

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)



Second Findings: June 2016–June 2017 Internal Report #2

September 2017; Revised March 2019

WAC Group

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Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)

Second Findings: June 2016—June 2017

I. Purpose

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Second Findings, June 2016-June 2017 reports on the WAC Group's second year of work, which included an assessment of 400-level and capstone papers, and analysis of UWR data provided by the Office of Institutional Research (IR). This report continues work on an ambitious three-year strategic assessment draft plan linked to the WAC mission and program development. Planning was based on work by White, Elliot, and Peckham (2015), a workshop co-chaired by Klages and Elliot (2015), and an institute presented by Huot and Caswell (2015).

The Second Findings follows *Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) First Findings: June 2015—June 2016*, which reported initial assessment of the Eastern Oregon University (EOU) University Writing Requirement (UWR). The first report examined UWR syllabi alignment at the upper and lower division levels, inclusion of UWR courses in minor degree checksheets, and the relationship of the UWR to Capstone courses.

This report presents data that can be used in planning and decision making by current and future WAC Group members, teaching faculty, programs and colleges involved in writing instruction, and those with oversight responsibilities, such as the Provost, Vice Provost, Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee (EPCC), and Faculty Senate, and informs the university community about the WAC Group's work and findings.

II. Rationale

Faculty support for writing and teaching writing has long been evidenced by their development of writing intensive classes in the disciplines; institutional requirements for degree completion, including the Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE) and UWR; support for the Writing Center to provide writing assistance to students; and participation in faculty development workshops focusing on writing to learn (WTL) and writing in the disciplines (WID), well-recognized extensions of WAC.

The UWR has been well-supported by faculty in their disciplines. Even so, prior to this three-year investigation, our institution has not examined whether and how the UWR functions institutionally to prepare students for writing in their courses and careers. To address this, the WAC Group was formed in 2015 from representative faculty across the university. The rationale



is discussed more fully in [WAC First Findings](#) and remains unchanged for the second year of this study.

Trends in UWR efficacy have been noted when suggested or apparent. Summative assessment data will be made available for university purposes. The WAC Group is also interested in formative assessment to support faculty in developing writing pedagogies and students in becoming stronger writers during and after their higher education experiences.

III. Executive Summary

The WAC Group has made progress during the second year of the initial three-year strategic assessment plan toward WAC program assessment. Findings include:

- Students' use of sources and evidence appeared to be less successful than with other categories of writing criteria. (See Section V.A. of this report)
- The UWR framework did not accommodate some 400-level and capstone courses well; it appeared to lack flexibility for disciplinary variations, sometimes imposing an artificiality in assignment design within what is intended as writing in the disciplines. (Section V.A.)
- Twenty percent of EOU's courses have UWR designation. (Section V.B.a.)
- The annual number of UWR courses completed by students in each of three recent graduating classes (2013, 2014, 2015) was compared to average GPAs in majors. These data did not support the assumption that completing more UWR courses resulted in higher GPAs. (Section V.B.b.1.) The annual average number of UWR courses completed for all programs has increased over time. The average number of UWR courses completed between 2012-13 and 2014-15 increased by nearly 25%. At the same time, average program GPAs increased by a smaller percentage. These trends should be monitored. (Section V.B.b.2.)
- The higher average number of UWRs completed by freshmen and on-campus students versus transfer and off-campus students showed little effect on average overall GPAs. Transfer and off-campus students did not appear to be disadvantaged by completing fewer total UWRs on average. (Section V.B.b.3.)
- Early and late UWR completers fared about the same in terms of GPAs. (Section V.B.c.)
- The total number of UWR courses with unique CRNs offered per term (online, campus, on-site) over three years showed sufficient unfilled sections in which students could have enrolled. The number of on-campus sections from 2013-2015 was stable, but a decline occurred in online and onsite section offerings. (Section V.B.d.)
- Lower average GPAs in UWR courses suggested that students struggled more with academic writing when compared to all courses. Averages were lower in UWR courses; however, students succeeded overall with LD Overall Average GPAs over three years at 2.95 and UD Overall Average GPAs at 3.31. (Section V.B.d.)
- The number of non-passing UD grades decreased over three years, but UD UWR non-passing grades constituted a greater percentage of all non-passing grades. (Section V.B.d.)



- Concerns or trends were not apparent among non-completers (e.g., not enrolled, needed 15 credits or fewer, and/or needed one or more UWR course to graduate) who had not finished the UWR. (V.B.d.)
- Average years to graduation among transfer students declined after the 2003 cohort year. This corresponds with introduction of the UWR and retirement of the Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE) (V.B.e.)
- Data showed that students who completed UWR courses in their freshman and sophomore years had a higher percentage of completion and graduation in six years than students who did not complete the same number of UWRs. However, students with two or more completed UWR courses in freshmen and sophomore years had a lower rate of completion in six years than did freshmen who completed one UWR. (Section V.B.f.)

IV. Recommendations for Action

The WAC Group recommends that EOU faculty and administrators review these findings while considering how the UWR integrates with the university's values and educational goals. WAC Group members view this initial assessment process as formative, an inquiry that can be used to inform instructional and assessment approaches, but findings may be considered summative.

Current recommendations include:

- The WAC Group should revise future data queries to request papers intended to meet length, revision, and other requirements listed in the UWR framework. Assignments should also be requested. (Section V.A.)
- Review the UWR's purpose and applications, and how disciplinary flexibility can be better supported by the UWR. (Section V.A.)
- Consider as an institution what capstone courses should accomplish. (Section V.A.)
- Increase opportunities for student writing specific to program major and career path. (Section V.A.)
- Increase emphasis on use of sources and evidence. (Section V.A.)
- Consider intentional scaffolding of writing instruction within each program. (Section V.A.)
- Interrogate whether and how writing instruction promotes transfer across disciplines. (Section V.B.a.)
- The trend toward an increasing annual total of completed UWR courses across all course prefixes should be monitored, with attention to whether and how the increase affects student writing and faculty workload. (Section V.B.b.2.)
- Transfer and off-campus students completed fewer UWRs on average than did freshmen and on-campus students while GPAs remained comparable. GPAs of these student populations should continue to be monitored relative to total number of UWR completion, particularly if program curriculum or embedded writing instruction is revised. (Section V.B.b.3.)



- Transfer students may benefit from being advised to enroll in UWR courses upon admission. (Section V.B.c.)
- Students who enrolled as freshmen at EOU may benefit from being advised to complete more of their UWRs at the sophomore and junior levels. (Section V.B.c.)
- Periodically monitor UWR section enrollment by term and location for developing trends in enrollment and offerings. (Section V.B.d.)
- As commencement approaches and spring UWR classes fill close to caps, roadblocks may develop. With section enrollment approaching 18 students or above, consideration should be given to adding sections or distributing sections differently throughout the academic year and/or two-year course rotation. (Section V.B.d.)
- Lower average GPAs in UWR courses when compared to all courses also suggested that students struggled more with academic writing. However, based on overall UWR GPAs, UWR courses did not create a roadblock for retention and completion. (Section V.B.d.)
- Continuing to inform students early in their college careers about UWR courses and expectations, such as in UNI and CORE courses, may support increased completion and success rates. (V.B.d.)
- Students completing two or more UWRs over freshman and sophomore years had a lower six-year graduation percentage than freshmen who completed only one UWR. This trend should be studied in more detail to determine cause and significance. (V.B.d.)
- Provide opportunities during fall faculty orientation and throughout the academic year for faculty development workshops. Topics for fall 2017 have been suggested in Section VI.
- Continue supporting the WAC Group and the strategic writing program assessment they are engaged in. Data are being gathered that have potential to improve student writing across the curriculum (WAC) and in the disciplines (WID).

