

FINAL REPORT

**EXTERNAL REVIEW OF THE FIRST-YEAR WRITING PROGRAM
AT NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY**

Submitted on behalf of the
National Council of Writing Program Administrators

by

Dr. Eileen E. Schell
Syracuse University

Dr. Christopher Thaiss
University of California, Davis

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Table of Contents

Introduction and Context for the Report	2
I. Strengths of the First-Year Writing Program	3
II. NTT Faculty Working Conditions	6
III. ENGL105	7
IV. Possible Increased Coordination in Regard to Multilingual Writers	8
V. GTA Mentoring and Support	9
VI. Building a Unified, Powerful Writing (and Speaking) Presence at NCSU	10
VII. Assessment	11
Conclusion	13
References	14
Appendix A	16
Appendix B	17
Appendix C	18

Introduction and Context for the Report

On April 22-24, 2018, Professors Chris Thaiss and Eileen E. Schell¹ visited the North Carolina State University Program (NCSU) for the purpose of evaluating its First-Year Writing Program (FYWP). The visit was arranged through the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) Consultant-Evaluator Service; Thaiss and Schell are appointed evaluators for this service. Arrangements for the visit were made by Professor Shirley Rose, Director of the WPA Consultant-Evaluator Service, in consultation with Professor Casie Fedukovich, Associate Professor of English and Director of the FYWP at NCSU.

Prior to our visit, we received a FYWP self-study, which included an overview of the FYWP's personnel, writing curriculum, staffing information, specific challenges, and other details. During our visit and also at our request, we received copies of syllabi for ENG101. The self-study report identified the following areas for review: "the sustainability of [the] one-credit course for transfer students, ENG105; organization of the Program's administrative team; and the way the Program operates within the context of the department and other units on campus that provide writing courses and support for writers," and the working conditions of NTT faculty. We have used these identified items to structure our review.

We wish to thank the many faculty, students, and administrators we met during our visit to NCSU. In particular, we thank the following administrators who met with us during our time on campus: Jeff Braden, Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHASS); Deanna Dannels, Associate Dean, CHASS; Chris Anson, Director, Campus Writing and Speaking Program (CWSP); Meredith Reed, Graduate Consultant, CWSP; Vicki Martin, Associate Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; Adriana Kirkland, Associate Dean, College of Natural Resources; Jerome Lavelle, Associate Dean, College of Engineering; Stacey Pigg, Director of Professional Writing; Wendy VanDellon, Director, Writing and Speaking Tutorial Services; Anne Burke, University Library; Juliana Pybus, Foreign Languages Department; Nancy Penrose, Director of Graduate Studies, English; Jason Swartz, Director of Undergraduate Studies, English.

We thank the many members of the faculty of the First-Year Writing Program who met with us over several meetings. We thank the graduate students we met who serve as graduate teaching assistants in the First-Year Writing Program. In addition, we thank the undergraduate students from across the disciplines who shared their experiences in ENG101.

We thank especially Casie Fedukovich (Director of First-Year Writing), Stephany Dunstan of the Office of Assessment, and Laura Severin (Head, Department of English)

¹ Brief biographies of Professors Schell and Thaiss are included as Appendix A to this report.

for their assistance in many aspects of our visit. We also thank Dana Horne and Yvette Thompson for their assistance with arrangements before, during, and after our visit.

This report is divided into specific sections covering different areas of the program and related programs. Each section offers commentary on specific challenges and opportunities and concludes with our recommendations. We emphasize from the start that the NCSU program has a great deal to commend it; our report details ways that the program can build on its strengths and connections to other writing initiatives toward the goal of strengthening the writing culture in the FYWP and across campus.

I. Strengths of the First-Year Writing Program

At NCSU, ENG101: Academic Writing and Research is a four-credit-hour Writing in the Disciplines course. The course takes care of the General Education Plan's "Introduction to Writing" requirement; students take four credit hours of ENG101 (or the transfer equivalent) with a grade of C- or better. The course cap for ENG101 is an advantageous 19 students per section, which we found to be a considerable asset in giving students the time and attention they need to develop as writers.

As noted in the internal review report: "The overall goal for ENG101, therefore, is to develop the rhetorical sensitivities students need to understand how texts do the work they do." The program has seven shared goals while allowing instructors freedom to create their own syllabi and assignments: "Grounding policies for ENG101 include the following: students must write at least 25 pages of formal prose over the course of the semester (or 20 pages with a multimodal project); all instructors must teach at least three major projects for evaluation; final grades must be calculated with 80 percent of the grade." Clearly, ENG 101 is central to developing students' writing abilities and rhetorical awareness.

