UW COMMUNICATION ACROSS THE CURRICULUM
ACTIVITES AND IMPACTS, 2022-2025

The work of UW Communication Across the Curriculum (CxC) is driven by four strategic goals for fostering stronger academic and scholarly communication activities on campus. Key activities over the past three academic years (Fall 2022-Spring 2025) are highlighted below and discussed in more detail on following pages.

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

Writing Center usage has remained strong, averaging **nearly 1700/appointments per year** over the past 3 years.

The Writing Center has leveraged PhD consultants to **increase visits from STEM fields and to provide science-focused programming** (including an NSF GRF preparatory course in Fall 2024).

GOAL 2: *Support faculty as writers and instructors of writing*

Over 50 faculty have participated in the annual UW Academic Writing Fellows programs (including a new 2024-2025 program focused on grant writing), producing over 250 scholarly projects.

CxC launched an **asynchronous video series, "The Least You Should Know about Teaching Writing,"** in Fall 2024.

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

Indirect assessment of COM instructors (in Spr23, Fa23, and Fa24) has provided information about their emerging attitudes, policies, and experiences about AI that will be shared in an ECTL workshop in Fall 2025.

Direct assessment of (~400) COM students (Fa22, Fa24) continues to show steady overall ratings of written and oral communication, typically at "solid" or better across a range of COM courses.

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

Approximately 100 students achieved **CxC Graduate Learning Communities certificates** in scholarly writing practices.

45 UW faculty/staff attended Doug Eyman's CxC-sponsored keynote, **"In a world of AI, what's the point of writing?"** (April 2024.

CxC has continued to offer **weekly and weekend writing blocks,** with over 300 faculty, staff, and students working alongside one another making progress on major writing projects.

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BIG CHANGES AHEAD!

Beginning over Summer 2025, CxC has shifted its staffing model to bring in more expertise and diversity of perspectives, ideally allowing the unit to become more responsive to diverse needs of faculty and students across the disciplines. Especially with the likely transition to new COM course outcomes and policies once a reviewed general education program is adopted, now is a good time to bring new life into CxC. Over AY 2025-2026, CxC is excited to bring the following players onto the field:

1. **Rick Fisher.** Rick will step back from a directing role to a more restricted role in coordinating overall CxC activities. He additionally will serve as the coordinator of scholarly writing programs directed toward graduate students and faculty.
2. **Francesca King.** Francesca continues as the Director of the UW Writing Center and will now take on expanded roles in promoting a culture of communication, including overseeing writing blocks.
3. **Shelby Hutson.** Currently a lecturer in LeaRN, Shelby will join the unit in a role coordinating COM course assessment; as the new USP is solidified, she will take on a key role in developing materials to support revision and development of courses to meet new outcomes for communication-intensive courses.
4. **Peyton Lunzer.** Currently a lecturer in LeaRN, Peyton will have a major role in developing, organizing, and facilitating workshops and providing materials for faculty, both those teaching COM courses and those beyond COM courses who want to improve their writing assignments.

Together, this new configuration will open new possibilities for sustainable, long-term approaches for promoting campus-wide knowledge and principles central to effective writing and communication instruction.

A CLOSER LOOK AT OUR IMPACTS, FALL 2022-SPRING 2025

WRITING CENTER OUTREACH AND IMPACTS

Use by college. The Writing Center has made successful strategic efforts to increase usage by students from primarily STEM-focused colleges including the College of Agriculture, Life Sciences, & Natural Resources ; the College of Health Sciences; and the Haub School of Environment & Natural Resources.

> *"I have worked with Colleen many times last semester and have come away from each session with a better understanding of my work. She gives excellent feedback, which is always specific with clear direction. I feel that I grow with each visit. Thanks to Colleen I have a better grasp on APA and she always leaves me feeling more confident in myself than when I walked in."*
> - Spring 24 Writing Center client

International/ESL students. The proportion of Writing Center appointments made by international students continues to increase, now standing at nearly 1 in 6 appointments. The International Writing Friends program (launched in Fall 2023) has had a positive impact on usage rates among this population.

