# Review of Purdue University's
# Introductory Composition at Purdue (ICaP) Program

Submitted on behalf of the
Council of Writing Program Administrators

by

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March 2, 2017

Dates of visit:
January 30-31, 2017

## Summary of Recommendations

**Recommendation #1: ICaP should reconstitute and offer a revised version of ENGL 102 for 3 credits, to meet the needs of students who enter or transfer to Purdue with 3 credits for ENGL 101 or equivalent (e.g., dual credit course, AP credit, English 101 course taken elsewhere).**

**Recommendation #2: ENGL 106 should be continued as a 4-credit course for those students who bring in no prior composition credit and take the course as the equivalent of ENGL 101-102. If it is not too difficult for ICaP planning, ENGL 106 might be made available to students who do bring in credit for ENGL 101 but would prefer ENGL 106 (or whose disciplines prefer it).**

**Recommendation #3: Self-directed placement should continue, with modifications to advise students about selecting between ENGL 102 and ENGL 106 as well as other options. Depending on considerations such as staffing (who could teach each of these courses), the training/mentoring needs for both courses, and student demand for ENGL 108, ICaP could simply replace it with ENGL 102 or continue it for this group of students alongside a new 102 course.**

**Recommendation #4: ENGL 106-I should continue as a 4-credit course (capped at 15 students) for international students.**

**Recommendation #5: ICaP should develop a systematic assessment program, aligned with the university's new framework for assessing foundational outcomes.**

**Recommendation #6: Course(s) outside of ICaP that are intended to fulfill the first year writing requirement should be designed to conform to ENGL 106 outcomes and guidelines provided and monitored by faculty with expertise in rhetoric and composition.**

**Recommendation #7: Because effective writing instruction requires specialized training and expertise in composition pedagogy, faculty teaching courses outside of ICaP that are intended to fulfill Purdue's first year writing requirement should receive training and support that enable them to deliver such course(s) effectively.**

**Recommendation #8: Administrators should allocate resources to launch a WAC/WID initiative.**

**Recommendation #9: English department faculty outside of the rhetoric and composition area should not be routinely required to teach composition courses. In those cases where English department faculty either volunteer or must be assigned to teach an ICaP course (due to financial or other pressing exigencies), then they – like faculty outside the English department as discussed under Recommendation #7 – must be trained/mentored by the WPA or a designated faculty representative with expertise in composition pedagogy.**

**Recommendation #10: The English department should consider changing the Writing Program Administrator (ICaP Director) position from a three-year rotating appointment to a five-year rotating appointment**.

**Recommendation #11: The English department, in collaboration with the Dean of CLA, should explore alternatives to the increasing use of adjunct instructors and one-year Visiting Assistant Professors to staff ENGL 106 courses**. **More specifically, we recommend that the Dean of CLA, the Chair of the English Department, and the Director of ICaP find a way to increase the number of Continuing Lecturer positions in the English Department, positions that are full-time, long-term,**

**renewable, and potentially promotable within the university system.**

## The Context of the Visit

At the invitation of Dr. David Reingold, Justin S. Morrill Dean of the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) at Purdue University, Drs. Anne Ruggles Gere, Michael Pemberton, and Louise Wetherbee Phelps, members of the Council of Writing Program Administrators' Board of Consultant-Evaluators, conducted a review of the department on January 30-31, 2017. In preparation for the review, the evaluation team members read the self-study prepared by the English Department's Director of Introductory Composition, Dr. Bradley Dilger, as well as Kris Ratcliffe, Linda Collins Haynes, Erin Cromer Twal, Beth Towle, Barbara Hart Dixon, Patrick Love, and Carrie Kancilia. Additional reports and documents relevant to the ICaP program were sent to us after the visit at our request. While on campus, Drs. Gere, Pemberton, and Phelps interviewed administrators at multiple levels within the university, faculty, instructors, and staff (the itinerary is appended at the end of this report as Appendix A) in order to gather pertinent information from all stakeholders in the program.

As a team, we were strongly impressed by the quality of Purdue's writing programs, the dedication of its faculty and graduate teaching assistants, and the good will of administrators at all levels during our visit. We found those qualities exemplified in the thoughtful and comprehensive self-study, which was a pleasure to read, and in each of the meetings we attended and discussions we held. The rhetoric and composition faculty at Purdue is highly skilled, exceptionally well trained, and highly productive, and the department's graduate program has an international reputation, a touchstone for excellence that a great many other programs aspire to. Its completion and placement rates for graduate students are enviable and a testament to the strength of the program overall. Further, the Department of English has a tradition of exceptional, committed writing program administrators, and it is clearly evident that members of the faculty and instructors at all levels are devoted to student success in writing and the implementation of best teaching practices, grounded in current theory and empirical research. It is easy to see why the ICaP program won a CCCC Writing Program Certificate of Excellence award in 2006.

We were also pleased to see that the Department has been both flexible and proactive in addressing economic exigencies and diverse student needs that have faced them over the last several years, including a tuition freeze, scarce and continually dwindling resources, changes in international student demographics, staffing concerns, training issues, Cornerstone courses, and the pressure to integrate some literature faculty into first year writing courses. We will address many of these topics in our report and recommendations that follow.

Dean Reingold's specific charge to the consultant-evaluator team was to address the following three questions:

1. What is the evidence that a 4 credit class is necessary (versus a 3 credit class)?
2. What are other models we should consider where the writing/composition requirement is shared by other units in CLA and across the campus?
3. What should be the expectation for faculty instruction in these courses? That is, should all English faculty be expected to teach at least one section of composition per year?

During the course of our visit, we learned some of the specific exigencies that brought these questions to the fore and that shaped the recommendations we will make regarding the ICaP program. Several of these programmatic contexts and pressures we describe below.

**The Context of the Program and the Department**

The current manifestation of the ICaP program, though it has undergone some changes over time, was first implemented in 2003 in response to institutional pressures at Purdue to reduce its two-course 6-hour writing requirement to a single course. English 106, as that course is now known, is a four hour class that fulfills the university's writing requirement and is a prerequisite for many other writing courses in the English department, most notably upper division classes in Professional and Technical Writing.

