Title of the program

Writing support for graduate students teaching Disciplinary Communication (DC) classes

Program

This is a Writing Program proposal, meant to be facilitated by the Writing Program for graduate students (TAs) outside the Writing Program who will teach DC courses in their respective fields. Briefly, we are seeking funding to offer one section of WRIT 202: Writing and Learning Seminar, a class that equips TAs with strategies for helping "undergraduates become better learners and writers in disciplinary courses" (UCSC Catalog). A list of course goals for WRIT 202 are provided in the "What is Proposed?" section of this proposal.

Proposed Budget, Writing support for faculty to teach Writing 202		
WRIT 202, 1 section, 2015-2016	**LSOE @ 1 Course Equivalency**	8050.00
		Project total: $8050.00

Number of students affected

Per the course catalogue, WRIT 202 will be capped at 30 graduate students. In teaching this course, though, we hope to reach a considerable number of undergraduate students in classes TA'd by graduate students who take WRIT 202.

As part of their work in the WRIT 202, students will be asked to prepare training and support materials that can be used in their home departments and/or shared on the teaching resource Google site created by the Committee on Teaching (COT). The COT Google site states that:

> *It is the goal of the Committee on Teaching to create a center for teaching support. Within the committee's means, it is our short term goal to create a web presence for a center that can provide as many teaching resources to the campus community as possible. We hope to create a community for faculty to learn from and share strategies with each other.*

The Writing Program has already partnered with the COT to create materials for the Google site as part of the coursework in Writing 203: Theory & Practice of Teaching Writing (the class that trains graduate students to be the instructor of record for a writing course). This proposal would allow us a broader reach by integrating the creation of DC-specific materials into Writing 202.

Thus, we have in mind three audiences: Graduate students who will TA in DC courses during 2015-2016; the undergraduates in the care of those DC TAs; and members of the wider campus community who might find reason to consult the resources that will be created in WRIT 202 and disseminated through the COT's Google site.

What is proposed?

We submit this proposal to secure funding to offer a support class (WRIT 202) for TAs who teach the DC requirement.

The main goal of the proposed support class is to provide "strategies for teaching assistants to help undergraduates become better learners and writers in disciplinary courses." The class would help graduate students teach in the DC context by addressing the following topics:

- what they can expect their students to have been taught in Writing 2 or a similar community college course;
- how to help students build on writing and communication skills they have already learned in Writing 2 or elsewhere;
- how to deal with faculty-created writing assignments so as to effectively mentor students through the writing process;
- how to design writing assignments that help students to plan, draft, and revise their responses to course materials and generate material for papers/reports/posters;
- how to help students understand and plan responses to assignments, generate material for papers/reports/posters, and revise them;
- how to teach students conventions of communication in specific disciplines (e.g., how writers present evidence and cite sources in literature or biology or economics);
- how to teach students strategies for assessing their own work and that of others; and
- how to address ESL-related challenges.[1]

The class content would be keyed to the disciplines represented by the DC classes in which the grad students serve as TAs. We would particularly advertise this class to departments with large numbers of majors and significant use of TA support in their DC classes and those with significant need for support for their TAs, such as Economics, Biology, Psychology, and Literature. During AY 2013-2014, members of the Writing Program spoke with individual members of the Economics, Psychology, and History departments; those conversations led us to believe that such a course would likely be welcome. We are also aware of significant DC-related need in the two Biology departments.

Problems addressed by the proposal

There is no comprehensive, systemic support for DC classes at UCSC. While scattered support exists (for instance, Learning Support Services has provided MSI support for selected DC classes, and individual students have been able to receive tutoring at LSS and the West Side Writing Center), the only formal support for the DC has been provided by a couple of a couple of departments (LALS and Environmental Studies) that have self-funded the costs of using Writing Program faculty as co-teachers in their DC classes. The failure to systematically support the campus DC requirement has been amplified by the absence of a Center for Teaching Excellence or any central pedagogical guidance at all — though as we note above, the COT (via the Google site) is seeking to rectify this situation, and our efforts would be enacted in collaboration with theirs.

If WRIT 202 is funded, we will at minimum be able to offer basic guidance to TAs who, though in most cases apprentices in University-level teaching, have been tasked with assessing student writing both for content and for its adherence to disciplinary conventions.

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[1] It is worth noting that both UCLA and UC Riverside offer Writing Program-staffed training classes for graduate students who teach in their version of upper-division DC courses. Among other virtues, these programs ensure that graduate students teaching writing within disciplinary contexts are alert to and consciously articulate lower- and upper-division writing instruction, a welcome consistency for DC students who are simultaneously absorbing complex new disciplinary content and conventions (genres, expectations, styles) for communication within the discipline. UCSC would do well to do likewise.

Fit with the program's learning outcomes
The Writing Program's formal learning goals are tied to the courses it offers, almost exclusively lower-division classes that help students to satisfy C1 or C2 General Education requirements. The Writing Program no longer offers an upper-division writing curriculum, but we are deeply invested in continuing to support our students' education in writing (~80% of any given frosh class passes through the Writing Program) after they satisfy the lower-division requirements. Writing Program guidance to Disciplinary Communication TAs will offer those TAs basic familiarity with what undergraduate students should already have learned about academic discourse in their lower-division writing courses. In addition, we will train TAs to help students build on what they learned at the lower division (especially in Writing 2) and adapt that knowledge about writing to new contexts. This course will also have the significant benefit of allowing the Writing Program to learn more about what other programs and departments value in writing, and will therefore help Writing Program faculty make their own courses and methods of teaching more useful for students in diverse majors.

Also, as the only program that offers a formal pedagogy seminar for graduate students, we have considerable experience in providing instruction and guidance to those tasked with the teaching of writing, and we hope to use that expertise in support of larger campus efforts.

Assessment plan:
Assessment will be handled initially via WRIT 202 participants' course evaluations and by analysis of the teaching resources created by participants. A follow-up survey within eighteen months will examine the longer-term value of the course as graduate students go on to TA for or teach subsequent classes that may or may not be DC courses. Surveys may be supplemented by interviews with TA participants and with department chairs or undergraduate curriculum directors for their observations on the effects of the support class on graduate teaching.

Sustainability
In addition to the one-time money sought here, we call for a careful CEP/CPB-led assessment of the DC, with an eye toward permanent funding for classes such as WRIT 202. We will certainly seek continued funding if our efforts prove to be valuable to the campus.