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TO: ECSU Community

FROM: LAPC Communications Working Group: Rita Malenczyk (English, University Writing Program director, committee chair), Elizabeth Cowles (Biology), Denise Matthews (Communication), Agustin Bernal (Modern Languages), June Bisantz-Evans (Visual Arts), Andrew Utterback (Communication, LAPC liaison)

RE: Proposed Communication Outcomes for new Liberal Arts Core

As you probably know, our group has been charged with articulating communication outcomes—visual, oral, as well as written—for each of the three tiers of the new Liberal Arts core. Part of our charge is to come up not only with outcomes but with suggested assignments that might fulfill these outcomes. Below are the initial results of our discussions. So far we have only discussed Tiers I and II; we plan to tackle Tier III in Fall 2006.

It's important to note that what we propose below are guidelines, and that not all Tier I courses need to incorporate all the possible assignments or modes listed below. The communications working group, along with the University Writing Program director, is willing to provide training and workshops for faculty unfamiliar with the types of assignments listed below.

### *Tier I*

First of all, it's important to note that ENG 100 and 100P, College Writing and College Writing Plus, are part of Tier I, and include a set of outcomes which the English Department uses to evaluate (through required portfolios) students completing the course. Those outcomes, which focus on written communication, state that students completing ENG 100 or 100P should be able to:

- Write essays in several genres that are sufficiently focused, clearly and logically organized, and fully developed so they communicate ideas clearly to their intended audiences;
- Use various kinds of evidence and reasoning to support their judgments;
- Locate, evaluate, synthesize, and appropriately document various kinds of information gleaned from research;
- Analyze texts or concepts;

- Effectively analyze the strengths and weaknesses of their own writing;
- Adequately edit their writing according to the conventions of standard written English.

Assignments typically given in ENG 100/100P to fulfill these outcomes include research papers, reviews, analyses, arguments, and other assignments requiring non-traditional types of research such as profiles and proposals. Most faculty also give informal writing assignments such as brief response papers; often, too, students critique their papers in peer response groups, which helps them to form and articulate judgments about their own and others' written work.

However, the LAPC expects courses proposed for the new core to also include communication (written, oral, visual) outcomes, and to be consistent with the goals of Tier I, which is a level at which students become familiar with the methods of a discipline and, importantly, “engage curricular material...actively, and when possible, experientially....Tier I courses will hold as a central learning objective the development of critical and analytical modes of thinking, and will provide ample opportunities for students to communicate and demonstrate their acquisition of material and ideas.”

In keeping with those goals, then, we propose a set of communication assignments appropriate for Tier I courses that require students to:

- Explore ideas in writing and discussion
- Effectively present ideas and in multiple modes (oral, visual, written)

Some types of assignments appropriate for this tier:

*Written assignments:*

- Research papers appropriate to the discipline (5-7 pages)
- Writing-to-learn (or informal) writing assignments such as:
  - response papers
  - in-class summaries
  - discussion starters
  - learning logs
  - “believing and doubting” exercises
  - journals
- Creative/exploratory writing assignments related to disciplinary content (“poetry across the curriculum”)

*Oral communication assignments:*

- Peer review of written work
- Guided small group discussion
- Reading and/or presenting work out loud

- Large group discussion

*Visual communication assignments:*

- Visual aids for oral presentations
- Creative/exploratory visual assignments related to disciplinary content (“drawing across the curriculum”)
- Assignments that teach students basic guidelines for, techniques, and principles of good visual communication

Faculty might also think about giving types of assignments—e.g., playacting—that incorporate all three modes.

Also, as in all courses, principles of academic integrity should be discussed.

*Tier II*

In this tier, students begin to “apply concepts and principles to new and more advanced sets of problems and contexts.” In keeping with this goal, then, we propose a set of assignments that require students to:

- Apply the principles of effective communication learned in Tier I
- Develop techniques to present and analyze information within a particular discipline
- Develop fluency within a discipline’s culture
- Develop the ability to express oneself creatively
- Give and receive oral and written feedback and constructive critique
- Continue to develop awareness of audience
- Assist in understanding the impact of rhetoric—visual, oral, and written—in public life

Suggested assignments:

*Written:*

- Disciplinary genres—e.g., Lab reports, literary criticism, scripts, press releases, artist’s statements

- Creative writing: fiction, poetry, drama

*Oral:*

- Debate
- Delivery
- Presentations for a disciplinary audience
- Small and large group discussion

*Visual:*

- Posters
- Visuals used in context
- Large and small group presentation
- Assignments that analyze visuals

NOTE: Any of the suggested writing-to-learn assignments can also be used in this tier.