The ICaP program is housed in the Department of English and is staffed largely by graduate teaching assistants in English and other CLA departments. Of the 274 ICaP sections offered in 2016-17, for example, 219 were taught by GTAs, 47 by adjuncts, and 8 by other faculty. English 106 (4 contact hours) and English 108 (3 contact hours) are the two ICaP courses offered by the department, and 106 has several variations to meet the needs of specific student populations: 106-I for international students, 106-E for students enrolled at Purdue Polytechnic Institute (PPI), and 106-R for students participating in Learning Communities in the fall semester of their first year. English 106 courses consist of two days of meetings in a conventional classroom, one day in a computer lab, and two days devoted to individual student-teacher conferences. This means that English 106 instructors typically teach or meet with their students five days a week. The fourth hour of this 4-hour course is specifically intended to cover the mandatory conferencing component, split over a two-day period, which the majority of GTAs we spoke with believed was one of the most valuable portions of the course. English 108, by contrast, is an "accelerated" version of 106 which omits regular conferencing and is generally intended only for students with high SAT writing scores and who feel comfortable working at a faster pace. (ICaP uses a directed self-placement system to guide students toward an appropriate course.)

Mentoring new GTAs is a priority for the ICaP program, and this mentoring begins in students' first semester. As the self-study points out, "Teaching assistants new to 106 complete a year of FYW-directed mentoring (English 505A and 505B) which includes a week-long orientation that precedes the start of classes…For new lecturers, this requirement is one semester. Similar requirements apply to 106–I, Professional Writing courses, and Writing Lab tutoring" (13). In addition to this curricular requirement, GTAs are also supported by Faculty Mentors, Assistant Mentors, and Technology Mentors.

As stated in the self-study, economic pressures are making themselves felt across the entire Purdue campus and nowhere more than in the College of Liberal Arts. The strong STEM focus at Purdue has only heightened concerns about future allocations and funding for CLA programs overall and for the Department of English in particular. In 2015, for example, English received a significant budget reduction, and "the Department of English…[was also] told to expect few if any faculty hires for quite some time, despite recent losses of several faculty in areas of the Department which are arguably understaffed" (self-study, 6). A new early retirement initiative at the university (which is expected to further reduce the current size of the department), coupled with Provost Dutta's forthcoming plan to "right size" faculty based on student-to-faculty ratios, leaves the future status of the English department and the ICaP program in doubt. Additional reductions in the number of graduate students allocated to the English department will also present ICaP administrators with significant staffing challenges in the years to come.

Further complicating ICaP's programmatic mission, a new "Cornerstone" program is being implemented in CLA, ostensibly to attract students from STEM and other majors across the campus into liberal arts courses. Cornerstone, currently voluntary for incoming students, is envisioned as a "great books" course, structured thematically, with students taking a common two-semester sequence in their first year, and then, optionally, an additional three courses on topics and themes that match their personal interests or career paths. After taking these five courses, students will receive the designation of being "Cornerstone Scholars" on their transcripts. Though the specifics of this program are not yet in place, several

stakeholders we met with, including Dean Reingold, indicated that the first two Cornerstone courses could be used to "fulfill" the university's communication requirements, currently satisfied by English 106 (written communication) and Communication 114 (oral communication). As these courses will not be taught by writing or communication faculty exclusively, significant concerns exist about whether the writing outcomes for Cornerstone classes will, in fact, be equivalent to the outcomes for English 106 and whether faculty from other disciplines will have the expertise necessary to teach, assign, respond, and assess writing in those courses.

We have opted to use Dean Reingold's initial questions as a way to organize and structure our review, but we will also be discussing other programmatic issues that are relevant to the successful operation of the ICaP program that the questions do not directly address.

**Question #1: What is the evidence that a 4 credit class is necessary (versus a 3 credit class)?**

Broadly, ENGL 106 requires 4 credits in order to cover the same content in a single course that is traditionally covered at other institutions, as it was in the previous Purdue curriculum, by two first-year writing courses totaling 6 credits: ENGL 101 and ENGL 102. As a compressed, accelerated version of this curriculum, which meets the university's foundational learning outcomes for *both* written communication and information literacy, it replaces and is equivalent to ENGL 101-102. (Criteria for satisfying the foundational writing requirement at Purdue, and for courses that meet that requirement for entering and transfer students, vary widely from college to college, as documented in the *Advisor's Guide*.)

Specifically, ENGL 106 teaches:

> • rhetorical knowledge (concepts and flexible application);
> • composing processes for writing in digital and print media;
> • critical reading and thinking about ideas and information (i.e., information literacy);
> • research strategies and methods;
> • inquiry-based argumentation;
> • collaborative work on complex research and writing projects. (See Revised ICap Outcomes, May 2015, Appendix C in ICaP 2014-2015 Assessment Report.)

These goals not only represent the content of an introductory and an advanced course, condensed into one, but also address outcomes for *two distinct areas of learning* (writing and information literacy). To accomplish its goals, the course requires students to write 1,500-22,000 words, including drafts, revised to produce at least 7,500-11,500 words of polished writing. This amount of writing requires commensurate feedback. The pedagogical format of the course builds in weekly time for every student to conference with instructors as well as teaching students to give and receive feedback from other writers.

When ENGL 106 was designed 14 years ago to replace a 6-credit requirement, its innovations in curriculum and pedagogy helped ICaP win a coveted CCCC Writing Program Certificate of Excellence. Since then, the evolution of writing studies has ratcheted up expectations for the outcomes of a first-year writing course in both scope and complexity. These higher expectations reflect both cultural changes in writing itself and also research on writing pedagogy, including the role of first-year writing in preparing students for writing in the disciplines or professions. Such developments are reflected in documents like the Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing (http://wpacouncil.org/framework); the NCTE Definition of 21st Century Literacies (http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/21stcentdefinition); and the WPA Outcomes Statement, http://wpacouncil.org/positions/outcomes.html. The recent update of the WPA Outcomes Statement (2014), in particular, informed the 2015 revisions in outcomes for ENGL 106. As explained in the Statement, the concept of "writing" has evolved in the digital age to a broader one of

"composing" in multiple media, necessitating changes in instruction: "In this Statement, composing refers broadly to complex writing processes that are increasingly reliant on the use of digital technologies. Writers also attend to elements of design, incorporating images and graphical elements into texts intended for screens as well as printed page." This and other  ongoing developments in the discipline require continual updating and modernizing of a course like ENGL 106, as was anticipated in the original design (see Appendix I to the self-study, Application for CCCC Writing Program Certificate of Excellence Award, 2006).

