

# **Foundational Writing Skills Working Group** **Summary Report and Proposal: July 2018**

## **I. Overview and Mandate:**

The 2017-18 Foundational Writing Skills Working Group (hereafter referred to as the Working Group) recommends that UTM establish a first-year 0.5 FCE course focused on writing skills, required for all incoming students. This course would not only enhance all students' abilities in the practice of written communication, regardless of their writing proficiency at entry, but would also serve as a venue for cohort-building and transitional support for all incoming UTM students, an inclusive feature seldom found outside of small private universities and therefore a significant recruiting advantage for UTM. In addition to its intrinsic benefits for students, this course would serve as the foundation for upper-year writing instruction in existing and future disciplinary courses, and it would help to create a pathway for writing improvement throughout the curriculum.

The Working Group was created in December 2017 as one of the first implementation committees for the UTM Academic Plan released by Dean Amrita Daniere in the fall of that year. The Working Group was charged with developing a potential plan of action with the goal of solving a long-term problem that is widely recognized by UTM faculty across the disciplines: the need to provide a solid foundation for the teaching of writing and communication skills for all students, on which more advanced instruction could then build in second-year courses and above. These skills include both the mechanics of writing and the ability to develop and express arguments. From the first meeting, the group focused on foundational writing skills development, but also frequently spoke about the need for a curricular pathway to develop more advanced skills in a discipline-specific manner. Our work has also considered opportunities to improve student adjustment to university, and to teach students skills for resilience in their careers within and beyond the university. Finally, we examined issues specific to English Language Learner students as an important portion of our mandate. Our proposal is based on a study of approaches undertaken by both UTM and other universities to address the long-term problem of student writing issues.

## **2. Foundational Writing Course Approach**

After considerable discussion, the Working Group strongly recommends that a foundational writing course be required for all UTM incoming students, with the working title of "Writing for University and Beyond". Most of this document provides recommendations for both the content of such a course and practical steps towards its implementation, based on examinations of past attempts elsewhere and a thorough investigation of the restrictions and opportunities at UTM.

In developing a suggested foundational course, the Working Group focused on instructing students in aspects of the writing process (i.e., audience, purpose, context, style), as opposed to instruction in specific content or specific disciplinary requirements. We are proposing a foundational course that will enhance students' ability to

communicate effectively through writing. A formal committee of instructors who are experts in the teaching of writing (i.e., a Foundational Writing Curriculum Committee) would need to develop and regularly update the foundational writing course curriculum together. This will ensure a consistent approach to instruction across the dozens of sections of the course and will guarantee that identical sets of skills will be taught in all sections while allowing for a range of thematic foci. Appendix A provides an example of guidelines adapted to UTM, based closely on the WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition (2014); these guidelines could serve as a model for the work of such a committee.

While the various sections of the foundational course would need to have identical learning outcomes, the Working Group expects that there will be some flexibility in the exact content used in the sections to teach writing as a practice, as well as the need to create support for students with different levels of writing proficiency. All sections would be portfolio-based first-year seminars with a maximum enrolment of 30 students, and would be designed to encourage student cohort-building across backgrounds and disciplines, as well as to provide students with strategies for transitioning to university life and practices.

After much discussion, the Working Group has concluded that, rather than trying to design first-year writing courses to fulfill disciplinary distribution requirements, it would be more appropriate to count the course towards a new distribution requirement; since it would be mandatory for all students, the course would essentially become a new type of requirement. The Working Group strongly recommends that such a writing requirement be fulfilled only by the foundational course taught by specialists and with content approved by the Foundational Writing Curriculum Committee; thus, units would not be obliged or expected to design their own versions of this course. This removes a potentially onerous burden from the various units; furthermore, past experience has shown that writing-focused courses quickly deviate from their original purpose if not overseen by a curriculum committee.<sup>1</sup>

