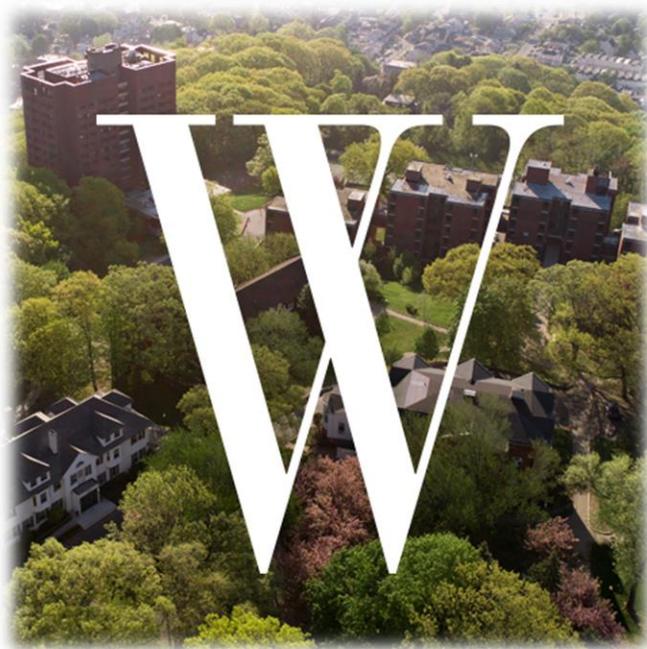


WAGNER COLLEGE

FYP Faculty
Guide



2021

Preface

Wagner, a small residential college, is strongly committed to undergraduate education, an education that emphasizes the classical and contemporary liberal arts curriculum; an education, moreover, that integrates a variety of disciplines with a challenging core of foundation courses. A liberal education prepares students for life as well as for careers. It opens minds by introducing students to the sweep of human imagination as well as to the shortcomings of human behavior. Liberal education provides students with the tools for evaluating moral problems as well as analytic skills necessary for critical interpretation and for effective problem solving. In every historical epoch, liberal education is about freeing the human imagination to understand the past while visualizing a future beyond the present limit of possibility.

In this broad view, liberal education is both pragmatic and idealistic. To reach its mission, liberal education requires a particular approach of its students that includes both the acquisition of knowledge and the habit of critical thinking. This approach necessarily involves students and faculty in continual engagement with the world around them, asking them to integrate, through critical assessment, ideas and experience as a means to establish new knowledge. In the larger sense, liberal education has always been pragmatic—testing the value of ideas against the tapestry of human experience.

Wagner’s liberal arts curriculum prepares students for careers in the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and the arts as well as in business, education, law, and the health professions. It promotes inquiry, critical thinking and analytical skills, heightens cultural awareness, emphasizes writing and computer skills, and fosters individual expression and intellectual independence. It serves as a bridge to the student’s major, broadens the student’s perspective, and brings students and faculty into dialogue with the larger intellectual and professional communities inside and outside the College.

The practical liberal arts program, or Wagner Plan, ensures that Wagner College is meeting its goals of offering a liberal education as set forth by the College Mission Statement. The Wagner Plan integrates the longstanding commitment to liberal arts, experiential learning and interdisciplinary education with the geographical location and enduring bond with New York City. Fueled by a distinguished faculty dedicated to scholarly pursuits as well as to excellence in teaching, the Wagner Plan, provides methodologies and pathways for intellectual inquiry. This is accomplished through the Key Skills and Knowledge curriculum, the Learning Communities program, and the completion of majors and minors, all three finding interconnections across the Plan.

The Wagner Plan’s novel approach emphasizes both traditionally structured modes of learning and experiential learning (“field-based” learning or “learning by doing”). Students participate in at least three learning communities, of which two include field work, research, and/or an internship in an organization, usually in New York City or the surrounding area. The first-year learning community includes a field-based experience that is thematically linked to two introductory, liberal arts courses and a reflective tutorial. The senior learning community, which is in the student’s major, consists of a capstone course in the discipline, a substantial internship or research experience, and a major paper or presentation in the senior reflective tutorial. The intermediate learning community, which consists of two courses that are thematically linked or a single course that is co-taught by faculty members from two different disciplines, serves as an important bridge between the first-year and senior learning communities. The three learning communities individually and collectively challenge students to relate academic learning to the wider world, to social issues, and to their own individual experiences.