V. *Findings*

V.A. 400-Level and Capstone Writing Review

In March and June 2016, email messages requesting high, medium, and low culminating drafts of capstone papers, portfolios, senior projects, and senior seminar papers were sent to faculty teaching 400-level University Writing Requirement (UWR) courses. A list of courses and course sections from which papers were solicited was attached, and faculty were asked to inform the WAC Group of any that were missed.

Faculty were asked to select writing samples, and redact names and section numbers from each paper, but to include the course prefix and number. Upon receipt, each paper was assigned a unique number for data collection purposes. The WAC Group then performed a broad summative assessment of EOU students' written communication processes and skills as they approached degree completion.

Using the Written Communication VALUE Rubric (AAC&U), two rounds of norming were completed before each student paper was assigned to be read by two WAC Group members.

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Thirty UWR 400-level and/or capstone papers were reviewed from a total of 10 programs, ranging from one to six papers per program:

Math	Education
Computer Science	Anthropology
Political Science	Psychology
History	Early Childhood Education
Art	Business

In Figure 1, aggregated data for these 30 papers showed fairly even average, median, and mode assessed across four of five criteria: a.) context of and purpose for writing, b.) content development, c.) genre and disciplinary conventions, d.) sources and evidence, and e.) control of syntax and mechanics. Category d., sources and evidence, which included quality of sources and integration of sources, showed somewhat lower average, median, and mode.

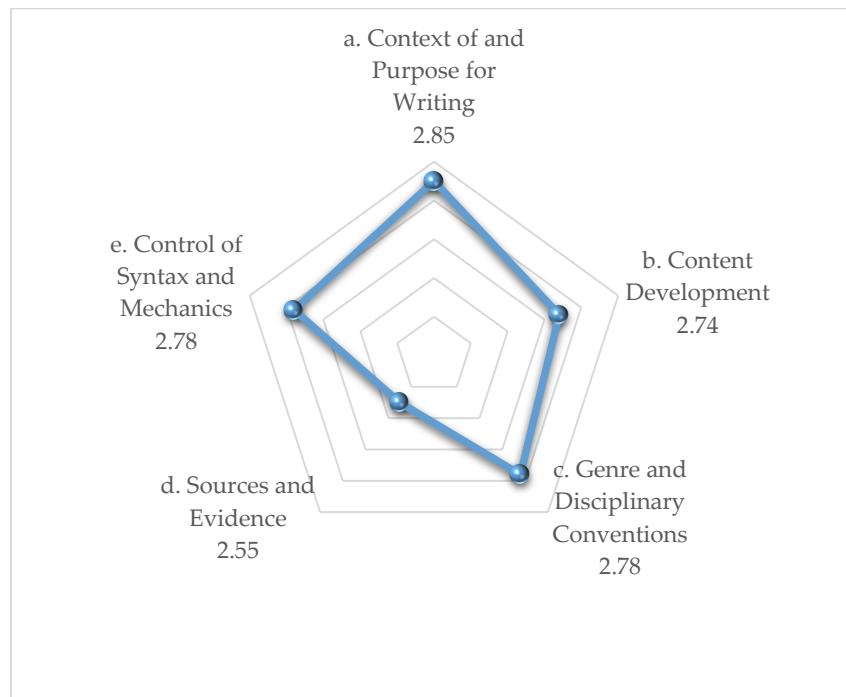


Figure 1. Average rating for each of five writing criterion, based on a scale of n=4. Assessment was completed using the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Written Communication VALUE Rubric which included the five criterion shown in this figure.

Following this assessment, the WAC Group recommended the following:

- Some of the culminating assignments submitted for assessment had not required sustained writing and writing from sources, although follow-up with instructors indicated that other papers assigned in the course did. The query for samples needs to be revised to request



papers that are intended to meet length, revision, and other requirements listed in the UWR framework. Assignments for these papers should also be requested.

- The UWR framework accommodated some 400-level and capstone courses more effectively than others. The UWR framework appeared to lack flexibility for disciplinary variations, perhaps imposing an artificiality within what is intended as writing in the disciplines (e.g., math, computer science). Recommendations for addressing these concerns included:
 - Review the UWR's purpose and applications, and how disciplinary flexibility can be better supported by the UWR. (Section V.A.)
 - Consider as an institution what capstone courses should accomplish.
 - Increase opportunities for student writing specific to program major and career path.
 - Increase emphasis on use of sources and evidence.
 - Consider intentional scaffolding of writing within each program.

V.B. UWR Data

The WAC Group requested data from Institutional Research (IR) in spring 2016 for the purpose of reviewing and assessing EOU's writing curricula (see Appendix III). Data from IR were displayed in tables, data, and analysis shown in sections below. For questions 3-13, data were requested for three academic years: 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15. The WAC Group agreed to recommended changes in some of the original questions to permit data gathering.

General notes provided by IR prefaced the data:

Counted UWR Courses:

For counting University Writing Requirement courses taken by a student, we did not identify specific UWRs required for the student's major. The process for that isn't yet developed and we realize that you need your initial feedback soon.

Time/Status-Based Questions ("Freshman Year", "Junior," etc):

A number of the questions asked about time-frames in terms of 1st year, last year, etc. In many of these cases, we've reported according to status based on credits completed: Freshman: < 45, Sophomore: 45+, Junior: 90+, Senior: 135+.

59% of our current headcount did not take courses on campus, and online students take a loose average of 8 or 9 credits per term. Many measurements presuming a 4-year plan may be problematic. Though the standard 6-year span is used for graduation rates in this report, many students complete their degrees over a larger span of time.

Transfer Students:

Be advised that there will be distortion in the data where transfer students are involved.

UWR and other attributes ascribed to transfer students' coursework are not always evident in the electronic system. Where a transferred course was -recently- mapped directly onto one of our UWR courses, that will manifest; but for less recent transfers

and appealed requirements, those tend to be tracked in the student's paper file or otherwise documented outside of the normal course-tracking system. For this reason, we've broken a lot of the results down by transfer vs original freshmen. Readmits with transfer credits from intervening institutions are generally treated as transfers. (Smutz, 2016)

V.B.a. What proportion of classes (not sections) are designated as UWR courses?

The total number of designated UWR courses showed that faculty are embedding writing intensive practices within EOU's curriculum: "Of 664 distinct courses reported for the 2014-15 and 2015-16 academic years, 134 (20%) are identified as UWR courses" (Smutz, 2016). These courses do not account for all course-based writing, however, which raises the question of how writing in non-UWR courses is scaffolded within programs and promotes transfer across disciplines.

V.B.b. Do students who take more than the required number of writing intensive courses exhibit higher performance, as demonstrated by GPAs? (What is the relationship between number of UWR courses taken and GPA?)

1. Relationship of Completed UWR Courses to Average GPA

The average number of UWR courses completed by students in each of three recent graduating classes (2013, 2014, 2015) were compared to the average GPAs in each major, shown in Figure 2. These data did not support the assumption that completing more UWR courses resulted in higher GPAs.

