



ASSESSMENT CYCLES FOR WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM AT CSM 1994-2009



These assessment cycles describe the feedback loops related to the development, implementation, maintenance, and evolution of the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Program at the Colorado School of Mines (CSM). To describe these feedback loops, we have included the time and sources of information, concerns, responses, and their effects. These will illustrate both what we have done to date as well as suggest future directions for WAC at CSM. NB: The acronyms CRSC and UGC refer to the Curriculum Reform Steering Committee and the Undergraduate Council, respectively; LAIS refers to the Division of Liberal Arts and International Studies, WI refers to writing intensive, CxC to Communication across the Curriculum and WPA to Writing Program Administrator. For additional information, please contact WPA Jon A. Leydens, Ph.D. (jleydens@mines.edu).



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Semester, Information Source	Concern(s)	Response(s)	Effect(s)
Fall 1994: --Alumni Survey --CRSC Recommendation	Alumni Survey indicates the need, given workplace realities, for additional preparation in written communication. Anecdotal information from industry colleagues confirms this gap in CSM graduates' education. CRSC and others express the desire to have communication (esp. writing) play a greater role after the sophomore year.	In fall 1994, CRSC recommends that there be "a continuum of communications usage throughout the junior and senior years, anchored by four required option courses designated as communications intensive."	In fall 1994, the phrase "[CSM graduates will have] the skills to communicate information, concepts and ideas effectively orally, in writing, and graphically" becomes a part of the CSM Graduate Profile. In spring 1996, the administration funds a mini-grant to investigate faculty views on the need for and viability of a communications across the curriculum program.
Fall 1996: --Mini-grant survey results --UGC	The issue to be resolved was whether faculty perceived written communication as a sufficiently important goal to warrant a WAC program.	Survey of faculty resulted in a general campus-wide agreement in the need for and desire to participate in a WAC program. In the report of the mini-grant results to the CRSC, the PI recommended support for	In response to this and other concerns, the UGC, drawing from the work of the Humanities and Social Sciences Subcommittee, passed the Revised Undergraduate Curricular Framework and

		LAIS' request to hire a Writing Program Administrator and the institution of a school-wide WAC committee.	Implementation Plan, which identified the goal of establishing a freshman through senior year WAC program. The administration approved three new hires for a Writing Program, including a WPA.
Spring 1997 --UGC --WAC Working Group Report	The UGC identified the need to articulate the steps necessary to move WAC from concept to implemented reality.	The UGC commissioned the WAC Working Group (a multidisciplinary team) to draft recommendations for WAC implementation. LAIS faculty penned a two-year Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) grant to promote both WAC at CSM and K-12 connections; the latter links facilitated the development of the WAC program.	The WAC Working Group surveyed CSM programs, studied WAC programs at peer institutions and recommended 1) Establishing four writing intensive (WI) courses in each undergraduate degree-granting program. 2) Establishing a permanent WAC Committee to develop a) performance standards, b) guidelines for WI courses and c) a WAC assess. plan.
Fall 1997 --WAC Working Group Report	Recommendations of the WAC Working Group indicated the need for a permanent WAC Committee and Program.	The UGC confirmed faculty volunteers for the WAC Committee to act on the Working Group recommendations and also	In summer 1997, WAC workshops were held with CCHE funds. In spring 1998, the WAC Committee, a UGC subcommittee, began

		asked each academic program to elect one liaison to the WAC Committee.	meeting regularly, began dialogues with WAC Liaisons, and gave periodic reports to the UGC.
Spring 1998 --WAC Committee Mission, Course Guidelines	1) The WAC Committee needed input to reach consensus on its mission and WI course guidelines. 2) The 1996 mini-grant study indicated "lack of faculty expertise/training" as a major obstacle to the success of WAC.	1) Mission statements and course guidelines were shared with liaisons and revised with their input. 2) The new WPA obtained an administration-sponsored mini-grant to fund stipends for faculty to participate in WAC workshops.	1) Feedback from liaisons helped revise the mission statement and WI course guidelines. 2) The WPA wrote a post-workshop report indicating how evaluations from workshop participants would spur WAC program improvement.
Fall 1998 --WAC Committee	The WAC program needed documents articulating a clear set of goals, objectives, and an assessment plan.	WAC Committee members collected faculty input and drafted these three documents.	Faculty feedback facilitated consensus-building and significant revision of the three WAC Program documents.
Spring 1999 --WAC Committee --VPAA --UGC	1) The WAC program sought UGC approval of the three WAC program documents. 2) Attention to the "lack of faculty expertise/training"	1) UGC approved all three documents, making WAC an official, formally recognized program. 2) WPA obtained a second	1) WAC Committee identified a process to ensure academic programs meet WI course guidelines. 2) Another mini-grant follow up report was penned to