Such updates by ICaP must also recognize that parallel developments have been taking place in the conception and pedagogy of information literacy. To the extent that ENGL 106 serves to meet a foundational learning requirement for information literacy, it needs to account for recent changes in that field which modify guidelines for outcomes in that area, making it convergent with writing studies in many respects as well integral to teaching research and digital literacy. See the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (2016) [http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework], which offers this definition of information literacy:

> Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning.

These increased demands on the first-year writing curriculum mean that covering its content even in a 4-credit course is a challenge. Reducing ENGL 106 from 4 to 3 credits would inevitably compromise instructors' ability to meet that challenge; some of the outcomes would have to be modified or dropped, and the amount of writing probably cut down. By eliminating the class time now scheduled for conferencing, it would also weaken the commitment to frequent feedback, which both ENGL 106 instructors and faculty in other disciplines described eloquently to us as the most important and successful pedagogical feature of the course. Right now, because the course provides its own one-on-one tutoring, only about 10% of the Writing Lab's tutoring goes to ENGL 106 students. Eliminating the conferencing component in a 3-credit ENGL 106 would put pressure on the Writing Lab (already running at full capacity) to accommodate many more ENGL 106 students.

So let us turn Dean Reingold's question around and ask it a different way: **What is the evidence that a 3-credit first-year writing course is sufficient to prepare Purdue students for the writing demands of their college major, not to mention the increasingly sophisticated needs for written communication and related skills (research, critical reading and thinking, information literacy, collaboration) in the workplace?** While no research has directly addressed this question (since few universities have such a limited writing requirement), decisions made by peer institutions indicate that they believe much more is needed—and they have reallocated resources accordingly.

Writing requirements at AAU peer institutions (and, indeed, most research universities) are far more robust than Purdue's, which is an outlier in this respect. (See Appendix B: Benchmark Data on Big Ten Writing Requirements/Programs, in the English Department's GSI Plan [5/13/16]). Increasingly, institutions are recognizing that writing abilities continue to develop over time in response to new challenges. While first-year writing can provide an important foundation, students need continued writing practice and instruction throughout higher education to help them adapt and extend rhetorical knowledge and skills to new genres, audiences, and contexts.

Those of Purdue's peer institutions that still require 6 credits of first-year writing are adding further, advanced writing requirements. Following a recent trend, others have shifted from the traditional 6 credits in two semesters of first-year writing (ENGL 101-102) to a single first-year foundational writing course (often for 4 credits). But, unlike at Purdue, that reduction at the first-year level is almost always coupled

with adding new writing requirements at the upper division level or in the major. Changes that reduce a first-year requirement, whether to a 3-credit or 4-credit course, are typically part of a larger restructuring of university writing programs to address writers' needs for continuing writing instruction and practice *throughout* college.

In contrast to its peers, first-year writing in the form of ENGL 106 and its variants (in some colleges, only ENGL 101) remains the only writing requirement mandated at Purdue. As some noted in our visit, there is a large gap between ENGL 106 and courses in the major where discipline-specific writing may be expected and practiced. We think the ad hoc, jury-rigged network of support offered by the Writing Lab, ICaP, and rhetoric/composition faculty and graduate students is masking this gap to some degree by making help available to upper division students and faculty in the disciplines who seek it out most urgently. (The number and diversity of outreach efforts provided by these units, as documented in the self-study and the Writing Lab's Annual 2015-2016 Report, is truly impressive.) However, the totality of these efforts is putting a heavy burden on ICaP and the Writing Lab, and the demand is rising all the time. If the Writing Lab, already hard-pressed, had to cover more conferencing for first-year writing as a consequence of turning ENGL 106 into a 3-credit course, it would not be able to maintain this level of support for students and faculty in other disciplines.

**We conclude that the content and expected outcomes of ENGL 106 together with the absence of advanced course requirements or instruction in writing at Purdue more than justify its status as a 4-credit course**. However, it is reasonable (and would have practical advantages) to differentiate between those students who need only ENGL 102 and those who need a course that covers the content of both ENGL 101 and ENGL 102.

> **Recommendation #1: ICaP should reconstitute and offer a revised version of ENGL 102 for 3 credits, to meet the needs of students who enter or transfer to Purdue with 3 credits for ENGL 101 or equivalent (e.g., dual credit course, AP credit, English 101 course taken elsewhere).**

This course should avoid repetition of the content of ENGL 101 introductory courses and focus on the advanced content typical of ENGL 102 while adapting some of the most successful elements of ENGL 106 (e.g., feedback through conferencing) to the 3-credit format. ENGL 102 builds on the composing practices and rhetorical concepts introduced in ENGL 101 to focus on "research, information literacy, documentation and citation, and writing research papers in addition to some multi-genre/multi-modal composing" (*Advisor's Guide*, 5). It also emphasizes sustained projects, collaboration, and reflection. According to the self-study, ICaP is already examining ways to incorporate more conferencing into a 3-credit course. One possibility is restructuring class time ("flipping" the classroom) so that material or activities covered in some class meetings take place online or are completed independently by students, while class time is devoted to conferencing, peer review, and other interactive activities. Teachers can also conference in small groups as well as individually.

> **Recommendation #2: ENGL 106 should be continued as a 4-credit course for those students who bring in no prior composition credit and take the course as the equivalent of ENGL 101-102. If it is not too difficult for ICaP planning, ENGL 106 might be made available to students who do bring in credit for ENGL 101 but would prefer ENGL 106 (or whose disciplines prefer it).**

These first two recommendations will help to address staffing concerns, albeit to a limited degree, but can be revisited if and when advanced writing courses or requirements are instituted broadly by the colleges or university to broaden the scope of writing instruction beyond the first year.