Staffing for the 101 course is made up almost exclusively of full-time non-tenure-track (NTT) lecturers and graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) who are themselves students in the MA programs or in the PhD program in Communication, Rhetoric, and Digital Media (CRDM). The NTT faculty in the FYWP clearly are doing an excellent job in teaching their varied undergraduate population principles of rhetoric and writing. According to the students we met, these principles can be applied in their disciplines and have made the assignments they have faced in the courses much easier.

In meeting with the faculty and hearing about their assignments and their time-intensive interactions with students' writing, we were impressed by the adherence of individual courses to the key course objectives that link all the sections. Our impression of the success of this model was reinforced by our reviewing syllabi, by the course objectives themselves, and by statistics on pass rates from year to year. We were even more impressed by the dedication of the faculty to their students, and their application of sound traditional principles of writing process pedagogy, including drafting, peer review, and revision. In terms of the current emphasis of writing studies theory on transferability

of concepts from the first-year required course to later courses they would be taking, the ENG 101 course, as enacted by these teachers, is indeed teaching transferable knowledge and abilities that students will find valuable as they proceed into their major courses.

Part of the approach across sections gives priority to students' choice of topics of intense interest to them, and to instructors challenging the students to find and apply the most pertinent research literature from their disciplines of choice. The students we met with across the disciplines remarked on the importance of being challenged to find the most pertinent and valid sources to support their arguments. They also noted the freedom they had to use the citation methods and bibliographic styles most pertinent to their chosen disciplines and to the topics of their choice.

Thus, in addition to the successful adaptation of process pedagogy, a time-honored method in writing studies, the course also successfully enacts its dedicated emphasis on the concept of writing in the disciplines (WID) and across the curriculum (WAC), as it was formulated in classic literature in the field in earlier decades.

In addition, part of our appreciation of the dedication of these NTT faculty comes from our recognition that their achievements have come about despite an appalling lack of appropriate compensation, which we will also explore in our Recommendations. To a person, the NTT faculty express their love of the NCSU students, but this sense of intrinsic reward should never be used by administrators to justify exploitation of professional educators.

In emphasizing successes, we also point out that the FYW Program Director Casie Fedukovich and the English Department Head Laura Severin were warmly praised by the NTT faculty for their advocacy of improved compensation and working conditions. They see both of these administrators as allies. Moreover, the NTT faculty very much appreciate the freedom they feel in the FYWP at NCSU to choose materials and design curriculum within the guidelines of the course objectives. In addition, they admire the frequent, regular faculty development workshops coordinated by the Program Director, which feature teaching presentations by individual faculty. These allow NTT faculty to learn from their colleagues and help to build what appears to us to be a vibrant community of instructors. These frequent workshops also provide an excellent forum for discussions of the curricular and organizational changes we recommend in the next section of this report, should faculty and administrators choose to use them in that way.

The support that the NTT faculty have from the departmental leadership is buttressed by the releases and stipends that the FYWP program leadership have been provided to manage day-to-day operations as well as planning for the future. These releases and stipends must be preserved to ensure the highest possible support for quality writing instruction. We also encourage the FYWP Director and staff to undertake the process of strategic planning and updating of the theoretical traditions and 21st century writing practices that inform the curriculum, as recommended below. A dedicated strategic planning retreat and a series of follow-up sessions will allow time for such planning and

can tie in to other recommendations made across this report. For the purposes of strengthening the FYWP, we recommend the following:

Recommendation #1: Formulate a five-year strategic plan that addresses needed adjustments and updating of the ENG101 course and the operations of the FYWP. As part of that plan, consider these recommended items for updating and strengthening the design of the ENG101 course and program as well as other pertinent recommendations across the report.

