The Department of English
Plan for Fulfilling the Communication-Intensive Requirement

Communication Demands of the Discipline
English majors are among the most versatile of all college graduates. They pursue careers in both the private and public sectors, in areas such as the law, education, finance, the arts, social services, travel and tourism, publishing, and politics. English classes across the major, therefore, emphasize fundamental competencies broadly applicable to a wide variety of career paths. In discussions with our faculty, students, and Distinguished Alumni Board, the members of which have themselves excelled in a representative spectrum of careers, the following skills emerged as critical to professional success.

The ability to
- read and analyze spoken, written, and visual texts
- adapt written and oral communication to a culturally diverse audience
- construct effective arguments
- organize and present information logically
- write persuasively as well as creatively
- manage, structure, and synthesize information

English: A Communication-Rich Curriculum
Of the three discipline-specific competencies comprising the new communication requirement, writing is without question the most important to English majors. As a recent survey of pedagogical practices in the department has demonstrated, however, students routinely receive extensive instruction in all three competencies—spoken, visual, and written communication—in a broad array of English classes spanning the curriculum—from the gateway Introduction to Critical Reading course to capstone courses in literature, professional writing, or creative writing. For example,
- Students in the Introduction to Critical Reading course learn effective principles of spoken communication. Individual and group presentations are common in the 3000-level period courses. Senior Seminar students present the results of their research, frequently teaching or co-teaching a class.
- Visual communication is evident in a variety of Professional Writing courses, where students learn principles of design essential to the construction of printed documents and web pages. Creative writing courses teach students to analyze typography and visual representation in poetry and fiction. The analysis of film, advertising, and photography is common to many literature courses, especially those employing a cultural studies approach.
- Students learn to improve their written communication skills as they move through the major. They begin in Introduction to Critical Reading by composing short papers employing a basic critical vocabulary to analyze single texts. By the time they have reached the capstone courses in literature, professional writing, or creative writing, they have learned to conduct original research projects, develop a user manual or a grant proposal, or develop an extensive, multi-genre portfolio.
Developing a Sequenced, Integrated Approach to Spoken, Visual, and Written Communication: Goals and Objectives

While our department survey of pedagogical practices revealed communication instruction to be pervasive across the curriculum, our most important goal for the new CI plan is to make sure that each student moves through our program encountering this instruction in a substantial, integrated, and measurable way. Because students elect to specialize in Creative Writing, Professional Writing, or Literature, Language and Culture, we also need to link communication instruction to each of these options. Finally, we want to engage students in reflecting on the process of their own growth in the areas of spoken, visual, and written communication. To this end, we have developed parallel CI plans for each of the options, based on a common template. The bookends of the CI requirement will be our Introduction to Critical Reading course (2604) and our program-specific capstone courses. (As pedagogical methods are not part of the course ratification process, and as we would not be changing the content of these courses beyond the 20% limit, we would not be required to send these courses through the various committees again. This means we could enact this process immediately and phase it in over the next few years.)

Although we have integrated various aspects of communication into many of our English courses, we need to ensure that students can reflect upon the various kinds of learning experiences they’ve participated in during their four years. We also need to make sure that it is not just technique that is foregrounded in our courses, but that analysis and critique are at the heart of the investigation. We understand that there are very few resources to support this effort and that therefore our plans need to be as economical as possible. In English, we also face the problem of scalability. The large faculty in English means that it’s impossible to get funding support for everyone, but it’s also vital that we find a way to assist them as they introduce new approaches into the classroom.

Plan for the CI Curriculum in English

The plan we have developed is one we believe is practical and workable, even with relatively few resources. For all English majors, the CI requirement will include the following components:

1. Intensive instruction in analytical writing, spoken argument, and visual literacy in English 2604, Introduction to Critical Reading, the gateway course to the English major, coupled with presentations by the ePortfolio Pedagogy Team. (See below.)
2. Ongoing development of student ePortfolios assisted by Writing Center tutors trained to help in this process.
3. A program-specific capstone course. In this small seminar setting each student already undertakes a major written project of ambitious length and complexity. This work is presented to peers in a formal, visually-enhanced presentation. Once again, the ePortfolio Pedagogy Team visits the class to help guide students through the reflection component of the ePortfolio.
The ePortfolio Pedagogy Team (ePPT) will assist in the introduction, monitoring, and assessment of ePortfolios. We are fortunate in that several of those currently working on the University’s pilot ePortfolio project are faculty in our department, and many others have expressed an interest in utilizing this technology. The team of 5-8 faculty members will work together to determine how best to incorporate ePortfolios into the curriculum. Supporting this effort will be graduate student tutors in the Writing Center—at least 2 of these tutors will be trained specifically in ePortfolio pedagogy by the ePPT.

The ePortfolio begun in English 2604 will contain materials evidencing growth in written, spoken, and visual communication. These might include writings of increasing length, complexity, and sophistication drawn from a variety of courses, analyses of films, stage productions, advertisements, photography, or paintings, and outlines or streaming video of oral presentations. A common component of each ePortfolio will be the student’s reflection on the connections between the discrete pieces of the ePortfolio and on the intellectual growth experienced in assembling the work over time.

Applying the Template to the Options

Creative Writing CI Requirement
- The student successfully completes 2604 with mastery of the basic principles of analytical writing, spoken argument, and visual literacy. Student attends ePPT presentations.
- Working closely with a Creative Writing advisor and with graduate student specialists in the Writing Center, the student develops the ePortfolio.
- In the capstone course (either Advanced Creative Writing: Poetry or Advanced Creative Writing: Fiction) the student develops a major written project and presents it to peers.