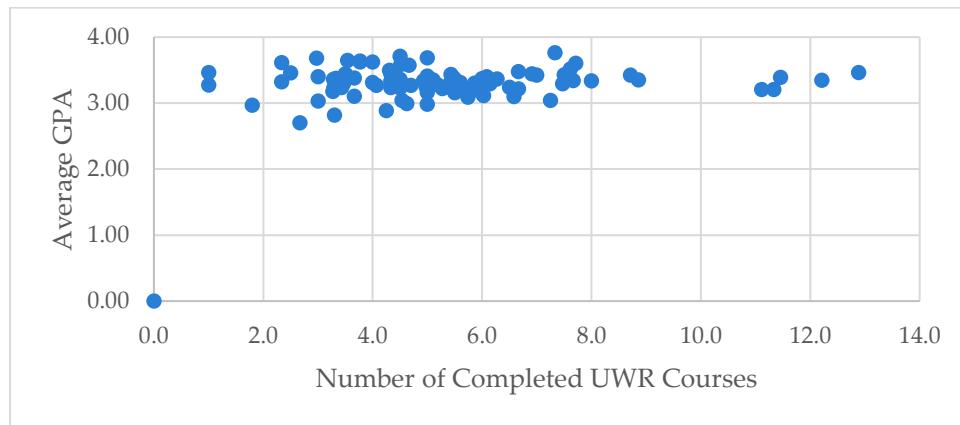


Figure 2. Comparison of cumulative average GPA at degree completion to number of completed UWR courses. GPAs clustered around the 3.28 average, ranging from 2.7 to 3.75 on a four-point scale. The marker at the 0 axes indicated that no data were available for one program prefix, CMSV.

2. Relationship Over Time of Number of UWR Courses Completed to GPA

The annual average number of UWR courses completed for all programs has increased over time. The average number of UWR courses completed between 2012-13 and 2014-15 increased by nearly 25%. At the same time, average program GPAs increased by a smaller percentage. These trends should be monitored.

Table 1.

Average number of UWRs completed and average program GPAs

Row Labels	2012-13		2013-14		2014-15	
	Average GPA	Average # of UWRs	Average GPA	Average # of UWRs	Average GPA	Average # of UWRs
ANSO	3.25	4.98	3.27	4.70	3.28	5.18
ART	3.29	6.14	3.29	6.00	3.31	5.60
BADM	3.27	4.07	3.34	4.93	3.28	5.86
BAEC	3.36	3.29	3.32	2.33	3.03	3.00
BIOC	3.38	3.33	3.36	6.27	3.44	6.91
BIOL	3.28	4.36	3.33	5.43	3.22	5.27
CHEM	3.04	7.25	3.43	7.50	3.24	6.50
CMSV					0.00	0.00
CS			3.31	4.00	3.33	4.33
CSMM	3.76	7.33	2.70	2.67	3.41	5.00
ECON					3.37	6.00
ENGL	3.46	12.88	3.35	12.21	3.39	11.45
FSA	3.68	2.98	3.64	3.77	3.62	3.77
HIST	3.23	5.42	3.15	6.00	3.29	7.47
LBBH			3.62	4.00	3.38	3.67

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	2012-13		2013-14		2014-15	
Row Labels	Average GPA	Average # of UWRs	Average GPA	Average # of UWRs	Average GPA	Average # of UWRs
LBCC					3.27	1.00
LBEC	3.69	5.00	3.57	4.67	3.44	4.33
LBEQ	2.97	1.80	3.23	3.43	3.46	2.50
LBES	2.89	4.25	2.98	5.00		
LBIP	3.10	3.67	3.16	5.00	2.82	3.30
LBOP	3.23	4.33	3.71	4.50	3.31	4.50
LBST	3.35	5.11	3.40	3.00	3.04	4.54
LBTM	3.37	5.49	3.30	5.87	3.09	5.74
MA	3.30	5.11	3.20	5.76	3.16	5.50
MATH	3.51	7.62	3.42	7.00	3.48	6.67
MDEL	3.65	3.54	3.58	4.51	3.43	5.43
MDST	3.36	4.50	3.10	6.58	3.42	8.71
MLGC	3.46	1.00	3.61	2.33	3.23	4.50
MUS	3.44	3.50	3.49	4.31	3.40	6.08
PADM					3.33	8.00
PAH	3.17	3.27	3.23	3.29	3.29	3.46
PPE	3.20	11.11	3.35	8.86	3.20	11.33
PSY	2.99	4.63	3.18	5.97	3.11	6.03
THEA	3.60	7.71	3.34	7.67	3.21	6.67
Total Average	3.33	5.13	3.57	5.63	3.76	6.39



Note. Average program GPAs and average number of UWR courses completed over three years are shown.

3. Freshman/Transfer and On-campus/Off-campus GPAs Compared to Number of UWRs Completed

Figure 3 shows that meaningful differences were not apparent between freshmen and transfer GPA performance based on the average number of UWR courses taken. Based on GPAs, transfer students did not appear to have been disadvantaged by taking fewer UWRs than freshmen.

Similarly, Figure 4 shows that the average number of UWR courses completed by campus and off-campus students did not appear to affect GPA.

Average for Freshmen vs Transfer

Year	Fresh/Tran	UWRs	GPA
2012-13	FR	6.9	3.33
2012-13	TR	4.1	3.35
2013-14	FR	6.1	3.29
2013-14	TR	5.0	3.37
2014-15	FR	6.5	3.26
2014-15	TR	5.4	3.25

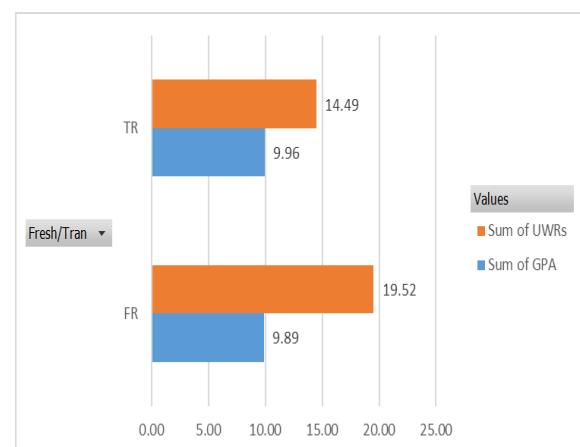


Figure 3. Comparison of average number of UWRs completed to the average GPAs for freshmen versus transfer students. Note that “transfer UWR data [are] imperfect” (Smutz, 2016).

Average for Campus vs Non-Campus Student

Year	On-Camp/Off	UWRs	GPA
2012-13	Campus	5.7	3.28
2012-13	Non-Campus	4.0	3.39
2013-14	Campus	5.9	3.26
2013-14	Non-Campus	4.9	3.41
2014-15	Campus	6.1	3.24
2014-15	Non-Campus	5.3	3.26

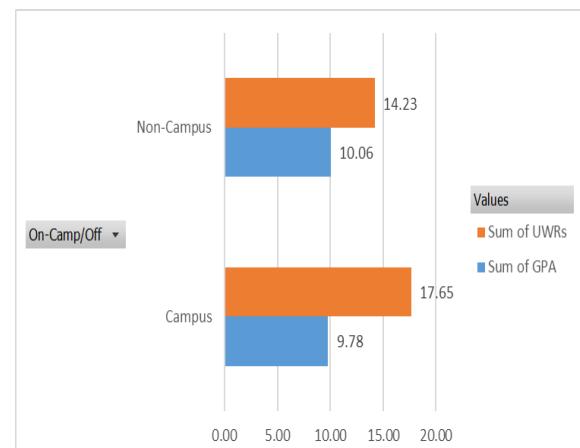




Figure 4. Comparison of average number of UWRs completed by students enrolled on-campus versus off-campus. Note that “location is determined by the last campus status of the student before graduation” (Smutz, 2016).

