TO: Academic Senate

FROM: Committee on Instruction and Curriculum

SUBJECT: Writing and Information Literacy Learning Outcomes for General Education (G.E.) requirements

PURPOSE: For Action by the Academic Senate

ACTION REQUESTED: Approval of the attached Learning Outcomes for the following General Education (G.E.) requirements: Lower-Division Written Communication; Upper-Division Writing Components; Lower-Division Information Literacy; and Upper-Division Information Literacy. Outcomes will be used for review of courses applying for GE credit and for assessing the General Education program.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: When the Senate passed the new 2004-09 G.E. package in June 2003, it continued the requirement for assessment of the program that had begun in the previous G.E. package. Assessment requires learning outcomes, so that it is clear what is to be assessed. Courses submitted for General Education credit must demonstrate on the syllabus and by narrative explanation that the course provides students opportunities to acquire the competencies described in the learning outcomes.

When revising the requirements for upper division General Education courses, CIC determined that the Area A and B4 competencies should be extended to the upper division requirements, where appropriate, since upper division general education is the only set of courses all CSUH graduates are certain to take at CSUH. Advanced writing, speaking, critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning requirements were included in course descriptions approved by the Academic Senate, Spring 2003.

Both sets of written communication outcomes were developed and approved by the Writing Skills Subcommittee in Spring 1997 and were approved by the General Education Subcommittee in Winter 2004 and by CIC (which made a minor change in the lower-division outcomes) at its meeting of March 15, 2004, by a vote of 9-0-0. The lower-division outcomes will be used to assess ENGL 1001 and 1002. The upper-division outcomes will be used to assess the writing component of the upper division courses that meet the Humanities (C4) G.E. requirement, which includes a “significant writing component” and the Social Science (D4) “advanced writing skills” requirement. Upper division Science courses include numeracy, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and information literacy but not writing skills.

Both sets of information literacy outcomes were developed by an ad hoc committee and approved by the General Education Subcommittee in Winter 2004 and by CIC at its meeting of March 15, 2004. The vote in CIC for the lower-division outcomes was 9-0-0; for the upper-division outcomes, it was 8-0-1. The lower-division outcomes will be used to assess the 2-unit information literacy courses attached to the cluster program. The upper-division outcomes will be used to assess the information literacy component of courses that meet the upper division G.E. requirements for science (B6) and social science (D4).

Faculty may assess student acquisition of learning described in the outcomes using embedded assessment strategies appropriate to the specific course. Aggregated data from all courses approved for a particular GE area will be analyzed to determine the effectiveness of our General Education program in supporting student acquisition of these outcomes.

CIC approved most of the changes by consensus, after carefully reviewing them. The change in the location of the proposed upper division writing outcome (“present material in language appropriate for the context, usually in standard written English that is grammatically and syntactically correct”) was approved by a vote of 8-0-0.
Information literacy is an intellectual framework encompassing a set of abilities requiring individuals to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information."¹ It forms the basis for lifelong learning and is common to all disciplines, all learning environments, and all levels of education. At the lower division level, it enables learners to explore basic resources and research techniques, and begin assuming greater control over their own learning. The following attributes of an information literate student at the Lower Division level have been adapted from the Association of College and Research Libraries' *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* (2000). Available at: www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/informationliteracycompetency.htm

The information literate student:

1. **defines and articulates** the need for information
2. **determines** the nature and extent of the information needed
3. **identifies** a variety of types and formats of potential sources for information
4. **constructs and implements** effective search strategies
5. **accesses** needed information effectively and efficiently
6. **retrieves** information online and in person using a variety of methods
7. **evaluates and refines** search strategies as necessary
8. **articulates and applies** criteria for evaluating both the information and its sources
9. **determines** whether the initial query should be revised
10. **uses** information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose and **communicates** the results of research effectively to others
11. **understands** that there are ethical, legal and socio-economic issues surrounding information and information technology
12. **acknowledges** the use of information sources through standard citation and attribution practices

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Advanced Information Literacy Outcomes
for GE Areas

B4 - A 4-unit upper division course in the sciences (life or physical science) that includes numeracy, quantitative analysis, information literacy, and critical thinking skills.

D4 - A 4-unit upper division course applying the research findings of the social sciences to significant contemporary problems and emphasizing advanced writing and information literacy skills.

Information Literacy is a prerequisite for lifelong learning. It enables learners to engage critically with content, extend their knowledge, assume greater control over their own learning and become self-directed learners.2

Whether taught within a specific discipline or in a multi-disciplinary context, advanced information literacy curricula should encourage students to seek multiple perspectives and use diverse sources of information to inform conclusions. Further, students should develop an understanding that information and knowledge in any discipline is in part a social construction and is subject to change as a result of ongoing dialog and research. Teaching advanced information literacy helps students understand and participate in this scholarly conversation.

