

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE WRITING PROGRAM
STRATEGIC PLAN: FINAL DRAFT

Section 1 Gustavus Adolphus College Writing Program Description

The Gustavus Writing Program combines a Writing Across the Curriculum component—required writing intensive courses coupled with faculty development efforts—and a College Writing Center. This combination of curricular efforts, faculty development, and peer tutoring helps ensure that both students and faculty receive support for their work. Gustavus requires students to complete three designated writing requirement courses from at least two different departments in order to graduate. Students fulfill this requirement by taking Writing Intensive (WRITI) and Writing in the Disciplines (WRITD) courses.

The **Writing Across the Curriculum Program (WAC)** has been directed by Dr. Jeanne Herman (HES) since 2008. Herman handles the curricular, faculty recruitment, and assessment areas of the Writing Program.

The **Writing Center** has been directed by Dr. Rebecca Taylor Fremo (ENG) since 2000. Fremo directed WAC from 2000 until 2005; Fremo provides pedagogical support via workshops and consultations.

1.1.1 Mission, vision, and goals

1.1.1.1 Writing Across the Curriculum Mission

WAC at Gustavus draws from "writing to learn" theories (WTL), which suggest that students write in order to think through challenging material, internalize what they know, and express themselves more effectively and fluently. Our WAC program asserts that students can best learn the conventions of academic writing by taking writing intensive courses in many disciplines. The WAC program demands shared responsibility for writing instruction across the campus, and faculty work together to help students learn to express themselves with clarity and precision in every course context. In tandem, WRITI and WRITD courses teach students to express their ideas to both broad—in a cultural and disciplinary sense—and narrow audiences. In WRITI courses, students learn to analyze purpose, audience, and context and respond to a variety of rhetorical situations. In WRITD courses, students learn to communicate in the highly specialized languages of their disciplines. Thus the WAC program enables true interdisciplinary participation for students, helping the College fulfill one of the most important areas of its Mission Statement: "The Gustavus Curriculum is designed to bring students to mastery of a particular area of study within a general framework that is both interdisciplinary and international in perspective."

1.1.1.2 Writing Across the Curriculum Vision

Liberal education should help students write well and use writing both to discover and construct new knowledge and to communicate their ideas to others. Writing is a complex activity; it is a form of creative expression and critical engagement that serves practical and intellectual purposes. Since writing shapes the views of others, courses that focus on writing should help students understand the effects of their own written language. Once students learn to make successful choices as writers, they can use written communication in order to engage more fully as citizens, both locally and globally. In drawing its principles from a rhetorical system, the WAC program nods to the ancient art of rhetoric, which enabled civic participation. By enabling Gustavus students to fully participate as citizens after graduating, preparing them to write for audiences who may share different cultural and disciplinary values, the Writing Across the Curriculum program helps the College fulfill its mission: “The purpose of a Gustavus education is to help its students attain their full potential as persons, to develop in them a capacity and passion for lifelong learning, and to prepare them for fulfilling lives of leadership and service in society.”

1.1.1.3 Writing Across the Curriculum Goals

Goal 1: Develop rhetorical competency. WAC seeks to enable all students to make consistent, appropriate choices regarding purpose, audience, context, form, and style when they write. Such rhetorical competency enables full civic participation.

Goal 2: Foster creativity and self expression. WAC encourages students to use writing as a means of self-expression, creative expression, and exploration, and provides opportunities for students to write informally as well as formally. Such creativity and self-expression helps Gustavus students develop their full potential as persons.

Goal 3: Teach argumentation and critical thinking. WAC courses teach students to analyze and create arguments and to use writing in order to explain, persuade, and communicate with diverse audiences. Argumentative and Critical Thinking skills are hallmarks of academic excellence.

Goal 4: Enable fluency in disciplinary conventions. In WRITD courses, students complete assignments that exemplify the structures, genres, and conventions of their discipline. Mastery of Disciplinary Conventions enables students to understand the educational and theoretical innovations of their fields.

Goal 5: Develop the writing process. All WAC courses help students to study their own writing practices, develop a writing process that is successful, and practice that process. Both WRIT and WRITD courses provide opportunities for students to draft, revise, and edit their work. As they develop their Writing Processes, students focus not only on how knowledge is communicated, but how one comes to know in the first place.

Goal 6: Negotiate meaning with diverse audiences. WAC courses demonstrate that writing is always an act of negotiation, where readers and writers from different cultural or disciplinary contexts must help one another understand their beliefs, values, and habits. Courses should expose students to multiple rhetorical contexts across the curriculum. As they learn to Negotiate Meaning with Diverse Audiences, students are poised to become members of diverse communities and to participate fully within them.

Goal 7: Create support mechanisms. The WAC program seeks to support all teachers of writing at Gustavus, providing workshops, resources, and assessment strategies for teachers who are new to the program.

Goal 8: Increase the number of WRITD and WRITI courses within the curriculum. By encouraging departments and programs to offer writing courses, and providing support for those who submit proposals, the WAC program hopes to increase the overall number of writing courses in the curriculum.