The First-Year Program begins a critical stage of academic and social development for a student. The goals of the First-Year Program are to introduce aspects of liberal learning that relate to other hallmarks of the Wagner Plan. This guide has been assembled to assist faculty in understanding and constructing First-Year Learning Communities.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The overall goal of the First-Year Program (FYP) is to enable students to take charge of their own education by becoming active participants in their own learning. A successful first year will encourage students to use the tools that are necessary for active and lifelong learning. Many of these tools have been broadly identified within the key skills and knowledge curriculum of the general education program, but the FYP aligns the focus on general education skills with its unique requirement of experiential learning and interdisciplinary connection. The general goals across FYP LCs include:

- Experiential Learning and Reflection
- Interdisciplinary Learning
- Written Communication (WW)
- Critical Reading and Analysis
- Information Literacy
- Critical Thinking, Inquiry, and Analysis

In the FYP, learning communities are interdisciplinary by design. The link between courses goes beyond the academic coursework, extending to intellectual activity outside the classroom through experiential learning. The experiential component, averaging 26-30 hours per term depending on activity type, enhances the interdisciplinary theme of the LC by offering students the opportunity to "learn by doing." Professors in the LC are afforded flexibility in determining how the experiential learning hours are completed in accordance with the learning goals of the LC. For the First-Year Program, the experience is at the introductory level, whereas for the Senior LC the experience is linked to the major at the research or internship level.

A first-year LC, taught by two professors, combines two General Education courses with a third course called the Reflective Tutorial (RFT). The courses in a First-Year Learning Community typically integrate material from two distinct disciplines. Exceptions to this principle will be reviewed by the First-Year Program Review Committee. The professors of the individual courses meet to discuss the most fruitful connections between the two courses and develop the RFT theme. Writing instruction takes place in the RFT, which is designed to be small— usually 12-14 students per tutorial. Half of the students who are in the two courses will have one professor as RFT instructor and academic advisor, while the remaining half will be instructed and advised by the other professor.

The RFT is a course that has its own reading material, discussion and requirements. Ideally, the coursework of the RFT enriches and connects to the other two courses in the LC. In the Wagner Plan, the RFT replaces a first-year English composition course. Therefore, writing is a major component of this class. Extensive support is available for RFT instructors from the Horrman Library Writing Center (see *Categories of Writing*, *Formal Writing Guidelines* and *Library Resources*). The RFT permits students to directly engage ideas and experiences. They come to systematically reflect on what they are learning in community settings and compare their own field-based experiences with those of other students. The faculty members function as facilitators of reflection by encouraging the open discussion of ideas that lead to more effective writing and oral communication.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND REFLECTION

The experiential learning component of the Learning Community may take any of an array of possible forms: *service learning, field trips, participatory learning and community research*. With rare exception, these experiences take place off campus. Each student is required to complete between 26 and 30 hours of experiential learning.

- ***Service Learning*** involves a community partner that will link the course content directly to the community experience. The field work assists the community partner. This can involve individual students or teams of students working with the community partner. The civic value of the field work provides an important dimension of academic and civic development.
- ***Field Trips*** involve in-depth observations of, and interactions with local communities and cultural institutions, on matters that are directly related to course themes and content with appropriate follow-up discussion or activities.
- ***Participatory Learning*** relies on direct observation of course concepts, themes or skills in social settings, outside the classroom. By observing and taking part in the activities of others, and creating audio, visual or written, theoretically informed observations, students learn about people's lives through first-hand experience.
- ***Community Research*** is a collaborative project of two or more students working with one community partner under the direction of the Reflective Tutorial instructor and with the assistance of the Dean of Experiential Learning. The faculty member develops the topic with the community partner. The quality of the research, rather than a particular number of field hours, is the most important goal. The project should involve sustained research and some face-to-face meetings with the agency plus a presentation to the Reflective Tutorial.

The experiential component of the Learning Community may also be structured as a hybrid of two or more of the models described above. The form that the experiential learning takes in any given Learning Community, including goals of the experience, will be clearly articulated by the faculty members. Faculty will also communicate with any agencies at which students are involved and, to the greatest degree possible, integrate the experience through reflection into the coursework of the Reflective Tutorial.