- According to the FYWP self-study, the course takes as a central text the article by Patricia Linton, Robert Madigan, and Susan Johnson “Introducing Students to Disciplinary Genres: The Role of the General Composition Course” (1994). This classic article addresses the importance of teaching students writing conventions from different disciplines. Writing in the disciplines (WID) is a model that has flourished considerably since the publication of this article, and we include texts in the reference section that could be utilized to update the WID/WAC paradigms being utilized. We encourage professional development events and speakers/workshop leaders centered around updating the program’s emphasis on WAC/WID to account for recent scholarship in this area.
- In addition to updating the program’s models of WAC/WID theory, it is necessary to consider how digital technologies (including multimodal communication) have greatly changed how writing occurs in disciplinary and non-academic contexts. When we asked about including multimodal work/projects in the curriculum, we heard different responses to that idea. One of the GTAs and another member of the NTT faculty noted their enthusiasm for engaging in multimodal work, whereas others expressed concern about knowing how to do this work and wanting to emphasize the more traditional skills of essay writing. We sensed reluctance to engage in this multimodal work among some NTT faculty and, in contrast, considerable enthusiasm among some GTAs and a handful of NTTs and faculty for including multimodal assignments and methods. Given the multi-faceted ways that digital writing and rhetoric are deployed across disciplines and in rhetorica and writing studies, it seems essential for more professional development to take place around this important area. We include sources in the references section on principles of multimodal course development that could be utilized in professional development activities. We also encourage the program to figure out ways of tapping into the knowledge bases of faculty in the unit who are already engaged in this work or whose scholarship touches on these areas.
- Another issue that emerged from our discussion with the program members, in particular, was the issue of diversity and inclusion in the 101 course. One of the program members pointed to the fact that the text/materials for the course did not include materials that would help students of color see how their communities were included or represented in the course materials or assignments. This was an issue we wondered

about as well, both in terms of the course materials but also in relation to having a diverse faculty and undergraduate and graduate student population on campus. We will comment further in another section about the ways in which student populations have diversified culturally and linguistically and how the curriculum could further engage and respond to multilingual student writers.

- **Planning for enrollments and better coordinating of advising functions:** The self-study refers to challenges with chaotic enrollment situations where the program leadership is asked to accommodate students with little advance warning or where advisors in other units are giving advice/promising timetables to students that cannot be carried out by the FYWP/CHASS. While a certain amount of flux is always present in accommodating large numbers of students in a FYWP, the program leadership expressed distress about these situations and a desire for more advance planning and consultation of them. The strategic planning process could determine areas of break-down or gaps in communication around advising and consultation and seek to create solutions to lessen those gaps.
- **Base budget:** During our visit, we learned that the FYWP has no firm base budget. Most FYWPs have designated operating funds that are dedicated to their routine functions as well as faculty development and special events funding, even in times of budgetary stress. A base allocation could be negotiated and determined during the strategic planning process and awarded on an annual basis.

II. NTT Faculty Working Conditions

The starting salary for NTT faculty of 32.5K not only puts NTT faculty way behind the national curve for writing programs in research universities with which NCSU would hope to be compared, but even more tellingly, behind other North Carolina institutions in the state system, where starting salaries are in the low to high 40s. The community colleges and the local K-12 school system also pay significantly more than does NC State. Moreover, the pain of the low starting salary is exacerbated by the lack of raises for many years and the lack of a clear-cut, transparent system of across-the-board raises or merit standards.

Although a number of faculty slightly augment their meager salaries by serving as mentors of graduate teaching assistants (GTAs), at \$500 per student, the many hours expended in this careful, conscientious mentoring (which the graduate students see as a primary benefit of coming to NC State) greatly exceed the value of the meager stipend. The teacher/mentors liken the hours in mentoring to teaching another course. We feel that we must call attention to the meager stipends particularly because the value to the graduate students has been so great. We comment more on the matter of the GTA mentoring system more in a later section of this report.

While we realize that the institution has been hard hit by budget cuts that have persisted since the national financial recession of 2007-11, as well as by short-sighted state policies that have damaged education, other North Carolina institutions seem to have dealt with these difficulties in ways that don't penalize NTT faculty. Nationally, the trend in the treatment of NTT faculty in writing programs in recent years has taken a very different trajectory with the creation of teaching professorships. Recognizing that new NTT positions have greatly superseded new tenure-line positions across higher education, institutions have responded by creating authentic career paths for NTT faculty, with extended (even non-term) contracts, opportunities for compensated promotion to such ranks as Associate and full Professorships in Teaching, better benefits, and extensive voting privileges in departments—all of which are lacking at NCSU. Indeed, as other institutions are moving toward measures that have increased the attractiveness of positions to highly-trained applicants and increased job security, actions in CHASS at NC State have made the NTTs in First-Year Writing even less secure, as they hear the term “flexibility” used as a threat—even as enrollments are steadily increasing and therefore the need for more faculty is intensifying.

