

Writing Program Disciplinary Communication Grant Application
Tonya Ritola, Teaching Professor and Assessment Coordinator, Writing Program

1. Title of the program

Writing Pathways: Tracing Students' Writing from C2 to the DC

2. Department/Program

This is a Writing Program proposal that is designed to investigate students' writing pathways as they move from the completion of their Composition 2¹ (C2) General Education requirement to their respective Disciplinary Communication (DC) courses. The purpose of this longitudinal study is to research the kinds of writing knowledge and practice students develop throughout their careers at UCSC. I will use my research results to develop evidence-based curricular materials that Writing Program faculty can implement into their C2 courses. This initiative will enable UCSC to continue its development of a locally-responsive and vertically-integrated writing curriculum, from the lower division to the DC.

NOTE: Unlike conventional DC grant proposals, this proposal requests funding to target and improve students' performance in the C2 course to better prepare them for the DC.

3. Amount requested

To complete this proposal, I am requesting **\$10,200**. Please see "Detailed Budget" below for specific information about how the funds will be allocated.

4. Number of students affected

This study has the potential to impact a significant number of students who complete their C2 requirement in Writing 2 before they advance to the DC requirement.

Initially, this program will directly impact nine students: seven students who enrolled in my fall 2016 Writing 2 course who will serve as research participants in this two-year longitudinal study; and 3 students who will serve as undergraduate research assistants that will transcribe interviews and conduct coding/data analysis.

I will use the study results to develop curricular materials that I will present to Writing Program faculty in a two-hour workshop. This workshop will teach faculty how to integrate key writing concepts in C2 that will benefit students as they move from C2 to the DC. As a result, this project is designed to influence virtually all Writing 2 students in the coming years.

¹ Students may satisfy the Composition 2 requirement by either taking a C2-bearing College Core Course (80B), administered by the colleges, or by taking Writing 2, administered by the Writing Program.

5. Overview of the program's DC requirement

In this longitudinal study, I will evaluate seven students from my fall 2016 Writing 2 course. I selected these students because they (1) represent a diverse cohort with regard to the background characteristics, (2) moved through different writing pathways (Stretch-Core and ELWR-Satisfied Core) ahead of Writing 2, (3) expressed interest in this study, and (4) have different course sequences to meet the DC requirement (See "What is Proposed?" for more details about the student sample).

These students represent the following majors: Theatre Arts, Politics, Business Management Economics, Mathematics (Pure), Physics (B.S.), Math Education, and Human Biology. Because I am proposing a longitudinal study--following students from Writing 2 to the DC--I will examine seven DC course sequences, briefly outlined below:

- **Theatre Arts:** THEA 160 Dramatic Theories, THEA 185 Senior Seminar, and THEA 159 Advanced Playwriting
- **Politics:** Three of the required four core courses from the following list of courses: 105A Ancient Political Thought, 105B Early Modern Political Thought, 105C Modern Political Thought; 120A Congress, President, and the Court in American Politics, 120B Society and Democracy in American Political Development, 120C State and Capitalism in American Political Development; 140A Politics of Advanced Industrialized Societies, 140C Latin American Politics, 140D Politics of East Asia; 160A International Politics, 160B International Law, 160C Security, Conflict, Violence, War, and 160D International Political Economy
- **Business Management Economics:** ECON 197 Economic Rhetoric or ECON 104 Is There Truth in Numbers: The Role of Statistics in Economics
- **Mathematics (Pure):** MATH 100 Introduction to Proof and Problem Solving and MATH 194 Senior Seminar OR MATH 195 Senior Thesis
- **Physics (B.S.):** PHYS 182 and Senior Thesis
- **Math Education:** MATH 100 Introduction to Proof and Problem Solving and MATH 194 Senior Seminar OR MATH 195 Senior Thesis
- **Human Biology:** BIOL 130L Human Physiology Lab, BIOL 189 Health Sciences Internship, and BIOL 189W

6. What is proposed?

For most students, the C2 course is the last designated writing course they take before they are expected to write with field-specific expertise in the DC. As the unit that offers a significant portion of these classes through Writing 2, the Writing Program is responsible

for equipping students with both the declarative and procedural knowledge they need to be successful in their DC courses.² In other words, Writing 2 is not just a course that satisfies a general education requirement; it is also a preparatory course that teaches students writing knowledge and practice they must take up in their DC courses.

To understand what such uptake might look like, this study will allow the Writing Program to clarify both its goals for Writing 2 and faculty's expectations for the DC courses. Such an understanding is crucial for the Writing Program and will allow us to respond directly to our 2014 External Review. In this review, we were commended on our efforts to work with DC faculty to best serve students, but we were also encouraged to continue seeking ways to develop courses that "articulate with the DC" so we can "inform campus wide discussions about the alignment between the DC and the C1/C2 courses." The results of this study will help us to understand what such alignment might look like.