V.B.c. Do students delay completion of UWRs? When do students complete LD and UD UWR requirements? Do early completers fair better than late completers, as gauged by GPA?

Timeline of UWR Completion

On average, transfer students completed 5% of the UWR requirement during their freshmen level, 10% at the sophomore level, and 25% at the junior level. In most programs, transfer students delayed completing UWRs to the senior level. This may be due to transfer students not having opportunities before enrolling at EOU to take writing intensive courses that articulate as UWRs. About 60% of all transfer students completed the UWR at the senior level, supporting the recommendation that transfer students should be advised to enroll in UWR courses as soon as possible after admission.

On average, EOU freshmen completed 11% of the UWR requirement as freshmen, 21% as sophomores, and 23% as juniors, with 45% completing the UWR as seniors. This population of students may benefit from being advised to complete UWRs earlier, during the sophomore and junior levels of study.

Table 2.

Timeline Profile of When Students Take UWRs

Fresh/Trans	Major 1	FRESHMAN	SOPHOMORE	JUNIOR	SENIOR
F	ANSO	12%	22%	31%	36%
F	ART	12%	28%	24%	36%
F	BADM	8%	24%	21%	47%
F	BIOC	2%	10%	16%	71%
F	BIOL	5%	7%	21%	67%
F	CHEM	3%	2%	35%	60%
F	CS	25%	42%	0%	33%
F	CSMM	5%	7%	34%	54%

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F	ENGL	9%	20%	22%	49%
F	HIST	6%	13%	28%	52%
F	LBES	0%	25%	25%	50%
F	LBIP	20%	21%	7%	51%
F	LBST	14%	29%	14%	43%
F	LBTM	19%	24%	24%	33%
F	MA	9%	16%	29%	47%
F	MATH	10%	8%	17%	64%
F	MDEL	20%	31%	23%	26%
F	MDST	16%	19%	19%	46%
F	MLGC	8%	46%	17%	29%
F	MUS	6%	21%	23%	50%
F	PADM	25%	25%	25%	25%
F	PAH	10%	31%	37%	21%
F	PPE	15%	15%	23%	46%
F	PSY	11%	26%	29%	34%
F	THEA	9%	14%	27%	51%
T	ANSO	7%	14%	32%	47%
T	ART	15%	11%	25%	49%
T	BADM	4%	8%	16%	72%
T	BAEC	3%	9%	22%	67%
T	BIOC	8%	4%	9%	79%
T	BIOL	8%	8%	9%	75%
T	CHEM	3%	4%	6%	87%
T	CMSV				
T	CS	0%	22%	11%	67%
T	CSMM	12%	30%	7%	51%
T	ECON	7%	31%	39%	23%

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T	ENGL	3%	8%	24%	65%
T	FSA	4%	6%	18%	71%
T	HIST	4%	12%	34%	50%
T	LBBH	3%	10%	39%	48%
T	LBCC	0%	0%	100%	0%
T	LBEC	3%	9%	21%	66%
T	LBEO	4%	1%	9%	87%
T	LBES	0%	3%	37%	61%
T	LBIP	0%	6%	17%	77%
T	LBOP	2%	3%	23%	72%
T	LBST	7%	11%	22%	61%
T	LBTM	6%	10%	22%	62%
T	MA	6%	10%	30%	55%
T	MATH	4%	5%	16%	75%
T	MDEL	7%	11%	34%	48%
T	MDST	5%	7%	26%	62%
T	MLGC	10%	10%	30%	50%
T	MUS	4%	11%	30%	55%
T	PADM	17%	4%	4%	75%
T	PAH	6%	11%	28%	55%
T	PPE	7%	17%	33%	43%
T	PSY	6%	11%	35%	48%
T	THEA	5%	18%	20%	57%

Note. "Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior levels are based on numbers of credits" (Smutz, 2016).

Students who enrolled as freshmen and transfer students at EOU between 2012-2015 and who completed UWR requirements with junior status or less, and those from both categories who finished as seniors, fared similarly in terms of GPAs (see Table 2). In other words, early completers and late completers fared about the same in terms of GPAs.

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Table 3.

Comparison of Freshmen/Transfer Average GPA for Early UWR Finishers

Fresh/Trans	Finished as Junior	Average GPA
F	Y	3.29
F	N	3.28
T	Y	3.31
T	N	3.33

Note. F=Freshmen, T=Transfer, Y=Yes, and N=No.

As shown in Table 3, GPAs of early UWR finishers showed little difference from those who finished as seniors.

Table 4.

Comparison of Freshmen/Transfer Students Finishing LD and UD UWRs in Last Term; N=2051

Fresh/Trans	Finished UWRs on Last Term	LD UWR Last Term	UD UWR Last Term	Students
F	N	N	N	246
F	N	N	Y	118
F	N	Y	N	26
F	N	Y	Y	17
F	Y	N	Y	57
F	Y	Y	Y	6
T	N	N	N	812
T	N	N	Y	420
T	N	Y	N	73
T	N	Y	Y	22
T	Y	N	Y	239
T	Y	Y	Y	15

Note: Table 4 shows the number of students who completed their last UWR requirement in their last term and whether students enrolled in lower or upper division UWRs in their last term.

Where "Y" denotes "Yes" for completing a Lower Division (LD) or Upper Division (UD) UWR during the last term of the degree, students have in some cases finished their UWR



requirements in advance of that term. "N" ("No") under Finished UWRs on Last Term indicates that the UWR was finished before the last term, while a "Y" ("Yes") shows that UWRs were finished during the last term. Students may take additional UWRs beyond the institutional requirement because of program requirement, curricular design, or student desire to learn more about writing.

As shown in Table 4, data on UWR completion in students' final term were gathered for three academic years (2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015). A total of 2051 students from two distinct groups were identified: those who had begun as transfer students from other institutions ($n=1581$) and those who had entered as EOU freshmen ($n=470$). All students must fulfill the four-course UWR institutional requirement for degree completion.

The number of students who enrolled as freshmen and who completed the UWR requirement in their final term was slightly smaller than the number who finished UWRs earlier in their studies. Of this group, 246 finished UWRs before their final term, and 224 finished during the final term. This compares to 812 transfer students who finished UWRs before their final term, and 769 who finished during the final term. The difference in time to UWR completion for the two groups is inconsequential.

A larger number of transfer ($n=515$) students than freshmen ($n=161$) completed UWRs in their final term and had already met the institutional UWR requirement. These additional UWR courses may have been required for degree completion or indicative of student interest.

A small number of students, 15 transfer (0.9% of transfer) and 6 freshmen (1.3% of freshmen) completed both LD and UD UWRs while also finishing the UWR requirement. However, transfer students who finished UD UWRs their final term and finished the overall UWR requirement ($n=239$) did so at a rate about 25% higher than for freshmen ($n=57$). Based on this analysis, transfer students may benefit from being advised to enroll in UWR courses upon admission.

V.B.d. Do UWR courses create a roadblock for retention and completion? If so, where do roadblocks appear? Are UWR courses accessible for students?

Data in section V.B.d. were gathered to analyze UWR course and section enrollment over three years, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016.

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Table 5.