Recommendation #2: In speaking with the Associate Deans from Engineering, Agriculture, and Natural Sciences, we learned that stable, fairly compensated NTT teaching-rank positions are already in place at NCSU in other departments/colleges. Implementing comparable positions in English/the FYWP seems of paramount importance and with salaries that are competitive in relation to peer institutions.

III. ENG105

As noted in the self-study, ENG105: Writing and Research in the Disciplines is a one-credit-hour, eight-week course (capped at 10 students) designed for transfer students who are arriving at NCSU with three transfer credits of first-year writing from another institution. ENG105 adds the 1-credit to complete the lower-division writing requirement at NCSU. ENG105 is built around a capstone assignment, a comparative rhetorical analysis (CRA) that focuses on differences and similarities between disciplines. The original rationale for the 105 course, beyond providing the additional 1 credit, is that students transferring in credits for ENG101 from other institutions would not have the kind of rhetorical training/WID focus that ENG101 offers. It is assumed that students who successfully complete ENG105 should be able to complete the capstone assessment for ENG101, the CRA. The CRA is 6-8 pages, and ENG105 currently has no formal page requirement or assignment policies beyond the CRA. Designing an entire course around one assignment is a large outlay of resources and instructional time.

In speaking with the Department Head, the Director of the FYWP, and instructors during our program visit, we learned that ENG105 is a course model that has become increasingly untenable. The self-study identified the major problems with the course, which were also reinforced and reiterated during our visit:

- Challenges with faculty workload: ENG105 has a course cap of 10 students, meaning that faculty must teach four sections of ENG105 to equal one section of ENG101. As noted in the self-study report: “Someone teaching a full load of ENG105 would teach 60 students every eight weeks or 120 students per semester.” This is an extremely high number of students for writing faculty.
- Challenges with the pedagogical rationale and delivery: Among the pedagogical problems we heard about were: (1) that the course is often delivered online, (2) students are overwhelmed by the eight-week format, and (3) advising is often problematic. The report notes that the “Associate Director for Undergraduate Support must audit every section of ENG105 before each semester to determine students’ eligibility.” Also, fail rates in ENG105 (10%) are double that in ENG101 (5%).
- Challenges with section management and a growing transfer population: The transfer population is growing, which puts additional pressure on ENG105. In particular, “Spring Connection” students need sections that may not be staffed/available. According to the self-study, this term alone (2018) “students arrived on campus being told they could be accommodated when their transcripts had not been processed into the Spring 2018 semester when all ENG105 seats in both eight-week sessions were claimed.”

No one defended the course during our visit or said it served a valuable function. We found that striking and a sign that the course has not lived up to its potential.

Recommendation #3: Thus, we recommend that the course as it stands should be discontinued. If NCSU is going to accept transfer credit for ENG101, steps should be taken to help ensure that those transfer courses are truly a match for ENG101 and that they meet or are equivalent to the WID approach. We are well aware that in large public university systems, there is pressure on universities to facilitate transfer from community colleges in the given state, for multiple reasons, both economic and in terms of accessibility to higher education. Since many first-year writing courses at community colleges are 3 credits, not 4, NCSU will need to decide if the number of credit hours is a deciding factor in the acceptance of such courses for transfer.

Recommendation #4: If NCSU chooses to accept 3-credit transfer courses in writing, especially if such courses are not, in some cases, modeled on the WAC/WID paradigm, then we recommend further that the university should consider requiring a second writing course of all students, especially one that already fits the WAC/WID paradigm. Because the ENG 33x courses already are required in some majors and colleges, the move to require that all students complete one of these (as most appropriate to their majors) would perhaps be the alternative most easily accommodated by the current curriculum. This move would ensure that transfer students would take at NCSU a WID course founded

on solid rhetorical principles and that they would be prepared in the WID principles valued so highly at NCSU.

IV. Possible Increased Coordination in Regard to Multilingual Writers:

Operations that are usually closely linked with first-year writing, such as the Writing Center and courses/services for multilingual writers, also seem to exist on islands in other parts of the university, and have different reporting lines. While it is increasingly common for writing centers to be housed in tutorial operations that report to offices of student affairs, this arrangement places more urgent demands on both the Writing Center (the WSTS at NCSU) and the overall writing curricula that it supports to coordinate missions, including improved publicity to students and departments.