When ENGL 106 was introduced, its 4-credit design solved a number of practical problems in the first-year program. (See Appendix I to the self-study, Becoming Introductory Composition at Purdue [ICaP] Application for CCCC Writing Program Certificate of Excellence Award, 2006). Condensing the two-semester requirement to one course decreased the number of sections that had to be staffed while also enabling ICaP to decrease class size to conform with national guidelines for writing classes (20 students/per regular section and 15 for international sections). The 4-credit model also reduced TA teaching loads from 2/1 to 1/1 for those teaching ENGL 106.

However, in today's stringent circumstances the complexities of administering ENGL 106 as a 4-credit course have become increasingly troublesome for ICaP, the department, and various stakeholders. Current problems include staffing the course; scheduling TAs; and dealing with the "transfer" credits for prior composition courses, especially for transfer students who have earned credit for ENGL 101 but not ENGL 102.

First, staffing resources have, as in 2003, become a major problem in delivering the course. The number of English TAs available for teaching has been sharply cut by the Dean's Graduate Program Upgrade Initiative, and ICaP is hard put to cover the sections needed. Continuing lecturers have also been lost, the number declining from 15 in 2014 to 2 in 2016. To cover sections, the department has had to dramatically increase the undesirable practice of hiring adjuncts (going from 4 in 2014 to 47 in 2016). Other current measures to cover ICaP classes include assigning English faculty from disciplines other than rhetoric and composition to ENGL 108 (2 in Spring 2017); and hiring visiting professors. However, these measures are not viable long-term solutions to staffing the course while maintaining consistency and quality of instruction (see discussion below).

Second, because of how FTEs are calculated for graduate assistants, scheduling a combination of ENGL 106 for 4 credits with 3-credit courses or other assignments is very complex, leading to overloads (at increased cost) in various configurations that are hard to budget predictably. This problem also makes it difficult to assign graduate students to the Writing Lab as tutors.

The third complaint about administering ENGL 106 has to do with how credit is granted for prior composition instruction, greatly complicated by the variation from college to college in requirements and rules of transfer. This complexity, and the mismatch between prior composition credits that students bring in and what ENGL 106 requires, combine to produce widespread confusion and frustration for students, faculty, and advisors across the campus. Some argue that the situation makes it more difficult to recruit transfer students, at a time the university is planning to increase the number of transfer students. We were informed by Associate Provost for Teaching & Learning Frank Dooley that about 40% of students are now entering or transferring with credit for ENGL 101, and the number is likely to rise as students take advantage of multiple options for gaining such credit.

Our recommendation for combining a 4-credit 106 course for some undergraduates (perhaps a decreasing number) with a 3-credit 102 course for others has the potential to alleviate, if not eliminate, the current problems in administering the course. Reintroducing the ENGL 102 course for students bringing credit for ENGL 101 would clarify the choices for advisors and simplify the complex decision-making around transfer equivalencies and which course to take. Scheduling would be easier with fewer graduate students needing to teach in different combinations of ENGL 106 and other assignments. Staffing resources for ICaP would increase because graduate students teaching solely 3-credit courses (102, 108, or upper division courses) would teach a 2/1 load. Also, it is likely an ENGL 102 course, like ENGL 108, would be a better match for some English faculty outside rhetoric and composition to teach than is ENGL 106.

We believe a 3-course load (9 credits/year) is reasonable for graduate students teaching ENGL 102, as it is now for those teaching ENGL 108 or other writing courses, for several reasons. First, a 2/1 load (or

more) is the norm for English doctoral programs in institutions that employ GTAs for first-year composition. Conferencing is an expected part of composition pedagogy in these courses, if not at the frequency of the ENGL 106 course (every student, every week). As discussed above, there are ways to incorporate a higher level of conferencing in a 3-credit course. We also note that conferencing can take the place of writing comments on drafts, which is equally labor-intensive and not always as effective.

There is one significant disadvantage to our recommendation: adding a new course increases the administrative burden on ICaP. It adds yet another curriculum design task to an already heavy agenda: ICaP is under constant pressure to develop new variants and custom-designed versions of ENGL 106. For example, besides ENGL 106-E and 106-I (under new conditions with PLaCE now in English), ICaP has recently been asked to develop an online ENGL 106, consider an Honors ENGL 106, and teach in the summer bridge program. Designing a new (modernized) ENGL 102 will require planning curriculum content and outcomes, developing sample syllabi, and running pilot sections to refine the plan. Then ICaP must develop a program for transitioning all its teachers (not just TAs) to teaching the new course through professional development and graduate student mentoring, including adjustments in the composition pedagogy course that TAs take. Finally, as more systematic assessment is planned, it will need to take into account the differences between ENGL 106 and ENGL 102, as well as cover ICaP's other first-year writing courses and variants.

Right now, many uncertainties make it extremely difficult for ICaP to predict how many sections will be needed for each course it offers (and thus staffing needs and assignments). Undergraduate enrollment is projected to continue growing, and we heard of no plans for how ICaP is to staff sections for these additional students. The program is already working to adjust to shifts in university enrollment plans (e.g., more transfer students, more Indiana residents, changing ratios of international students from China versus other countries), working with the Registrar and Enrollment Management to respond to these trends. Reintroducing ENGL 102 will introduce another layer of uncertainty for ICaP planning, especially without a firm handle on how many students will end up taking ENGL 102. We commend ICaP for the proactive efforts it is making to adapt to changing conditions and urge CLA to assist the program in any way possible through timely information, transparency about changes, and flexibility in dealing with their impact on ICaP's budget and staffing.

> **Recommendation #3: Self-directed placement should continue, with modifications to advise students about selecting between ENGL 102 and ENGL 106 as well as other options. Depending on considerations such as staffing (who could teach each of these courses), the training/mentoring needs for both courses, and student demand for ENGL 108, ICaP could simply replace ENGL 108 with ENGL 102 or continue it for this group of students alongside a new 102 course.**

> **Recommendation #4: ENGL 106-I should continue as a 4-credit course (capped at 15 students) for international students.**

Although there are a few infelicities attendant to using DSP as a mechanism for student placement, it appears that the system is working efficiently at Purdue. The department chair, Dr. Ratcliffe, said that there were generally very few students who took issue with their placements or requested transfers to different ICaP courses in their first year, and since DSP is intended to help students make informed choices about which course is best for them to enroll in rather than mandating a particular course, student and faculty confidence in the system remains high. Should the reinstatement of ENGL 102 take place, however, the existing DSP program will have to be modified to reflect that change.

