# **ASCRC Writing Committee Meeting**

Monday, November 7, 2016, 10:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m., Skaggs 174

Call to Order
Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Members Present: E. Baucom, S. Brown, N. Duke, J. Gallo, J. Pavilack, A. Ratto-Parks
*Ex-Officio Members Present:* G. Gardner, N. Lindsay, K. Webster, E. Wecker
Members Absent/Excused: E. Holst, T. Slater, B. Sweeney, C. Winkler
Guest: Brian French- Office of Student Success

The minutes from 10/3/16 were approved after the discussion regarding the 27 credit rule with the Director of the Office of Student Success, Brian French.

Communication

* The Executive Director of the Office for Student Success, Brian French was asked by ASCRC to provide Pros and Cons to the possibility of eliminating the current “more than 27 transfer credit” exemption from the Intermediate Writing Requirement. The document appended was provided to members in advance of the meeting. The rule was adopted when the University converted from the quarter to semester system, but lacks a logical rational. Especially considering transfer students are not exempted from WRIT 101 and the intent of the writing program is for students to take the courses in sequence. There is a transfer placement exam in place for students who have not taken WRIT 101 or an equivalent course. Students should have evidence of their writing when they matriculate. A process could be implemented that assures students are placed in the appropriate writing course level. This would logically fall to the Composition Department. However, workload would need to be considered for any additional time commitments for Composition (a two faculty member unit).

UM graduates should be able to write. Eliminating the exemption could lead to more appeals. It would be helpful to have data in terms of how exempted students perform in their advanced writing courses. The Office of Student Success will collect this data over Winterbreak. There is an Advisor meeting on November 17th. Additional feedback will be collected at that time. In the meantime a Workgroup consisting of Professors Baucom, Ratto-Parks, Pavilack, and Director Webster will work on a rationale for eliminating the exemption and language to communicate the distinctions to parents and students with regard to why CCN courses taken on other MUS campuses do not meet the intermediate writing requirement. This language should be sent to members prior to the next meeting.

* The Writing Symposium had 31 attendees. The student panel went well. The break out discussion varied from table to table. One suggestion was to be more deliberate about the composition of the tables depending on the needs of the attendees. Another suggestion was to organize a “Responding to Student Writing” Workshop for graduate students outside of Composition that are not enrolled in WRIT 540. The workshop could be co-taught by Composition TAs. A workshop geared for faculty teaching advance writing may also be needed.
* There is some confusion with regard to academic oversight of Bitterroot College courses. Composition was asked to review a Bitterroot College WRIT 201 course. It is not clear whether this should be the responsibility of Missoula College. The Bitterroot College section of WRIT 201 will need to be submitted to the Writing Committee during the rolling review.

## Business Items

* The Appeal Workgroup (Amy, Jess, and Kelly) will consider the request to pre-approve a transfer course to qualify for the exemption. Chair Brown received an inquiry from Laurie Young. One of her advisees, Santee Ross had to return to the reservation because of family issues, but would like to finish her degree. She is hoping to complete some of her course work remotely before returning to campus. Santee identified a Technical Writing Course at Central Wyoming College that she hopes will meet the Intermediate Writing requirement. The Workgroup will review the syllabus to in accordance to the revised policy.
* The following intermediate writing courses were approved.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CSCI 104 | Interdisciplinary Computing: Practical Computational Problem Solving |
| LIT 201 | The Study of Literature |

The two forms submitted late (LIT 230 and LIT 280) are still under review. These were held up by the Deans Office. Composition Director Erin Wecker will also be submitting a Course, IRSH 380, *Irish Women Writers* for review. A fulbright scholar scheduled to teach a course for Irish Studies canceled at the last minute. So the Irish Studies department was scrambling to offer a course that would allow 14 students to fulfill the minor requirements. Director Wecker has advanced study in Irish Literature and is willing to teach a course to help the program. She will send the syllabus to be reviewed ASAP.

* The following advanced writing courses were approved.

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| --- | --- |
| CLAS 399 | Classics Proseminar |
| ECNS 481 | Communicating Economics |

RLST 369 requires follow-up. The form is requesting that the course be changed from an intermediate writing course to an advanced writing course, but it is filled out poorly. The instructor will be contacted for clarification and provided with samples of other advanced writing course forms.

* The Transfer Appeal policy was sent back to committee by ECOS. The recommended suggestions were made in addition to some small edits and approved by the Writing Committee. ECOS felt the term equivalency was misleading. The revision changes the title to the Writing Course Exemption Appeal Guidelines. (Appended below.)

