

Chapter 5: Program Initiatives to Improve Performance -- English Department

“How do you propose improving future performance?”

**When proposing an initiative(s), use the following structure for each initiative proposed:*

1) Initiative Title: New English faculty/Writing Center Director

Initiative Description: A joint initiative with the Tutoring Center: New faculty position: full-time, contracted English instructor to develop the Writing Center and act as a resource for faculty teaching writing in all disciplines at Lane.

Why do it? Currently, the English Department makes use of a part-time tutor coordinator (15 hours/week) paid through student fee money. During her 15 hours/week, this person must train tutors, recruit, schedule, select and support tutors. Her minimal schedule results in a fragmentation of service and a lack of continuity. In 02-03, the Writing Center served over 1000 students from multiple disciplines; clearly a timesheet worker is inadequate for these important responsibilities. For the past four years, the Writing Center has had no faculty assigned to oversee and direct its operations.

Product: Having a faculty member responsible for Lane's Writing Center would support the college's emphasis on developing students' Core Abilities: communicate effectively; think critically and solve problems effectively; increase understanding of the relationship between self and community; explore academic disciplines. The new faculty member will teach classes through the English Department each year, but his or her main responsibility will be to provide ongoing tutor training, provide assistance to all faculty in the area of writing across the curriculum, tutor students, and improve student access. This position will benefit all students, not just those currently enrolled in writing courses.

Need: Lane's Writing Center should be an academically up-to-date, accessible and adequately staffed place for students to receive help with their writing and critical thinking skills. The English Department intends to work with the Central Tutoring Coordinator to tailor the Writing Center to meet fully the tutoring needs of all writers on Lane's campus.

Feasibility: Throughout the 1990's, the Writing Center had a faculty director, but the position was eliminated in earlier budget cuts.

Campus location: Tutoring Center/English Department

How many students (per year) will benefit? Over 1000 students were served on 02-03. Many more students will benefit when services improve.

How will students benefit? Development of writing and critical thinking skills essential to student success

Resources needed: faculty salary

Funding sources: general fund or foundation endowment

Can this project be partially funded? No

ORG: 651001

PROG: 111000

How does this project articulate with the college's vision, mission & goals and contribute toward meeting the President's/Board's approved goals? All professional technical and college transfer students must take writing classes, and writing in all disciplines is both foundational for academic development and significant in lifelong personal enrichment. Indeed, writing instructors and tutors see every day that student lives are transformed through their writing experiences. A viable Writing Center will create improved opportunities for students, faculty, and tutors to do their best work.

2) Initiative Title: Instructional Specialist for Writing Center

Initiative Description: A joint initiative with the Tutoring Center: In addition to the need for a faculty member with appropriate experience to oversee the tutoring center and writing across the curriculum at Lane, the writing center has staffing needs that would be best served by an instructional specialist.

Why do it? Currently, the English Department makes use of a part-time coordinator (15 hours/week) paid for through student fee money. During her 15 hours/week, this person must train tutors, recruit, schedule, select and support tutors. Her minimal schedule results in a fragmentation of service and a lack of continuity. In 02-03, the Writing Center served over 1000 students from multiple disciplines; clearly a timesheet worker paid as a kind of "super-tutor" is inadequate for these important responsibilities. Lane's Writing Center needs an instructional specialist to perform this work as well as the additional work needed for a consistently well-run writing center..

Product: The instructional specialist would perform essential work to facilitate the efficient running of the Writing Center: he/she would coordinate scheduling of tutors, work with faculty to communicate curricular needs to the tutors, keep an up-to-date catalog of courses being taught, help maintain the handout libraries, etc. This person would develop or acquire tutor training materials with the state-wide composition outcomes in mind. He or she would attend English department meetings; would promote the Writing Center across campus; would create and revise student resources as needed; would coordinate the development and maintenance of the Writing Center homepage; would provide tutoring as needed. The instructional specialist would also work as the support person for the English unit's initiative on assessment (priority #5). The assessment project calls for English faculty to read and score portfolios; the instructional specialist would take responsibility for maintaining the database and provide continuity and a centralized place for the longitudinal study.

Need: Lane's Writing Center should be an academically up-to-date, accessible and adequately staffed resource for students.

Feasibility: The College already supports other similar positions. For the past year, the English department has been working with the Central Tutoring Coordinator to upgrade services by tailoring the Writing Center to meet fully the tutoring needs of all writers on Lane's campus.

Campus location: Tutoring Center

How many students (per year) will benefit? Over 1000 students were served on 02-03. Many more students will benefit when services improve.

