year. The revised learning outcomes are as follows:

#### First-Year Composition Learning Outcomes

During First-Year Composition, the student should have consistently progressed toward mastery in his or her ability to:

##### **The Student as Reader**

- Read, understand, and respond to texts exhibiting a range of complexity
- Read, understand, and respond to texts in a variety of genres
- Read, understand, and respond to texts in multiple disciplines
- Interact with texts as they read and re-read, by underlining, taking notes and commenting in the margins, in order to arrive at a strong reading that supplies a starting point for writing
- Critically read texts to increase knowledge about self, others, and the world.
- Have knowledge of and understand the purpose and methods of conducting primary and secondary research
- Use appropriate information from primary and secondary research
- Utilize effectively both library and Internet resources appropriate to topics
- Critically assess and rate Internet sources before incorporating them into texts

##### **The Student as Writer**

- Learn to manage and individualize a writing process
- Apply invention strategies as part of their writing processes
- Use that writing process as a means of drafting and organizing well-developed, thoughtful texts
- Develop and maintain a personal written voice
- Propose, plan, and undertake research projects involving a number of writing activities that build toward a final project that meets the audiences' needs
- Show evidence of collaborative and social activities utilized in the writing process
- Synthesize and analyze multiple points of view, entertaining opposing views
- Use a variety of argumentative strategies appropriate to their audience
- Adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality for the audience(s)

- Use conventions of format, structure, and language appropriate to the purpose of the texts they write
- Learn the levels of revision and apply revising strategies to their written texts in clear and appropriate ways, showing evidence of these practices within process drafts by revising content, structure, sentences and word choice

**The Student and the Text**

- Create written texts that display insight into the topics presented
- Develop topics with details, examples, and description
- Generate texts with a workable and realistic focus
- Understand and use varied sentence constructions
- Have a workable knowledge of grammar, spelling, mechanics, and punctuation
- Integrate their own ideas with those of others, showing an ability to synthesize information and ideas
- Correctly use MLA format for internal documentation and bibliography information

**The Student and Context**

- Engage in written and oral discussion to deepen understanding and to clearly communicate ideas within a respectful environment
- Recognize and avoid fallacy
- Understand the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes
- Adhere to the liberal studies program goals of interdisciplinary learning
- Analyze and incorporate visual texts in their reading and writing

**The Student with Purpose/Intent**

- Engage argumentation and reasoning through critical thinking and analysis
- Recognize the components of argument and create their own arguments in conversation with other members of their discourse communities
- Engage in inquiry to discover new ideas and to potentially challenge existing ones
- Focus on an appropriate purpose in writing situations they encounter
- Engage in writing as a life skill and continue applying lessons learned in first-year composition to all academic and professional writing situations

**The Student and Assessment**

- Be confident in their ability to provide constructive feedback to peers
- Show evidence of critical thinking in self assessment

**The Student and Technology**

- Understand basic word processing technologies and how they might be used to aid effective feedback and revision strategies
- Use a variety of media, including computerized media, in ways that permit them to make their writing acceptable to a wide variety of readers
- Use technology in the service of document design

**Program student learning outcomes – current**

This year’s portfolio assessment relied on the following current learning outcomes (“WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition” endorsed by the National Council of Writing Program Administrators, 1999):

### **Rhetorical Knowledge**

By the end of first year composition, students should

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

### **Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing**

By the end of first year composition, students should

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

### **Processes**

By the end of first year composition, students should

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

### **Knowledge of Conventions**

By the end of first year composition, students should

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