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**Report of Curricular Renewal Sub-Group on Writing:
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Writing Requirement:

Four (4) semester hours after the First Year Course and prior to the senior year earned in a course designated as meeting the Writing (W) requirement.

Rationale:

Macalester's statement of purpose and belief states explicitly that students should be able to express themselves well in both oral and written forms. Writing is intimately connected with thinking, and competent writing is not merely a vehicle for expressing thought, but a means for producing it in the first place. Competency in writing is an essential skill in virtually all aspects of modern life and a prerequisite for many professions; it is, moreover, a cumulative process that cannot be successfully taught as a discrete skill in one semester. Writing instruction must be applied to significant academic, social, civic, and personal contexts for students during all of their four years at Macalester; learned in various rhetorical and discursive settings, and valued by students, staff, and faculty. Student writers must be held to high standards for clear communication for all of their "public" writing—public here meaning anything from a class paper to a publication in an academic journal.

Learning objectives:

Macalester seeks to ensure that all students receive an instruction in writing that gives attention to writing as a process (writing is rewriting), and that provides students individually with feedback on the mechanics and substance of their writing. While the first-year class assists students in making a transition to college writing along with myriad aspects of college study, each student is required to take at least one further course with a W designation, in which they will hone their writing skills and go through a process of evaluation and rewriting.

Specifically, the requirement aims at ensuring that students learn:

- How to plan, draft, and revise a college-level paper
- How to construct a thesis statement
- How to organize an essay
- How to use argumentation and evidence to support claims
- How to cite evidence using a standard citation style, such as MLA, APA, CMS, or CBE
- How to build a list of works cited using a standard citation style, such as MLA, APA, CMS, or CBE
- How to present a well-reasoned academic argument to a critical audience

–The importance of clear writing and proper grammar, usage, and style in academic writing.

Proposed Criteria for Designation as a “W” course:

In order to receive a “W” designation, a course must include three or more writing assignments during the semester (at least one of which is an academic argument) or one larger research or term paper. At least one writing assignment must undergo revision based on faculty feedback. At a minimum this feedback should include comments that address content (e.g., questions of organization, development of arguments, use of evidence, consideration of audience, paragraph structure and flow), clarity and style, as well as mechanics, such as grammar and proper usage. Faculty may also include course time devoted to discussing student writing processes, desired qualities of academic writing, or writing in the discipline. Grading of writing assignments should reflect writing quality as well as content mastery.

Since enrolling students in “W” classes will lead to larger classes and heavier work loads for some faculty members than for others, we encourage EPAG and Provost Michelfelder to open a discussion leading to a resolution of the equity issues that will arise.

Support for Writing Instruction

We propose to establish a Steering Committee to provide support for writing instruction at Macalester. The responsibilities of this committee would be:

- To review course proposals for inclusion in the W requirement
- To review courses offered as part of the W requirement in order to update and review the goals of the requirement
- To develop a means of assessing whether the goals of the W requirement are being met
- To work with CST and the MAX Center to organize faculty development workshops on various topics related to teaching writing and to enable faculty to develop W courses (requires extra funding)
- To work with the MAX Center to provide student tutor support to faculty teaching W courses. For example the MAX Center could:
 - Provide a writing center to support student writing (already a significant part of the MAX Center’s mission, no extra resources required at this point—perhaps if demand for tutors increases may need extra student workers).

- Provide their Works in Progress program for facilitated student-to-student review of drafts. (Likely will require additional tutors as “W” Courses are implemented.)
- Provide Peer-Tutor Liaisons for "W" courses. The purpose of the liaison would be to communicate to all the tutors, during MAX Center weekly staff meeting/ training sessions, the assignment requirements of the W course for the coming week(s). (With existing resources at present, likely need for additional tutors down the road.) AND/ OR
- Develop a liaison program where students would be drawn from the same departments as the W courses. Each department or program that offered W courses could have a tutor hired from among its majors, trained and supervised by the MAX Center, who would spend perhaps half of his or her hours as a liaison, meeting with the department faculty teaching W courses, visiting the W courses to explain MAX Center services to students, and bringing information to the MAX Center tutors. The other half of the hours would be as tutors in the MAX Center. (Requires extra funding.)
- Train writing fellows or assistants for W courses. (Funding for these fellows would be needed.)