### **3. Organization and Staffing of Foundational Writing Course Program**

It is important that the required writing course be administered by a Foundational Writing Curriculum Committee, with regular reconsideration of pedagogy, assessment strategies, and course materials to ensure they align with learning outcomes. Since every student would be required to take this course, there would need to be consistency in the learning outcomes and in many aspects of course delivery, while recognizing that students would be coming into this course with different levels of ability. For all these reasons, this course would need to be taught by specialists in the teaching of writing at the post-secondary level. For that purpose, UTM would need to hire faculty with specific expertise and training. The Working Group proposes that these faculty be housed in a new unit focused on university pedagogy, designed to provide support to all disciplines

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<sup>1</sup> This way of thinking about the requirement provides an opening for UTM to discuss whether it wishes to change the nature of distribution requirements altogether. This would be a separate discussion requiring a separate committee, although past discussion by this group may be a helpful reference.

and departments. Given that a proposed EDU-A focused on university pedagogy is already in development and is intended to house the present RGASC members and others, this unit would be the most suitable home for new writing instructors.

The Working Group discussed the instructional staff that would be required for this course, including potential Human Resource challenges that would need to be overcome. Discussion with senior administrators at other universities about the history of similar attempts to create a required foundational writing course showed that challenges in the implementation of those programs were primarily caused by a lack of full-time instructors to support the new programming. Given the large scale of this undertaking, it is essential that permanent faculty be hired to run this program. Some sessional instructors would always be needed to fill gaps due to releases and leaves, and to be trained to fill future positions, but permanent faculty must teach the core program. These faculty would need to be recruited over a number of years, with at least a few hired initially at senior levels, to avoid a faculty distribution that is too concentrated at the junior level. The nature of the program is such that Teaching Stream faculty would be best suited for these positions, as it would be desirable to have faculty focused on university pedagogy related to writing from a research as well as a teaching perspective.

#### **4. Mechanics Associated with Adding a Required Foundational Course**

The Working Group considered a wide range of operational issues associated with offering a required foundational writing course, including accommodation of students with different levels of writing abilities, encouraging completion of the course within the first year, options for assigning marks, and finding sufficient space to offer a large number of small seminar courses every year. We developed a set of practical and realistic approaches that can form the basis of an implementation strategy. Additional details are found in the FAQs at the end of this document.

#### **Support for English Language Learner (ELL) Students**

The Working Group recommends that all incoming students be required to take the foundational writing course, but we also recommend some streaming of specific students into a course with a more remedial focus. There was general agreement that the foundational course could be designed (e.g., using portfolios and peer writing groups) so that students with various levels of writing ability could be accommodated in one class and fairly marked in spite of differences in their initial levels. This does not apply, however, to the population of students who need additional instruction in the fundamentals of writing, reading, vocabulary, and grammar before they can benefit from the proposed “Writing for University and Beyond” course. These students (who may be ELL students or may simply need more practice with writing in English) will be advised to take a parallel course with the working title of “Introduction to the Basics of Writing in English” that provides intensive instruction in English grammar.

We recommend using a writing proficiency test in the first week of classes to provide instructors with the ability to identify students' writing proficiency and, if appropriate, to recommend enrolment in the "Introduction to the Basics of Writing in English Course". Completion of the more remedial course would not fulfill the Foundational Writing Course requirement. Details regarding this second course are discussed further in the FAQs at the end of this document.

### Assessment

The Working Group discussed how a credit/no-credit<sup>2</sup> option could apply to the foundational writing course. Possibilities for assessing the foundational writing course include the following:

- 1) The course could be offered only as credit/no-credit;
- 2) The course could have grades like all other courses, but students should be allowed to use their credit/no-credit option if they wish for this course, so long as the course is not required for their program; or
- 3) The course could have grades visible on the transcript, but counted as credit/no-credit when the cGPA is calculated (this is not an option currently available; it would have to be created).

The Working Group was unanimously against option (1). We were in favour of trying to use marks to encourage student achievement without creating too much anxiety for students worried about the effect a poor mark in the course would have on their cGPA; both options (2) and (3) achieve this, and (2) would be easy to adopt.