Faculty can enhance student information literacy by providing problem- or inquiry-based assignments where learning results from the use of multiple information sources thereby encouraging self-directed learning and critical thinking. The development and evaluation of these types of assignments may require significant commitment and investment of time on the part of students and faculty alike.

In addition to the lower division information literacy outcomes, students who are information literate at the advanced level are able to:

1. identify the main disciplines, fields, and organizations which generate and publish knowledge in their area of research,
2. develop in-depth knowledge of the literature from the above information producers in their area of research,
3. evaluate the significance and validity of information found, both in the context of the disciplines and fields consulted, and also within their own knowledge base and value systems,
4. analyze the implications of research and publishing patterns in their area of research,
5. formulate and reformulate research inquiries based on the objectives above and,
6. demonstrate their ability to perform the above objectives when they communicate the results of their inquiry to others.

2 This quote and other ideas contained here are drawn from the Council of Australian University Librarians’ Information Literacy Standards, (Canberra, 2001) and from Learning for Life: Information Literacy Framework & Syllabus published by the Queensland University of Technology Library (Brisbane, 2001)
Lower Division GE Written Communication Outcomes
GE Area A2
(English 1001 and 1002)

Students who have completed general education requirements should be grounded in the rhetorical principles that govern reading and writing. These principles are fundamental to logical thinking and clear expression. For reading, they presume open-mindedness combined with critical thinking and analytical skills; and for writing, they presume an awareness of audience, context, and purpose.

Lower division writing courses will provide students with the opportunities to learn the following competencies:

**Reading.** When reading a text, students are expected to:

1. **Read** for the meaning of a text by determining its purpose, intended audience, and significance;
2. **Understand** the historical context of the text;
3. **Engage** with and offer thoughtful responses to ideas in the text;
4. **Question** authors and texts;
5. **Evaluate** the text according to criteria appropriate to the context.

**Writing.** When writing a text, students are expected to:

1. **Realize** that writing is a recursive process involving prewriting and revision;
2. **Compose** an essay with a clear thesis and evidence to support the thesis;
3. **Understand** the role of logically sequenced and fully developed paragraphs;
4. **Develop and have confidence in one’s own ideas**
5. **Demonstrate awareness** of other points of view and how to address them;
6. **Incorporate research** into an essay, including summarizing, paraphrasing, and properly quoting and citing material from other sources;
7. **Know the ethics** of academic writing and of accuracy in the use of evidence;
8. **Organize an essay** in light of audience expectations;
9. **Present material** logically and without fallacies;
10. **Present material** in language appropriate for the context, usually in standard written English that is grammatically and syntactically correct;
11. **Be familiar** with strategies for timed writing.
Upper Division Writing Outcomes
For GE Areas C4 and D4

Outcomes for upper division General Education writing components build on the lower division learning outcomes acquired in English 1001 and 1002. When Cal State Hayward students complete their upper division general education requirements, they should possess the fundamental reading and writing competencies described above and the rhetorical knowledge and writing process skills described below:

Rhetorical Knowledge
Students should
1. Use writing for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating
2. Understand a writing assignment as a series of tasks, including finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing appropriate primary and secondary sources, and incorporating peer and instructor feedback into revisions
3. Integrate their own ideas with those of others
4. Practice the ethics of academic writing and of accuracy in the use of evidence

Writing Processes
Students should
1. Be aware that it usually takes multiple drafts to create and complete a successful text
2. Develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proofreading
3. Understand writing as an open process that permits writers to re-think and revise their work
4. Learn to critique their own and others’ works

For C4 – A 4-unit upper division course in the humanities . . . that includes a significant writing component and emphasizes advanced communication and critical thinking skills.
In addition to the knowledge and process outcomes above, students should

- Write a minimum of 4500 words, including informal writing (in-class exercises, homework), drafts of papers, and/or written exams (take-home or in-class)

For D4 – A 4-unit upper division course applying the research findings of the social sciences to significant contemporary problems and emphasizing advanced writing and information literacy skills.
In addition to the knowledge and process outcomes above, students should

1. Compose written work that manifests the key features of writing in the discipline (such as a proposal and literature review)
2. Incorporate research into written work, including summarizing, paraphrasing, and properly quoting and citing material from other sources
3. Present material in language appropriate for the context, usually in standard written English that is grammatically and syntactically correct

Faculty can support student acquisition of advanced writing skills by helping students learn
- The main features of writing in their fields
- The main uses of writing in their fields
- The expectations of readers in their fields
- The uses of writing as a critical thinking method
- The interactions among critical thinking and writing