	<p>issue needed to be continued via additional faculty workshops.</p> <p>3) New hires are needed for other writing program teaching.</p>	<p>mini-grant to fund stipends for WAC workshops.</p> <p>3) New hiring requests made.</p>	<p>identify successes to date and areas for improvement; 23 faculty participated in the 1998 and 1999 workshops.</p> <p>3) Administration approved two additional hires, bringing the Writing Program to five FTE.</p>
<p>Fall 1999 --WAC Committee</p>	<p>Academic programs needed to indicate how they will meet the guidelines for writing-intensive (WI) courses.</p>	<p>WAC Committee requested that each program submit an overview of its WI courses, which identified all WI course instructors.</p>	<p>WAC Committee reviewed and responded to each program overview with encouragement, comments and/or suggestions.</p>
<p>Spring 2000 --WAC Committee</p>	<p>1) Academic programs needed to indicate how their WI courses met WI course guidelines.</p> <p>2) WAC program overviews indicated that several faculty had not yet attended WAC workshops.</p>	<p>1) WAC Committee requested a profile of each course and how each met WI course guidelines.</p> <p>2) WPA penned another mini-grant to fund stipends to encourage faculty to attend workshops.</p>	<p>1) When most profiles were received, WAC Committee reviewed them and was satisfied with the types of coverage of writing within the disciplines.</p> <p>2) The mini-grant was approved.</p>
<p>Fall 2000 --WAC</p>	<p>1) ABET Accreditation Review in October. WAC</p>	<p>1) The WPA developed and posted on the Writing</p>	<p>1) In the exit interview, ABET evaluators specifically</p>

<p>Committee --ABET</p>	<p>Committee needs to provide information so programs under review can articulate how they have met their program objectives, especially criterion 3g, on effective communication. 2) Requests continue for assistance with WI courses from faculty across campus.</p>	<p>Program web site this WAC Case Study, so programs can see institutional WAC efforts that connect to program-specific activities. 2) WPA works with faculty on WI courses.</p>	<p>mention the WAC Program as a successful curricular initiative. 2) Faculty teaching WI courses request additional assistance.</p>
<p>Spring 2001 --WAC Committee --UGC --VPAA</p>	<p>1) Need to continue faculty development efforts via summer WAC workshops. 2) WI courses designated as such by departments/divisions should be flagged as such in the 2001-02 Undergraduate Bulletin to promote awareness among students, faculty, and others. 3) Faculty requests for assistance continue and begin to grow beyond capacity.</p>	<p>1) WPA wrote another mini-grant to support participants in 2001 WAC workshops. 2) WPA discussed the WI-course-designation issue with UGC. 3) Demand is documented and the WAC Committee recommends an additional lecturer hire (to cover WAC, teach writing courses, and more) in a letter to the director of LAIS.</p>	<p>1) Mini-grant was approved. 2) UGC approved WAC Committee recommendation and WI courses were flagged as such in the 2001-02 Bulletin. 3) New lecturer hire under consideration by the VPAA.</p>
<p>Fall 2001 --WAC Committee</p>	<p>1) Demand exceeds capacity; spring requests for assistance with WI courses or writing</p>	<p>1) LAIS Director reiterates need for lecturer hire.</p>	<p>1) The lecturer request is shelved due to budgetary restrictions and a hiring</p>