Professional Writing CI Requirement
- The student successfully completes 2604 with mastery of the basic principles of analytical writing, spoken argument, and visual literacy. Student attends ePPT presentations.
- Working closely with a Professional Writing advisor and with graduate student specialists in the Writing Center, the student develops the ePortfolio.
- In the capstone course (Issues in Professional and Public Discourse), the student develops a major written project and presents it to peers.

Literature, Language, and Culture CI Requirement
- The student successfully completes 2604 with mastery of the basic principles of analytical writing, spoken argument, and visual literacy. Student attends ePPT presentations.
- Working closely with an LLC advisor and with graduate student specialists in the Writing Center, the student develops the ePortfolio.
- In the capstone course (Senior Seminar), the student develops a major written project and presents it to peers.
Outline of Phasing Process
The Professional Writing program and, to some extent, the Creative Writing program already have portfolios as a component of many of their courses. In light of this, the phasing of this project will begin with Professional Writing, then go on to include Creative Writing. Students in the Literature, Language, and Culture option will be part of the final phase of this project.

English 2604 and the capstone course in each option already offer the kind of Communication-Intensive instruction described above.

The eportfolio will be new to our faculty and will need to be phased in by the ePPT according to the schedule below:

- ePPT Summer Seminars: Summer 2005; Summer 2006
- Faculty Development Workshops: Summer 2005; Summer 2006
- Graduate Student Writing Center Tutors trained by ePPT in the pedagogical theory and practice of ePortfolios: Summer 2005; Summer 2006; Summer 2007
- Specific content and criteria for student ePortfolios developed by ePPT and Program Directors: Summer and Fall 2005
- Assessment methods for ePortfolios developed by ePPT and Program Directors: Spring 2006
- ePortfolios implemented for English majors in Professional Writing Option: Fall 2006; ePortfolios implemented for English majors in Creative Writing Option: Fall 2007; ePortfolios implemented for English majors in Literature, Language and Culture Option: Fall 2008

Outcomes Assessment
All three elements of the CI template will be sites for assessment. We plan to take a four-fold approach to assessment.

1. **Internal Assessment 1**: Working with John Muffo and others we will develop a survey for our students to measure the success of our program.

2. **Internal Assessment 2**: Every four years, we will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the capstone courses by sampling assignments and student work and evaluating syllabus design to see whether goals have been met.

3. **External Assessment 1**: As part of our ongoing program development, the program directors will work with external assessors to measure the effectiveness of the ePortfolio and capstone experience. (E.g., AWP, the national creative writing organization has agreed to send a team to evaluate our undergraduate and graduate programs; the CI component will be a part of that evaluation process.)

4. **External Assessment 2**: We will work with alumni representatives on our Distinguished Alumni Board and ask them to conduct periodic evaluations of capstone projects.
ADDENDUM: Resource Needs
Successful and speedy implementation of this CI plan will require the following resources:

**Communication-Intensive Requirement Budget: AY 2005-2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Element</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Amount Needed*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ePortfolio Pedagogy Team</td>
<td>$2,500 x 6</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Center ePortfolio Tutors (2 grad students, 10 hrs each per week)</td>
<td>$5,625 x 2</td>
<td>$11,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Support</td>
<td>Covered by English: 2 part-time IT personnel, student work hours (Proposed cost-share estimate:$7,500 per year)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty Development 2-day CI Workshops</td>
<td>$250 per participant x 25 per year</td>
<td>$6,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment (one-time cost for external evaluation)</td>
<td>$5,000 (Proposed cost-share: ENGLISH =$3,000)</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$34,500</strong></td>
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*English will work to cover as much of this cost ourselves as we can because we believe it’s an important and innovative project. We would greatly appreciate any assistance that can be offered to us by the University. Apart from the assessment cost, this amount would be ongoing support that would be needed during the first three years of the project so that we could get it established.

**Budget Narrative**

**ePortfolio Pedagogy Team:** Summer stipends of $2,500 each would permit team members to plan the presentations they will be making to English majors in 2604 and the capstone courses. This will also permit them to meet for approximately five mornings in a seminar setting to discuss ePortfolio pedagogy and think about ways to tie these to the curriculum and to assessment. The team will consist of faculty representatives from each of the three programs (LLC, CW, and PW).

**Writing Center ePortfolio Tutors:** These tutors would receive training from members of the ePortfolio Pedagogy Team. They would work with majors on the development of their ePortfolios at any time during their academic careers. As we already have a Writing Center tutorial program in place (we are one of the oldest Writing Centers in the country) and hope to recruit a new director this year, we think we’d be positioned well to offer this kind of support, especially as we begin to establish the new graduate programs in English.

**Technical Support:** We anticipate that faculty will need additional support as they work to incorporate ePortfolios into their courses. We will try to cover this as best we can.

**Faculty Development—2-day, CI Workshops:** We plan to hold two-day workshops for faculty. We hope we can invite the CEUT and the University Writing program to assist us with these workshops. We will model them after our highly successful composition workshops, which have resulted in the custom text for first-year composition courses.

**Assessment:** We already plan to conduct assessment as we launch our graduate programs. We will therefore utilize some of the funding we’d set aside for that in this assessment process. We will model the assessment after the thorough SCHEV review process, conducted by English and Communication.

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