I. Writing Plan Cover Page

*Please fill in the gray areas on this form.*

May 5, 2014

- [x] First Edition of Writing Plan
- [ ] Subsequent Edition of Writing Plan: previous plan submitted SEM/YR, First edition submitted SEM/YR

Sociology

<table>
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<th>WEC Unit Name</th>
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<td>Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joseph Gerteis</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEC Faculty Liaison (print name)</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:gerte004@umn.edu">gerte004@umn.edu</a></td>
<td>612-624-1615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
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**Writing Plan ratified by Faculty**

*Note: This section needs to be completed regardless of Writing Plan edition.*

Date: May 5, 2014

If Vote: 25 / 25

Process by which Writing Plan was ratified within unit (vote, consensus, other- please explain):

Vote taken at faculty meeting (7 faculty on leave, 1 absent).
II. Unit Profile: Sociology

Please fill in the gray areas on this form.

Number of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty:

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Comments about Faculty/Instructors

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III. Signature Page

Signatures needed regardless of Writing Plan edition. Please fill in the gray areas on this form.

Electronic signatures may be submitted in lieu of this page. If this page is submitted as a hard copy, please include a print out of the electronic signature chain here.

WEC Faculty Liaison

Joseph Gerteis

WEC Faculty Liaison (print name)

Signature

Associate Professor

Title

4/29/2014

Date

Department Head/Chair

Elizabeth Boyle

Print Name

Signature

Professor

Title

4/29/2014

Date

Associate Dean

Jennifer Windsor

Print Name

Signature

Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs, CLA

Title

5/6/14

Date

For College of Liberal Arts units only:

CLA - Curriculum, Instruction, and Advising Committee approved Writing Plan on

Date

Print Name

Title

Signature

Date
Executive Summary

This is the first Writing Plan for the Department of Sociology. The plan was developed over the course of the 2013/2014 academic year, and shaped through meetings with WEC staff and through a series of productive conversations among the faculty. These discussions highlighted for us some essential elements of writing in our discipline, which we seek to emphasize and build upon. The discussions also shaped the vision for our curriculum development that we seek to address with this plan.

There was wide agreement in our department about the characteristics of writing in our discipline, and it was clear from initial research that our instructors are implementing writing in creative and exciting ways across the curriculum. Our vision of disciplinary writing involves mastery of three writing “modes” (descriptive, analytic/interpretive, critical), which combine in different ways. Our involvement in the WEC program allowed us to better articulate this vision of disciplinary writing and to translate it into concrete abilities we would like to see in our graduates.

Our discussions also revealed issues and gaps with regard to writing in our curriculum, which we seek to address with this plan. Faculty wished to see stronger writing skills in our majors, while many students thought their skills were solid but wanted higher evaluative standards applied to their writing. For a number of reasons outlined below, we do not propose to make major structural changes to the curriculum. Rather, we seek to: (1) better understand the path our students take through the major, and how they experience writing leading up to their major project experience; (2) better signal our vision of writing throughout the curriculum; (3) set explicit expectations for writing and building these into our grading criteria more systematically; and (4) provide better support for students who are struggling with writing in the early stages of our program.
Section 1. Discipline-Specific Writing Characteristics

What characterizes academic and professional communication in this discipline?

Sociology is a broad and varied discipline, and sociological writing is similarly diverse. There is no single model for writing that holds across the field’s many areas of specialization, theoretical orientations and methodologies. Yet there are common features that mark good writing in sociology. Conversations among our faculty revealed two main points of consensus.

First, good sociological writing marries broad intellectual vision and insight with precision and rigor. Our diverse field is held together by what C. Wright Mills once called a “quality of mind” rather than a narrow set of topical interests. This same quality of mind marks all good sociological writing. Sociologists must pay close attention to method and carefully connect their claims to data. At the same time, sociologists seek to interpret their findings within broader theoretical frameworks that reach beyond the data and help to make sense of complex human relationships, institutions and societies.

Second, there are common “modes” of writing that sociological writing draws upon and emphasizes. While no single template exists for good sociological writing, all good sociology builds from some combination of descriptive, analytic/interpretive, and critical modes of writing.