Pathways from Prison outreach and support. Beginning in Fall 23, the Writing Center offered feedback (initially asynchronously, and now via Zoom) for students in UW's Pathways from Prison students. In Spring 2025, the center launched the *Pathways from Prison Journal*, receiving 17 story submissions from incarcerated writers.

General support workshops for teaching communication-intensive courses
- "Crash Course: Improving Student Writing through Move Effective Feedback." Workshop co-facilitated with Francesca King (Writing Center director) and Bethann Merkle (director of Wyoming Science Communication Initiative). Offered in Fall 2022 and Fall 2023.
- "Developing Activities to Promote Students' Critical and Creative Thinking," co-facilitated with Meg Wood (ECTL). 9 session series focused on *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*.
- "Prepared for the future? What a Spring 2022 undergraduate survey can tell us about innovative teaching" and "Teaching critical thinking and writing in alternate spaces." Workshops for Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning Academy, Fall 2022.
- "Improving Critical and Creative Thinking in ENGL 1010." Targeted discussion series co-facilitated with Meg Wood (ECTL), to engage program administrators and others engaged in delivering first-year composition.

Support for adapting to ChatGPT and other AI platforms
- "Two Years In: Adapting to ChatPT." Faculty discussion about their positive and negative assignment and curricular responses to the widespread availability of ChatGPT and similar AI platforms. Fall 2024.
- "In A World of AI, What is the Point of Writing?" Spring 2024 presentation by Douglas Eyman (George Mason U), hosted by CxC with additional support from the Office of the President, College of Business, Department of English, and Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning.
- "AI in Higher Education" discussion series, co-facilitated with Meg Wood (ECTL), with invited speakers Diksha Shulka (Dept. of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science), Alec Muthig (UW IT), and Chad Hutchens (UW Libraries Digital Collections). Spring 2023.
- "Leveraging ChatGPT for Slow Learning," with Irene Checa-Garcia (UW Modern and Classical Languages) and Meg Wood (ECTL), as part of Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning Academy.
- "Written assignments in the age of AI / Adapting to ChatGPT." Demonstration, presentation, and discussion open to faculty across campus in advance of Spring 2023 semester. Related videos available on CxC YouTube channel.
- "Using Generative AI in the Nursing Classroom." Invited session for School of Nursing Lunchbox discussion series. Fall 2023.

USP revision of COM courses. CxC has continued to be involved in general education revision processes, with the CxC Director leading sub-committees focused on revision of communication-intensive course policies, outcomes, and focuses. **Key wins of draft outcomes** include the centering of rhetorical thinking throughout the course sequence, the inclusion of metacognitive and reflective outcomes across courses, the injection of "writing to learn" activities into upper-level courses, a stronger commitment to oral communication in the intermediate course, and a set of outcomes related to effective reading and listening. CxC looks forward to an ongoing role in supporting the (re)design of courses to meet communication-intensive outcomes once the proposed program is approved and the process moves toward implementation.

COM ASSESSMENT

Direct Assessment. In Fall 2022 and Fall 2024, all COM instructors were asked to submit scores for a random set of their students' work. Scoring was based on nationally developed 4-point AAC&U VALUE rubrics for written and oral communication. Like results from previous semesters (including Fall 2021 and Spring 2022) the **Fall 2024 results show a general trend for (1) higher scores in COM3 courses than in COM1 and COM2 courses (except for**

grammar scores in COM2), and (2) slightly higher scores for oral communication projects than for written work. Additionally, student work was generally scored higher in more advanced courses; at the intermediate and advanced levels, *all* averages are greater than 3—suggesting that most teachers see most student communication-intensive work as acceptable or better.

Table F24.1. Average rubric scores of student written work by COM level					
	Context	Content	Conventions	Sourcing	Grammar
COM1	2.84	2.63	2.78	2.66	2.59
COM2	3.33	2.93	3.50	2.93	3.53
COM3	3.39	3.16	3.33	3.10	3.30
All written submissions	3.24	3.00	3.21	2.96	3.15

Table F24.2. Average rubric scores of student oral presentation					
	Organization	Language	Delivery	Support	Message
COM2	3.36	3.27	2.85	3.09	3.29
COM3	3.42	3.46	3.21	3.42	3.33
All oral submissions	3.38	3.33	2.98	3.20	3.30

Fall 2024 indirect assessment of COM students. In Fall 2024, 137 COM3 students (out of 1075; 12.7% response rate) responded to an invitation to participate in a survey about their communication-intensive experiences during college. Among notable results, **three-quarters of students felt that their overall set of experiences during college had "mostly" or "fully" prepared them for a variety of communication tasks they might face after graduating**.

