Furthering the Writing Action Plan: Where the University Could Invest Over the Next Three Years (12/1/2017)

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At this point the UWC has already either done or has underway much of what the plan stipulated: We have revised the PSU mission statement to include writing; UNST has developed writing outcomes and is assessing FRINQ and SINQ student writing on a regular basis; English is offering more online and hybrid courses and has begun revising the University Writing Requirement; IELP has developed a variety of bridge opportunities; and the committee is offering several yearly workshops for students and faculty. However, with investments from the university, we can do more.

Writing across the Curriculum Director and New Unit:

This new position and unit is key to disseminating responsibility for writing throughout all the departments in the university. In the Action Plan, this hire was slated for 2017-18. Clearly, the current budgetary situation has set this timeline back. If we assume that this hire might not be feasible for three or four years, the following Action Plan items are ones that the University might invest in until that key hire.

Writing Center:

According to the Action Plan, the writing center budget was to be increased during 2017-18. However, that did not occur, so, currently, the center is running on the budget of 2013, even though it is now holding over 6,000 sessions with students and having to turn away over 1500+ students annually. An investment of $20,000 for each of three years—2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21—would enable it to better meet demand by holding needed sessions and reducing the turnaway number.

University Studies:

Multilingual FRINQ (MFL) and SINQ (MSL) Labs and Other Two-Credit Support Courses: Student demand has been so great that the MFL has been consistently full or over-enrolled, even with two sections in winter and spring. Many faculty have been asking for a Multilingual SINQ Lab, so one is being piloted this winter. The unit is also exploring other 2-credit support courses following this same model—successful at other institutions—that can provide additional support by allowing students to work with the same materials they are using in FRINQ and SINQ. Investments over a three-year period could further the development of these labs, critical because writing problems in the first year negatively affect student success and retention.

Reduce FRINQ Class Sizes: FRINQ class sizes have always been far too large compared to the recommended size for writing intensive courses. The Action Plan is committed to
lowering this class size, if only gradually as finances allow. An investment over the next three years can begin this reduction process.

IELP

**Support the UNST & IELP Collaboration in Multilingual FRINQ (MFL) and SINQ (MSL) Labs:** Currently, UNST buys out an IELP faculty member (.33 F, W, Sp) to teach the Multilingual FRINQ Lab and to provide training and support for UNST mentors and FRINQ faculty working with multilingual students. Winter 2018, this collaboration is expanding to offer a Multilingual SINQ Lab. PSU could invest in these efforts and its expansion over the next three years.

**Support and Expand the Role of the Writing Center ESL specialist:** Currently, IELP supplies an ESL specialist for the university Writing Center (.33 F, W, Sp). This is an important position because we know that the majority of students seeking help are multilingual students. The university, rather than just IELP, could increase this position’s FTE, thereby allowing not only more support of students in the writing center, but also outreach and support to departments trying to meet the needs of multilingual writers.

**Support English Department and IELP Collaboration:** Current IELP courses can be strategically integrated with composition courses in English. We know especially that writing courses aimed specifically at multilingual students and taught by IELP faculty are quite successful in meeting student need. Next year English and IELP would like to pilot two WR 323 courses for Multilingual Students. A university investment here over the next three years could make this and other such courses possible.

**General Writing Placement and Assessment of Multilingual Writers:** The university needs to invest long term in a sustainable system for placing students into writing courses, University Studies courses, and/or support programming. This year a UWC subcommittee will get this process underway by exploring options.

But, beyond placement, we need to revise the language proficiency requirements for multilingual students, both incoming freshman and transfer students. PSU’s language proficiency requirement for international students is set too low. Students who meet the minimum proficiency requirement often do not have the reading and writing skills needed to fully engage in their coursework. Nor do we have a language proficiency requirement for multilingual domestic students. As these processes of exploring both writing placement in general and the assessment of multilingual Writers, in particular, proceed over the next three years, investments here can further the process.