**Descriptive mode**

Most concretely, sociological writing is descriptive. The maxim “show, don’t tell” points out that persuasive writing must accurately outline and elucidate the basis of claims that are being made. In particular, descriptive writing seeks to:

- Clearly and accurately summarize prior theoretical or empirical work;
- Describe the data and methods being used;
- Summarize data by showing key relationships (as in quantitative work) or central themes (as in qualitative work).

**Analytic and interpretive mode**

Good sociological writing also seeks to make sense of the facts being described. Sociologists bring an analytic eye to their work by connecting the “trees” of individual facts with the “forest” of broader trends and patterns in the social world. Additionally, analytic thinking fosters a synthetic vision by asking how ideas, events or cases may be related to each other. Sociologists employ this analytic mode of writing to:

- Note where a finding needs to be explained or does not fit with existing knowledge (“setting up a puzzle to be explained”);
- Note common patterns or trends and apply sociological concepts and theories to name and explain them;
- Break down broad social phenomena into smaller parts and making sense of how those parts work together (functions) or fail to do so (conflicts);
- Compare and contrast cases, events or theories;
- Connect related claims or findings in past research;
- Apply existing theories or concepts to new situations;
• Build on past research and link to new discoveries.

**Critical mode**
Finally, good sociological writing is often critical. It tries to see the limits of common knowledge or existing social arrangements. Instead, sociological writing tries to also see the implications (both positive and negative) of existing arguments or a given state of affairs, asking how it came to be, and what alternatives are possible. It does this by:

• Evaluating strengths and weaknesses of positions and claims;
• Seeing the broader implications of theories and claims;
• Examining the limitations of existing data, methods and theories;
• Connecting our own lives and experiences with the social realities we write about, and how they came to be;
• Reflecting upon more just ways of organizing societies and social institutions, and participating in the imagination and design of such alternatives.

**Section 2. Desired Writing Abilities**
*With which writing abilities should students in this unit's major graduate?*

Conversations among our faculty revealed broad agreement around the importance of the modes of sociological writing outlined in the first section. A survey of faculty, TAs and undergraduate majors conducted in Fall 2013, during our initial phase of WEC development, confirmed this. In particular, the analytic, critical and descriptive dimensions of writing were selected most often as “particularly descriptive of writing in this major’s discipline.” The responses from the TAs reflected the same emphasis.

Clearly, the message is getting through in our classes that these modes of writing mark our discipline. The survey showed that our faculty employ a wide range of different writing assignments in the undergraduate major, ranging from brief response papers to formal presentations, short essays and longer form research papers. And different classes place the emphasis on different modes of writing, with some emphasizing critical thought and others descriptive or analytic. Nevertheless, when the undergraduate students were asked the same question in the survey, they chose the same set of characteristics most often.

Because of the diversity of writing styles and assignments, there is no single concise list of abilities that students must master that are relevant for all of their writing projects. Rather, the most important thing is that students master a set of general writing abilities and also gain confidence, experience and skill in writing within the different modes outlined above.

The outline below details sets of skills that our faculty felt were important components of general writing abilities and each of the modes of writing. Students will not necessarily master all of these skills, but writing instruction in the department should provide a solid grounding across the range.
General writing abilities

- Formulate a valid research question or problematic that can be addressed within the scope of the text/document;
- Present a substantive thesis;
- Introduce substantive argument(s) in introduction and both summarize and evaluate main argument(s) in conclusion;
- Locate relevant sociological literature using discipline-specific search strategies;
- Organize a paper so that it flows logically, perhaps using section headings;
- Produce engaging and grammatical prose that lacks distracting errors and makes meaning clear;
- Organize points clearly and persuasively by using logical paragraph structure;
- Extrapolate and reference sources’ main points, use direct quotations judiciously, and cite sources consistently;
- Address an educated lay audience by using and applying concepts and theory.

Describe data and methods

- Describe data and methods that inform the analysis;
- Observe patterns in quantitative and qualitative data, and discuss those patterns accurately and succinctly;
- Provide relevant evidence to substantiate arguments.