1.1.1 Writing Center: Mission, Vision, and Goals

1.1.2.1 Writing Center Mission

The Gustavus Adolphus College Writing Center recognizes that differences in proficiency, levels of preparation, and linguistic and cultural background need to be taken into account in helping students to become more effective writers. We believe that writers benefit from conversation about writing at all stages--planning, drafting, revising, and editing--and the Writing Center staff understands that writers encounter these stages with differing degrees of strength and comfort.

Our undergraduate peer tutors consult with student clients individually. They encourage students to discuss the writing experiences they share as members of the academic community of the College. At the same time, the tutors help students to clarify their understandings of the stylistic and substantive expectations emphasized within various academic disciplines. We seek to help students become stronger writers by:

- facilitating students' drafting, revising, and editing processes
- helping students recognize and practice conventions for good writing across the curriculum
- encouraging and contributing to a culture of collaboration among students
- fostering students' sense of communicative responsibility.

The Writing Center fulfills its mission in two primary ways: by providing individualized tutoring sessions on-site--either by appointment or on a walk-in basis--to students from across the college; and by providing workshops and coordinating outreach efforts bring the Writing Center staff to particular student populations.

The Writing Center embodies Gustavus's commitment to the Core Value of Community. The peer tutoring model utilized at the WC teaches students to negotiate meaning in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation.

1.1.2.2 Writing Center Vision

Simply put, the Writing Center seeks to be a vital, fully integrated part of every Gustavus student's experience. We reach out to those writers who struggle and those who excel. We help those whose native languages and/ or home literacy practices differ (either in degree or kind) from those traditionally valued by the academic community. But we seek to help all writers think in more sophisticated ways about rhetorical issues such as purpose, audience, context, and style. Finally, we strive to serve as a central location where students can exercise their critical and creative impulses, share their work with real, live audience members, and receive feedback in a space uncompromised by the pressures of grading and evaluation. In other words, we want to be a Center for Writers: the place where all student writers come to get their work done, share their work with others, and celebrate the written word.

1.1.2.3 Writing Center Goals

Goal 1: Model for students the social aspects of written language. Conventions for writing arise out of specific social and cultural contexts. A tutorial demonstrates the ways that writers from different backgrounds (cultural or disciplinary) negotiate meaning.

Goal 2: Help writers discover their own process. Tutorials focus on all stages of the process: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing or sharing work. By working with writers at all stages of the process, and calling attention to the ways that those stages matter, we help students learn what works best for them.

Goal 3: Provide real, live readers for writers who need an audience. The peer tutors help writers see and experience how their words affect others. This helps students learn to communicate with others whose ideas, beliefs, values, and language practices may differ from their own.

Goal 4: Help writers improve their rhetorical and stylistic skills. Tutorial sessions focus not merely on "making papers better," but on the rhetorical choices and technical skills that good writers practice. Tutors model those choices and skills for students.

Goal 5: Model invention, revision and self-editing skills that can transcend disciplinary boundaries. Tutors focus on a process-based approach to writing, teaching students that regardless of the disciplinary focus, similar strategies can be used to help students learn to brainstorm and plan, revise and rethink, and edit and proofread their work.

Goal 6: Support an increasingly diverse student body at Gustavus, including those who are multilingual or speak and write English as their second language. Tutors are committed to helping all writers at Gustavus, regardless of their linguistic and cultural

backgrounds. Tutors are particularly sensitive to the needs of students who struggle with competing rhetorical impulses due to their bilingual or multilingual backgrounds.

Goal 7: Assist writers who may have trouble with written processing skills, including those with learning disabilities. Tutors and the director work closely with our Disability Services coordinator to ensure that students with learning disabilities can receive one-on-one feedback on their work, and tutors research various learning disabilities in order to learn more about how to help students with written processing disabilities.

Goal 8: Create and support a community of writers by maintaining a collaborative space where students can share their creative and academic work and locate helpful resources. Tutors themselves use the Writing Center, and the Center sometimes hosts visiting authors in order to enable students to converse with them; tutors wish to converse about creative as well as critical writing. The WC is also a repository for resources, including handbooks and style manual. The WC maintains a web page and provides materials to the campus community.

1.2 Programs

The Gustavus Writing Program consists of both the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program and the Writing Center (WC); the WC houses our English Language Learners (ELL) Tutoring Specialist as well. The two programs share a budget, but each is directed by a different faculty member. Neither program benefits from support staff.

1.2.1 Writing Across the Curriculum

1.2.1.1 Writing Requirement:

Gustavus requires students to complete three designated writing requirement courses from at least two different departments in order to graduate. One of these courses must be taken in the first year (normally in the First Term Seminar or Curriculum II). At least one designated writing course must be taken as part of a student's major, and at least one must be Level II or higher. Students fulfill this writing requirement by taking two types of courses, WRITING INTENSIVE (WRITI) and WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINES (WRITD). Currently, either WRITI or WRITD courses are offered by the vast majority of departments on campus. Some, however, participate much more substantively than others. See Appendix A (a detailed view of departmental participation) and Appendix B (which charts the number of students completing more than 3 WRITI/ D courses before graduation). And, because of the intensive nature of the revision and feedback cycle, all WRITI and WRITD courses should be restricted to enrollments of 20 or fewer students.