Fall 2024 Data: COM3 Students' Perceptions of Readiness for Communication Tasks after Graduation						
As you think about your life after your undergraduate experience, how well prepared do you feel for to accomplish each of the following tasks (in future academic, workplace, and/or community settings)?*	Fully prepared	Mostly prepared	A little prepared	Not very prepared	Totally unprepared	I'm not sure
Writing documents for a variety of audiences	32.8%	53.3%	9.5%	0.7%	2.9%	0.7%
Creating communication materials that integrate text with graphics	38.0%	37.2%	17.5%	4.4%	2.2%	0.7%
Learning new software and applications to help you produce and/or manage communication	28.7%	34.6%	22.8%	11.8%	1.5%	0.7%
Working collaboratively to produce written documents	36.5%	40.9%	17.5%	2.9%	1.5%	0.7%
Working collaboratively to produce oral presentations	35.8%	38.7%	16.1%	5.8%	3.6%	0.0%
Revising communication materials you have created on your own	44.5%	38.0%	13.9%	1.5%	2.2%	0.0%
Revising communication materials that others have created	36.8%	40.4%	17.6%	2.2%	2.2%	0.7%
Editing and proofreading to produce error-free final-quality documents	48.5%	37.5%	8.8%	2.2%	2.9%	0.0%
Speaking and presenting to a variety of audiences	30.7%	46.0%	16.8%	4.4%	2.2%	0.0%

Listening and responding to a variety of audience members	40.1%	38.7%	13.9%	3.6%	3.6%	0.0%
Creating communication materials that fairly represent multiple perspective...	29.9%	46.0%	19.7%	0.7%	3.6%	0.0%
Conducting self-guided secondary research (to locate journal articles, disc...	44.5%	39.4%	9.5%	3.6%	2.9%	0.0%
Citing secondary research materials	51.1%	34.3%	7.3%	3.6%	2.9%	0.7%
Creating documents that meet specific format/design expectations	57.7%	32.8%	5.8%	0.7%	2.2%	0.7%
* Students were instructed to complete this section "based on ALL of your experiences during college, both in courses and beyond--including co-curricular activities, jobs/internships, etc.")						

Fall 2023 indirect assessment of COM instructor perceptions. Indirect assessment of COM courses in Fall 2023 focused on instructor perceptions and practices, including their emerging policies for generative AI (GAI) technologies. Information was also collected to help guide USP revision of communication-intensive courses. Among key findings:

Creating opportunities for students to practice and improve their written and oral communication takes real time and investment, both for students and for teachers.

- About **two-thirds of COM instructors estimated that students produced 20 or more pages of written work during their course**. And, **nearly 48% of COM instructors indicated that students in their class would spend 20 minutes or more delivering formal presentations, facilitating discussions, or engaging in other oral communication activities** over the course of the semester. (This doesn't include time students also spend in preparing and practicing!)
- A majority of COM instructors (~55%) indicated they would spend 30 hours or more on assessing and providing feedback on student written work. And, about 40% or instructors indicated that at least 5 hours of class time would be spent on student presentations or other student-driven oral communication activities; about half of those instructors (19.3% of all respondents) anticipated allocating 10 or more hours to student oral communication activities. Research into writing-intensive courses provides strong justification for these levels of time investment; as Kuh[1] notes, writing-intensive courses are one of handful of high-impact practices that "increase rates of student retention and student engagement."