How will students benefit? Students will be clear benefactors of a well-organized, accessible, and adequately staffed Writing Center. The Writing Center supports the college's emphasis on developing students' Core Abilities: communicate effectively; think critically and solve problems effectively; increase understanding of the relationship

between self and community; explore academic disciplines.

Resources needed: Instructional Specialists' salary

Funding sources: general fund

Can this project be partially funded? Yes

Minimum: .75 FTE

ORG: 651001

PROG: 111000

How does this project articulate with the college's vision, mission & goals and contribute toward meeting the President's/Board's approved goals? All professional-technical and college-transfer students must take writing classes, and writing in all disciplines is both foundational for academic development and significant in lifelong personal enrichment. Indeed, writing instructors and tutors see every day that student lives are transformed through their writing experiences. A viable and well-organized Writing Center will create improved opportunities for students, faculty, and tutors to do their best work developing the writing and critical thinking skills essential to student success and personal enrichment.

3)Initiative Title: Learning-centered work day for all English faculty

Initiative Description: In order to enhance the learning-centered environment essential to student success in English classes and to support and encourage one another's innovation, the English Department faculty propose to dedicate a work day to teaching learning-centered pedagogy to one another in a series of workshops, seminars, and demonstrations.

Why do it? Faculty of the English Department eagerly pursue and practice innovative de-centered pedagogies, but do much of this work individually because the teaching workload is heavy and the English schedule is spread throughout the workday, from 7:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. Faculty seek an organized opportunity to share best practices with colleagues in their discipline by means of a day-long series of workshops, seminars, and demonstrations.

Product: The curriculum of the English department is deeply infused with issues of difference, power, and privilege. A day of pedagogical workshops focused on the de-centered classroom would explore how issues of power, privilege, and difference exist both in the content of English courses and in the dynamics of the classroom, between instructor and students and between the students themselves; such examination would further deepen the English faculty's strong commitment to fostering respect, fairness, honesty, and openness in the classroom. Included in the day's commitment will be the establishment of a process to create an equivalent opportunity the following year. The faculty goal is to make this an annual event.

Intended Use: Dedicated workshop day, faculty-led

Campus location: classrooms and conference rooms

How many students (per year) will benefit? All professional-technical and college-transfer students take writing classes; all should benefit from their instructors' participation.

Funding source: curriculum development

Can this project be partially funded? Yes

Minimum: \$900 (60 hours for 2 faculty coordinators)

ORG: 651001

PROG: 111000

How does this project articulate with the college's vision, mission & goals and contribute toward meeting the President's/Board's approved goals? English Department classes support the college's emphasis on developing students' Core Abilities: communicate effectively; think critically and solve problems effectively; increase understanding of the relationship between self and community; explore academic disciplines. All professional-technical and college-transfer students must take writing classes, many students study literature for personal development and enrichment as well as for academic advancement. The English faculty seek this opportunity to focus their own learning on the core values of

working together to create a learning-centered environment; cultivating a respectful, inclusive, and accessible working and learning environment; and developing their capacity to understand -- and help students understand -- issues of difference, power, and privilege.

4)Initiative Title: Technology Specialist position

Initiative Description: This initiative is put forward by English, Language, and Speech units as a cooperative effort, and will provide technical support for students taking online classes, students and staff using computer labs and classrooms, and students and staff using other technology-rich learning environments.

Why do it? English faculty are offering 21 online classes (504 students) in 03-04, and will increase online offerings in future years in response to student demand. Online students have no technical staff assistance when they experience computer problems or have questions about WEBCT access. In addition, faculty offer multiple sections of writing in computer classrooms and multiple sections of writing and literature in new "smart" classrooms. Faculty and students need ongoing instruction and support in order to make the best use of smart classroom technology.

Product: This position is in alignment with the learning-centered principles of engaging learners as full partners, creating options for learning and will 1) support instruction with technical training for computer classrooms and new "smart" classrooms, and 2) support students enrolled in online classes who have computer and other access questions.

Need or intended use: Both faculty and students need help in order for efficient and effective use of new classroom equipment and the rapid growth of online instruction.

Campus location: The technology specialist will be located on the 4th floor of the Center Building in order to be available to assist faculty in new smart classrooms.

How many students (per year) will benefit? Most students who take EFLS classes will benefit from this position. Supporting technology in this way also demonstrates thoughtful stewardship of the College's use of bond monies (used to create the new smart classrooms).