My fall 2016 Writing 2 course was titled "Teaching for Transfer," and it was explicitly designed to help students develop writing knowledge and practice they can apply to other contexts. Thus, the course's main objective was to prepare students for the DC.

The students who expressed interest in participating in this grant come from very different backgrounds. Of the seven, four are multilingual language learners, three are first-generation college students, four are students of color, and three entered the institution ELWR-Required and took Stretch-Core ahead of Writing 2.

Finally, in my Writing 2 course, students were required to self-select a topic and sustain inquiry about that topic over the course of seven weeks. Every student who signed up for this study selected a topic related to their majors/careers, so they are a good fit for a longitudinal study.

I am proposing two specific initiatives to complete this project: (1) following students from quarter to quarter as they complete their undergraduate careers at UCSC; and (2) presenting the findings of this study to Writing Program faculty so that they can revise their curricula to include writing concepts that will prepare students for the DC. I describe each initiative below.

Initiative 1: To develop a cohesive longitudinal study, I will ask student participants to...

- Fill out a quarterly survey that details the kinds of writing students have completed and the key writing terms students found most beneficial;
- Submit yearly written reflections about their writing experiences;

² For comparison, in the 2016-2017 AY, the colleges taught 44 sections of 80B (31% of the C2 courses), while the Writing Program taught/will teach 141 sections (69% of the C2 courses).

- Submit yearly assignments they consider to be their “best writing”;
- Submit their DC writing assignments; and
- Participate in four interviews (over two years) to explain how their Writing 2 experiences influenced their abilities to write successfully in other courses.

To analyze this data, I will work with three undergraduate student researchers to transcribe student interviews, analyze survey data, and code students’ writing assignments to see what key writing concepts were most useful to their success.

Initiative 2: The results of this research project will be presented to Writing Program faculty in a two-hour workshop setting. This workshop will present the research findings and will educate faculty about the key writing concepts and practices students need exposure to in Writing 2 if they are to be successful in their DC courses.

Timeline

Fall 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Writing Experience Survey • Participate in Interview 1
Winter 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Writing Experience Survey
Spring 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Writing Experience Survey • Submit Reflections and Assignments • Participate in Interview 2
Fall 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Writing Experience Survey • Participate in Interview 3
Winter 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Writing Experience Survey • Analyze Results w/ Undergraduate Researcher
Spring 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Writing Experience Survey • Analyze Results w/ Undergraduate Researcher • Submit Reflections and Assignments • Participate in Interview 4
Fall 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze Results w/ Undergraduate Researcher
Winter 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present findings to faculty
Spring 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement findings in Writing 2

7. What problem will this proposal solve?

I am proposing this project for two reasons:

- Writing Program faculty are tasked with teaching courses that prepare students for the DC, but we often have only a “felt sense” of what this means. As a program, we want to prepare students for writing in other contexts, but to be successful, we need to know more about the assignments students will be asked to complete and the expectations DC faculty have for student writing.
- This proposal will help the Writing Program respond to its 2014 External Review by giving us an opportunity to articulate Writing 2 with the DC courses.

8. How does the DC fit within your program’s learning outcome goals?

The Writing Program does not offer a DC course. However, this project will positively influence departmental PLOs, specifically tied to writing proficiencies, because students will be better prepared for their DC courses after taking Writing 2.

9. Detailed budget

Student Participants (@7)	\$300/person for 25/hrs of work: four interviews, quarterly surveys, two written reflections, and submission of writing assignments completed in the major	\$2100
Undergraduate Students Researchers (@3)	\$12/hr for 10/hrs week for one quarter each (one in winter 2019; one in spring 2019; one in fall 2019) ³	\$3600
Faculty Workshop Stipends ⁴ (@45)	\$50/hr for 2/hrs (one time; winter 2020)	\$4500
		Project Total: 10,200

³ I am requesting three undergraduate researchers because I want to stagger the data analysis process, as I will be collecting interview data, student writing, and survey data.

⁴ In the Writing Program, we have ~45 Unit 18 lecturers. In order for this proposal to have significant impact, I am requesting faculty funding for the workshop to optimize participation. If the workshop is offered on a volunteer basis, then the overall percentage of faculty attending may be low, which would compromise my ability to make the research useful for students.