One topic of discussion among the evaluation team was whether it would be preferable to recommend the resurrection of ENGL 102 (as an advanced research-focused course) alongside ENGL 108 (an advanced

course that compresses ENGL 106 into a 3 hour format) or to recommend that the newly-configured ENGL 102 be used to <u>replace</u> ENGL 108 in the curriculum. We believe that there are strong arguments that might be made for either approach, but we felt that the ultimate decision should be best left to the ICaP faculty and administrators whose senses of student and programmatic needs are much richer and far better attuned than ours.

We do not recommend changes in the present policy for accepting AP credit for ENGL 106 (currently 4 or 5 on the English Language and Composition exam). However, ENGL 106 might consider accepting a 3 on this exam for ENGL 101 credit, allowing students to enroll in ENGL 102 during their first semester. A revised version of the DSP would, of course, need to reflect this change.

International students, on the other hand, will almost certainly need the intensive attention and conferencing enabled by the 5-day schedule of ENGL 106-I with 4 credits. The additional burden of designing an ENGL 102-I for international students does not, for that reason, seem warranted.

> **Recommendation #5: ICaP should develop a systematic assessment program, aligned with the university's new framework for assessing foundational outcomes.**

Assessment is especially important in maintaining coherence across a distributed program with multiple sections taught by different types of instructors. For this reason, ICaP assessment must also include the embedded teaching and mentoring program for GTAs and other faculty by which it maintains consistency and quality of instruction..

ICaP has a long tradition of assessment in its program, starting with the commitment by its original designers to using assessment to continually improve the course (see Assessing 106 table in Appendix I to the self-study, Application for CCCC Writing Program Certificate of Excellence Award, 2006, 24-27.) Because at that time Purdue had neither called for nor funded large-scale formal assessment of student writing, ICaP focused on using available means to address each of these categories of programmatic assessment. However, these efforts never developed as fully as had been hoped into a systematic program of comprehensive assessment, in particular the type that produces data on student learning.

In 2014-2015, Jennifer Bay, then-director of ICaP, led the research team that conducted an IRB-approved assessment of the ICaP program (see Introductory Composition at Purdue 2014-2015 Assessment Report, Appendix J of self-study). In response to the conclusions in this report, ICaP has undertaken a number of significant changes. These include updating and revising outcomes for ENGL 106 (important because they were redesigned to be measurable); systematically monitoring syllabi in all ENGL 106 sections; creating an Assessment Map to help clarify grading criteria; revising the TA training program; and other measures. Importantly, one conclusion they reached was that "assessment in a large program like ICaP should be a continuing process and not just happen intermittently" (12).

We learned after our visit that the university intends to begin using a new framework for assessing foundational outcomes in the core curriculum (Core Curriculum Assessment Plan: Foundational Outcomes). Professor Dilger, building on the 2014-2015 assessment, plans to collect further data this semester in anticipation of beginning this new plan in AY 2018-2019.

We endorse the director's proactive approach to aligning ICaP assessment with university assessment procedures as they develop. ICap should also be guided by the CCCC position statement on Writing Assessment (2014), http://www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/writingassessment. The first principle of assessment is that although writing assessment serves diverse purposes (including institutional ones) for multiple stakeholders, "[w]riting assessment is useful primarily as a means of improving teaching and

learning. The primary purpose of any assessment should govern its design, its implementation, and the generation and dissemination of its results." It goes on to say: "Best assessment practice is informed by pedagogical and curricular goals, which are in turn formatively affected by the assessment. Teachers or administrators designing assessments should ground the assessment in the classroom, program or departmental context. The goals or outcomes assessed should lead to assessment data which is fed back to those involved with the regular activities assessed so that assessment results may be used to make changes in practice." With this in mind, we have a few suggestions for ICaP as it works on developing a comprehensive assessment plan, which needs to include multiple measures and cover several categories of programmatic quality.

First, student learning in ENGL 106 is not comprehensively measurable by evaluating the quality of students' writings in the course. Some learning goals articulated for the course may need other measures to capture student achievement. Examples of such learning in ENGL 106 might include knowledge of rhetorical concepts, metacognitive knowledge of writing, and knowledge of composing processes. One way to get at these forms of learning is to incorporate self-assessment and reflection in assessment plans. For example, students might be required to include in their portfolios metacognitive reflections that directly address and illustrate these kinds of learning.

Second, ENGL 106 has distinctive pedagogical features that might be assessed independent of student writing in order to get at the strengths and weaknesses (and consistent implementation) of its instructional design. For this purpose, ICaP might want to develop a student evaluation instrument separate from the required university form. It could focus on asking students to evaluate the benefits of such features of the course as intensive conferencing and feedback; engagement with instructors and other students in small classes; instruction in composing processes including drafting, revision, and editing; collaborating with other students; and so on. Conversely, it is important for ENGL 106 to continue and improve assessment of the pedagogical courses and mentoring procedures that help TAs learn to teach and of its professional development support for other ICaP staff.

One of the great difficulties of delivering and assessing a course taught by diverse staff is ensuring consistency while also allowing teachers to develop abilities in course design and to work from their individual strengths. As we discussed on campus, ICaP could further strengthen its consistency and facilitate assessment of student written work by including a common assignment for all classes, as well as a reflective assignment. Syllabi should explicitly include all the defining common features of the course as a writing course (outcomes, feedback opportunities, revision, specifications of the amount of writing and revision required, common assignment, reflection). The syllabus approaches are a sensible way to maintain commonalities while giving teachers more freedom and allowing for continuing innovation in curriculum. But they have lost their effectiveness and need to be fine-tuned to recover their original energy and appeal. We agree that it is a good idea to extend syllabus approaches to ENGL 108 and a new ENGL 102.