The great majority of tutorial sessions in the WSTS are given to students in either English 101 or FLE 101 (of approximately 2000 sessions per year total), so that part of the coordination between WSTS and writing courses seems to be succeeding. However, we should point out that, since university writing centers usually see themselves as serving the whole university, not just first-year writing, students across the university, as well as the WSTS itself, could greatly benefit from a coordinated writing (and speaking) operation that would have as one of its goals broader use of the WSTS by undergraduates beyond the first year and in diverse majors. Multiple resources from the International Writing Centers Association (<http://writingcenters.org/>), among other organizations, speak to this broader mission of the writing center.

In the case of courses and services for multilingual writers, we recommend that more attention in the FYWP and in coordinated literacy planning be given to support for multilingual writers, not only in the first year but also in subsequent years and in graduate programs. As the numbers of international students grow, and as NCSU increases its enrollment of U.S.-born students from homes where a language other than English is commonly spoken, resources for a more culturally- and linguistically-diverse student body will be needed—and faculty in the writing programs and across disciplines will need to be educated on the most productive attitudes and practices.

Recommendation #5: Consideration should be given to models of first-year writing curricula that integrate multilingual speakers/writers and those who speak and write only U.S. English. Among those with whom we spoke, we heard some dissatisfaction with the current methods of placement of international students into the separate course in FLE, a unit that is not otherwise involved in the teaching of writing in English. We recommend investigating how the two units could collaborate more on the delivery of this course.

Recommendation #6: In addition, and equally important, the WAC/WID philosophy that undergirds the FYWP (as well as the Professional Writing Program and the CWSP) should incorporate recent WAC/WID scholarship that addresses the needs of diverse, multilingual and transnational student populations and the global context of most writing and research in universities.

Recent WAC/WID scholarship and theory have emphasized the concepts of “language difference as benefit and opportunity” versus the conventional view of “difference as deficit”: this conventional view is manifested in instructor response that undervalues student knowledge-making through writing and overemphasizes perceived errors in syntax. We include sources in the reference page that address some of this research.

V. GTA mentoring and support:

We met with a group of dedicated and engaged graduate students at the M.A. level in Literature, Linguistics, and Rhetoric and Composition. The graduate students were enthusiastic and universal in their praise of the mentoring they have received as teachers-in-training for ENG101. We heard a lot about the ways they feel prepared for their teaching duties and the ways in which they feel profoundly respected and understood by their mentors, many of whom are non-tenure track instructors (NTT).

There was also a sense of communal spirit and camaraderie among the GTAs that was heartening to witness. With different professional goals and aspirations in their future trajectories (some planning on university teaching, K-12 teaching, industry jobs, and Ph.D. programs), they all signaled the idea that teaching is profoundly important to them and that the mentoring program has been pivotal to their professional development and sense of success. It was clear that they aspire to being the best possible teachers that they can be both now and in the future. This is a credit to the GTA mentoring program and mentors as NCSU.

As mentioned earlier in the NTT faculty section, we heard from NTT faculty about their concerns that the stipends they are paid to support the mentoring of GTAs have been cut over the years from a high of \$5,000 at one point to \$1,500 for mentoring three students per semester. Given this cut to the overall stipends in the program, we wonder how feasible it is for NTT faculty to continue performing this work for such low pay.

In their remarks to us, some of the TAs expressed concerns about scheduling due to needing to take second jobs and the fact that the stipend is a little over \$10,000, on the lower side for M.A. students, although they acknowledged that their load was also quite low—with training in the first year and a 1-1 load in the spring.

Recommendation #7: Streamline TA mentoring and support. We wondered if a different TA mentoring system might be more realistic and feasible—one where two NTT might each be given course releases to mentor a larger number of students, thus consolidating the work and concentrating the efforts of these faculty. Another model might be for tenure-track faculty to take on this work for course releases, thus ensuring that NTT are not being underpaid for this important service.

While it's clear that the intensive mentoring is a selling point of the M.A. program teacher preparation, we also wonder about how much time and effort is being invested in this system when graduate students only teach a total of two courses in their final year of the program. It is a clear benefit to these students to receive such intensive mentoring and support, but, in a time of budgetary restriction, we wondered about the overall budgetary footprint of the program versus the pay-off in the sections that these TAs would teach.