In addition, the Working Group noted that the foundational writing course should be numbered as a 000-level course to avoid having it count towards the limit of 6.0 credits that students can take at the 100-level. The course would necessarily count toward the 20.0 credits needed for graduation, as a for-credit 0.5 FCE course.

### Encouraging Completion of the Foundational Course in First Year

As this course is intended not only to provide foundational writing skills, but also to facilitate students' transition to university, it is important that students take the course in their first year. Methods for encouraging this include:

- 1) departments requiring completion of the course as a pre-requisite for second-year courses;
- 2) departments requiring completion of the course as a pre-requisite for enrolment in a program (if not direct entry); or
- 3) UTM requiring completion of the course as a pre-requisite for continuing past a certain number of credits.

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<sup>2</sup> UTM students may currently take a total of 2.0 credits as credit/no-credit.

Any of these requirements could be waived for individual cases where special circumstances require that students take the course in their second year.

### Space on Campus

A major concern of the Working Group was the space required for teaching a required foundational writing course to all incoming students. To our surprise, the space needed was relatively manageable (see FAQs for detailed calculations). Even with a somewhat complex offering scheme, all sections of the course would need only four rooms of the appropriate size for four days per week in the Fall and Winter terms, and two rooms in the Summer term. If four rooms were dedicated to the program, sections could be scheduled with maximum efficiency and without gaps. The Working Group appreciates the difficulties with finding ANY classroom space at the current time, but these calculations provide guidance for the university to find a way to accommodate this pedagogical initiative.

### Course Content

The various sections would largely be designed and their structure and content set by the pedagogically focused instructional staff hired to deliver this foundational course. Cooperation with units on foundational writing courses that could fulfill both a writing and a distribution requirement would be welcome, including participation of established faculty who wish to teach such courses under the auspices of the writing unit, as long as the course complies with the Foundational Writing Curriculum Committee's requirements. The expectation, however, is that faculty with expertise in writing instruction would be hired to teach the course, and the recommendation of the committee is that such hires be part of a unit focused on university pedagogy and academic writing instruction.

## **5. Pathways to Writing Improvement Beyond the Foundational Course**

The Working Group emphasized that a single foundational writing course would not be sufficient to address the concerns regarding student writing identified in the Academic Plan. The skills learned in the foundational course would need to be practiced and expanded upon to reinforce them and ensure they are retained. As well, students must be provided with opportunities to build upon these foundational skills and transfer them to different disciplinary contexts.

We expect that this will primarily be done using methods similar to the ones that have already been successfully used in teaching discipline-specific writing skills within core courses across the curriculum, often with the support of the Writing Development Initiative and / or Writing Specialists at the RGASC. Individual instructors and units have been incorporating writing modules of various types in courses across the curriculum for many years, and this practice should not only continue, but should be expanded if the Foundational Writing Course is approved.

The Working Group recommends that writing instruction beyond the foundational course continue to be delivered primarily through modules or embedded instruction in required or optional disciplinary courses, rather than through stand-alone “writing” courses outside of programs, so that writing is presented to students as an integral part of the knowledge production process in their programs. The newly hired writing instructors could supply assistance for such modules or instruction by consulting with instructors on assignment design, offering short lectures or workshops to classes, and expanding the Writing Development Initiative.

## **6. Next Steps**

This document summarizes the suggestions and conclusions of the 2017-18 Foundational Writing Skills Working Group. The next steps involve broader consultation with the UTM community, beginning with the Dean’s Office and then the UTM Chairs and Directors. Given the scale of the proposed change, it is recommended that further consultation also involve discussion with individual faculty and instructors (i.e., at individual unit faculty meetings), the executive of the UTMSU and Academic Societies, the UTM Registrar, the Principal’s Executive, and at open UTM Townhalls.

These next steps in the consultation process must address a number of related questions:

- 1) Does UTM want to proceed with some form of foundational writing course required for all incoming students?
- 2) Does UTM want this to be a course designed for all students and administered by specialists trained in writing instruction at the university level?
- 3) Would UTM like the Foundational Writing Skills Working Group or a similar committee to continue to create detailed recommendations for a specific structure for both the course and the faculty to be hired?