**Question #2: What are other models we should consider where the writing/composition requirement is shared by other units in CLA and across the campus?**

Decades of research in the theories and practice of writing pedagogy have demonstrated quite clearly that while there are many good ways to teach writing, there are also a lot of very bad ways, and without sufficient training and guidance, instructors – even with the best of intentions – can teach writing in a manner that is detrimental to student learning and fails to achieve critical SLOs. George Hillocks' 1986 *What Works in Teaching Composition*, a meta-analysis of hundreds of experimental studies of writing instruction approaches, identified several strategies for teaching writing that worked well (though with varying degrees of effectiveness) and at least one that led to a decline in student writing performance. Since then, the field of rhetoric and composition has produced thousands of research studies and other

scholarly works that have enriched our understanding of best practices and led to curricula and pedagogies that enhance student learning, improve student writing, and prepare students for writing tasks, genres, and activities they will confront in their future academic and professional careers. (See, for instance, Beaufort, A. *College Writing and Beyond: A New Framework for University Writing Instruction*, 2008; Graham, S., MacArthur, C.A., & Fitzgerald, J., *Best Practices in Writing Instruction*, 2013; the *CCCC Position Statement on Principles for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing*, 2015.)

> **Recommendation #6: Course(s) outside of ICaP that are intended to fulfill the first year writing requirement should be designed to conform to ENGL 106 outcomes and guidelines provided and monitored by faculty with expertise in rhetoric and composition.**

Any model for fulfilling the writing/composition requirement with courses taught by faculty without expertise in rhetoric and composition from units in CLA and across campus should include several features in order to provide the best possible learning experience for students. Faculty with expertise should develop guidelines that specify clear goals, specific outcomes, and both pedagogical and content features that demonstrably support these goals and outcomes. While some aspects of the attached Planning Guide from the University of Michigan's Sweetland Center for Writing (Appendix B) are not relevant, this Guide offers a model of the degree of specificity that is appropriate.

Regardless of the content details included in the guidelines developed by the rhetoric and composition faculty, we urge that they include at least these features: rhetorical knowledge, particularly audience awareness and writerly stance; attention to multiple genres, drawn from more than one disciplinary tradition; and tutelage in the evidence-based argument. Since information literacy, an essential skill for students, is part of ENGL 106, this content should also be included in the course. In addition, the course content should include those features incorporated into ENGL 106 in accordance with the recommendations in this report. These could include, for example, a common assignment to be written by students in all versions of courses intended to fulfill the first-year writing requirement so that the quality of student writing can be assessed. Because the goal is to provide a comparable—not identical— learning experience for all students, individual faculty should have freedom in selecting additional content, with the proviso that course readings enhance, rather than draw attention away from, writing instruction.

In addition to specified content, any course that fulfills the first-year writing requirement should include pedagogical features central to effective writing instruction. These include: strategies for prewriting or developing ideas; regular opportunities for feedback on drafts; revision of a substantial portion of the required writing, fostered by a careful distinction between revising conceptually and editing surface features; scaffolding or delineating portions of longer writing assignments; required reflection on one's own writing; and development (by faculty or faculty in collaboration with students) of rubrics that provide students (and faculty) with clear criteria for assessment.

> **Recommendation #7: Because effective writing instruction requires specialized training and expertise in composition pedagogy, faculty teaching courses outside of ICaP that are intended to fulfill Purdue's first year writing requirement should receive training and support that enable them to deliver such course(s) effectively.**

Faculty members who lack expertise in rhetoric and composition should participate in professional development in order to prepare effective ways of creating writing assignments, implementing the pedagogical features described above, and deepening their own knowledge about the field of rhetoric and composition. This professional development could take multiple forms. One approach would be to offer summer workshops that bring together groups of faculty who plan to teach a course that satisfies the first-year writing requirement. Another alternative would be to convene meetings of participating faculty

during the academic year, when they are teaching a writing course, to provide ongoing support.  Still another possibility is to invite faculty new to writing instruction to visit the classrooms of their more expert colleagues. While professional development at the outset is essential, it is also important to create ongoing mechanisms to assure that faculty have regular opportunities to confer with their colleagues about teaching writing.

### Recommendation #8: Administrators should allocate resources to launch a WAC/WID initiative.

Although our contact with faculty in other disciplines at Purdue was limited, we inferred from a number of sources and conversations that many share the view of peer institutions (and employers) that students need far more writing practice and instruction than a single first-year writing course, no matter how well-designed and implemented, to become successful writers in their majors and as graduates in the workplace. (See, for example, the recent report released by the Association of American Colleges and Universities at https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/02/23/aacu-releases-report-national-large-scale-look-student-learning.)  Perceptions of a gap between ENGL 106 and upper division writing needs motivate the constant requests for the English Department and Writing Lab to participate in partnerships (e.g., learning communities, linked courses) and various forms of customized writing instruction and faculty support across the disciplines. Professor Jim Jones in Mechanical Engineering, who participates in one of these partnerships, cited surveys showing that Purdue graduates in his field are not meeting stakeholders' expectations for communication skills, which are ranked higher than any other outcome, even engineering fundamentals, in their importance to accreditors, alumni, and employers. He is a strong proponent of the 4-credit ENGL 106 as a foundation, but calls for as much advanced writing support as possible.

The question about faculty in multiple departments teaching first-year writing courses therefore prompts us to recommend that administrators give serious consideration to supporting the development of a Writing across the Curriculum/Writing in the Disciplines program (WAC/WID).  The majority of Purdue's peers in the Big Ten require an upper division course that is based in the student's major. Because learning to write is a life-long project, and because writing in a given discipline requires skills that go beyond those developed in first-year writing, students will benefit substantially from a writing-focused course in their major during the junior year.  During our visit, a number of faculty members noted that Purdue graduates often fail to reach the upper rungs of their professional fields and/or move into management positions because their writing skills are not well developed.  A WAC/WID program would address this need to improve students' writing capacities at the same time that it would send a clear message that writing is not something that can be learned once and for all.

The need for a WAC/WID program is also evident in the regular practice of faculty in STEM areas hiring graduate students from the English Department writing program to help provide writing instruction in non-English departments.  These ad-hoc arrangements are not an effective way to enhance writing instruction in multiple departments because there is no mechanism to assure that the graduate student is well prepared to take up this new responsibility, and graduate student responsibilities in other departments often take precedence over teaching writing in CLA.