Analyze and interpret

- Interpret observed patterns and discuss their meaning;
- Move beyond personal opinions and experiences to address how or why something happens;
- Utilize theory to describe social phenomena;
- Produce clear summaries of debates in the field;
- Define concepts and use them consistently;
- Identify where important ambiguities exist in data or theory and clearly outline them;
- Interrogate how or why patterns occur;
- Choose and use appropriate pattern of logic (inductive or deductive);
- Follow observations or arguments to their logical conclusions by addressing the implications or consequences of social phenomena.

Critique

- Evaluate the consequences (positive and negative) of a given argument or state of affairs;
- Engage existing arguments by taking a position on them (with or against);
- Draw appropriately on own experiences and use them to situate interpretations of theory or evidence, or to produce new interpretations of theory or evidence;
- Evaluate scholarly claims that might be contradictory.
3. Integration of Writing Into the Curriculum

How is writing instruction currently positioned in this department’s undergraduate curriculum? What, if any, structural plans does this unit have for changing the way that writing and writing instruction are sequenced across its course offerings? With what rationales are changes proposed and what indicators will signify their impact?

There is a great deal of writing in Sociology classes, although it is oriented to a wide range of different types of assignment and with a similarly wide range of expectations as to the mode of writing. The central writing “event” in the major is the senior thesis paper which demands strong general writing skills as well as mastery of all three modes of sociological writing (descriptive, analytic/interpretive and critical).

In Sociology, the thesis is written in one of two settings. Honors majors are expected to engage in original research and the papers typically follow the classic “research article” format. Currently, the Honors majors have a two-semester research seminar sequence that provides structure and support for the research as well as writing. This format allows time for significant peer review and critique of writing, multiple drafts of sections, and discussion of form and tone.

Majors not in the Honors program may elect to follow a similar path (either by joining the Honors seminar or on their own). For the vast majority of majors, the research and writing of the thesis occurs in the one-semester capstone seminar. In this context, the thesis is typically based on fieldwork done through community service learning sites, reflections on the state of knowledge in a particular subfield, or reports of action projects.

Writing prior to the thesis is much more varied. Virtually all sociology classes encourage and require clear, effective writing. This occurs in different ways: engaged journals and blog posts, responses papers, short and focused formal writing assignments, longer-form seminar papers, and many others in between. The more intensive writing assignments tend to occur in formally designated W (writing intensive) courses, but it is important to note that currently the core classes – the ones all majors typically take – are not writing intensive. Rather, the W designation has been applied to 3000- and 4000-level courses that engage with a subfield in more depth. As a result, a given student may or may not have had such intensive writing experiences by the time they begin their thesis course.

The courses also emphasize different modes of writing. While they may not currently refer to these modes by name, majors are exposed to each of three modes by the time they reach the thesis stage. As with the type and length of writing assignments, the modes may be specific to classes rather than strictly ordered within the major. A given student may have more experience with one mode of writing than the others depending upon which courses they have taken leading up to the thesis.

Two important issues must be considered in relation to any plan or intervention regarding writing in the curriculum. First, students take very different paths through our curriculum. We have a relatively “flat” curriculum rather than a strictly
hierarchical one. We have only one 1000-level course, which serves as a pre-
requisite (sometimes formally, often informally) for later courses. Students may take
many different paths through the 3000- and 4000-level requirements and electives
however. This is compounded by the fact that many of our majors declare relatively
late. Second, depending upon their preferences and interests, students may have
more exposure to some writing modes than others. Putting these two issues
together, it is clear that a given instructor cannot expect students to arrive at her
course with a uniform set of expectations and experiences regarding writing.

There are other considerations that must play into the writing plan as well.
Sociology is a relatively large major, and for a host of reasons there is pressure to
increase class enrollments (without simultaneous increases in TA support). Courses
also include a large number of non-major students, whose experiences and
expectations may be even more varied than those of the majors. Finally, even though
we have a large major base, many declare their major relatively late in their studies,
leading to a compressed timeline for coursework.

It should also be said that while we have many very strong writers in our major, we
also serve a very diverse group of students and many of our students struggle with
the core aspects of writing (the general writing abilities listed above), either due to
issues with language (as with students whose first language is not English), or
students who have not arrived at the University with strong prior training in the
mechanics of writing. We suspect that this is an issue facing many departments,
particularly at a time when support for writing is being cut back. In short, while our
central goal is to encourage strong sociological writing abilities, we must first
provide support for competent general writing abilities, for which we have little time
or training.