1.2.1.2 Faculty Development and Curriculum Development:

The WAC program supports faculty development in several ways. First, since all First Term Seminars must meet the criteria for WRITI, all new teachers of FTS take part in a

summer workshop before they teach FTS. This workshop includes instruction on writing theory, pedagogy, and assessment strategies. The WC director also sits on the FTS Advisory Committee. Second, the WAC program participates in the Teachers Talking series. In addition, other WAC faculty development workshops may be offered throughout the academic year. Finally, the WAC director is an ex-officio member of the Curriculum Committee and can assist the PADC or others with assessment projects. Note, for instance, that the WAC director assists with the Teagle Foundation Grant project, which has assessed writing, critical thinking, and civic engagement among six different liberal arts colleges (including Gustavus) over the last three years. This has involved soliciting papers from large numbers of students, reading the papers to determine whether or not they fit the study, and selecting “range finders” for other groups of readers to assess.

1.2.1.3 Writing Program Advisory Committee:

Currently inactive, The Writing Program Advisory Committee (WPAC), chaired by the Director of WAC, consists of six members who should represent at least three of the five academic divisions and diverse faculty ranks, as well as the FTS program. The committee's primary function is advisory. The committee will offer advice about faculty development efforts, read and review WAC documents, and assist with the development of a regular WAC assessment plan. The committee will also discuss Writing Center related issues as needed. Finally, WPAC should re-assess the FTS handbook every five years. The nearly annual turnover in the position of WAC director has affected the formation and contributions of this committee.

1.2.2 The Writing Center

The **Writing Center** supports students who take WAC courses and the faculty who teach them. The Center, located in 232 Confer Hall, is staffed by 14-20 undergraduate peer tutors from across the curriculum and supported by campus employment programs. All tutors are chosen based upon their writing samples and personal interviews; all attend pre-semester orientation as well as weekly staff meetings and annual professional development retreats. The WC offers tutorials both by appointment and on a walk-in basis. The Center also provides outreach programs to the Gustavus community, including workshops for international students, first-year students, and other populations. In a typical year, the Writing Center conducts 700-800 tutorials; at least 2/3 of those take place during the fall semester, when our First Term Seminar (FTS) courses run. Most students are “repeat customers”; in 2007-08, for instance, the Writing Center conducted 775 appointments with 319 distinct clients.

E.L.L. Tutoring: The WC currently houses our E.L.L. Tutoring Specialist, who works also with multilingual students. She consults with faculty members and administrators as well. Currently, Gustavus now employs a graduate student from Minnesota State University, Mankato whose area of specialization is TESOL (Teaching English as a Second Language) in this part-time position. Turnover has been problematic.

Designated Tutor Program pairs a sophomore, junior, or senior Writing Center tutor with a specific section of FTS (fall) or other WRITI or WRITD course (spring). While s/he is not a composition "specialist," the DT has been trained to utilize a tutoring method that privileges conversation and questioning. The DT is not a "grader" or a "T.A."

Outreach Program places tutors in satellite locations on campus. We currently place tutors in the Diversity Center, and we will use the Library as well in fall 2009. The Outreach tutors also visit the dorms during exam periods and offer workshops to the community. Past topics have included "The Writing Buffet," "How to Avoid Plagiarism," and "Preparing for the MCAT Writing Portion."

Special Needs Team works in tandem with Laurie Bickett, coordinator for Disability Services, to make sure that students with written processing needs are served. Each year, three experienced tutors serve on this team. Tutors first meet with Bickett to discuss the needs of writers with learning disabilities. The tutors then work with individual students with disabilities throughout the year.

Writing Center Training Course will be required for all Writing Center tutors beginning fall 2009. This course will be offered for .500 credit and will introduce tutors to rhetorical theory, composition theory, and tutoring strategies.

1.3 Writing Program (WAC and WC) Support relationships

First Term Seminars: All FTS courses are designated WRITI. The WC provides designated tutors (DT) to approximately 12 sections of FTS each fall. In addition, the Center's director, Rebecca Fremo, conducts the writing orientation session for all new FTS teachers every other summer and sits on the FTS Advisory Board.

Diversity Center: The Center is closely allied with the Diversity Center. Tutors are stationed there three to four evenings each week in recognition of the cultural barriers that may prevent many students of color from going directly to the Writing Center for help. The E.L.L. tutoring specialist also works closely with the Diversity Center in this regard. Virgil Jones works closely with Fremo and the tutors, providing ongoing support for the development of cultural competency.

Center for International and Cultural Education: the Writing Center director provides an orientation session for new international students each year (with Jane Lalim, Academic Counselor), as well as workshops for international students upon request. The E.L.L. tutoring specialist works closely with this office as well.