Director Webster and Professor Gallo will attend the next Advising meeting to talk about the changes to the policy.
* Next month the Committee will discuss the possibility of creating a mechanism for substituting advanced writing courses to fulfill the intermediate writing course requirement. Chair Brown received an inquiry from the Sociology department.
* Members were asked to consider whether additional writing courses should be included in the MUS Core Communication category. Camie will send an email with the relevant information and ask for members to weigh-in. OCHE asked the General Education Committee to conduct an audit of the courses this fall.

## Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

## Pros and Cons of the “more than 27 transfer credit” exemption from Intermediate Writing Requirement

Pros:

* Using the current policy to determine whether or not students are subject to the Intermediate Writing requirement is very straightforward (i.e. either they have more than 27 credits at the point of matriculation to UM or they don’t).
* The number of students who are exempted from the requirement by way of this policy is a relatively low proportion of the total number of transfer students we have:
	+ Fall 2016 – 123 out of 625 total new transfers were exempted from requirement (20%)
	+ Spring 2016 – 89 out of 300 (30%)
	+ Fall 2015 – 155 out of 742 (21%)
	+ Spring 2015 – 74 out of 325 (23%)
	+ Fall 2014 – 155 out of 764 (20%)
* Having one less general education requirement at the point of matriculation to UM allows students to focus more on requirements of their major.
* The exemption eliminates any confusion about transferring in CCN’d courses that are approved Intermediate Writing Courses at UM (e.g. LIT 110L) for students with 28 or more transfer credits at the point of matriculation to UM.

Cons:

* The 28 or more credit threshold is rather arbitrary and is difficult to explain. No one can recall any discussion of this particular policy when it was enacted in 1992-1993, but that was the point that UM switched from a quarter system to a semester system. At that point, transfer students with 27 credits or less needed to complete all general education requirements and those with 28 or more credits did not have to complete the lower-division writing course (currently the Intermediate Writing Course).
* If we eliminate the exemption, we will potentially increase the number of students who will petition the Writing Committee or file graduation appeals based on bringing in a CCN’d course that is an approved Intermediate Writing Course at UM or other writing-intensive courses.
* The policy does not ensure that students have adequate writing skills to succeed in writing-intensive, college-level courses, especially those at the upper-division level. Many people have stated that requiring writing courses to be taken in sequence (i.e. WRIT 101, then Intermediate, then Advanced) would be the best way to ensure that students have adequate writing skills.

## Procedure Writing Course Exemption Appeal Guidelines

Procedure Number: 202.50.5
Date Adopted: 10/1/12
Last Revision: 11/1/16

Approved by: ASCRC Writing Committee

## Writing Course Requirement and Transfer Students

The Admissions Office (406-243-6266) evaluates transcripts for course equivalencies, with the exception of UM’s approved writing courses.

This information pertains only to the intermediate writing course, not the departmental advanced writing requirement. Students should speak to their major department regarding any issues relating to the advanced writing requirement.

If a student believes a course taken at another institution meets the intermediate [writing course requirement](http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/committees/writing_committee/guidelines.php%29), the student may petition for course exemption through the Writing Committee. The student must provide the materials listed below. Materials should be submitted to the Faculty Senate Office, UH 221, camie.foos@mso.umt.edu, 243-5553.

**Students within two semesters of graduation must use the** [**Graduation Appeal process**](http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/procedures/ASCRC_200/203%2050Grad%20Appeals%20Procedure5-5-16.docx) **in place of the Writing Course Exemption Appeal process.**

Students applying for course exemption through the Writing Course Transfer Exemption Appeal process must submit the following materials. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

1. A cover letter outlining the basis for the request. The cover letter should clearly articulate how the proposed course meets the outcomes of the University of Montana course. Include pertinent information such as contact information, student ID number, and how you fulfilled this requirement in a course at your previous institution.
2. Evidence of a C- or better in the course.
3. A syllabus and course description, and any available writing assignment instructions The syllabus or assignment must show that the course required at least 16 pages of writing and that 50% of the course grade was based on writing performance.

## Evaluation

Course exemption will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

* Student earned a C- or better in the transferred course, and at least 50% of the course grade was based on writing performance

The transferred course required student to:

* Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts
* Formulate and express written ideas that are developed, logical, and organized
* Compose written texts that are appropriate for a given audience, purpose, and context
* Revise written work based on comments from the instructor
* Find, evaluate, and use information effectively and ethically
* Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions
* Demonstrate appropriate English language usage
* Produce at least 16 pages of writing

## Review Procedure

Petitions are reviewed by the Writing Committee. Students within two semesters of graduation must use the [Graduation Appeal](http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/procedures/ASCRC_200/203%2050Grad%20Appeals%20Procedure5-5-16.docx) process in place of the Writing Course Exemption Appeal process. Notice of the decision is sent to the student’s University of Montana email address.