Number of UWR Courses Per Discipline Offered Over 3 Years (2013-2016)

Discipline	Sections	Discipline	Sections
BA	84	LS	15
ENGL	58	SCI	15
WR	54	ART	13
SOC	36	MUS	13
PSY	33	MATH	12
HWS	24	REL	11
ED	23	BIOL	10
POLS	23	EXS	7
ECON	21	CS	5
HIST	21	GEOG	4
ANTH	18	IS	3
PHIL	18	SPAN	3
THEA	16	MM	2
CHEM	15	EMSA	1
COM	15	JNL	1
ECED	15	MA	1
FSA	15		
Total Courses Available: 605			

Note. Some programs may not have offered UWR courses in their own discipline but approved courses from other disciplines to meet the UWR requirement.

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Table 6

UWR Section Enrollment by Term and Location

Term	Location	UWR Sections	UWR Enrollment	Avg Enrollment/Section
Summer 2013	On-Campus	3	46	15.3
Summer 2013	Online	42	429	10.2
Summer 2013	Onsite	2	23	11.5
Fall 2013	On-Campus	33	559	16.9
Fall 2013	Online	59	787	13.3
Fall 2013	Onsite	11	121	11.0
Winter 2014	On-Campus	31	433	14.0
Winter 2014	Online	59	818	13.6
Winter 2014	Onsite	6	80	13.3
Spring 2014	On-Campus	33	523	15.8
Spring 2014	Online	65	854	13.1
Spring 2014	Onsite	6	79	13.2
Summer 2014	On-Campus	3	28	9.3
Summer 2014	Online	31	363	11.7
Summer 2014	Onsite	1	21	21.0
Fall 2014	On-Campus	34	435	12.8
Fall 2014	Online	41	758	18.5
Fall 2014	Onsite	7	79	11.3
Winter 2015	On-Campus	30	451	15.0
Winter 2015	Online	42	725	17.3
Winter 2015	Onsite	5	68	13.6
Spring 2015	On-Campus	31	409	13.2
Spring 2015	Online	49	821	16.4
Spring 2015	Onsite	6	50	8.3
Summer 2015	Online	22	324	14.1
Fall 2015	On-Campus	32	452	14.1
Fall 2015	Online	38	697	17.9
Fall 2015	Onsite	8	110	13.8
Winter 2016	On-Campus	31	439	14.2
Winter 2016	Online	41	674	16.0
Winter 2016	Onsite	4	36	9.0
Spring 2016	On-Campus	31	494	15.9
Spring 2016	Online	46	772	16.1
Spring 2016	Onsite	5	46	9.2
Total Sections		888		

Note. The total number of sections (n = 888) shown in Table 6 exceeds the total courses offered (n = 605) in Table 5 because multiple sections of some courses were offered.



In Table 6, decreases in the number of available UWR sections over the three-year period from Summer 2013 through Spring 2016 may have resulted from program changes following the 2014 sustainability plan.

Table 7.

Sum of UWR Sections and Enrollment by Location

Row Labels	Sum of UWR Sections	Sum of UWR Enrollment
On-Campus	292	4,269
Online	535	8,022
Onsite	61	713
Grand Total	888	13,004

Note. Data show enrollments by location, totaled from Fall 2013 through Winter 2016.

Examination of the total number of UWR courses with unique CRNs offered per term (online, campus, on-site) over three academic years (2013-2016) in Table 7 appeared to show sufficient unfilled sections in which students could have enrolled. The number of on-campus sections from 2013-14 to 2014-15 was stable, but a drop in offered online and onsite sections suggested watchfulness for developing trends in enrollment and offerings. Because trends may be observable in these data, future assessments should examine similar data sets of UWR section enrollment by term and location.

The data suggested that sufficient numbers of UWR courses or enrollments by discipline are currently available to prevent UWR-caused roadblocks to retention and completion. But as classes fill close to caps, roadblocks may develop. With section enrollment approaching 18 students or above, consideration should be given to adding sections or distributing sections differently throughout the academic year and/or two-year course rotation. This potential trend may develop in spring enrollments and may be used for scheduling UWR sections.

Table 8.

Average, Median, and Mode of GPA for Upper and Lower and Upper Division UWR Sections

Year	Lwr/Upr	Overall Avg	Overall Med	Overall Mode	UWR Avg	UWR Med	UWR Mode	Non UWR Avg	Non UWR Median	Non UWR Mode
1213	LD	2.88	3.00	4.00	2.75	3.00	4.00	2.90	3.00	4.00
1213	UD	3.32	4.00	4.00	3.22	3.67	4.00	3.34	4.00	4.00
1314	LD	2.93	3.33	4.00	2.83	3.00	4.00	2.94	3.33	4.00
1314	UD	3.30	3.67	4.00	3.21	3.67	4.00	3.32	4.00	4.00
1415	LD	3.06	3.33	4.00	2.95	3.33	4.00	3.07	3.33	4.00
1415	UD	3.32	4.00	4.00	3.15	3.67	4.00	3.35	4.00	4.00

Overall grade point averages (GPAs) for all lower division (LD) courses increased a total of 0.18 points, from 2.88 to 3.06, over the three-year period examined in this report, as shown in Table 8. The gain for LD courses was 0.05 points from 2012-2013 to 2013-2014, and 0.13 points from 2013-2014 to 2014-2015. For upper division courses, the overall grade point average stayed near the same, with a 0.02 increase between the first and second year and a 0.02 decline from second to third year, bringing the average overall GPA back to the original 3.32.

Average GPAs for LD UWR courses trended higher over three years, from 2.75 to 2.95, with a 0.20 point total increase. The gain was 0.08 from 2012-2013 to 2013-2014, and 0.12 from 2013-2014 to 2014-2015. Overall Average GPAs increased at about the same rate over time with 0.18 points, and Non UWR Average GPAs increased similarly by 0.17 points.

UWR Average GPAs appeared to have little influence on Overall Average GPAs, as shown by the LD difference of 0.01-to-0.02 and UD difference of 0.02-to-0.03 between Overall and Non UWR Average GPAs each of the three years. This is likely due to the low ratio of UWR-to-Non UWR courses completed.

Average GPAs for UD UWR courses trended slightly lower over three years, from 3.22 to 3.15, with a decrease of 0.07 total points. UD Non UWR Average GPAs stayed about the same over that period, as did UD Overall Average GPAs.

Even though averages were lower in UWR courses (LD at 2.84 and UD at 3.19 over three years), students succeeded overall with LD Overall Average GPAs over three years at 2.95 and UD Overall Average GPAs at 3.31. Lower average GPAs in UWR courses when compared to all courses also suggested that students struggled more with academic writing. However, based on overall UWR GPAs, UWR courses did not create a roadblock for retention and completion.

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Table 9.

Non-Passing Grades for UWRs and Non-UWR Classes

Year	Division	UWR?	Total Non-Passing Grades	Percent
2012-13	LD	N	2270	12.13%
2012-13	LD	Y	251	14.05%
2012-13	UD	N	962	5.32%
2012-13	UD	Y	166	6.24%
2013-14	LD	N	2030	11.51%
2013-14	LD	Y	249	13.58%
2013-14	UD	N	877	5.38%
2013-14	UD	Y	181	6.54%
2014-15	LD	N	1523	9.68%
2014-15	LD	Y	158	10.53%
2014-15	UD	N	751	5.06%
2014-15	UD	Y	191	7.46%

Note. The percentages shown were calculated by year and division (LD or UD). For example, for 2012-2013 LD Non-UWR courses, the total number of non-passing grades, 2270, was 12.13% of all LD grades.