Advising and Counseling Center: Jane Lalim (Academic Counselor) collaborates frequently with Rebecca Fremo to support international students and students of color (via Mentoring for Success); Laurie Bickett (Disability Services) also collaborates with Fremo to ensure that students with special written communication needs receive support.

Technology: The Writing Center currently outsources its most important technology needs, paying approximately \$715.00 annually for software that manages schedules and appointments, tracks usage, etc. Additional support from GTS could increase availability of specialized software and hardware designed to help students with special writing needs.

Section 2 Strategic Review

2.1 Strategic issues

The directors of WAC and the WC conducted focus groups with 14 of its most engaged faculty members; they also provided a survey to the community at large; only 10 people responded. The WC director reviewed Writing Center client evaluation forms, tutor self-evaluations, and faculty feedback regarding tutorial sessions. Finally, WAC and WC annual reports dating back to 2000 were reviewed.

2.1.1 WAC Program Strengths

Course Proposal Process: Faculty report that the approval process for new WRITI and WRITD courses is appropriate and teachers receive feedback. Likewise, while we would certainly argue for an even lower cap, the current enrollment cap of 20 is perceived as positive, enabling faculty to provide students with more specific feedback.

Completion of Writing Courses: Data provided by the Registrar shows that more than 50% of students within the current four-year cohort will register for/ complete more than the three required writing courses (see Appendix A).

Faculty Support: The Program enjoys support of faculty across the disciplines. The majority of departments do participate in the program and perceive WAC as “commonly owned.”

Program Focus: The program focuses on writing process and rhetorical issues; it does not encourage students or teachers to simply consider the technical elements of writing such as grammar or mechanics. Because of this, more faculty feel comfortable participating in the program. Specifically, faculty seem most drawn to WRITD courses, as these courses appeals to faculty who feel comfortable working as expert writers within a specific field.

National Recognition: Gustavus was one of the first colleges in the country to institute a Writing Across the Curriculum requirement. Several former WAC directors have been contacted by other institutions looking for models; we are perceived as a successful WAC program with longevity. The College maintains its membership in national and regional organizations related to writing instruction.

2.1.1.2 WAC Challenges, Barriers, and Opportunities

Lack of Administrative Support: The College does not “replace” faculty who choose to teach WRITD or WRITI courses. Thus departments must choose: contribute to an interdisciplinary program like WAC (FTS, for example) or provide a course to their own majors. Some departments cannot “spare” a faculty member to teach a WAC course. Because the enrollment cap for WAC courses is 20, some departments lack enough personnel to offer WAC courses regularly. Likewise, the WAC program does not have secretarial support, which means that the WAC director must manage tasks like meeting planning, desktop publishing, envelope stuffing, web page upkeep, and so on. These types of responsibilities leave little time for the director to offer training sessions for faculty or engage in programmatic assessment and improvement. The College needs to fully staff and support the WAC program or its goals cannot be met.

Lack of Funding: The WAC program shares a \$2,275.00 annually with the WC (including travel money for both directors to participate in national and regional conferences). The WC uses this entire budget, often by the end of the first semester. The WAC program must then draw from another pool of “restricted” funds/ endowed funds for the program. Lack of funding also leaves a WAC director with a single course release annually, which is not enough to enable her to do the pedagogical, theoretical, managerial, and assessment work to keep the program productive. Finally, lack of funding means that it’s difficult to bring in nationally recognized speakers, conduct external reviews, or participate fully in the WAC community beyond Gustavus. Both the WAC program and Writing Center need separate budgets with adequate funds.

Leadership: The WAC program should be directed by a faculty member with Writing Across the Curriculum background and experience. The director should be familiar with assessment strategies, pedagogy, history, and theoretical directions for WAC. Given the current emphasis on global and intercultural communication in a digital era, the WAC director should also have considerable background in digital media and/ or cross-cultural communication. Moreover, that person should be fully compensated with a full course reduction each semester for this work and enough travel funds to ensure that sh/e can attend the national Writing Program Administrators Conference and/ or Conference on College Composition and Communication each year.

Lack of Assessment: The WAC program, more than 20 years old, has never undergone an external review or other formal assessment. While WAC directors may conduct smaller assessments on their own, surveying FTS faculty, for instance, the College has never formalized its expectations for student outcomes, assessed student writing across disciplines, or considered seriously the usefulness or efficacy of the program. Given our participation in the Teagle Foundation Grant, which has enabled a three-year study of writing, critical thinking, and student engagement at six institutions, we are now poised to assess the program. Following the final stage of data collection and analysis this year, the results of the study should serve as a foundation for the first Gustavus faculty discussion of the WAC program and its outcomes. The WAC program should also consider commissioning an external review for the program, which might help the College move toward a viable assessment plan.

Lack of Technology Support: Given the technical expertise and time required to maintain and/ or upgrade the WAC web site, support from GTS is essential. Another important concern regarding technology services is the increasing number of students at Gustavus with special writing and learning needs. Support from GTS in identifying and purchasing appropriate assistive technologies and software will ensure that the needs of students with atypical writing needs are met.