Depending on the outcomes of this UTM-wide consultation, the next steps would include formal Curriculum consultation and assessment for approval, beginning with the three UTM Curriculum Committees (Humanities, Sciences, and Social Sciences) and advancing to the UTM Academic Affairs Committee. The U of T Office of the Vice Provost, Academic Programs will need to be consulted to determine any additional governance steps; minimally, any major proposal will be sent to the appropriate Vice-Deans handling curriculum issues for FAS and UTSC.

## **7. Committee Membership**

Committee members volunteered or were nominated from the UTM community, with some attention to representation from UTM units with special interests or expertise, as well as membership from a range of faculty and staff, including UTM alumni. Input from the wider UTM community is expected to be the next stage of the process.

Heather M.-L. Miller, UTM Vice-Dean Teaching & Learning (Chair)  
Adriano Pasquali, UTM Dean's Office (Secretary)  
Brett Beston, Department of Psychology  
Feng Chen, Department of Management  
Tyler Evans-Tokaryk, Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre  
Adam Giles, Office of the Registrar  
Shelley Hawrychuk, UTM Library  
Michael Kaler, Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre  
Jayson Parker, Department of Biology  
Lavan Puvaneswaran, Department of Management  
Anjeza Rexha, Department of Biology  
Jessica Silver, Centre for Student Engagement  
Holger Syme, Department of English & Drama  
Alan Walks, Department of Geography

Working group members met six times between December 2017 and July 2018, approximately once a month for two hours to discuss plans and options. Most members also collected data or met in smaller groups focused on curriculum specifics or mechanics of operation to provide background materials and guidelines for the monthly working group discussion and decisions.

## **8. Frequently Asked Questions**

The Working Group discussed many operational details and alternative mechanics for this course. Rather than create a very long core document, we decided to put most of those details and discussions in the form of FAQs. These FAQs can be expanded during the consultation period.

### **Topic: Transitional Support**

Q: How will this course serve as a venue for cohort-building and transitional support for all incoming UTM students?

- First-year seminars have been recognized as “the most commonly implemented curricular intervention designed specifically for first-year students” (Upcraft, Gardner, Barefoot & Associates, 2005, pg 56).<sup>3</sup> At their core, first-year seminars facilitate learning by assisting entering students with their academic and social transition into university.
- Transitional learning is especially concerned with assisting students to do the following:
  - 1) connect with other students—i.e., to help form peer-support networks and peer-learning communities;

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<sup>3</sup> Upcraft, M.L., Gardner, J.N, Barefoot, B.O., & Associates. (2005). *Challenging and supporting the first-year student: a handbook for improving the first year of college*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- 2) connect with their institution—i.e., to promote involvement in the co-curricular (out-of-class experiential learning) activities, and use of campus support services
  - 3) connect present experience with future goals and plans—i.e., to help relate current university experience with upcoming decisions about majors, career path, and life beyond UTM.
- Some of the ways in which these goals can be achieved in a foundational writing course include the following:
    - emphasizing group work and group assignments;
    - building activities and projects around institutional characteristics and services; and
    - integrating writing work with presentations and support delivered by campus organizations such as the Career Centre, and using writing as a way to think through longer range planning.
  - This type of course content integration is based on Tinto's (1987)<sup>4</sup> and Astin's (1984)<sup>5</sup> work, which has been widely influential in transition theory. They argue that successful social and academic integration into an institution impacts student commitment and increases the likelihood of persistence. Close interaction with peers and faculty will further enhance that commitment, leading to greater persistence.