<p>--UGC</p>	<p>issues came from five areas or departments/divisions (Enviro. Sci. & Engineering., Geology, Engineering, Petroleum Engineering, EPICS, as well as the Grad. Student Association.) 2) Geophysics rep to UGC desires a junior-level refresher on writing extensive technical reports; recommends that course be a non-credit graduation requirement. 3) Faculty development workshops are in demand.</p>	<p>2) WAC Committee supports the concept, but recommends integrating such information into an existing 300-level Geophysics course. 3) WPA writes and receives funding to cover faculty stipends for participation in WAC Workshops.</p>	<p>freeze. 2) WPA contacts a Geophysics rep. to discuss options. 3) After the summer 2001 WAC workshop, almost 40 CSM faculty members have participated in such a workshop since 1998, and all CSM departments and divisions have had at least one representative participate in the workshops.</p>
<p>Spring 2002 --WAC Committee</p>	<p>1) Brainstorming needed to address Geophysics concerns (see fall 2001). 2) Faculty development efforts need to continue. 3) Faculty in Multidisciplinary Engineering Lab (MEL) I, II, and III request a series of workshops to discuss writing and grading issues in those</p>	<p>1) Geophysics faculty discuss and decide to integrate, with assistance from WPA, writing discussions into one of their 300-level courses. 2) WPA requests funds from VPAA for WAC workshops. 3) WPA assists MEL III faculty by facilitating a series of spring workshops.</p>	<p>1) The lead instructor of that course will contact the WPA. 2) VPAA approves funding for the WAC workshops. From 1998-2002, 45 faculty participated in WAC workshops, and many more did so before 1998. 3) MEL faculty ask the WPA to continue these discussions in the fall.</p>

	courses.		
Fall 2002 --Faculty Conference --WPA	<p>1) At the fall faculty conference, the writing abilities of students are listed as a concern, as reported by a representative of the Curriculum Committee.</p> <p>2) Geophysics instructor contacts WPA.</p> <p>3) MEL I-III faculty express an interest in continuing discussions on the grading of written work.</p>	<p>1) Further investigation into the qualitative field notes taken by group representatives at the fall faculty conference reveals that while two entries appear regarding students' grammar, seven entries specifically mention writing as an area of improvement over the past few years. This was misrepresented in the oral report of a Curriculum Committee member at the August faculty conference.</p> <p>2) WPA working with Geophysics.</p> <p>3) WPA facilitates workshops that focus on grading issues in MEL Labs.</p>	<p>1) The WPA discussed the qualitative results with some Curriculum Committee members; as a result of this and other events involving quantitatively trained faculty misusing qualitative data, WPA decided to write a journal article, with two CSM colleagues, on the systematic interpretation of qualitative data (published in the <i>Journal of Engineering Education</i> in Jan. 2004).</p> <p>2) The integration of new writing objectives into a 300-level Geophysics course will be in place by spring 2003.</p> <p>3) MEL coordinator and lead instructor expresses an interest in doing a more longitudinal assessment of writing growth of MEL I-III students.</p>
Spring 2003	An effective WAC program requires a strong	As in previous years, the WPA requests stipends for	VPAA's Office funds WAC workshop costs. In the

	infrastructure that supports ongoing faculty development.	faculty who participate in summer WAC Workshops.	WAC Workshops between 1998 and 2003, 50 CSM faculty members have participated.
Fall 2003	1) WPA is contacted by the Principal Tutor of the McBride Honors program regarding integrating Writing into a collaboratively taught honors course with a new team of faculty. 2) WAC Workshop demand continues.	1) WPA conducts a three-hour workshop for McBride Honors Program faculty to integrate writing into Comparative Political Systems on November 2003. 2) WPA writes and receives grant funds for faculty workshop stipends.	Post-workshop feedback from both faculty and the Principal Tutor suggest that the workshop helped sharpen focus integrating writing meaningfully into course learning objectives. 2) To date, over 50 CSM faculty have participated in WAC Workshops; faculty evaluations remain strong.
Spring 2004	1) Faculty time is valuable, so stipends should continue for participating in WAC workshops. 2) WAC web site needs updated resources and a new look and interface.	1) WPA writes proposal for workshop funds. 2) WPA works with web designer to revamp the look and feel as well as update content.	1) VPAA's Office funds workshop; to date, 56 faculty have participated in WAC workshops (1998-2004). 2) Web work partially finished in summer 2004.
Fall 2004	1) Writing-intensive courses listed on the WAC web site have changed (either	1) Enlisted the assistance of the WAC Committee in updating information on	1) Posted all updates received to the online writing-intensive course list.