A WAC/WID program would ensure that students develop the ability to write effectively as they graduate and move into the next chapter of their lives. Because the Writing Center currently provides a good deal of writing support requested by faculty members outside of English, we believe that this would be a good place to locate a WAC/WID program. Since many requests for writing support as well as for graduate student writing instructors go to the Writing Center, we recommend that the Center serve as the locus for such an initiative.

Given the current fiscal constraints, we do not believe that a full-on approach to a WAC/WID program at Purdue is feasible. Instead we propose that development of a WAC/WID program proceed incrementally, drawing first upon faculty and departments who have already expressed an interest in incorporating writing into their teaching, and building from there. In addition to being fiscally responsible, this model of program development would enable a grass-roots form of implementation, which would be healthy for faculty morale. In case it is helpful, we have attached materials about the WAC/WID program, the Upper Level Writing Requirement, at the University of Michigan.

**Question #3: What should be the expectation for faculty instruction in these courses? That is, should all English faculty be expected to teach at least one section of composition?**

Those outside any academic field can sometimes vastly underestimate the intellectual investments required to teach well in that field, and that is nowhere more evident than in Rhetoric and Composition. Though English faculty in many institutions are routinely expected to teach first year writing as a part of their normal teaching load, that does not guarantee that such teaching will reflect current research, scholarship, and best practices. One of the unfortunate consequences of the "teaching composition by necessity" model is a pervasive misconception that "anyone in an English department can teach writing," a belief that is frequently grounded in the notion that English composition classes focus (or should focus) on rudimentary writing skills and that instructors need no special training or experience to teach composition; their general familiarity with the English language and a few basic conventions of academic prose are deemed sufficient qualifications for the job. This belief, however, is misguided. We do not assume that a person who can add, subtract, and multiply is qualified to teach algebra and calculus; similarly, we do not assume that because a person has read *Great Expectations*, he or she is qualified to teach Victorian Literature. The same principle holds true with writing and writing instruction. For this reason, we would not recommend that all English department faculty routinely be expected to teach first year composition in the ICaP program, and those who do should receive a significant amount of training and guidance.

> **Recommendation #9: English department faculty outside of the rhetoric and composition area should not be routinely required to teach composition courses. In those cases where English department faculty either volunteer or must be assigned to teach an ICaP course (due to financial or other pressing exigencies), then they – like faculty outside the English department as discussed under Recommendation #7 – must be trained/mentored by the WPA or a designated faculty representative with expertise in composition pedagogy.**

Familiarity with rhetoric/composition research and its findings is critically important when designing and implementing an effective writing program and also when training and mentoring the instructors who will be expected to teach in it. We were impressed by the careful design of the ICaP program and the extent to which it has been informed by writing scholarship and principles of effective pedagogy since its inception. The writing program administrators and other rhetoric/composition faculty who have contributed to ICaP's structure and implementation – Drs. Jennifer Bay, Bradley Dilger, Krista Ratcliffe, Shirley Rose, and others – have built an impressive and effective program that is firmly grounded in theory and dedicated to the highest quality of writing instruction for students. The GTAs and lecturers not only take coursework that familiarizes them with the scholarship and research that undergirds ICaP and its pedagogy, but they also receive extensive mentoring during the time that they are teaching in the program. Teaching writing and learning to teach writing are not "one and done" activities, as professionals in the field know well. They are ongoing processes that require research, reflection, reassessment, and revision – activities that are important for teachers in every discipline, not just composition.

What this means for members of the English department who are not experts in rhetoric and composition is that if they ask or are expected to teach ICaP courses, then they – like faculty outside the English department – should be trained/mentored by the WPA or a designated faculty representative with expertise in composition pedagogy. Ongoing opportunities for further workshops, mentoring, and professional development in writing instruction should be made available to all English faculty on a regular basis. The mentoring these faculty receive should also include periodic reviews of syllabi to ensure course norms, expectations, and SLOs for English 106 and/or ENGL 108 are being met. It is also important that this mentoring be conducted by fellow faculty members, not by the graduate students who are designated peer mentors and currently working with other graduate students in the program.

The opportunities for ongoing faculty development in this area might include workshops offered through a Writing Across the Curriculum program as recommended in our response to Question #2. These workshops would bring English department faculty together with colleagues in other departments who plan to incorporate writing as an important learning activity in their courses. Topics for these workshops might include "Using Writing to Learn Activities," "Managing Peer Review," "Creating Effective Writing Assignments," "Responding Effectively – and Efficiently – to Student Writing," and a host of other possibilities depending on faculty interest and program needs. English department faculty could also be asked to participate in departmental brown bag workshops on writing, attend and/or present at writing conferences (local, regional, or national), and collaborate with their rhetoric/composition colleagues on classroom research and publishable scholarly articles. (As a side note, the book *Engaging Ideas*, written by John Bean, has been used very successfully in a great many WAC workshops since its initial publication in 1996. It is written for a multidisciplinary faculty audience and couples practical advice with current research to help instructors incorporate writing into their courses.)

Staffing and training will be ongoing issues in the department for the foreseeable future, especially given the university's current financial challenges, the move to restructure graduate programs, newly-imposed models for graduate student support, and the as-yet-to-be-determined effects of "right-sizing" departments in CLA. Impending retirements and natural attrition will also have a dramatic impact on the English department in the very near future, especially if no lines are made available for replacements. The top-heavy nature of the department – comprised of nearly all full and associate professors, 19 of whom will soon become eligible for early retirement – suggests an impending staffing crisis in the offing. As the size of the English department shrinks (and based on our conversations with administrators at several levels, we have every expectation that it will), the department will have to make some hard decisions about how to meet its future institutional obligations in terms of ICaP course offerings as well as the structure of its several majors. The English department is taking steps to address many of these staffing shifts and pressures, as we mentioned earlier, but in terms of the ICaP program, we have several recommendations to enhance the program's stability and sustainability in the years ahead.

> **Recommendation #10: The English department should consider changing the Writing Program Administrator (ICaP Director) position from a three-year rotating appointment to a five-year rotating appointment**.