In Table 9, differences were small when comparing the percentage of failed UWR to failed Non-UWR grades (C- or lower) each year.

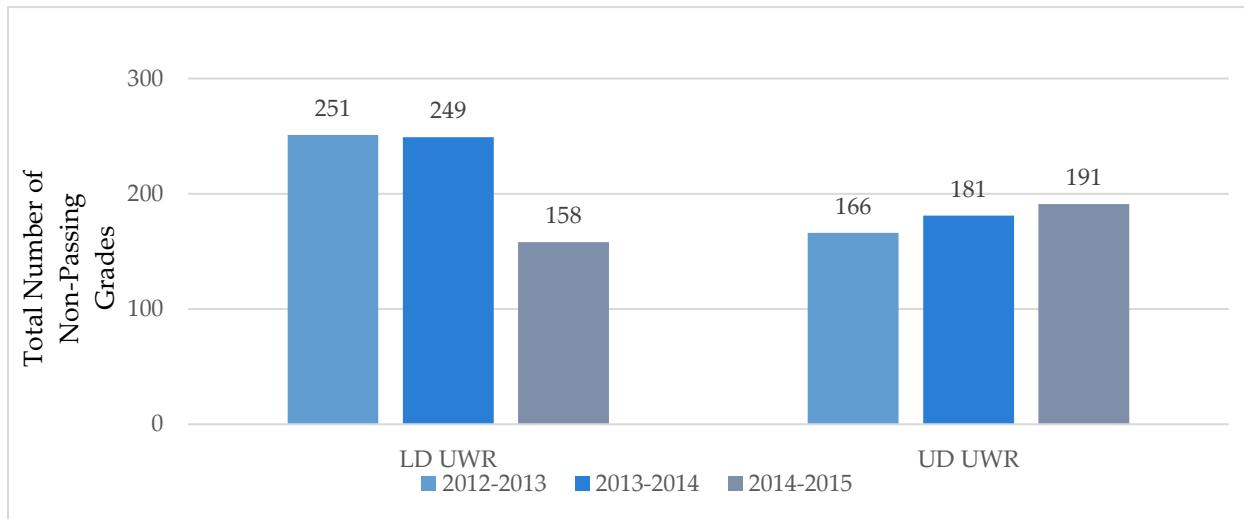


Figure 5. Three-Year UWR non-passing trends.

As shown in Figure 5, the number of non-passing LD UWR grades increased slightly between 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 before dropping in 2014-2015. In contrast, the percentage of non-passing UD UWR courses trended slightly higher over three years.

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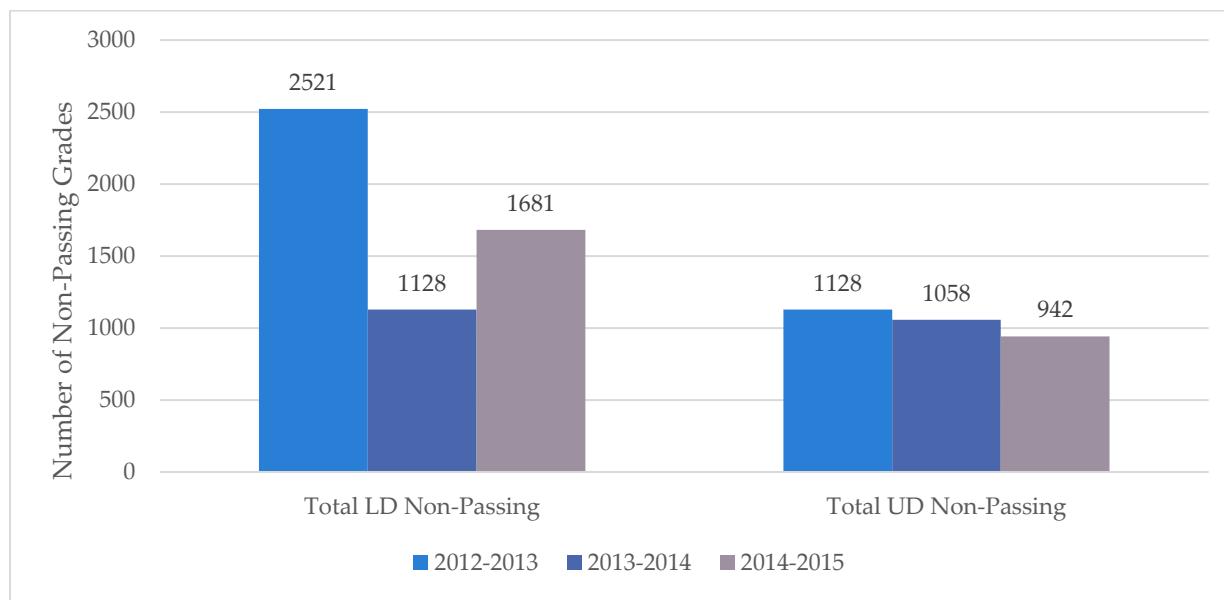


Figure 6. Total count of non-passing grades by year, and for lower- and upper-division.

At the same time that the percentage of non-passing grades increased in UD UWR courses, shown in Figure 5, the total number of non-passing grades declined, as shown in Figure 6. In other words, although the number of non-passing UD grades decreased over three years, UD UWR non-passing grades rose.

The university's decrease in undergraduate student enrollment over three years, 2012-2013 through 2014-2015, may partially explain these changes (Common Data Set). Other factors may be related to curriculum, faculty expectations and grading, student preparation, and more. These data should continue to be tracked for persistent trends.

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Table 10.

Total Withdrawal from UWR Courses

Year	Course Level	UWR?	Withdrew Indiv Crse	Withdrew All Crses	Total	% Withdrawn
1213	LD	N	268	310	578	3.0%
1213	LD	Y	62	31	93	4.9%
1213	UD	N	152	150	302	1.6%
1213	UD	Y	30	26	56	2.1%
1314	LD	N	250	275	525	2.9%
1314	LD	Y	39	38	77	4.0%
1314	UD	N	129	171	300	1.8%
1314	UD	Y	40	33	73	2.6%
1415	LD	N	287	257	544	3.3%
1415	LD	Y	44	32	76	4.8%
1415	UD	N	126	154	280	1.8%
1415	UD	Y	31	41	72	2.7%

Note. “The withdraw numbers here pertain to courses quit after 4th week. For the percent withdrawn, we compare withdrawn registrations to enrollment as of 4th week. Pre-4th-week ‘Dropped’ registrations aren’t counted in either number, nor are administrative withdrawals. ‘Withdrew All Courses’ signifies when the student withdrew and is taking nothing else. Either the student has dropped everything all at once, or this was the last course withdrawn over the term.” (Smutz, 2016)

