The University Writing Program:  
A systemic approach to support the advancement of writing excellence across RIT

DRAFT: Version 1.0

Overview and context: In the spring of 2010, the Academic Senate approved a transformational approach to advancing the writing skills of RIT students. The Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) proposal included introducing additional advanced writing courses both in general education and in the individual degree programs, new faculty development for teaching writing and student support services that include a system of peer writing fellows.

In addition, RIT has traditionally supported writing through the First Year Writing Seminar, the Writing Center, other support units across the campus and faculty development opportunities from the Wallace Center.

The writing skills of our students are critical to their success and to the academic excellence of RIT. As the RIT policy on writing (D16.0) states, “Writing practice and instruction fosters higher order thinking and cultivates critical intellectual processes such as analyzing ideas, solving problems, and evaluating claims,” and “Writing competencies are essential for graduates to secure jobs, advance in their given professions, and participate in all forms of civic life.”

This charter documents how a new programmatic structure at the university level will be organized to implement the WAC proposal while continuing to provide superior support services to students. For the purposes of this charter, this new structure will be called the University Writing Program (UWP).

Goals and objectives: There are five overarching goals to be achieved with the new UWP.

1. Support the achievement of student learning outcomes, particularly those that involve writing skills.
2. Provide writing support to all RIT students.
3. Implement the Writing Across the Curriculum program.
4. Coordinate and develop the writing resources across campus for operational excellence and efficiency.
5. Work collaboratively with the Institute Writing Committee to advance writing across RIT and to develop new innovative pedagogical approaches to teaching writing.
**Administrative structure:** The University Writing Program will take a systemic approach to writing, ensuring that the learning needs of all students are met, faculty have pedagogical development opportunities, resources are used effectively, and learning outcomes relevant to writing are achieved. In particular, there will be three components: the Writing Across the Curriculum, the Writing Center and the First Year Writing Seminar.

As the UWP is a university-wide academic and curricular program, the UWP will report into the Office of the Provost. It will have a director who will coordinate and oversee all three components. The director will be primarily responsible for implementing and overseeing the WAC while the Writing Center and the Writing Seminar will be lead by associate directors for the UWP.

The director will be guided and advised by the Institute Writing Committee (IWC), a standing committee of the Academic Senate.
Resources: To establish the UWP, we will be realigning the Writing Center from the Division of Student Affairs and the First Year Writing Seminar Program from the Department of English in the College of Liberal Arts. The funding for the director position will come from reallocating monies in the Office of the Provost.
**Timeline for implementing UWP:** The academic year 2011-2012 will be a transitionary year that will include the hiring of the UWP director, the integration of the Writing Center and the Writing Seminar and the initial deployment of faculty development grants. It is important that the transition proceed smoothly and seamlessly and so it is anticipated that the timeframe for this transition will take a significant portion of the Academic Year 2011-2012. Following this transitionary year, the UWP will be in full implementation mode:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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| AY 2011-2012   | Complete UWP director hire  
|                | Transition Writing Center into UWP  
|                | Transition administration of Writing Seminar to UWP  
|                | Develop WAC plan  
|                | Initiate faculty development funds  |
| AY 2012-2013   | Pilot writing-intensive courses  
|                | Develop student peer writing fellows program  
|                | Continue faculty development  |
| AY 2013-2014   | Semesters begin  
|                | Continue faculty development  
|                | Pilot student peer writing fellows program  |
| AY 2014-2015   | Implement student peer writing fellows program  
|                | Full implementation of UWP achieved  |