Funding source: general fund

Can this project be partially funded? Yes

Minimum: .75 FTE position (\$25,412)

ORG: 651001

PROG: 111000

How does this project articulate with the college's vision, mission & goals and contribute toward meeting the President's/Board's approved goals? All EFLS classes serve professional-technical and college-transfer programs and contribute to students' foundational academic, language, and life skills development, as well as lifelong personal development and enrichment. This project increases student access to education through support of online classes, and it also supports technological innovation .

5) Initiative Title: Writing Assessment Project

Initiative Description: Continuation of an assessment project begun in 2001 intended to develop a meaningful ongoing assessment of the writing program, one which 1) understands the larger sense of literacy as both functional and transformative; 2) provides for systemic change across the campus; 3) not only measures learning but enriches the learning environment; 4) makes use of portfolios containing different kinds of writing samples for each student – writing samples to be drawn from both English classes and from classes in other disciplines; 5) employs systematic sampling techniques, while recognizing that assessment of portfolio samples does not (and cannot) lend itself to discrete, easy-to-tabulate measurement; and 6) is not only interdisciplinary but longitudinal.

Why do it? The assessment will evaluate the overall success of the writing program, and, in turn, encourage individual instructors to rethink practices and strategies they use in their classrooms.

Product: Ongoing assessment of student writing and writing instruction. Compensation needed for three English faculty for three terms, 20 hours per term, per person, in order to oversee the project, facilitate collection of samples, conduct training for readers, and work in collaboration with IRAP, the Writing Center, the Composition coordinator, and faculty in departments across campus. Compensation also needed for readers to be trained and to participate in the reading assessment.

History of this project: during the spring of 2001, six English faculty members met at the request of the Coordinator of Student Outcomes Assessment and Curriculum Development to design and implement a systematic assessment that would become a permanent operation of the department. The result was the “English Self-Study” – a pilot project funded for winter and spring terms 02-03 by the Strategic Learning Initiative. In the initial planning, the six-member committee (later known as the Assessment Team) recognized the need to develop a program that would not only articulate with other departments on campus (i.e., Writing Across the Curriculum) but serve as a model for assessment projects elsewhere. With that vision in mind – i.e., one which was both comprehensive and meaningful in the larger sense of “literacy” – the team researched other college assessment programs and designed an assessment plan which included random sampling, gathering of student data, the collection of student writing portfolios (papers taken from both English classes and classes in other disciplines), the development of rubrics for evaluation of the writing samples, and the construction of a model for faculty training to carry out the evaluations. Three members of the committee collected and evaluated WR 121 and WR 122 papers in a training run the summer of 2002. Beginning fall 2002, however, no further funding was available to continue the project.

Need: Writing and thinking critically are core abilities for Lane students. Ongoing assessment of the writing program is essential for student success and continued program improvement.

Campus location: English department

How many students (per year) will benefit? All professional-technical and college-transfer students take writing classes; all will benefit from a meaningful ongoing assessment of the writing program.

Funding source: general fund

Can this project be partially funded? No

ORG: 651001

PROG: 111000

How does this project articulate with the college's vision, mission & goals and contribute toward meeting the President's/Board's approved goals? Writing classes support the college's emphasis on developing students' Core Abilities: communicate effectively; think critically and solve problems effectively; increase understanding of the relationship between self and community; explore academic disciplines. All professional-technical and college-transfer students must take writing classes in order to develop essential skills for academic success and lifelong personal development and enrichment.

6) Initiative Title: New faculty position

Initiative Description: English faculty request a new faculty position.

Why do it? A new position is needed in order to address FT/PT ratio in English (18:34) and move toward a substantially full-time faculty. Such a move is critical in English because of ongoing coordination problems inherent in our reliance on part-time faculty to teach a carefully articulated writing program.

Product: contracted faculty position

Need: Lane's writing program is designed to facilitate student development in the crucial areas of critical thinking, understanding research, and clear and persuasive communication for both academic and professional audiences. Students are best served when those important classes are taught by a substantially full-time faculty.

Campus location: English department

How many students (per year) will benefit? All professional-technical and college-transfer students take writing classes; all will benefit from an additional full-time contracted position.

Funding source: general fund

Can this project be partially funded? No

ORG: 651001

PROG: 111000

How does this project articulate with the college's vision, mission & goals and contribute toward meeting the President's/Board's approved goals? Writing classes support the college's emphasis on developing students' Core Abilities: communicate effectively; think critically and solve problems effectively; increase understanding of the relationship between self and community; explore academic disciplines. All professional-technical and college-transfer students must take writing classes in order to develop essential skills for academic success and lifelong personal development and enrichment.