In this first Writing Plan, we do not propose to make any structural changes to
course sequencing, W designations for courses or writing requirements within
courses. Rather, the faculty decided to focus our plans around a range of issues that
we see as important for fostering and supporting strong writing skills in our classes,
and for gaining a better sense of how students are encountering writing (and
challenges to good writing) in the course of their studies. Specifically, we want to
focus our efforts around the following:

1. Understanding student paths through the major. If we are to institute larger
structural changes down the road, it will be important to know how our
majors move through our relatively flat curriculum. Our required courses
(Introduction to Sociology, Social Theory, Methods, and Statistics) offer some
known control points for potential interventions, but even here students may
take the courses in different order and at different points in their time at the
University. We therefore need to determine whether there are typical routes
that students take through the major.

2. Better signalling the abilities we expect students to master. While students are
exposed to all of the different writing modes within our current curriculum,
our sense is that they often experience the different writing expectations as
idiosyncratic demands of specific professors rather than part of a general set
of skills that should become part of their repertoire. To this end, we wish to
better signal our expectations by using common terms for the skills we are trying to teach, and adopting more consistent grading criteria that reinforce these skills while allowing students to see how the skills carry from one course to the next.

3. Setting more explicit expectations for writing. In class exercises and discussions around writing are important for signaling, but also for allowing instructors to maintain higher and more consistent expectations for student writing, and to better align students' understandings of their strengths and weaknesses in writing with those of their instructors. Assignments will vary from class to class. Yet having a set of common examples and types of assignments to draw from will help to underscore our common expectations. To this end, we want to develop models for short in-class discussions of writing and begin to institute them. We also want to gather assignment examples in order to develop a pool of examples that instructors can use in developing their own writing assignments.

4. Providing support for general writing abilities. Discussion of higher-level writing abilities, such as what it means to write in one or more of our three modes, is difficult or impossible when students struggle with fundamental writing skills. Crucially, there are few resources to help with these core writing issues on campus. We therefore need to begin providing help with core writing skills for our students, so that instructor and TA time can be focused around the higher-level abilities we want to encourage.

4. Assessment of Student Writing

What concerns, if any, have unit faculty and undergraduate students voiced about grading practices? What, if any, new grading systems or practices are proposed, whether for individual courses or for a program? How satisfied is the unit faculty that students are adequately familiar with writing expectations? What do these expectations look like when they are translated into grading criteria?

Faculty and students agreed that writing is a critically important part of the curriculum and that it is essential for the career development of students in the major. However, our survey revealed that the faculty and students differed in their assessment of writing abilities of undergraduates. Students rated their abilities in many core areas as “strong” or “satisfactory” while faculty more often rated student abilities in the same areas as “satisfactory” or “weak.”

Some of this discrepancy may result from the fact that the more motivated and committed students were also more likely to respond to the survey. Still, it seems clear that while we are doing a good job of conveying the core characteristics of sociological writing, we can do a better job of helping our students to become strong writers and to appraise the strengths and weaknesses of their own work. Survey results indicated that students wanted more consistent grading standards. It was striking to see that in several cases, they also wanted faculty to hold their writing to higher standards. As one student put it, “I wish that my professors and TA’s critiqued our writing skills harsher. I am a decent writer, but I know I could be better.”
Faculty and students have not voiced major concerns about grading practices per se. The most consistent issue is rather that students feel the grading criteria are specific to professors and to courses, while instructors would like to encourage a broader understanding of writing abilities that can carry from course to course. Consequently, having a standard set of terms for what we are trying to encourage, and a more consistent set of grading criteria from which faculty can draw is important for our plan.

The following menu of criteria have been developed from the list of desired writing abilities provided in Section 2 of this plan. Items from this menu may be selectively adapted for classroom use of writing assessment. Courses and assignments may emphasize one or another mode of writing, and faculty will (and should) draw from different sections of this list in a particular course. Over the course of their instruction in the major, students might see several of these items (and headings) on grading rubrics from different courses.