	<p>instructor, course, or both) and need to be updated; WAC liaison info also needs updating.</p> <p>2) Two former WAC Committee members have left CSM, reducing the committee to five members.</p> <p>3) WAC Committee expresses a desire to know what resources CSM faculty need in terms of WAC and writing-intensive courses.</p>	<p>WAC liaisons and writing-intensive courses.</p> <p>2) WAC Committee meets to discuss viable replacements.</p> <p>3) WAC liaisons are queried via email.</p>	<p>2) The individual selected for membership declined, and the WAC Committee elected to remain at five members.</p> <p>3) Liaisons' responses indicated need to know a) WI course guidelines URL, b) level and types of assistance available for faculty from the writing center, and c) need for continuation of WAC workshops. Pertinent info was sent to liaisons.</p>
Spring 2005	<p>1) The US Air Force Academy Center of Educational Excellence invite the WPA and WAC Committee member Ron Miller to present on WAC to faculty from across campus.</p> <p>2) WPA has a desire to share WAC research with colleagues.</p> <p>3) WPA is invited to present</p>	<p>1) Miller and the WPA conduct workshop/presentation, "Writing to Learn and Writing to Communicate in Science, Math, Engineering, and Technology Courses," at USAFA in March 2005.</p> <p>2) WPA presents on writing in the disciplines and in the professions at the College</p>	<p>1) This workshop was among the best attended ever at USAFA and received a 9.1/10 rating from participants; qualitative feedback was also quite positive.</p> <p>2) Presentation valuable as a research dissemination opportunity; WPA received useful feedback from</p>

	<p>to Latin American college administrators, engineering and other faculty at the <i>Universidad Sergio Arboleda</i> in Bogotá, Colombia.</p> <p>4) Chair of an ad hoc Committee on Ethics Across the Curriculum (EAC) requests a meeting with the WAC Committee to discuss possible synergy.</p>	<p>Composition and Comm. Conference in San Francisco, CA (March 2005).</p> <p>3) “Writing Across the Curriculum in the U.S and at CSM” (March 2005).</p> <p>4) In April 2005, WAC Committee members meet with EAC Chair, who provides an overview of EAC’s history, drivers, and common curricular models. EAC Chair asks whether EAC and WAC should combine committees for an interim period.</p>	<p>colleagues.</p> <p>3) A last-minute airline glitch precluded WPA from presenting, so his slides were presented by a CSM colleague and were well received.</p> <p>4) WAC Committee indicates that although WAC may not be the committee for such a merger, it could still serve as a resource to EAC since both committees have a cross-curricular focus and since WAC has traveled roads EAC needs to cross.</p>
Spring 2005 (cont)	<p>5) Faculty inquiry regarding integrating and evaluating writing in a writing-intensive course.</p> <p>6) Faculty inquiry regarding integrating and evaluating writing.</p>	<p>5) Provided instructional resources on Writing in the Disciplines to faculty from Chemistry and Geochemistry for a writing-intensive course.</p> <p>6) Provided consultation on the writing performances of Division of Engineering undergraduates with a faculty member from that division.</p>	<p>5) The faculty member integrated relevant writing strategies.</p> <p>6) Faculty member revised course content to accentuate written expectations.</p>

Fall 2005	<p>1) Work begun in spring 2004 to update WAC web site remained unfinished.</p> <p>2) Need to continue WAC faculty development, offer stipends to WAC Workshop participants.</p>	<p>1) Compiled a lengthy list of updates needed; located and maintained ongoing communication with new web designer to complete work on the WAC web site.</p> <p>2) WPA writes and receives workshop funding from VPAA's Office.</p>	<p>1) Campus Writing Program web site resources updated.</p> <p>2) To date, over 60 faculty have participated in the summer WAC Workshops held from 1998 to 2005. When asked whether faculty would recommend the workshop to their peers, faculty have given a 100% affirmative response rate since 1998.</p>
Spring 2006	<p>Interested in research dissemination, WPA proposes an abstract for an upcoming WAC conference.</p>	<p>WPA presents a) on the CSM Writing Program at the Writing Across the Engineering Curriculum Special Interest Group meeting at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Chicago, IL (March 2006). Also presents b) findings from a study on engineering writing at the 8th International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference in Clemson, SC (May 2006).</p>	<p>Research dissemination feedback was quite positive at both a) and b) conferences.</p>