Uneven Participation: Some departments contribute regularly to the program, offering multiple sections of FTS each fall, and/ or 3 or more sections of WRITI or WRITD courses annually. Other departments offer only a single WAC course annually; still others choose not to contribute at all. (See Appendix A, attached.) This affects the morale of participating faculty and leads students to misunderstand or misjudge the lack of attention paid to writing instruction in some departments.

Imbalance of WRITI/ WRITD Offerings: FTS is by far the most important source of WRITI credit (34-36 sections annually). Beyond FTS, however, few WRITI courses are offered. Last year, for instance, WRITI courses were offered by only 11 departments, while WRITD courses were offered by 23 departments. Data included in Appendix A suggest a decline in sections of both WRITI and WRITD courses over the last two years. A better understanding of the reasons for this trend, and consideration of ways to support departmental participation in the Writing Program are essential. In fact, departments seem far more likely to participate in the WRITD part of the program, which may demonstrate a higher level of faculty confidence with disciplinary discourse rather than the “general” rhetorical principles.

Inconsistency in WRITI and WRITD Focus and Assignments: During focus group discussions, a number of faculty raised concerns regarding a perceived gap between the efficacy of WRITI and WRITD courses. They suggested that students seemed largely unprepared for the writing and research tasks associated with WRITD courses taught at the 300 level. Related to this issue is the paucity of writing courses offered at the 200 level across the curriculum. The WAC program, curriculum committee, and Gustavus administrators should find ways to encourage more teachers to propose WRITI courses at the 200 level.

Inadequate Training in the Teaching of Writing: Faculty members who teach WRITI and WRITD courses often request more training and support than the FTS summer orientation or “Teachers Talking” lunch discussions can provide. The program needs a regular slate of weeklong summer workshops, as well as more regular opportunities for WAC faculty to meet and discuss their teaching and assessment practices. This is particularly important for those who teach WRITI and WRITD courses but do not teach FTS. Essentially, those faculty members receive no formal training regarding the teaching of writing unless they choose to attend a workshop or seminar. Finally, projected changes in the linguistic and cultural diversity of our student population will require us to focus attention on how to teach and assess writing across multiple cultural contexts.

2.1.1.3 Writing Center Strengths

Scheduling and Appointments: The web-based WOnline program makes it easy to schedule appointments. Walk-ins are also available at convenient times. Satellite locations like the Diversity Center make access possible for all students, as do special visits to dormitories and outreach efforts and workshops. Faculty and students report that the WC web page is easy to use and visible, and advertising efforts seem to reach most students on campus.

Faculty Support: Faculty typically report feeling comfortable and secure sending their students to the tutors, and they perceive tutors as well-trained and helpful. Faculty appreciate tutors from all majors across campus, and they occasionally participate in Writing Center training about specialized disciplinary discourses (i.e. Writing in the Sciences). The Designated Tutor program is supported by many teachers, as is the “good pedagogy” of putting experienced writers with beginning writers in a collaborative relationship.

Student Usage: The WC conducts 750-900 tutorials annually with 300-325 distinct “clients.” The vast majority of students who visit the WC do so multiple times. The Designated Tutor program helps ensure that FTS students visit often. First year students experience a steep learning curve regarding the conventions of academic writing at the college level. Client surveys suggest a high level of satisfaction.

Tutor Training and Professional Development: All WC tutors undergo pre-service training before they work. Tutors then receive ongoing training and professional development support via weekly staff meetings, a full syllabus of readings, observation and evaluation reports, and other opportunities. Some tutors participate in regional and/or national conferences on Peer Tutoring, and all have access to paper and/or electronic copies of *Writing Center Journal* and *Writing Lab Newsletter*. The WC maintains institutional membership in the International Writing Centers Association and Midwest Writing Centers Association. A tutor training course has also been proposed for 2009-2010.

Support for Diverse Learners: The WC currently houses the College’s E.L.L. Tutoring Specialist, Katy Young (see 1.2.2.). The WC staff is committed to supporting culturally and linguistically diverse learners, as well as those who have disabilities affecting written processing of information. Thus the WC works closely with the Diversity Center, and all WC staff members visit the D-center and/or offer tutorials in that space. WC staff members also participate in various efforts to develop their cultural competency; for example, in 2008, the Diversity Center made it possible for all tutors to take the Intercultural Development Inventory. Virgil Jones then attended a half-day retreat for the tutors, explaining the scores and leading us in discussion. Finally, the Special Needs tutoring team works closely with Laurie Bickett (Disability Services), attempting to ensure that students with written language-related disabilities can maintain ongoing appointments with tutors who know them well and understand their needs. (Note that

they are not always able to do this work. See “Challenges,” below.)

Community Building: Writing Center tutors report that membership on staff contributes to their sense of community at Gustavus, and students who use the WC report that the environment is welcoming and appropriate given the mission of the College. The FTS program and WC in particular have begun to build a community of writers.