**General Writing Abilities**

1. Uses engaging, powerful prose
2. Includes a research question of reasonable scope for the paper/project
3. Presents a substantive thesis
4. Introduces substantive argument in introduction
5. Summarizes and evaluates main argument(s) in conclusion
6. Uses section headings to organize paper logically
7. Lacks distracting grammatical errors
8. Organizes points clearly and persuasively with logical paragraph structure
9. Locates relevant literature
10. References sources’ main points
11. Uses quotations judiciously
12. Cites sources consistently
13. Addresses an educated lay audience

**Describe methods, data and settings**

14. Describes data and methods that inform analysis
15. Discusses patterns found in qualitative data accurately and succinctly
16. Discusses patterns found in quantitative data accurately and succinctly
17. Provides relevant evidence in order to substantiate arguments

**Analyze and interpret**

18. Uses appropriate pattern of logic for question (deductive or inductive)
19. Applies appropriate method for question (qualitative or quantitative)
20. Looks deeply into cases, examples and contexts
21. Analyze the meanings of patterns found in data
22. Interrogates why or how patterns occur
23. Compare patterns found in different cases, contexts or times
24. Moves beyond personal opinions and experiences to address how or why something happens
25. Uses and applies concepts and theory to make sense of social phenomena
26. Produces clear summaries of debates in the field
27. Defines concepts and uses them consistently
28. Identifies where important ambiguities exist in data or theory

**Critique**

29. Follows observations or arguments to their logical conclusions by addressing the implications of social phenomena
30. Engages existing arguments by taking a position on them (with or against)
31. Evaluates evidence provided for claims
32. Evaluates the implications of existing knowledge or social arrangements
33. Considers alternatives to existing knowledge or social arrangements
34. Draws appropriately on own experiences and uses them to situate interpretations of theory or evidence, or to produce new interpretations of theory or evidence
35. Evaluates scholarly claims that might be contradictory.

5. Summary of Implementation Plans and Requested Support

*Based on the above discussions, what does the unit plan to implement during the period covered by this plan? What forms of instructional support does this unit request to help implement proposed changes? What are the expected outcomes of named support?*

Above, we have addressed our vision of what constitutes good sociological writing as well as the issues we confront in fostering and supporting better writing skills across our curriculum. To address these issues, we plan to do two things. First, we will hire a graduate RA to work with the department's WEC liaison on a number of fronts. Specifically:

1. **Analyze paths through the major.** A necessary first step to any future structural changes to the program is to get a firmer understanding of how students actually move through the major. Gaining an understanding of whether there are *typical pathways* through the curriculum and *when students encounter key writing experiences* will allow us to make informed decisions in future iterations of the writing plan. Using prior data from annual survey of seniors and writing new questions for the next iteration, this will allow us to begin to answer several crucial questions:
   a. When do our students declare their major, and how does this impact their experience with writing in the curriculum? How many took first-year writing courses at the U of M?
   b. In what sequence or sequences do our majors take the required classes? Do most students take non-required Writing Intensive courses in the major, and if so, when?
   c. How prepared and confident did our students feel in taking on the senior project writing? Which specific abilities or writing modes did they feel most sure of and which did they struggle with?

2. **Gather, organize and share writing assignments.** The RA will gather writing assignments from faculty, and will organize and share examples on our
department teaching resources site. This will involve meetings and short discussions with instructors in Fall (with core courses) and Spring (electives).

a. Part of this process will involve an analysis and categorization of the writing assignments done across our curriculum. What are the different types of assignments commonly used in the department? Which writing modes tend to be emphasized in which classes?

b. We have also requested consultation with the Center for Writing on how to incorporate suggestions and feedback for faculty into this process. How can we better incorporate our writing vision into assignments and grading (see point 4 below).

c. Broader, department-wide discussion of writing in our curriculum will be developed in conjunction with this process for fall and spring semesters.

3. *Work with instructors to institute short in-class writing discussions.* Building from the writing samples we gathered, the Writing RA will work with the Center for Writing to build 5-minute exercises around general writing skills (e.g., stating a thesis or paragraph structure) as well as around our three main writing modes (how to identify and sharpen descriptive, critical, and analytic/interpretive writing). The graduate RA and the Liaison will work with faculty in key required courses to implement these discussions, and will archive materials that will allow for broader implementation in future iterations of the Writing Plan.