VI. Building a Unified, Powerful Writing (and Speaking) Presence at NCSU

We, and our colleagues in writing studies research across the U.S., have long-admired programs and scholars at NCSU. **NCSU has a unique conglomeration of faculty and programs that make it a nationally recognized site of writing excellence.** Few programs nationally have such a large number of distinguished writing faculty and scholars. The Campus Writing and Speaking Program, the Professional Writing Program, and the PhD in CRDM are initiatives that all have this stellar status. Indeed, the University, CHASS, and the English Department are truly fortunate to have a tenured and tenure-line writing studies faculty not surpassed in quality, numbers, and reputation within the U.S.

That is why we have been disheartened to see that while each of these programs has been successful in its own sphere, we do not see a unified vision of writing development across the undergraduate (and graduate) years for students here—nor energy devoted to co-planning among these initiatives. We feel that these scholars and leaders could make the presence of writing across the undergraduate and graduate years much more visible to students, faculty, and administrators at NCSU--and to potential donors. Giving the overall writing program at NC State the attention and respect it deserves could bring benefits to the FYW Program, and much more besides.

With the focus of our visit on the FYWP, we were expecting to see first-year writing portrayed as an important element in a coordinated vertical and horizontal curriculum and as a model of rich learning experiences that would include a range of coordinated components, including

- first-year courses
- the 33X courses
- the Professional Writing Certificate
- the Writing and Speaking Tutorial Services
- courses and services for multilingual students (currently housed in Foreign Languages)
- writing-related services for graduate students across disciplines
- the interdisciplinary PhD in Communication, Rhetoric, and Digital Media (CRDM)
- and the faculty-focused Campus Writing and Speaking Program (CWSP)

Instead, we have seen a successful, but mostly invisible and grossly-underfunded FYWP that seems to exist on an island in the University, without a clear presence as part of the English Department, nor integrated with the advanced courses in the PWP, nor known by the departments which have been active in Campus Writing and Speaking.

The NTT faculty we met with are very aware of their own lack of visibility as individuals and as a group within the English Department, while the Associate Deans of the three colleges with whom we spoke (Engineering, Natural Resources, and Agriculture and Life Sciences) had only the most meager awareness of FYWP (and of the 33X courses that are required by a number of departments). Moreover, the NTT faculty in FYWP themselves could not speak about the curriculum or purposes of the Professional Writing Program, with which they have little or no interaction.

The Directors of these programs indicated that they are all busy meeting the demands of their various constituencies and that NCSU tends to be a “siloeed” campus. We note, however, that it would not take a huge outlay of energy or time to engage in co-planning and co-initiatives and sharing of resources, an issue that is raised in the self-study report and that we heard about when we met with the Directors of the programs.

Recommendation #8: We recommend, therefore, increased collaboration and communication across these programs. We are aware that there is a First-Year Writing Council that meets regularly, but that there has been no regular meeting to coordinate and plan the various functions of these programs. We recommend the founding of a Writing Council or another structure that will meet regularly to coordinate these various programs and to open up dialogue about how they are, together, building a culture of writing on campus that extends across a vertical and horizontal writing curriculum.

VII. Assessment:

Following from our recommendations regarding the building of a unified, powerful presence for writing (and speaking) at NCSU, we also feel that there is a need for systematic assessment of (1) how students are developing in ENG101 across sections, and (2) how the FYW requirement fits into the overall picture of writing (and speaking) development of undergraduate students from the first year through graduation. We do not make this recommendation because we feel that there are obvious shortcomings in the quality of instruction in ENG101. We reiterate that we heard positive comments from our informants, including the students with whom we spoke and the Associate Deans of several colleges. Rather, the need for systematic assessment of both types noted above arises from our concern, as expressed earlier, that ENG 101/the FYWP lacks a clear identity on the campus, and that NCSU faculty and administrators, both within the various writing programs and across colleges, could use results of well-designed assessments to refine curricula, to place new resources where they are most needed, and to bring attention to areas of strength. Institutional assessments of writing programs

for research purposes have become common in higher education in the U.S. for these reasons. Within the discipline of writing studies, the *Journal of Writing Assessment* (<http://journalofwritingassessment.org/>) is an important venue for publication of research in this area.

To facilitate these assessments, we strongly recommend collaboration between the FYWP, the other writing (and speaking) programs we've identified on campus, and the Office of Assessment. The co-operation between this office and the FYWP that we've benefitted from on this visit indicates to us that such collaboration on assessment projects could be easily achieved.