2.1.1.4 Writing Center Challenges, Barriers, and Opportunities

Attracting and Retaining Diverse Students: The College is now poised to recruit and educate an increasingly diverse pool of students. Given our mission, as well as the College’s Strategic Plan’s emphasis on educating immigrant populations and preparing students for global and citizenship, leadership, and service, Gustavus needs not only to recruit such students but to support, retain, nurture, and challenge them as well. Studies clearly demonstrate a positive correlation between mentoring programs, peer tutoring / support programs, and retention of underrepresented students. The Writing Center should seek to make permanent its E.L.L. tutoring specialist position, perhaps even expanding it to include other responsibilities: outreach to local immigrant populations, communication with parents of students from underrepresented groups, or other options.

Staff Diversity and Cultural Competency: The Writing Center needs to recruit an increasingly diverse staff of tutors, particularly tutors who are members of underrepresented student populations. The Center also needs to prepare those tutors who are white and/ or monolingual to work well with those whose cultural or linguistic backgrounds differ from their own.

Tutor Scheduling: Tutors are paid whether or not they have clients/ appointments at any given hour. There are some weeks of the year where tutors only actually consult with writers during 40% -50% of the hours for which they are paid. While the WC wishes to offer students both day and evening hours for their appointments, the WC may need to radically reduce the number of tutoring hours available (and the number of tutors). Likewise, there are far fewer tutorials conducted each spring than each fall. The WC needs to adjust its hiring/ scheduling for that discrepancy.

Budget: The WC shares its budget with WAC; \$2,275.00 barely covers the basic expenses of the WC annually. The WC needs its own budget and budget officer. Moreover, lack of funding means that there is no secretarial support for the WC; Fremo has created student leader positions to handle much of this work whenever possible.

Tutor Compensation: The tutors at the Writing Center are paid \$6.65 per hour, which is less than students who work for Dining Services and Custodial Services. They are also paid less than most peer tutors nationally. This makes it difficult to attract and retain the best students for these positions. The WC needs other ways to compensate tutors for their work.

Tech Support and Facilities: The Writing Center must outsource its software for \$715.00

annually. The WC also receives only used or recycled computers from GTS, and lacks access to the kind of software (i.e. voice-recognition) that would make writing easier for students with disabilities. Moreover, the WC facilities themselves are often inappropriate for the tasks at hand. The WC is really an old computer lab; thus tutorials must take place in the center of the room at a table where students have no privacy. Some tutors simply take their clients outside the WC and tutor them in the Confer/ Vickner hallways or other common spaces in the building. The room needs to be reconfigured, preferably with attached office space for the E.L.L. tutoring specialist.

Leadership: Fremo has been the WC director since 2000; she is replaced only for sabbatical periods. The WC needs to be infused with creative and innovative ideas. Having a single director (and no assistant director) means that there are few opportunities for Fremo to experiment, collaborate, or otherwise benefit from another WC professional's input. Additional leadership models should be investigated. For instance, the College could have two Writing Specialists on campus, and these people could co-direct the WAC program and Writing Center, rotating as needed.

Training: Tutors need more than a pre-semester workshop in order to further develop their rhetorical and grammatical vocabulary, critical reading skills, interpersonal communication skills, and pedagogical techniques. A full credit course each fall should be required for all tutors, as well as continuing staff meetings each spring. Likewise, tutors might be more fully integrated into the FTS classes, and faculty members in the sciences report that they would benefit from better connections between the Writing Center and science courses. This would require additional training, particularly for those tutors who major in Humanities based disciplines.

Support for Students with Disabilities: Tutors are not adequately trained to work with students who have written processing disabilities. Either tutors need to be trained (and compensated for this training) by Academic Advising, or the College needs to hire somebody to do this work.

2.2 Writing Program (WAC and WC) External Challenges and Opportunities

Programmatic Trends: Nationally, the WAC movement has run its course at small colleges, making WAC a staple rather than an innovation. Once WAC is a regular part of what "most good colleges do," it's time to consider ways to do that work with excellence and innovation. Current best practices in Writing Centers, for instance, favor a "Writing Fellows" model that assigns a strong cohort of tutors to first term seminar sections. But this model may not be feasible at Gustavus. We need to investigate other innovative practices, and the Teagle consortium of colleges may be a logical place to turn for new ideas.

Assessment Trends: Many excellent small colleges have instituted portfolio requirements or other cross-campus assessment opportunities, which enable faculty from across the disciplines to read and assess student writing together. Our WAC and WC directors need to find ways to attend more national conferences, learn about such innovations, and bring

that information back to the campus. Teagle and Wabash data analysis should feed into this project.

Student Support Centers: Academic Support Centers centralize tutoring efforts across the disciplines, providing space for mentoring programs, tutoring programs, adaptive technology for students with disabilities, and other resources. Such centers are staffed by professionals (who hold Ph.D. or MS/ MA degrees) who train tutors and coordinate programs. These centers exist in centrally located spaces, near or within libraries and student unions. They enable collaborative and interdisciplinary work for faculty, staff, and students. Such a model might be useful for us to investigate. The Gustavus WC tutors are often overwhelmed by the process of tutoring students with learning disabilities; they lack the knowledge and the support to do this work well.