### **Topic: Alternatives to a Required Course**

#### Q. Why not just create a writing proficiency test that all applicants for UTM must pass to be accepted?

- This option has been explored a number of times at the University of Toronto. In 1995, Margaret Procter (then Coordinator, Writing Support) was commissioned to report to the Academic Board on reinstating post-admission tests (see [http://individual.utoronto.ca/procter/reports/1995\\_Testing.html](http://individual.utoronto.ca/procter/reports/1995_Testing.html)). This report emphasized the expense and lack of effectiveness associated with proficiency testing.
- In the late 1990s, a Task Force at UTSC considered proficiency tests as well, but its 1999 report (see Appendix 2) advised against such an approach. The Task Force concluded the following about proficiency tests:
  - a) the focus is less on learning the writing skills necessary for academic work than it is on the writing skills necessary to pass the test;
  - b) the one-off and timed nature of the test does not really diagnose writing skills;

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<sup>4</sup> Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>5</sup> Astin, A. (1984). *Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education*. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 25, 297-308.



- c) the separation of writing from academic work does not encourage students to take writing seriously, and instead the test becomes regarded as an isolated hurdle to be passed;
- d) any weeding out should be done prior to admission;
- e) the focus is on writing evaluation, not writing improvement;
- f) tests are costly and hard to administer; and
- g) variability in marking creates an unfair evaluative system.

The Task Force also found that any advantages associated with this approach were outweighed by their “high administrative cost and their separation of writing from regular course work.”

- The Office of the Registrar was consulted and believes that an additional entry test, above the existing, standardized proficiency requirement, is operationally infeasible. The common Ontario application system has no facility for supplementary materials, so supplementary applications are the responsibility of the university. Running such an application would be very expensive and logistically challenging, especially since any assessment would need to be run internationally.
- The test does not solve the problem that most students need help in improving their writing; this course is intended to help all students improve their writing, not just identify those who need assistance.

Q. Why not administer a test during Orientation or the first day/week of classes, and have only those who fail take a required course?

- The problems with such a test are the same as those identified above. Writing skills are not diagnosed effectively.
- This sets up writing instruction as a punitive measure; such programs have been a failure at other universities for this reason.
- The test creates divisions between students instead of building cohorts; it implies that students who pass do not need to improve their writing when everyone can use help. The proposed course will help all students enhance their knowledge of the discipline and practice of writing.
- Such a program is operationally difficult to put into place while still having students fit the required courses into their schedules.
- There was consensus in the Working Group that all UTM students will benefit from focused instruction in written communication skills, no matter their initial level of competence.

Q. Why not have units designate specific existing courses as writing intensive and require students to take those?

- UTM has tried this route, and while it has been relatively successful for upper-level and discipline-specific writing, it has not solved the problem that most students need more sustained, basic instruction in academic writing; we need to hire experts to provide this instruction through the formal structure of a course.

- Discipline-specific writing instruction in upper-level courses should build on a common foundation of knowledge and skills that all students possess.
- It has been difficult to ensure that scattered courses designated as “writing intensive” retain their writing instruction components, especially with changes in instructors.

### **Topic: Impacts of Program**

#### Q. How will this course affect writing in upper-year courses?

- Providing all students with foundational writing instruction in the first year that is designed to improve all levels of writing ability should result in a generally improved level of writing in all upper-year courses.
- This course will enhance students’ ability to understand and act on the feedback they receive on the writing that they do in upper-year courses.
- Additional instruction in writing throughout the curriculum will still be needed to ensure that students retain and improve their writing skills; this will be done through a continuation of the existing writing modules and instruction embedded in UTM courses in many disciplines. The new faculty for the foundational course may be of assistance in designing such modules and instruction, as with the existing WDI program and the RGASC writing instructors’ assistance in UTM courses. The foundational course will ensure a certain basic level of competence that upper-year courses can build upon.

#### Q. Will this course affect enrolment in our programs? Specifically, will it discourage international students who will see it as an extra restriction?

- We expect this course to be a recruitment advantage for UTM. Since all students will be required to take it, they will not necessarily see it as a punitive or remedial measure. The additional focus on assisting students to transition to university and building a cohort of fellow students in other disciplines can be marketed as a unique, Ivy-League-like feature available only at UTM.
- In addition to receiving the general benefits of such a course, international students who want to improve their communication skills in English will likely see it as additional assistance in transitioning into the Canadian university system. The much more remedial ACE system has been seen as a benefit and a recruitment advantage for UTM; this program will go far beyond ACE to include all students.