Student Writing Development Across 101 Sections. One type of assessment would focus on the learning objectives spelled out in the Self Study and would consist of (1) analysis of student writing samples from across sections and perhaps (2) focus groups of students from across sections reflecting on their experience in the course. A possible source of the writing samples are the capstone projects, the Comparative Rhetorical Analysis (CRA) papers, that students write as a culminating assignment in all sections. The assessment literature offers many models of such an assessment.

One popular model would use a standardized assignment of the CRA for all sections. Students write the papers, but then final drafts are submitted for evaluation by a committee made up of all the faculty for the course, perhaps augmented by faculty from a range of departments. The papers are graded according to a rubric, and the grades become part of the total grade for each student. An additional benefit of this assessment would be to inform the program and its faculty about changes in curriculum that might be made in order to raise performance or somewhat shift emphases.

A second model does not affect the grades of individual students, and is used exclusively for program assessment purposes. A small random subset of (anonymous) papers from each section becomes the pool for the assessment, and the papers are read according to a rubric by a team of instructors. The goal is to identify strengths and weaknesses of the papers so that refinements in curriculum across the program can be identified and made.

Student Writing Development through the Undergraduate Years. There are a range of models that have been used to measure student growth in writing during the undergraduate years, and we will not go into them in this limited space. Moreover, there are faculty in writing studies at NCSU who are at least as familiar with these models as we are. Many of these models use portfolios of writing by individual students chosen randomly for the study. Others are departmentally focused, with, for example, projects from capstone courses in disciplines used as texts. Some well-known longitudinal studies have traced the development of small groups of informants, with data being drawn from interviews and focus groups as well as from samples of writing analyzed according to rubrics constructed to meet the purposes of the study.

If one goal of such a study is to measure the impact of ENG 101 on student growth in writing or student perceptions of this impact, relevant questions can be built into surveys or interviews. But we want to stress that the goal of these studies is not to grade individual students, but to achieve insights that can lead to refinements in curriculum, targets for resources, and areas of strength to receive recognition.

Recommendation #9: We recommend that the Office of Assessment collaborate with the administrators and faculty of ENG 101 to design and carry out a systematic (perhaps annual) assessment of student growth in writing during the course. We recommend further that such an assessment be designed in the context of a larger assessment that can measure student growth during the undergraduate years. The intent of such assessments is to recognize programmatic strengths, identify targets for resources, and make refinements in curriculum.

Conclusion

We came away from our visit at NCSU with respect and admiration for the FYWP's accomplishments and that of other writing-focused units on campus. The FYWP is doing a very good job of providing excellent writing instruction to thousands of NCSU students. In spite of the challenges and specific recommendations we have identified here, we found the faculty in the FYWP to be committed and engaged professionals interested in creating a strong culture of writing in their writing sections and across campus. The program is under excellent leadership.

We offer our recommendations as strategies that will allow the FYWP and other writing initiatives on campus to build on areas of strategic strength. We appreciated the opportunity to work with so many dedicated faculty and staff, and we would be happy to answer questions or follow-up on the phone or Skype.

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Appendix A: Brief Biographies of the External Evaluators

Dr. Eileen E. Schell is Professor of Writing and Rhetoric and the Laura J. and L. Douglas Professor of Teaching Excellence in the Department of Writing Studies, Rhetoric, and Composition at Syracuse University and a core faculty member in the Renee Crown Honors Program. At Syracuse University, she served as Chair and Director of the Writing Program (2007-2012), Associate Director of the Writing Program (1999-2000), Director of the Composition and Cultural Rhetoric Doctoral Program (2001-2005 and 2015-present), along with leadership positions in the Humanities Council and the University Senate. At Virginia Tech (1993-1996), she served as Co-Director of the Writing Program from 1994-1996. Schell has published six books and edited collections and over 40 articles on topics ranging from contingent faculty issues, feminist research methods and feminist rhetorics, and rural literacies and rhetorics. Schell currently co-edits the Writing, Literacy and Culture series at Syracuse University Press and serves on the Editorial Board of the Studies in Writing and Rhetoric Series. On a national level, Schell has co-chaired the College Composition and Communication (CCCC) Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession, the CCCC Committee on Adjunct/Part-Time Issues and served a three-year term on the CCCC Executive Committee as well as serving on a half-dozen other CCCC committees and Task Forces. She was a member of the NCTE Committee that composed the NCTE Position Statement on the Status and Working Conditions of Contingent Faculty.

