

UW COMMUNICATION ACROSS THE CURRICULUM 2019-2020 IMPACTS

The work of UW Communication Across the Curriculum (CxC)—which houses the UW Writing Center (UWWC) and is located within the Ellbogen Center for Teaching & Learning (ECTL)—is driven by four strategic goals for fostering stronger academic and scholarly communication activities on campus. More information about many of our activities will be located on CxC web pages (currently under development).

GOAL 1: Provide substantial individualized support for writers across campus.

UW Writing Center provided **1662 visits** to 710 individual students in 2019-2020.

15 graduate students from a range of programs participated in the first CxC Graduate Learning Community, focused on developing scholarly writing practices.

GOAL 2: Support faculty as writers and instructors of writing

Over **25 faculty** from all 6 undergraduate colleges, UW Libraries, and UW-Casper participated in CxC-facilitated learning communities. Topics included reading and citation, data visualization, and communication activities to promote student learning.

GOAL 3: Encourage research and inquiry into the impacts of communication-related activities at UW

A **Fall 2019 survey of COM2 and COM3 instructors** helps shed light on teaching and assignment practices related to oral and digital communication.

A group of faculty are currently analyzing results of a project exploring students' audience preferences in a variety of classes across campus.

GOAL 4: Foster a general culture of writing and communication on campus

CxC events included **partnerships with UW Libraries, Office of Graduate Education, College of Education, the Honors College, English Language Center, Wyoming Science Communication Initiative (WYSCI), and more.**

A Fall 2019 Assessment Showcase and Spring 2020 Multimedia Assignment Showcase highlighted efforts by faculty from English, Communication/Journalism, Geology, LeARN, Molecular Biology, and UW Libraries.



A CLOSER LOOK: 2019-2020 TRENDS

WRITING CENTER IMPACTS

- **Class standing:** 27% of consultations this year were with graduate-level writers. Freshmen represented approximately 28% of appointments, seniors and juniors each represented about 13% of appointments, and sophomores were only 8% of appointments.
- **Use by college:** This year, at least 22% of our clients identified a major within Arts + Sciences; 9% were from Engineering + Applied Sciences, 8% from Health Sciences, 8% from Business, 12% from Education, 4% from Agriculture + Natural Resources, 3% from the School of Environment & Natural Resources, and 2% from Law. (The remainder did not identify a college affiliation.)
- **International/ESL students:** Approximately 9% of our consultations were with writers who identified themselves as non-native speakers of English.

"It was super helpful to talk and brainstorm about main ideas of my writing. I have a plan to write my next section!"
-- Writing Center client feedback

COM COURSE SUPPORT AND ASSESSMENT

Fall 2019 / Spring 2020 COM refresher sessions were attended by 13 instructors (+10 individual consultations)

Fall 2019 COM assessment: Instructor survey of digital and oral communication practices/perceptions

Some interesting findings:

- Less than half of respondents (48.6%) said they ask students to participate in "using applications to create field-/discipline-appropriate analysis/graphics/visualizations."
- Only a third (34.3%) of instructors said they asked to "use a web-conferencing or screen-sharing application for online interaction," though nearly 70% said that web-conferencing was one the top three digital-communication skills most important to them in their own (pre-COVID19) work lives.

CxC produced "Tips for Teaching Communication Online: Facilitating Reading, Writing, and Speaking Activities," to support COM instructors and other faculty in adapting their courses during the COVID19-related transition to remote delivery in Spring 2020. Additional supports will be provided throughout 2020-21.

CULTURE OF WRITING

CxC's first Graduate Learning Community—focused on developing scholarly writing practices—was positive. Fifteen participants (selected from over 35 applications from all colleges except Law) participated in this 6-session series. Program evaluation indicated participant growth across a range of topics, especially using citation management software and developing academic voice. Two more GLCs are planned for Fall 2020.

The CxC Coordinator facilitated three presentations as part of ECTL's ongoing Teaching and Learning series:

"Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies: A Brief Introduction," in September 2019.

"Exploring Student Writing and Communication: Lessons from Spring 2019," with instructors Nancy Small, Val Pexton, and Mary Thorsness, in Nov. 2019.

"7 Tips for Supporting Non-Native English Writers," with Riki Seuss and Petra Heinz of the English Language Center, in April 2020.

A Communication Pedagogies badge was added to ECTL's popular self-directed Teaching + Learning Certification program. Several instructors across colleges are making active progress towards this badge.

RESEARCH AND INQUIRY

Fisher, R., Brock, C. H., Frahm, T., Van Wig, A., & Gillis, V. Reflections on writing and identity: Exploring the role of qualifying exams in the sociocultural development of doctoral students, *Studies in Continuing Education*. doi:10.1080/0158037X.2019.1661237

Students as Partners: This year-long course-based research produced 5 undergraduate projects focused on COM courses or co-curricular communication opportunities at UW. Videos will be available on CxC site.

A year-long SOTL project with 8 faculty across four UW colleges (A&S, CHS, ANR, Ed) is studying student perceptions and choices related to differing audiences for classroom writing. Article in development.

Survey data comparing UW graduate students' perceptions with graduate advisors' perceptions about their preparation and confidence in writing skills will be available on the CxC website.

Survey data of ENGL 1010 students, ENGL instructors, and Writing Center consultants helps us better understand how to adapt our outreach efforts with this important campus group.