While it makes sense for the WPA position to be shared by members of the English department on a rotating basis (according to the *2014 National Census of Writing*, 38% of all institutions follow this model) especially when there is a deep pool of qualified rhetoric/composition faculty to draw from, a three year appointment may be too brief to sustain the kind of programmatic consistency and stability that the ICaP program requires. As it was described to us, in the first year, the WPA is learning how to do the job; in the second year, he/she is fully immersed and engaged in the work; and in the third year, he/she is preparing to hand it over to someone else. Given the wide array of responsibilities the Director of ICaP must assume, including structuring curricula, scheduling classes, supervising and mentoring GTAs, hiring instructors, administering the program, and ensuring all classes meet instructional goals, we believe it is

important that the person appointed to that position serve for a more substantive length of time, not one that is dominated by transitioning into or out of those responsibilities.

> **Recommendation #11: The English department, in collaboration with the Dean of CLA, should explore alternatives to the increasing use of adjunct instructors and one-year Visiting Assistant Professors to staff ENGL 106 courses**. **More specifically, we recommend that the Dean of CLA, the Chair of the English Department, and the Director of ICaP find a way to increase the number of Continuing Lecturer positions in the English Department, positions that are full-time, long-term, renewable, and potentially promotable within the university system.**

Even though the English department may be able to reduce the number of ENGL 106 sections offered in Fall terms by reconstituting ENGL 102 as we describe in Recommendation #1, cuts to graduate student support in CLA and the resulting reduction in the number of GTAs available to teach ICaP courses will require the English department to hire additional teaching faculty just to meet existing needs. In fact, the department is having to do this even now and its reliance on limited term faculty and VAPs is growing: between the 2015 and 2016 academic years, the number of ICaP sections taught by limited term faculty and VAPs jumped nearly 150%, from 20 to 49. Relying on adjunct labor as a long-term solution to the program's staffing needs, however, is untenable and unsustainable. Even now, the English department has "struggled to find candidates with both qualifications and interest, suggesting that in future semesters demand for courses may exceed supply" (self-study 2). The labor pool in and around the West Lafayette area who have the qualifications to teach these courses is exceedingly limited, and the compensation offered (approximately $6000 per 4-hour 106 course [.33 FTE] with no benefits, no voting rights, and minimal investment in the institution) is dismal.

By the same token, one-year VAP positions (that may or may not be available to the English department annually) are short-sighted staffing solutions at best. They will be of only limited interest to members of the local community, and they are unlikely to generate many applications from a national search. Though these have the benefit of being full-time, benefitted positions, the fact that they are one-year only, non-renewable, and carry a 4/3 teaching load ensures that VAPs will be spending their entire term of employment focused on teaching their classes and looking for another job. In addition to the problems this causes for departmental cohesion and faculty morale, it also means that the department will have to engage in an ongoing, increasingly difficult process of searching for new instructors to teach critically important ICaP courses every single year.

Neither of these staffing solutions is conducive to the health of a department, the quality of its teaching, or its service to students. Long term problems can only be resolved by long term solutions, and that is what is called for here. More specifically, we recommend that the Dean of CLA, the Chair of the English Department, and the Director of ICaP find a way to increase the number of Continuing Lecturer positions in the English Department, positions that are full-time, long-term, renewable, and potentially promotable within the university system. These positions should carry no more than a 3/3 teaching load with their primary responsibility in the ICaP program. These full-time NTT positions are a relatively common model for R1 AAU institutions; at the University of California, Irvine, for example, 51-60% of its first year writing sections are taught by full-time, non-tenure track faculty, at the University of Minnesota, 26-35% are taught by instructors with that classification).

We note that as recently as 2014-15, 15 ICaP sections were taught by continuing lecturers; we were disappointed to see that that number had been reduced to a mere 2 in AY 2015 and 2016. Continuing lecturer positions do present some increased costs to the institution because the lecturers qualify for benefits, but they also provide a substantial savings in labor costs tied to the need for recurring searches and the stresses on faculty and administrators to find, process, hire, and train new instructors for ICaP

year after year after year.


**APPENDIX A: WORKING CWPA C-E Itinerary**
**Purdue University ICaP — 1/29-1/31, 2017**


**Sunday January 29**

3:00–4:00     Guests Arrive at Indianapolis Airport

5:30PM        Check in to the Union Club Hotel

6:00-7:30     Welcome Dinner (Bud Weiser, Bradley Dilger, Krista Ratcliffe, Linda Haynes ) *Location:* East End Grill (reservation needed)

**Monday January 30**

*All meetings in Heavilon 208 unless noted*

7:30-8:30     Breakfast and meeting with Bradley Dilger and Erin Cromer Twal

8:45-9:30     Meeting with Frank Dooley

9:45-10:00    Break

10:00-11:30   Meeting with Kris Ratcliffe, Heather Underwood, and Janeen Redman

11:30-11:45   Break

11:45 -12:45  Lunch with Jennifer Bay and Nush Powell — catered in 208

1:00-2:00     Focus group with undergraduate students

2:00-2:30     Debriefing and break

2:30-3:30     David Reingold (Dean of CLA) and Joel Ebarb (Associate Dean of UG Ed, CLA

3:30-3:45     Break

3:45 – 5:15   Bradley Dilger (Director of ICaP), Harris Bras (Director of ESL Writing), Linda Haynes (Assistant Director, ICaP), Harry Denny (Director of Writing Lab), April Ginther (Director, OEPP)

5:15 – 6:00   Break

6:00 - 8:00   Dinner (Location TBD; evaluators only)

*Tuesday January 31*

*All meetings in Heavilon 208 unless noted*

7:30- 8:00     Breakfast on your own — Sagamore Room, etc

8:15-9:15      Open meeting for graduate TAs and instructors (106, 108, PLaCE, WL)

9:15-9:30      Break

9:30-10:30     Open meeting for associate deans for undergraduate education

10:30 -11:30   Exit interview (Dilger, Ratcliffe, Haynes)

11:30 -12:30   Lunch and exit interview (Reingold, Ebarb)

1:00           Return to Indianapolis Airport