Digital Media and Visual Rhetorics: Current trends in the field of Rhetoric and Composition lean heavily in this direction. As we seek to prepare students to communicate in a media-savvy and technologically sophisticated culture, we must prepare them to read and write in the forms of the future, not only those of the past. Our WAC program might consider ways to integrate digital media or visual rhetorics into its requirements, or we might investigate ways to offer a particular suite of courses (appropriate for various disciplines, or specific to one division or another) that get students reading and writing in electronic and/ or digitally enhanced media.

Global and Intercultural Communication: Our current political and international situations speak to the vital importance of producing college graduates who can read, write, speak, and think in culturally sensitive, sophisticated ways. Rhetorical practices differ when cultural context shifts. What should teachers of writing know about the “conventions” that seem so natural to us? How do we prepare our students to work for or lead corporations in a global economy? What do our faculty members need to know in order to read and assess the work of linguistically diverse writers? Our WAC program and Writing Center must consider these questions.

Community Involvement: Growing immigrant communities in our area, such as the Latino/a and Somali communities, might benefit from extended contact with Writing Center tutors or other writers on campus. How might the Writing Center reach out to the community? Could tutors help immigrant students as they draft their college entrance essays? Could they help immigrant students and parents as they write resumes and cover letters? Likewise, what could the Writing Program do for / with local high school students and teachers? What partnerships could emerge?

Section 3 Strategic Initiatives and Recommendations

3.1 WAC Initiatives and Recommendations

Goal 1: Develop rhetorical competency.

- Explore a portfolio assessment project that helps us learn if, in fact, that competency has been achieved. Include faculty from across the disciplines; hold norming sessions to teach them to read and assess portfolios.
- Use Teagle data and Wabash data in order to assess the efficacy of our Writing Program. David Menk and/ or Deans might conduct conversations with faculty to review the data, and the WAC director could then develop initiatives to address the results.
- Hire WAC director whose areas of expertise include WAC, Writing Program Administration, Assessment, Scientific and Technical Communication, and/ or Writing Centers.
- Increase faculty development opportunities for teachers of WRITI and WRITD beyond the confines of FTS training. Hold workshops during the summer and compensate faculty accordingly.
- Develop new WRITI courses, particularly at the 200 level. Consider grants like RSC model to encourage and reward faculty who develop such courses.
- Create a required independent writing project or portfolio option for second- or third-year students. Consider linking the portfolio to the IEX term.
- Administration should commit to a lower cap (16) on WRITI and WRITD courses and enable/ enforce those caps by encouraging and rewarding departments for their participation in General Education programs like WAC.

Goal 2: Foster creativity and self expression.

- Collaborate with English department as it develops Visiting Writers Series; link that series to Craft Talks conducted at the Writing Center to encourage students who are creative writers.
- Sponsor a college-wide writing competition that includes creative and critical writing, as well as digital/ new media entries. Endow that competition.

Goal 3: Teach argumentation and critical thinking.

- Recommendation: Kendall Center could sponsor a workshop focused on teaching argumentation and critical thinking; include a session focused on writing instruction.
- Suggest that FTS Advisory Board revise WRITI and FTS language to include more explicit attention to argumentation.
- Create a repository of argumentative assignments and evaluative rubrics and make it available via the WAC web site.

Goal 6: Negotiate meaning with diverse audiences.

- Create full-time position for E.L.L. Tutoring and Support Specialist. This person can help faculty members develop assignments and activities to promote cultural competence. We might also link this position to another area of the College (i.e. outreach for Admission Office—ELL Tutoring Specialist might spend ½ time in

- the local Hmong, Somali, and/ or Hispanic communities recruiting students and meeting with parents).
- Kendall Center could sponsor a workshop for WRITI and WRITD teachers focused on oral and written communication for diverse students.
 - Create WRITI courses focused on writing for diverse audiences and/ or writing in diverse cultural contexts.

Goal 7: Create support mechanisms.

- Create academic support center that includes Writing Center under its umbrella; centralize tutoring services for students across the curriculum.
- Work closely with Kendall Center to develop more intentional workshops for WRITI and WRITD teachers who did not go through FTS training.
- Review results of Teagle and Wabash Studies with department Chairs and both directors (WC and WAC). Use that data to begin conversations about increasing departmental participation, particularly in courses at Level Two.

3.2 Writing Center Initiatives and Recommendations

Goal 4: Help writers improve their rhetorical and stylistic skills.

- Develop a full credit training course for tutors. Introduce rhetorical theory and contemporary theories of composing and revising prose.
- Develop staff meeting sessions devoted to stylistic and mechanical issues to improve tutors' ways of talking about style.

Goal 5: Model invention, revision and self-editing skills that can transcend disciplinary boundaries.