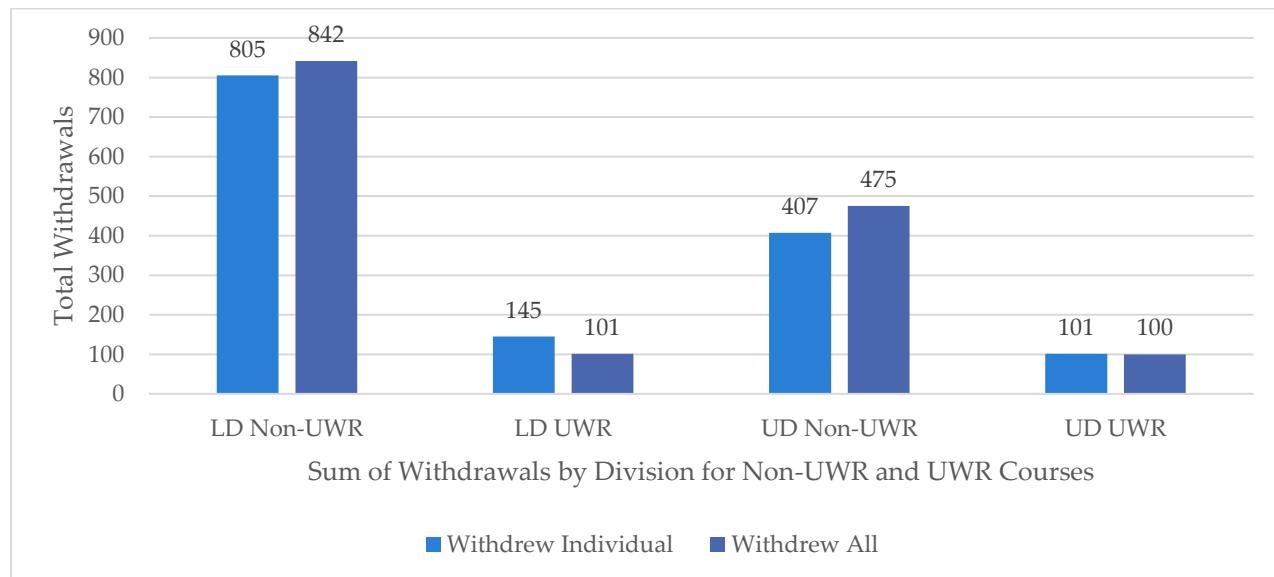


Figure 7. Total withdrawals from non-UWR and UWR courses by division, 2012-2013 through 2014-2015.

Students withdrew from Non-UWR LD courses at almost twice the rate as from all Non-UWR UD courses, as shown in Table 10 and visualized in Figure 7. Student withdrawals from individual LD UWR courses was about 44% higher than for UD UWRs. Student withdrawal from LD UWR courses was about 22% higher than for UD UWR courses.

Withdrawals from a larger number of LD UWR courses than UD UWR courses may be related to student preparation for and understanding of UWR course expectations. Also, division cohort totals have not been compared to determine the proportion of withdrawals at lower- or upper-division, which may also account for some of the difference. A gradual increase in the total number of Bachelor's degrees awarded may have some effect on that proportion (see Appendix II). Continuing to inform students early in their college careers about UWR courses and expectations, such as in UNI and CORE courses, and in Writing Center classroom visits, may support increased completion and success rates.

Table 11.

Non-Completers: Close to Graduating and Need UWRs

Close to Graduating and need UWRs

Year Started	Non-Completers
200607	7
200708	4
200809	7
200910	9
201011	4
201112	13
201213	1

Note. “These students had not graduated as of Spring 2015, and haven't been reported to the state as having attended EOU since Spring 2015. They all have at least 165 credits but have too few UWRs to have met the UWR requirement: Either no lower-division UWRs and less than 3 upper-division UWRs or they have less than 2 upper-division UWRs. Be advised that the actual numbers may be greater, since we did not make a distinction as to whether UWRs are in a given student's major. Writing UWRs don't count toward a History degree unless by appeal/special arrangement, etc. Also, though these students have 165 or more credits, they may need more than 15 credits to satisfy Major requirements.” (Smutz, 2016)

The WAC Group queried the total number of students who were not enrolled, and who needed 15 credits or fewer and one or more UWR course(s) to graduate. As shown in Table 11, the number of non-completers who had not finished the UWR and who had met parameters noted above suggested no concerns or apparent trends.

V.B.e. What are transfer student graduation rates and average years to graduation?

Table 12.

Six-year Transfer graduation rates

Cohort Year	6-Year Grad Rate
2000	45.8%
2001	46.1%
2002	48.5%
2003	43.2%
2004	50.4%
2005	46.4%
2006	51.3%
2007	52.3%
2008	50.5%

Note. "Readmits are not counted in these numbers" (Smutz, 2016).

The six-year graduation rate for transfer student cohorts has risen for most years between 2000 and 2008, with the exceptions of declines from 2003 to 2004 and again from 2007 to 2008, as shown in Table 12.

Table 13.

Average Years to Graduation for Transfer Students

Cohort Year	Avg Years to Graduate
2000	1.936
2001	2.053
2002	2.070
2003	2.028
2004	1.864
2005	1.807
2006	1.812
2007	1.743
2008	1.760

Note. "Students taking longer than six years are excluded" (Smutz, 2016).

Average years to graduation among transfer students declined after the 2003 cohort year (see Table 13). The 2003 cohort was the last required to complete the WPE; fall 2004 incoming students were the first cohort required to fulfill the UWR (Campus Assembly Minutes, 2004). While this connection is of interest, data are not available to determine causation. Based on



these data, however, replacement of the WPE with the UWR may have reduced or removed a roadblock to graduation.

V.B.f. Of the students who successfully complete at least one UWR course in their freshman year what percentage continue to graduation?

Table 14.

Correlation Between Successfully Completing a UWR in Freshman Year and 6-Year Graduation

Cohort	Freshman UWR	% Graduated
Fall 2006	N	30.3%
Fall 2006	Y	36.8%
Fall 2007	N	20.9%
Fall 2007	Y	30.8%
Fall 2008	N	30.6%
Fall 2008	Y	50.5%

Note. "This version defines freshman year as the academic year in which we reported them as freshmen" (Smutz). N=Did not successfully complete a UWR in the freshman year; Y=Successfully completed a UWR in the freshman year.

Table 14 shows that freshmen who successfully completed a UWR showed higher rates of graduation over six years for each of three cohorts.

Table 15

Taking 2+ UWRs with Freshman or Sophomore Status

Cohort	Freshman UWR	% Graduated in 6 years
Fall 2006	N	30.0%
Fall 2006	Y	34.0%
Fall 2007	N	20.8%
Fall 2007	Y	26.8%
Fall 2008	N	30.6%
Fall 2008	Y	44.6%

Note. "This version defines freshman status as within the student's first 45 credit hours" (Smutz). N=Did not successfully complete two or more UWR while at freshman or sophomore status; Y=Successfully completed two or more UWRs in the freshman or sophomore year.

Freshmen who completed two or more UWRs while at freshman and sophomore status, shown in Table 15, reached graduation in six years at slightly lower rates than those who completed



only one UWR at freshman status, as shown in Table 14. For freshmen who did not complete two or more UWRs at freshman and sophomore status, the graduation rate was the same as for freshmen who did not complete a UWR.

Data showed that students who completed two or more UWR courses in their freshman and sophomore years had a higher percentage who graduated in six years than those who did not complete two or more UWRs. However, students completing two or more UWRs over freshman and sophomore years had a lower six-year graduation rate than freshmen who completed only one UWR. This trend should be studied in more detail to determine cause and significance.