COM instructors' beliefs about essential communication skills, knowledge, and mindsets largely overlap with existing learning outcomes for COM courses. Though this conclusion is somewhat intuitive, it is still heartening to see this overlap. Common instructor responses focused on use of sources, critical thinking, rhetorical adaptivity, interpersonal skills (including the ability to navigate different perspectives), presentation skills, genre awareness and ability to create effective structures, and the ability to engage in a writing process (often involving feedback). **Excitingly, the most-often appearing responses were ones coded as "emotion and self-regulation," including comments about the value of persistence, reflection, self-evaluation, curiosity, and a value for communication.**

Faculty see the value of engaging students in "digital" communication. Just under **60% of faculty "strongly agree" that it is important to engage students in digital aspects of communication activity (and another 30% "generally" agree).** These percentages indicate a real victory for those who argued that "digital" communication should be included as a central element of USP 2015 communication-intensive courses. However, the fact that a much smaller proportion (28%) "strongly

[1] Kuh, G. D. (2008). *High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter*. Association of American Colleges & Universities.

agree" that they have adequate skills, training, and expertise to teach digital communication reflects the continuing need to support teaching around digital elements of communication.

Many COM instructors are adapting to generative AI. Compared to COM instructors who responded to similar questions in Spring 2023, far more Fall 2023 instructors have adopted *some kind* of policy: **in Spring 2023 about two-thirds (66.3%) indicated they had adopted no specific AI policy, while only about 29.5% of Fall 2023 respondents had no specific policy**. Fall instructors adopted "full bans" at higher rates than Spring instructors (30.7% in fall vs 16.3% in spring), but they also adopted "allowed if acknowledged policies" at higher rates as well (28.4% in fall vs 8.3% in spring). **About 9% of Fall 2023 instructors reported directly engaging students in GAI with at least one assignment**. In both spring and fall, only a few instructors (~1%) indicated that they encouraged students to use GAI but provided no guidance nor specific activities. While 40% indicated they had undertaken self-guided reading to better understand how GAI might impact teaching and learning, nearly 1 in 3 COM instructors said they had not participated in *any* generative AI-related events they felt would affect their teaching.

CULTURE OF WRITING

UW Academic Writing Fellows program (UW-AWF). Initiated in Fall 2020 and facilitated by CxC, the yearlong UWAWF program continues to support faculty as scholarly writers. Since its inception, over 50 faculty have participated in the program, producing nearly 250 articles and other scholarly works. Additionally, the program impacts the ways that participants approach the teaching of writing in their classes/programs. As one participant from 2024-2025 noted, "My participation in this program created a consistent structure for engaging with my writing as a sustained practice, rather than something only done under deadline pressure. The program encouraged me to prioritize writing time even amid teaching and administrative responsibilities—something that felt nearly impossible before."

UW Academic Writing Fellows Faculty Grant-Writing Program. In Fall 2024, CxC offered a new AWF program, focused on increasing grant-seeking among faculty, especially those outside of departments with strong existing grant-funding cultures. **Ten participants completed the program and report writing grants totalling $1.272 million.** Strongly positive participant feedback points to value of continuing this program (in a revised format including more writing, earlier in the program) in Fall 2025.

Graduate Learning Communities. CxC has continued to partner with Wyoming Science Communication Initiative and Office of Graduate Education to provide non-credit programs (one per semester), which focus on developing participants' scholarly writing practices. Since inception, **nearly 200 students have now earned a certificate in one of our two programs,** and our research (Fisher, Kocher, Clapp, & Merkle, 2024) shows that most report moderate gains in emotions about writing, their literature management approaches, awareness of the social context of writing, and their understanding of writing resources and academic voice.

CXC-RELATED RESEARCH, INQUIRY, AND DISSEMINATION

Rick Fisher & Janel Marie Seeley. (2025) "The Brief Life of a Students-as-Partners Model for Improving General Education." In *Where Honors Education and Faculty Development Meet*. National Collegiate Honors Council.

"Remixing Critical Thinking within Institutional Cultures of Writing." Roundtable session with Michael Knievel, Ashley Burchett, April Heaney, Allison Gernant, and Meg Van Baalen-Wood. Conference on College Composition and Communication. Baltimore, MD. 2025.

Fisher, R., Kocher, M., Clapp, J., & Merkle, B. G. (2024). "Meaningful Results with Limited Resources: Evidence from a Program to Support Graduate Students' Scholarly Writing." *College Teaching*, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1080/87567555.2024.2407121