### **Topic: Instructors**

#### Q. What kind of faculty will be necessary for this program? Will existing faculty need to learn to teach this course?

- This course will need to be taught by specialists in the teaching of writing at the university level. We need to employ faculty with relevant training and expertise;

however, such candidates are not common in Canada where we have very few graduate programs in Rhetoric and Composition (or other programs that provide relevant training).

- It is important that the required writing course be centrally administered by a Foundational Writing Curriculum Committee, with regular re-assessment of pedagogical approaches, assignments, and course materials to ensure these are aligned with the defined learning outcomes. Since every student will be required to take this course, there will need to be consistency across sections in the learning outcomes and in aspects of course delivery, while recognizing that students will be coming into this course with different levels of ability. This is best accomplished by permanent specialist faculty working together on long-term goals.
- The nature of the program is such that Teaching Stream faculty are best suited for these positions, as it is desirable to have instructors with expertise in university pedagogy (from a research as well as a teaching perspective). These faculty will need to be hired over a few years, with at least a few at senior levels, to avoid a faculty distribution that is too concentrated at one level.

Q. Why not hire sessional instructors to run this program, especially at first to see if it will work out?

- Discussion with senior administrators at other universities about the history of similar attempts to create required foundational writing courses showed that relying predominantly on sessional labour created significant problems in the successful delivery and administration of these programs. Given the large scale of this undertaking, it is essential that permanent faculty be hired to run this program. Some sessional instructors will always be needed to fill gaps due to releases and leaves, and to be trained to fill future positions, but permanent faculty must develop, oversee, and teach the core program.

Q. Will the specialist faculty needed to teach the foundational course need to be hired within existing departments, as part of their complement plan?

- The Working Group agreed that scattering these instructors throughout the departments would greatly reduce their effectiveness and create problems for the career trajectories of the faculty themselves.
- The Working Group proposes that these new faculty be housed in a unit focused on university pedagogy and designed to provide support to all disciplines and departments, such as the proposed EDU-A focused on university pedagogy and intended to house the current RGASC members and others.

Q. Will the Teaching Stream professors hired to organize, administer, and teach the foundational courses also be available for departmental advising on writing, as is the case with the current RGASC writing specialists?

- The Working Group specifically discussed issues of potential faculty burn-out and the need to provide these hires with other responsibilities beyond the teaching of first-year courses in foundational writing. Opportunities include working with departments and instructors to assist with the development and presentation of writing modules / instruction within existing or future upper-level disciplinary courses, similar to the WDI program.
- Individual faculty within the group of writing specialists might be regarded as academic writing liaisons for certain disciplines and serve as module support developers or instructors for those disciplines, benefiting the departments. At the same time, working on upper-level courses will provide the new hires some release from solely teaching the first-year courses, and allow time for different kinds of thinking. Having a variety of “flavours” of writing instructors will also have a positive impact on both the foundational courses and the upper-year writing modules across disciplines.

Q. How can someone from outside my discipline teach writing in my discipline?

- These faculty will not be teaching writing in disciplinary courses; those courses will continue to be taught by existing faculty in those units. If desired, these specialists could be available to assist with the development and the delivery of writing modules / instruction related to assignments or topics in disciplinary courses, as is done by the current Writing Specialists in the RGASC.
- For specific disciplinary content included in the foundational course, instructors or the Foundational Writing Curriculum Committee will welcome the advice and cooperation of interested disciplinary faculty during the design of the course.

**Topic: Mechanics of the Required Course**

Q. How will students be placed into the foundational course? Will it not be a problem to have students with very different levels of writing ability in the same course?