Fall 2006	<p>1) Knowledge of peer institution's WAC programs indicates that many focus on CxC, not just WAC.</p> <p>2) WAC workshops continue to be in demand.</p>	<p>1) WPA recommended LAIS create a Communications Center Committee to investigate the constraints and opportunities inherent in launching a center focused on multiple communicative practices.</p> <p>2) WPA writes and receives workshop funding from VPAA.</p>	<p>1) Committee learns that writing should no longer be taught in isolation, but as it occurs in practice—embedded within other communicative practices including oral, visual, and electronic communication.</p> <p>2) To date, 67 Mines faculty members have participated in WAC workshops since 1998.</p>
Spring 2007	<p>WPA anticipates demand for WAC workshop.</p>	<p>WPA writes and receives workshop funding from VPAA.</p>	<p>Workshop announcements sent to all faculty.</p>
Fall 2007	<p>1) Requests for individual consultations on WI courses remain consistently active.</p> <p>2) Numbers of faculty participating in the WAC workshop drops this year.</p>	<p>1) Consulted with faculty in three depts./divisions (EG, PE, and GP).</p> <p>2) WPA brainstorms responses to declining participation with WAC colleagues and former WAC workshop participants.</p>	<p>1) To date, WPA has consulted with over 40 faculty on incorporating writing into technical courses.</p> <p>2) WPA decides to take a year off and rebrand WAC workshops.</p>
Spring 2008	<p>WPA presented and proposed to the LAIS humanities faculty a new</p>	<p>LAIS humanities faculty feedback was positive and supportive, as was feedback</p>	<p>Proposed and wrote rationales for a new LAIS faculty hire: a tenure-track</p>

	<p>model for a Communication Program, foregrounding the teaching of writing as it occurs in practice— embedded within other communicative practices including oral, visual, and electronic communication.</p>	<p>from subsequent meetings with faculty who did not attend the Feb. meeting.</p>	<p>Communication Center Director to bring in expertise on writing as it intersects with oral, visual, and electronic communication.</p>
Fall 2008	<p>1) At the request of the Vice Provost for Educational Innovation, WPA and WAC Committee write a history of WAC at CSM (1994-2008). 2) WAC Comm. and LAIS faculty support Comm. Center Director hire idea.</p>	<p>1) WAC history (1994-2008) report shared with CSM President, Provost, Vice Provost for Acad. Affairs, Vice Provost for Educational Innovation, and LAIS DD. 2) New hire request made for Communication Center Dir.</p>	<p>1) Responses were generally positive and supportive of the progress to date and future plans, including expanding to a CxC program. 2) Most faculty searches frozen for budgetary reasons.</p>
Spring 2009	<p>1) At the suggestion of the CSM Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, WPA was invited to speak with Department Heads and Division Directors about WAC at CSM. 2) Requests for consultation on WAC continue from both on campus and off campus</p>	<p>1) In February 2009, WPA presented at the Dept. Head's/Division Director's meeting, to secure and provide updates on WAC activities at CSM and to articulate a vision and gauge support for a CxC model focused on multimodal communication, including writing, oral, visual, and</p>	<p>1) Most Dept. Heads and Division Directors provided updated WAC Liaisons to the WAC Committee. Support for the CxC model was mixed, with more interested questions than statements of support (or non-support). Some misconceptions about the CxC model emerged, and</p>

	<p>faculty.</p> <p>3) <i>Mines Magazine</i> wanted to profile CSM's Campus Writing Program.</p> <p>4) WAC workshop participation dropped in 2007 and in 2008 the WPA took a year off from facilitating the workshop.</p>	<p>electronic (WOVE) communication.</p> <p>2) WPA consults on WAC with faculty from on campus (Center for Space Resources, Geophysics) and off campus (English Dept., Dawson College, Quebec, Canada).</p> <p>3) The article, "Writing: The skill many engineers wish they didn't need," profiled the Campus Writing Program in the Winter 2008-2009 issue (Volume 98, Number 4, pp. 28-32).</p> <p>4) WPA rebrands workshop.</p>	<p>should be addressed in the future.</p> <p>2) WAC knowledge continues to be spread to faculty across campus and beyond.</p> <p>3) According to <i>Mines Magazine</i> Editor Nick Sutcliff, the article, received more impassioned, positive letters from readers than any other article in recent history.</p> <p>4) "Teaching and Learning Workshop" fills to capacity within 24 hours.</p>
Fall 2009	<p>1) WAC Committee, LAIS faculty support idea for a Communication Center Director hire.</p> <p>2) Teaching and Learning workshop needs funding for faculty participant stipends.</p>	<p>1) New hire request made for Communication Center Director.</p> <p>2) Stipends secured through a grant from the Trefny Institute for Educational Innovation.</p>	<p>1) For 09-10, LAIS receives no faculty searches; budgetary reasons curtail total number of CSM searches.</p> <p>2) Since 1998, almost 80 Mines faculty members have participated in Teaching and Learning/WAC workshops, on a campus with just over 200 full-time faculty.</p>

			Workshop evaluations remain strong.