

# The FHSU WAC Mission Statement

## —with Objectives and Activities

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) at Fort Hays State University supports the view that strong writing skills, discipline-specific knowledge, and critical thinking skills are fostered by the frequent incorporation of writing in the classroom. WAC is committed to ensuring all students receive adequate writing instruction throughout their studies by learning and developing both general and discipline-specific conventions. Establishing these essential writing skills will equip students with the communication skills necessary to play productive roles in their disciplines, careers, and communities, and will prepare students for responsible and reflective action in a diverse and interconnected world. Specifically, WAC promotes the following principles:

- Writing increases the student’s ability to learn in any area of study.
- Writing growth and development require ongoing exposure and practice.
- Writing can be especially effective when practiced within specific disciplines.
- Writing within a discipline is best taught by someone who has the ability to combine disciplinary expertise with the overall writing experience.

## Goals and Objectives

*These overall goals were endorsed by the International Network of WAC Programs (INWAC) in February 2014 and CCCC Executive Committee in December 2014. Under each overarching goal, we have included at least one assessable objective related to that goal. More objectives will likely be added as the WAC initiative evolves. We have also suggested possible activities that might be developed to meet the stated objectives. Again, we will likely add/change activities as the WAC initiative evolves.*

### Goal 1

**To sustain the writing of students across their academic careers.** The desire to increase the amount and frequency of student writing, as well as offer students more sustained instruction in writing, in more courses, spread out over their academic careers, is foundational to WAC programs.

#### Objective 1-A

To support the Gen-Ed Committee in rolling out and sustaining the courses designed to meet the writing-related outcomes of the Gen-Ed CORE.

#### Activities

- Develop faculty forums for Writing Liaisons (Each FHSU department has a designated Writing Liaison to serve as a contact person for writing-related initiatives.)
- Consult with departments
- Review proposals for courses/assignments designed to meet the writing-related outcomes of the Gen-Ed CORE

#### Objective 1-B

To support departments as they identify the types of writing specific to their majors.

### Objective 1-C

To support departments as they explicitly and intentionally incorporate discipline-specific writing within their curricula.

#### Activities

- Host rubric-development workshops

### **Goal 2**

**To increase student engagement with learning.** Results from the National Survey of Student Engagement show significant correlation between extensive writing and both higher order thinking and integrative learning (NSSE 2008 Results), affirming a long-held tenet of WAC that increased attention and support for student writing lead to further engagement with course content and increased retention.

### Objective 2-A

To provide faculty with evidence-based pedagogy for supporting student writing. (That is, to keep faculty informed of ways to incorporate writing into their teaching to promote both learning and communication.)

#### Activities

- Launch a WAC website where faculty will find Tip Sheets, Materials, Videos, Resources, etc. designed to support faculty as they use writing to engage their students with learning.
- Host faculty workshops on specific strategies for incorporating “writing to learn” as well as “writing to communicate” within one’s classroom.

### **Goal 3**

**To increase student writing proficiency.** Writers become more proficient as they write across a wide range of rhetorical situations, genres, purposes, and discourse communities, and compose using a range of media. WAC programs strive to create opportunities for this range of writing experiences across a student’s academic career.

### Objective 3-A

To create a wide range of writing opportunities in a variety of genres across campus—within and beyond the classroom.

#### Activities

- Develop and promote events that celebrate the joy of writing—e.g., open mic events (with awards in different categories, such as a SNARK Award), Poet Athletes, . . . .

### **Goal 4**

**To create a campus culture that supports writing.** WAC programs often seek to promote a cultural shift on campus in how writing is perceived and valued, and thus may sponsor speaker series, faculty

writing retreats, and platforms that highlight student writing such as writing awards, student conferences, or venues for publishing student work.

#### Objective 4-A

To collaborate with other campus units to create a campus culture that supports writing.

#### Activities

- Organize a Writing Tigers celebration of writing, wherein students are recognized for writing accomplishments. Collaborate with URE, FL (their Lynn Haggard writing award), English department (Comp. I and II writing awards), . . . . [maybe encourage a top writing award from each school? Invite departments to recognize their top writers in some way at this event?]
- Faculty Writing Mentor of the Year Award—This award recognizes a faculty member committed to developing and promoting their students as writers.

### **Goal 5**

**To create a community of faculty around teaching and student writing.** WAC seeks to break down the silos that can divide disciplines by creating common ground through its focus on teaching and learning, often accomplished through cross-disciplinary faculty development programming.

#### Objective 5-A

To create opportunities for identified Writing Liaisons and other interested faculty to share across disciplines their strategies for incorporating and supporting student writing.

#### Activities

- Host lunch roundtables over various topics related to writing and teaching writing.
- Form a reading circle around John Bean's *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*—and other relevant books.