

## Proposed Revision to University Writing Council Charge in PSU Faculty Constitution

Introduced to Faculty Senate 1 May 2023

BASED ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY WRITING COUNCIL, THE UNDERSIGNED FACULTY SENATORS ENDORSE THE FOLLOWING AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY FACULTY:

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### **ARTICLE IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE FACULTY**

#### **4) Standing Committees and Their Functions**

##### **q) University Writing Council**

This Committee shall consist of eight Faculty members, including not more than four from the College of Liberal Arts and Science, and including representatives from the Library and Intensive English Language Program; four voting ex-officio members (or their designees): the Director of Composition, the University Studies Writing Coordinator, the Director of the Honors College, and the Director of the Writing Center; and a student member. Members will serve for two-year terms, with the possibility of continuing. The Committee shall:

1. Oversee, assess, and make recommendations regarding writing curricula across campus, including the University Writing Requirement and Writing-Intensive Courses.
2. Establish guidelines for, evaluate, and recommend approval of courses that fulfill the University Writing Requirement and Writing-Intensive Courses, in accordance with disciplinary best practices, student needs, and Oregon legislation.
3. Review, at its own initiative or at the request of appropriate individuals or faculty committees, campus-wide writing resources, practices, and support for students, and suggest needed changes to the appropriate administrators or faculty committees.
4. Consult with the Registrar to approve transfer articulations and evaluate ARC petitions relevant to the University Writing Requirement.
5. Recommend suitable policies and standards for writing pedagogy and curricula to the Faculty Senate, its appropriate committees, and relevant administrative officers.
6. Recommend suitable policies and standards for University-level investments and initiatives pertaining to writing to the Provost and President.
7. Act in consultation with appropriate Faculty Senate committees.
8. Report at least once a year to the Senate, outlining committee activities.

## Background and Rationale

This revision of the UWC charge clarifies oversight of the University Writing Requirement (including Writing Intensive Courses) and promotes collaboration across units that shape writing curricula and instruction at PSU. The University Writing Committee operated on an ad hoc basis for many years before officially becoming a Faculty Senate Committee in 2014, following the Writing Intensive Course (WIC) program's defunding during the summer of 2013 without consultation with Faculty Senate. The UWC was formalized to ensure collaborative, informed decision-making about writing across campus.

The UWC has since become an important nexus within PSU's decentralized writing ecology. Nevertheless, despite multiple external reviews and action plans calling for investment in Writing Across the Curriculum, responsibility for writing curricula and assessment remains unevenly distributed across/within units. As a result, there is no shared vision for the [University Writing Requirement](#), which is often confusing for students and advisors; the [Writing Intensive Course](#) designation has become outdated and underutilized.

Given the high stakes of written communication in students' academic, professional, personal, and public lives—including transfer articulation of Writing courses—PSU should articulate and uphold high standards for writing pedagogy across campus. At this moment of declining enrollment, students' writing knowledge and skills should be understood as central to retention and future success.

The UWC ultimately bears the responsibility for ensuring the quality of writing instruction at PSU. This amendment clarifies the UWC's authority over writing across the curriculum, in consultation with Composition, University Studies, the Honors College, and other stakeholders. This amendment to the Senate's charge is designed to support those efforts in a spirit of shared governance.

Roster updates include an ex-officio role for the Director of the Honors College, one of three units (along with English and University Studies) that house General Education writing, and representation from the Library as central to writing across the curriculum.

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Per Article VIII, this proposed constitutional amendment is endorsed by the following Faculty Senators:

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|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Matt Chorpenning (SSW)     | 9. Isabel Jaén Portillo (CLAS-AL) |
| 2. Michael Clark (CLAS-AL)    | 10. Jennifer Perlmutter (CLAS-AL) |
| 3. Enrique Cortez (CLAS-AL)   | 11. Nadine Phoenix (CLAS-Sci)     |
| 4. Esperanza De La Vega (COE) | 12. Sonja Taylor (OI)             |
| 5. Jill Emery (LIB)           | 13. Rachel Webb (CLAS-Sci)        |
| 6. Tim Finn (SB)              | 14. Chien Wern (MCES)             |
| 7. Sybil Kelley (COE)         | 15. Lindsey Wilkinson (CLAS-SS)   |
| 8. Jason Newsom (CLAS-SS)     |                                   |

*Procedural note: Proposed constitutional amendments are introduced to Faculty Senate for discussion, and are subject to modification (amendments to the amendment) by majority vote. Once a final proposed text has been decided, it is communicated to Advisory Council for review as to "proper form and numbering." It then appears for a vote at the next regular (first Monday) Faculty Senate meeting. A two-thirds majority is required for passage.*

## Appendix: Existing UWC charge in [Faculty Constitution](#)

This Committee shall consist of eight Faculty members, including not more than four from the College of Liberal Arts and Science, and including a representative from the Intensive English Language Program; three voting ex-officio members: the Director of Rhetoric and Composition, the University Studies Writing Coordinator, and the Director of the Writing Center; and a student member. Members will serve for two-year terms, with the possibility of continuing. The Committee shall:

1. Make recommendations to Provost and other administrators on such matters as writing placement, guidelines, and staffing for teaching writing in University Studies, writing-intensive courses, and composition courses.
2. Offer recommendations for improving writing instruction across the university.
3. Initiate assessment of the teaching and learning of writing at PSU.
4. Support training of faculty, mentors, and WIC Assistants teaching writing.
5. Advise on budgeting writing instruction.
6. Act in liaison with appropriate committees.
7. Report at least once a year to the Senate, outlining committee activities.