4. *Signal expectations in assignments and grading.* Finally, the graduate RA will work with faculty to help institute common language in syllabi and assignments around which writing modes are being emphasized and developed in a given class or assignment, and will help institute the common pool of grading criteria into instructor rubrics. The first stage of this process (see 2b above) will involve specific courses. As needed, the RA will hold grade norming sessions with TAs and instructors to support these changes.

We also plan to train two undergraduate Peer Writing Consultants (25% RA, one each for Fall and Spring) for regular, one-on-one help for students in our required classes as they organize their writing projects. Our goal is to allow instructors and TAs to focus on fostering the higher-level skills that we want to see, while providing the support needed for undergraduates who need help with very basic issues of writing. We will recruit from our pool of very strong undergraduate majors for these positions. The consultants will be available during regular hours to consult with students (particularly in required courses early in the sequence). We specifically want undergrad RAs from our own major because they will be in the best position to work with our students on discipline-specific writing.
6. Process Used to Create this Writing Plan

How, and to what degree, were stakeholders in this unit (faculty members, instructors, affiliates, teaching assistants, undergraduates, others) engaged in providing, revising and approving the contents of this Writing Plan?

This is the first writing plan for the Department of Sociology. We began our involvement with the WEC program at the conclusion of the spring semester of 2013 with the collection of writing samples from key classes across our curriculum (specifically, our 1000-level Introduction to Sociology course, our 3000-level Methods courses, and our 4000-level Senior Projects course). The following fall semester marked the start of our broader departmental conversations about writing in the curriculum.

An online survey, designed and administered by the WEC staff, went out in September 2014 to our faculty, graduate instructors and teaching assistants, and undergraduate students. The survey allowed our department to compare experiences and expectations of writing held by faculty and graduate students with those held by our undergraduate students.

We discussed this information and built upon it in two faculty meetings during the fall. In the first (October 28, 2014), the faculty listed and discussed the characteristics we thought marked good writing in our discipline, and how these related to specific abilities we wanted to see our majors develop and master by the time of graduation. In a series of meetings between the liaison and WEC’s Pamela Flash, this discussion was codified and developed into Sections 1 and 2 above. A later meeting of an ad-hoc departmental committee helped to translate these ideas into criteria for evaluation of student writing (Section 4).

The second large meeting (December 2) was scheduled to map the desired writing abilities to the curriculum. This meeting was somewhat more difficult and inconclusive. It became clear that our faculty are already incorporating elements of the desired writing abilities into their courses, but also that we are collectively doing so in many different ways. It also became clear that the “flatness” of our curriculum meant that we could not tie writing abilities to the curriculum in any highly structured way – at least without major changes to the structure of the program itself.

Our final faculty meeting (March 31, 2014) was devoted to discussion of how to use the resources provided by the WEC program to implement our plan into the curriculum. The discussion was wide-ranging, but two key points emerged: the need to better and more consistently signal our expectations about writing throughout the curriculum and the parallel need to better understand how our students are moving through the curriculum. The central points from that discussion are outlined in Sections 3 and 5 of this plan.
7. The Writing Plan and Student Learning Outcomes

*Briefly, please describe the ways that the ideas contained in this Undergraduate Writing Plan address the University’s Student Learning Outcomes.*

The University of Minnesota’s Student Learning Outcomes codify an educational vision and set of values. The University states that at time of graduation, students:

1. Can identify, define and solve problems
2. Can locate and critically evaluate information
3. Have mastered a body of knowledge and a mode of inquiry
4. Understand diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies
5. Can communicate effectively
6. Understand the role of creativity, innovation, discovery and expression across disciplines
7. Have acquired skills for effective citizenship and life-long learning

The broad vision of liberal education, here summarized in points 4 and 7, is at the core of our department’s deep commitment to teaching. Making sense of differing life experiences, epistemologies, and cultural arrangements is centrally what our discipline is about. This is reflected in what we teach day to day in our classes and what our students engage in their writing, but also in the curriculum itself – the courses we offer and what we expect students to engage as they master the theories and methods of the discipline (outcome 3).