Dr. Chris Thaiss is Professor Emeritus of Writing Studies in the University Writing Program at the University of California, Davis. The first permanent director of the independent UWP (2006-11), he has taught undergraduate courses in writing in disciplines and professions, as well as graduate courses in writing studies pedagogy, theory, research, and program administration. Active in the development of cross-curricular writing in colleges and universities since 1978, Thaiss coordinated the International Network of WAC Programs (2005-15) and frequently consults on writing and conducts workshops on teaching and program development nationally and internationally. Before coming to UC Davis in 2006, Thaiss taught for 30 years at George Mason University, where he directed the Writing Center, the Composition Program, and Writing across the Curriculum, and chaired the Department of English. From 2012 to 2015, he directed the UC Davis Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), and from 2012 to 2016 he served as Chair of the PhD Designated Emphasis in Writing, Rhetoric, and Composition Studies. The author, co-author, or editor of twelve books, Thaiss serves on the editorial boards of *Across the Disciplines*, the WAC Clearinghouse, and *Writing on the Edge*, and reviews for *College Composition and Communication* and the international *Journal of Writing Research*. Additional information is available at <http://thaiss.ucdavis.edu> .

Appendix B: About the CWPA Consultant-Evaluator Service

The Council of Writing Program Administrators is a national association of college and university faculty with professional responsibilities or interests as directors of writing programs. Operating on a method similar to regional accreditation agencies, WPA evaluations have several stages. WPA requests a written program self-study, sends a team of two trained consultant-evaluators to campus for interviews and on-site evaluation, and then compiles a final report. A six-month follow-up report from the campus completes the process. The select panel of WPA consultant-evaluators comprises leaders in the field of composition. They come from four-year colleges, community colleges, and universities. All are experienced writing program administrators and recognized scholars with a national perspective on composition teaching and program administration; several are past presidents of the organization. As evaluators, their primary goal is to determine a program's unique strengths and weaknesses, not to transform all writing programs into their own. They recognize that every program must retain its individual character, serve a particular community, and solve special problems. The director of this program is Dr. Shirley Rose, Arizona State University. Dr. Rose reports on the CE program to the WPA Executive Board, which oversees its operation. Its Associate Director is Dr. Michael Pemberton, Director of the University Writing Center at Georgia Southern University. WPA website: www.wpacouncil.org

Appendix C: Visit Schedule

First Year Writing Program
North Carolina State University
External Review Visit
Reviewers: Dr. Eileen Schell and Dr. Chris Thaiss
All meetings held in Tompkins 131B

Sunday, April 22

4:00 p.m.: Reviewers arrive at airport, taxi to the Aloft Hotel at 2100 Hillsborough Street, Raleigh
5:45: Laura Severin picks up reviewers for dinner at 18 Seaboard
6:00: Dinner with Laura Severin (English Department Head), Casie Fedukovich (Director of the FYWP), and Stephany Dunstan (Office of Assessment Coordinator)

Monday, April 23

8:00 a.m.: Stephany Dunstan meets reviewers at the Aloft to walk to Tompkins Hall (T131B)
8:30: Review schedule and facilities, set up materials
9:00: Deanna Dannels, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs CHASS and Jeff Braden, Dean of CHASS
10:15: FYWP administrators
11:15: Casie Fedukovich, Director of the FYWP
12:00 p.m.: Lunch with NTT faculty, Director, and Head
1:00: Current/former FYW students
2:00: Chris Anson, Director of CWSP, and Meridith Reed, Graduate Consultant
3:00: FYWP NTT faculty
4:00: FYWP GTAs
5:00: Reviewers have dinner on their own

Tuesday, April 24

8:00 a.m. Associate Deans: Adam Hartstone Rose (COS), Vicki Martin for John Dole (CALs), Adrianna Kirkland (CNR), Jerome Lavelle (COE)
9:15: Meet with Stacey Pigg, Director of Professional Writing
10:00: Meet with Wendy VanDellon (WSTS) and Anne Burke (library), Juilana Pybus (FLE)
11:00: FYWP NTT faculty
11:30: Open forum for all faculty, staff, admins, and GTAs
12:00: p.m.: Working lunch, to prepare for exit interviews
1:15: Exit interview, FYWP Director
2:00: Exit interview: Department Head and Dean
3:00: Taxi arrives for transport to airport