VI. Future Plans for Assessment

The WAC Group has made preliminary preparations to continue writing program assessment activities in 2017-2018:

- Toward the goal of examining and assessing the EOU student writing experience from entrance to completion, we proposed a longitudinal research project involving WR 115 and WR 121 writing samples and course materials, and submitted the plan for IRB review. Due to low participation, an alternative plan (below) was initiated.
- An alternative to the longitudinal study will seek instructor-rated high, medium, and low first year composition and 100-level UWR writing samples, along with assignments and grading rubrics.
- A professional development workshop on assignment design, a collaboration between the WAC Group and CTLA, is proposed for winter break.
- Following the 2017-2018 academic year, the WAC Group will review assessments, finalize reports, and report out to the faculty through a Colloquium presentation.

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Appendix I

Number of Bachelor's degrees awarded by academic year from July 1-June 30

Academic Year (n=7)	Annual number of Bachelor's degrees awarded
2008-2009	539
2009-2010	573
2010-2011	540
2011-2012	619
2012-2013	674
2013-2014	710
2014-2015	703
2015-2016	709
Total Bachelor's degrees over 7 years	4358

Note: Data were reported in the Student Centralized Administrative Reporting Files (SCARF) labeled for years 2010 through 2017. These numbers include some first-time freshmen entering in 2004 and 2005 who completed degrees in four years and were subject to the University Writing Requirement. Some first-time freshmen who entered in 2002 or earlier and were subject to the Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE) requirement may be included.

Appendix II

Eastern Oregon University Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Three-Year Strategic Plan

Mission: Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) at Eastern Oregon University supports the view that writing aids in learning and critical thinking, and should happen across the academic community throughout a student's formal education. WAC is committed to ensuring all students receive attention to writing throughout their studies in small class environments and, through Writing in the Disciplines (WID), students learn and practice discipline-specific conventions. Students will develop habits of mind and communication skills necessary to play productive roles in their disciplines, careers, and communities, and be prepared for responsible and reflective action in a diverse and interconnected world. (Aligned with the [February 3, 2004, University Mission](#) statement; approved by the WAC Group on November 20, 2015.)

Strategy Priorities: We will achieve our mission through strategic priorities aimed to promote writing and the teaching of writing at all levels and in all disciplines, to help students achieve mastery or acceptable writing fluency for careers beyond college, to support student writing through access to the Writing Center, and to support faculty design of writing assignments and assessments.

Impact: Over the three years of the strategic plan, we anticipate that a collaborative culture of writing, involving students, faculty, staff, and administrators, will grow from these efforts, enhancing students' learning and professional success.

Targets: Three targets have been identified: to ascertain whether UWR-designated courses employ the UWR framework, whether that framework is effective in teaching and promoting student writing, and whether use of Discipline-Specific UWR Criteria (maps or rubrics) gather useable data; to measure student awareness of Writing Center support; to promote genre diversification; and to offer writing courses and/or support for students whose needs are not being met.

Assessment: Using qualitative and quantitative methods, we will document efforts and efficacy of writing curriculum, outcomes, and support, and use the information to improve our writing instruction and understanding of how to support students' practices of writing to learn and communicate effectively.

Communication: To strengthen community involvement, we pledge to establish the EOU Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Group to collaborate on writing

assessment efforts and to report our work to our constituencies—shared governance, administration, faculty and instructional staff, parents, students, professional societies, and the public—in ways appropriate to each.

Priority 1: Writing Across the Curriculum

Form and convene WAC Group.

Ascertain whether UWR-designated courses employ the UWR framework through syllabus review.

Determine whether the UWR framework is effective in attaining its stated goals (that students receive attention to writing throughout their studies, and that students demonstrate their mastery of discipline-specific writing) by reviewing signature assignments and sample papers (high, medium, low) from UWR courses.

Gather and assess disciplinary writing data through program-designed Discipline-Specific UWR Criteria maps or rubrics

Identify current writing genres assigned in UWR courses through syllabus review.

Identify UWR courses required in minors through checklist review.

Survey 400-level UWR courses.

Priority 2: Student Retention and Achievement

Assess writing proficiency in WR 115, WR 121, 200-, 300- and 400-level UWR with skill levels documented.

Identify any gaps in college-level writing instruction for specific student populations and develop plan of action.

Coordinate with academic programs and Career Services to prepare students for workplace and graduate-school success.

Priority 3: Writing in the Disciplines: Capstones/ePortfolios

Ensure student writing proficiency in genres required in the major.

Ensure student writing proficiency in genres required in the minor.

Promote and ensure that Capstones/ePortfolios are designated as UWR courses.

Offer workshops to teaching faculty on scaffolding writing curriculum and assignments.

Establish periodic review of capstone writing and readiness for career writing using the Written Communication VALUE rubric (AAC&U).

Ensure both print and digital writing exposure.

Query alumni regarding perceived readiness for career writing.

Priority 4: Writing Center

Ensure student awareness of Writing Center.

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)

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Broaden tutoring support to include not only writing, but also other literacies, including reading, English language learning (speaking, listening, reading, writing), and digital/visual rhetoric.

Offer support for print and digital assignment and assessment development to teaching faculty.

Note: The watermark “Draft” appears on this document to indicate that this plan may be revised by the WAC Group at any time.

Approved by Provost Sarah Witte on 8/10/2015

Revised with Vice Provost Donald Wolff’s input on 8/27/15

Presented to CTLA on 9/21/15

Mission approved by WAC Group on 11/20/2015

Appendix III

WAC Group Data Request

Current Course Information

What proportion of classes (not sections) are designated as UWR courses?

1. Total number (#) of discrete courses taught at EOU (individual courses, not sections, with a specific prefix and course number, e.g., WR 121)
2. Total # of discrete UWR courses

Data requested for three academic years: 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15

Are UWR courses accessible for students?

3. Total # of UWR courses (all sections) offered per term over three previous years

Do students who take more than the required number of writing intensive courses exhibit higher performance, as demonstrated by GPAs?

4. Total # of UWR courses completed by students in each of the last three graduating classes (2013, 2014, 2015), broken down by major or discipline

Do students delay completion of UWRs? When do students complete LD and UD UWR requirements? Do early completers fair better than late completers, as gauged by GPA?

5. Timeline profile of when students take UWRs, broken down by major or discipline (e.g., Year 1 Fall/Winter/Spring/Summer; Year 2 by term, Year 3, and so on)
6. Compare overall GPAs for students who complete UWRs in Year 3 and Year 4.
7. # students enrolled in last required UWR during their final term before completion
8. Compare # students enrolled in LD or UD UWR during final term

Do UWR courses create a roadblock for retention and completion? If so, where do roadblocks appear?

9. Average/median/mode course GPA for Upper Division UWR courses compared to average GPA for all Upper Division undergraduate courses
10. Average/median/mode course GPA for Lower Division UWR courses compared to average GPA for all Lower Division undergraduate courses
11. Compare total # of grades below C- for UWR courses to total # of grades below C- for all other courses
12. Total # of Withdrawals from UWR courses compared to total # of non-UWR withdrawals
13. Total # of students not currently enrolled and who need 15 credits or fewer and one or more UWR course(s) to graduate

Data requested for 2014-15 and 2015-2016

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What is the frequency of GECs combined with UWRs in LD to 300-level courses to provide early disciplinary writing experiences and double-dipping opportunities? [Note: GEC data were not provided.]

14. UWR courses that are also Gen Ed:
 - a. #UWR courses that are also Gen Ed: AEH.
 - b. #UWR courses that are also Gen Ed: APC.
 - c. #UWR courses that are also Gen Ed: Math/Sci.
 - d. #UWR courses that are also Gen Ed: SSC.
 - e. #UWR courses that are also Gen Ed: GTW.
 - f. #UWR courses that are NOT Gen Ed.