10. Assessment plan

The project itself implements several assessment protocols. Together, with undergraduate researchers, we will assess the following:

- The efficacy of my fall 2016 “Teaching for Transfer” Writing 2 course by coding students’ written reflections and interview data. Further, we will compare this data with students’ final course reflections (Assignment titled “Theory of Writing”) from fall 2016 to learn more about how my Writing 2 course prepared them to write beyond the context of my course;
- We will analyze students’ surveys responses to generate information about their writing experiences in the DC, which will impact the design of the faculty workshop;
- After the workshop, I will survey faculty to learn more about how they will directly implement the study findings into their Writing 2 courses; and
- The long-term impact of this project will be assessed through a direct outcomes-based writing assessment, similar to the methodologies I employed to study the C1 course.

11. Sustainability

This proposal is for one-time funding only, with the hope that a similar longitudinal study may be possible in the future once the new College Core Course and lower-division writing curricular revisions are put into place in the 2018-2019 AY.



Tonya Ritola <tritola@ucsc.edu>

Additional DC Grant for Writing Program: Due March 30th

Tyler Stovall <humdean@ucsc.edu>

Wed, Mar 22, 2017 at 5:36 PM

To: "Tonya L. Ritola" <tritola@ucsc.edu>

Cc: Heather Shearer <hshearer@ucsc.edu>, Judy Plummer <jplummer@ucsc.edu>

Hi Tonya,

Yes, I support this.

Tyler

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 20, 2017, at 5:57 PM, Tonya L. Ritola <tritola@ucsc.edu> wrote:

Hi,

Yes, Tyler, it's the same funding agency as before, Division of Undergraduate Education. It does not need to go through OSP because it is internal.

Thank you so much!

I'm flying back East for a family emergency, so if there are additional questions, please let Heather know.

Sincerely,
Tonya

--

Tonya Ritola, PhD
she/her/hersTeaching Professor & Assessment Coordinator, **Writing Program**University of California, Santa Cruz
Mailstop: Humanities Academic Services
1156 High Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95064

Please forgive typos and brevity; sent from phone.

On Mar 20, 2017, at 6:23 PM, Heather Shearer <hshearer@ucsc.edu> wrote:

Dear Tyler,

I believe Tonya is on a flight today, so I am taking the liberty of replying.

She is applying for DC grants, which are funded through UE.

Sincerely,
Heather

On Mon, Mar 20, 2017 at 1:25 PM, Tyler Stovall <humdean@ucsc.edu> wrote:

Dear Tonya,

Who is funding this grant program?

Best,

Tyler

On 3/20/17 11:37 AM, Tonya Ritola wrote:

Dear Tyler,

Thank you for approving my grant to work with the Sociology Department. As mentioned, I am attaching a final grant for approval, specifically focusing on the Writing Program.

This grant is titled "Writing Pathways: Tracing Students' Writing from C2 to the DC," for the 2017-2020 AY. This proposal is a longitudinal study designed to investigate students' writing pathways as they move from the completion of Writing 2 to their respective Disciplinary Communication (DC) courses. I think my research has the potential to influence how we disseminate the C2 curriculum, and it's timely for the upcoming revisions we have.

You need only send me email confirmation of your support for this grant, should you choose to support it. I will include your correspondence with my application packet, along with Chair Shearer's support email (attached).

Thank you so much for your consideration,
Tonya

--

Tonya Ritola, PhD, she/her
Teaching Professor, Writing Program
University of California Santa Cruz
1156 High St.
Santa Cruz 95064
Phone: [831-459-7024](tel:831-459-7024)
Mailstop: Crown Faculty Services

--

Heather Shearer, PhD
Teaching Professor and Writing Program Chair
University of California at Santa Cruz
1156 High Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95064

Crown 126
[831-459-2483](tel:831-459-2483)

<http://writing.ucsc.edu>



Tonya Ritola <tritola@ucsc.edu>

DC Grant to Study Writing 2 Pathways to the DC

Heather Shearer <hshearer@ucsc.edu>

Mon, Mar 20, 2017 at 10:50 AM

To: Tonya Ritola <tritola@ucsc.edu>

Dear Tonya,

This project will complement other planned projects (e.g., campus-wide DC survey; C2-related professional development), and the work you've outlined in the proposal will mesh usefully with your externally funded research on Teaching for Transfer.

The grant also creates research opportunities for undergraduates (you note that they will be used as transcribers and coders)--always a positive addition to campus culture.

For these reasons, this project has my support.

Sincerely,
Heather

[Quoted text hidden]

--

Heather Shearer, PhD
Teaching Professor and Writing Program Chair
University of California at Santa Cruz
1156 High Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95064

Crown 126
[831-459-2483](tel:831-459-2483)

<http://writing.ucsc.edu>