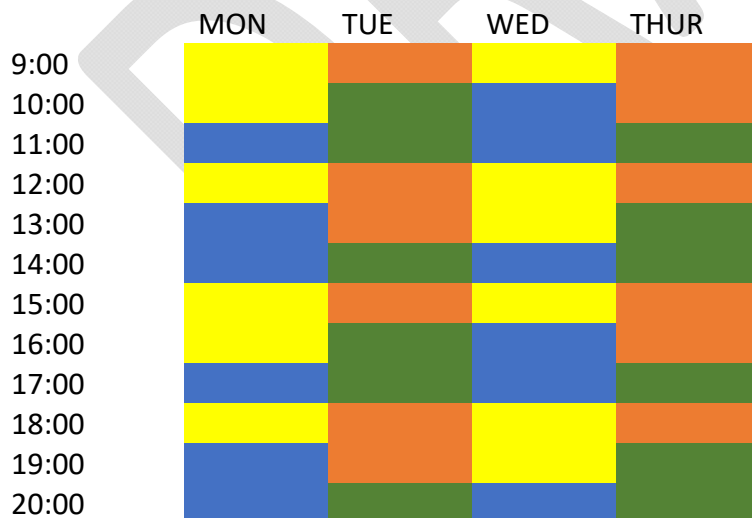
- The foundational writing course will be designed so that students with various levels of writing ability could be accommodated in one class, ensuring that they will be fairly marked in spite of differences in their starting levels.
- All students will take a proficiency test in the first week of classes. Such a test will inform instructors of the range of abilities and issues in each class, and will serve as a benchmarking instrument for the students at the beginning of their course.
- This test will also be used to identify students who need additional instruction in the fundamentals of English grammar. Such students will be offered the option to switch to a parallel course with the working title “Introduction to the Basics of Writing in English” that helps prepare students for the mandatory foundational writing course. The remedial course will have sections distributed through the timetable to allow for maximum accommodation.
- The Working Group has discussed a number of options for in-class proficiency tests:

- 1) CAEL, which is used in different ways at the University of British Columbia, St. Thomas University, and a few other places in Canada. UTM's ELL Specialist, Laura Taylor, has expressed interest in CAEL in the past and has had extensive conversations with a representative. More information on CAEL can be found here: <https://www.cael.ca/>.
- 2) A directed self-placement system, such as the one at the University of Washington Tacoma: <https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/university-writing-program/directed-self-placement-step-step>. Emily Carr University in Vancouver is phasing out their Academic Placement Test (which has been in place for 10 years) and moving to a self-placement system next year.
- 3) An instrument designed for UTM by UTM faculty and staff.

Q. Will space needs be met by a few seminar rooms?

The calculations used to estimate the space needs were based on the following course specifics:

- We assumed approximately 4000 students to be taught per year (including students who drop or fail and need to repeat the course), with a cap of 30 students per section and the expectation that at least 25 would stay in each section by the November count; the total number of sections needed across an entire calendar year (Fall, Winter and Summer terms) would be between 140 and 160.
- The course would have 3 hours of instruction per week (36S in the UTM Calendar), meeting once for 2 hours and again for 1 hour. With this schedule, 16 sections could be accommodated in a single room during a 4-day week between the hours of 9am and 9pm.



- Given the worst-case scenario of 160 sections (including drops and repeats), a realistic maximum distribution of sections would be 64 in the fall term, 64 in the

spring term, and 32 in the summer term. Fewer sections would be needed if retention is higher or student numbers are lower.

- Given 16 sections per room per 4-day week (above), the total number of rooms required would be 4 in each of the fall and winter terms, and 2 in the summer term. (A full-summer term would likely be needed for a writing course, as a compressed term would not allow enough time for writing practice.)
- The Working Group recommends that the four seminar-sized rooms designated for the new course be distributed across the entire campus, and that space be set aside for one or two such rooms in upcoming renovation and redesign projects. This will further reduce the impact on the existing pool of seminar-sized classrooms (a pool significantly enlarged with the opening of North B).

### **Appendices**

A. Guidelines for Foundational Writing Courses (adapted from and based on the “WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition (3.0)” available at <http://wpacouncil.org/positions/outcomes.html/>)

B. The UTSC Task Force on Writing: Final Report (1998)