- Create more opportunities for faculty across the disciplines to meet with tutors and/ or for tutors to study writing across the disciplines.
- Create a storehouse of examples of disciplinary discourse. Make available via the WC web pages.

Goal 6: Support an increasingly diverse student body at Gustavus, including those who are multilingual or speak and write English as their second language.

- Recommendation for administration: Make the ELL tutoring position permanent; reconfigure as ELL and Multilingual Academic Support. Make this position full time by adding community and/or parental outreach to the tutoring component. Allow the ELL specialist to connect with the parents of immigrant students, or local teachers, etc.
- Hire more tutors who are multilingual or international students themselves. Recruit students of color to work at the Writing Center.

Goal 7: Assist writers who may have trouble with written processing skills, including those with learning disabilities.

- Create a half-time tutoring position for a specialist (masters degree level) who focuses on written processing disorders.

Section 4 Assessment

Rather than offer a lengthy list of assessments for each of the goals stated above, the directors of WAC and WC recommend instead committing to a variety of assessment tools that can, in turn, be used to evaluate our program globally.

- 4.1 Commission an external review of the Writing Program (both WAC and WC). That external review would most certainly point us toward more fruitful directions for faculty development and internal programmatic assessment.
- 4.2 Charge Curriculum Committee with an internal review of the Writing Program. Use this as an opportunity to chart departmental participation in the program and present resulting data to the Provost.
- 4.3 Review Teagle and Wabash data with WAC and WC directors. Utilize that data in order to create faculty development opportunities for teachers of WRITI and WRITD courses.
- 4.4 Hire full time Director for the Writing Program to oversee both WAC and the Writing Center. This Director might teach 1-1 with two releases in the fall and two in the spring. This release time would enable the Director to focus attention on creating appropriate assessment projects, completing those projects, and sharing the outcomes with faculty and administrators.
- 4.5 Conduct portfolio assessment project at three points in the curriculum: 1) upon completion of FTS; 2) end of sophomore year; 3) upon completion of capstone or other writing intensive course in the final year of the major. This will help us understand program outcomes.
- 4.6 Look annually at data from the registrar's office in order to track departmental participation in WAC and to trace the number of students who have difficulty meeting the three course writing requirement at Gustavus.
- 4.7 Ask annually for feedback from all teachers of WRITI and WRITD courses regarding the level of support they've received and the topics they'd like to cover during future faculty development workshops.
- 4.8 Ask annually for feedback from students regarding their perceptions of their own writing abilities. Compare that with portfolio outcomes.

APPENDIX A
WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM
Data Analysis from Registrar

WRITI and WRITD COURSES-Number of Sections by Academic Dept.

DEPARTMENT	FALL 2007		SPRING 2008		FALL 2008		SPRING 2009	
	WRITD	WRITI	WRITD	WRITI	WRITD	WRITI	WRITD	WRITI
ART	1	0	3	0	1	0	3	0
BIO	4	0	3	0	5	0	1	0
CHE	1	0	3	0	1	0	2	0
CLA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
COM	4	0	4	1	4	2	4	1
CUR	0	5	2	1	1	5	2	1
E/M	6	0	5	0	6	0	4	0
EDU	4	0	6	0	6	0	6	0
ENG	7	0	6	2	4	1	3	1
ENV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FRE	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
FTS	0	39	0	1	0	37	0	1
GEG	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
GEO	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
GER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRE	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
GWS	2	0	0	1	0	2	0	1
HES	3	0	2	0	4	0	3	0
HIS	3	0	2	0	2	0	3	0
IDS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
JPN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LAT	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
MCS	3	0	2	0	3	0	1	0
MUS	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
NDL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NUR	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
PCS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PHI	0	3	2	4	1	3	1	3
PHY	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
POL	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	0
PSY	3	0	2	0	3	0	3	0
REL	6	0	3	0	2	0	2	1
DEPARTMENT	FALL 2007		SPRING 2008		FALL 2008		SPRING 2009	
	WRITD	WRITI	WRITD	WRITI	WRITD	WRITI	WRITD	WRITI
RUS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S/A	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
SCA	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
SPA	4	0	3	2	1	2	2	2
SWE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
T/D	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Sub-Totals	58	49* / 10	56	13	52	54* / 17	48	13

*FTS included

APPENDIX B

NUMBER OF STUDENTS COMPLETING MORE THAN THREE WRITING COURSES

(DATA SHARED BY KRISTI REINHOLTZEN, REGISTRAR)

*Data is based on students who have an anticipated graduation date of May 2009.

Number of WRIT Courses Completed	Number of Students Who Completed WRIT Courses
1	106 (About 30 will use transfer courses to complete the 3 course requirement; the remainder are no longer enrolled at GAC.)
2	91 (About 2/3 will use transfer courses to complete the 3 course requirement; the remainder are no longer enrolled at GAC.)
3	200
4	132
5	96
6	52
7	33
8	15
9	17
10	3
11	3
12	2
13	0
14	2
15	2

*357 students will complete more than the required three courses.

**Waiting for additional data from AIS to further break down these data by major.