In turn, our instructors and TAs see this kind of engagement as one of the most important “skills for effective citizenship and life-long learning” that will stick with our graduates. Indeed, our students come to our program in large part because they are attracted to this vision and they want to be engaged in the big issues that face our society.

The current writing plan helps us to better meet these goals by nurturing and developing the more prosaic writing skills that will help our students to be engaged in this way. We want to foster both the general writing skills (identify and define problems, locate and evaluate information), but also to gain experience and confidence in the modes of writing that will allow for such engagement.
## V. WEC Writing Plan Requests

### Financial Requests

(requests cannot include faculty salary support) *drop-down choices will appear when cell next to “semester” is selected*

**Total Financial Request:** $24,864.61

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate RA (ABD, 50%)</td>
<td>$10,088.78</td>
<td>Graduate RA (ABD, 50%)</td>
<td>$9,985.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergrad RA (25%), 196 hours@ $11/hr</td>
<td>$2,156.00</td>
<td>Undergraduate RA (25%), 194 hours@ $11/hr</td>
<td>$2,134.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch for department teaching workshop ($10/head for 25)</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
<td>Lunch for department teaching workshop ($10/head for 25)</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Semester 1 Total: | $12,494.78 | Semester 2 Total: | $12,369.83 | Semester 3 Total: | $0.00 |

### Rationale for costs and their schedule of distribution

Graduate RA will work with Liaison on gathering and analyzing data about writing in our program and on better signalling our writing vision in classes. Undergrad Ras will provide support for writing in core classes as we implement plan. Lunches are tied to teaching workshops in the department. Detailed rationale in the Writing Plan.

### Service Requests

*drop-down choices will appear when a cell in the "service" column is selected*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>In-class visit</td>
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<td>In-class visit</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Description and rationale for services

Support from Writing Center requested for RA/Liaison in teaching workshops and in piloting class visits for discussion of teaching goals. RA will consult on how to advise faculty on incorporating vision of writing plan into course materials. Detailed rationale in the Writing Plan.
June 26, 2014

To: Joe Gerteis, Sociology  
From: Robert McMaster, Office of Undergraduate Education  
Subject: Decision regarding WEC funding proposal

The Department of Sociology recently requested the following funding to support its Writing Enriched Curriculum:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Hours/Rate</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>Graduate RA (ABD, 50%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$10,088.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>Undergrad RA (25%), 196 hrs, $11/hr</td>
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<td>$2,156.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>Lunch for dept teaching workshop ($10/ea, 25 people)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
<td>Graduate RA (ABD, 50%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$9,985.83</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
<td>Undergrad RA (25%), 194 hrs, $11/hr</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,134.00</td>
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<td>Lunch for dept teaching workshop ($10/ea, 25 people)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$250.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL REQUEST** $24,864.61

The highlighted items have been approved by the Office of Undergraduate Education, for a total of **$20,574.61**. Please provide Pat Ferrian (ferri004@umn.edu) with your department’s EFS information so the funds may be transferred.

The Office of Undergraduate Education is generally supportive of your funding requests for the undergraduate RAs, but had several questions regarding training, oversight, sustainability, and assessment that must be clarified before approval could be granted for the remaining $4,290 of your budget request. Please see below:

- What criteria will be used to select undergraduate students for this role, and what type of feedback will they be expected to provide to their fellow students? Will students commit to a certain timeframe (1 semester, 1 year, etc.)?

- How will these students be trained, and what oversight will be provided to maintain quality and consistency of feedback?

- If this pilot program is successful, how will you plan to fund it in the future?

- What are the measures of success?

Please set up a meeting with Pamela Flash to discuss the best way to make these adjustments. Because this is a pilot project, you may want to consider adopting the model utilized by Computer Science. If you do choose to pursue this funding request, please provide updated materials no later than **August 15**. An updated request can be submitted to Leslie Schiff at schif002@umn.edu, with a CC to Rachel Rodrigue at webe0354@umn.edu.

CC: Suzanne Bardouche, Molly Bendzick, Will Durfee, Pat Ferrian, Pamela Flash, Tim Gustafson, Leslie Schiff, Jules Thompson