Any experiential learning activity not scheduled during regular class meetings must allow for the students to schedule within the confines of their own availability. Students should not be asked to miss a Wagner activity (such as a class, athletic practice, or rehearsal) for experiential learning. In unusual circumstances where this cannot be avoided, the Learning Community faculty should support communication with the faculty member or coach involved to explain the student's absence. In the event that the conflict cannot be resolved, the student must be given an alternate experiential learning assignment.

One of the purposes of the Reflective Tutorial is to use structured reflection to enhance learning from students' experiences. Reflection activities should involve individual learners and address interactions with peers, community members and staff of community agencies if appropriate.

Reflection activities can involve reading, writing, doing and talking. Some examples are: case studies, journals (individual or group), critical incident journal, portfolios, papers, discussions, presentations and interviews.

WRITING GOALS FOR STUDENT WRITING

- Writing and rewriting should become normal, integral, self-generated parts of student intellectual activity across the curriculum, and certainly in the First-Year Program.
- Writing and reflection should be linked, where appropriate, to reading and experiential learning.
- Students should understand that all writing has an audience and that the audience may be oneself, a peer or a body of experts.
- Students should aim for growing critical and analytical sophistication in writing and assessing arguments and sources.
- Students should become reliable readers and editors of their own and others' work. Readings should challenge students and should become more demanding as the semester progresses.

At a minimum, first-year students in the RFT should become proficient in:

- Composing a thesis statement
- Writing an introductory and concluding paragraph
- Developing the thesis through detailed examples
- Organizing ideas in a paper
- Utilizing transitions between paragraphs
- Integrating quotations into the paper (“I.C.E.” Introduce/Cite/Explain”)
- Using a documentation style format such as MLA, APA, or CMS
- Employing a variety of sentence structures
- Avoiding common errors such as sentence fragments and run-on sentences.

RFT instructors can find handouts on planning papers, effective writing, research skills and documenting sources, paragraphs, transitions, conciseness, sentence construction, English as a Second Language (ESL) and editing for revision at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>.

Upon request, the Writing Center provides presentations on topics related to minimal writing proficiency. Writing-intensive tutors (WITs) will visit the classroom on a specified day to offer a brief (ten- to fifteen-minute) overview of information on the requested topic and to answer questions. Topics include pre-writing and organization, research, thesis statements, MLA and/or APA documentation (other styles upon request), sentence structure, grammar, and style. Presentations are most effective when requested on the day a paper is assigned, as students are more likely to listen carefully. Check the Writing Center webpage for an online form to schedule a WIT or emailContact the Writing Center Director at (718) 390- 3430 for further information.check for an online request form on the Writing Center webpage.

CATEGORIES OF WRITING

There are several levels of writing—along the continuum of informal to formal—that are essential to define and distinguish in the RFT. Each category of writing takes on a special significance when used to teach students to become effective writers. Frequent practice in these different levels of writing, and in exercising the ability to distinguish among them, should enable students to leave their first-year RFT with an effective initial experience that includes both the tools of competent writing

and a vocabulary about its practice.

Broadly speaking, there are four general categories of writing that the student should practice:

1. free writing for self-instruction
2. informal, experience-based writing for more focused self-instruction
3. formal, usually academic, writing that shifts from a writer-based to a reader-based orientation and that integrates the student's experience of a topic with the ideas of others; and
4. revision: a thoroughly reader-based reshaping of material that is usually an integral part of the writing process but that, for the purposes of instruction, needs to be distinguished as a separate category. Some further definitions and suggestions for each category are as follows:

Free writing is a form of self-instruction that is preliminary, observational and random. It is entirely writer-based; that is, it is self-initiated. Its goal is to free the writer from the inhibitions of anticipated criticism (including the writer's own self-criticism) and to simply practice an unfamiliar task. There is no special objective. The professor should not assign a topic for it and it is not designed as an assignment that requires the professor to grade or even comment. should probably not even read it. However, the professor should clearly define the task (perhaps through some initial in-class exercises) and then encourage its use outside of class, possibly as a start-up mechanism for brainstorming any task that will involve writing. Finally, there is no specific form for free writing. It can be as random as a free association series of notes, or as shaped as a series of sentences in paragraphs. Its only requirement is that it be continuous and written down.

Informal writing differs from free writing in that it is more explicitly focused either by task, goal or form. That is, it may be assigned by the professor, it may have a particular objective or topic, and it may take the form of a journal entry, response to an exercise, reaction paper or any similarly predesignated format. In contrast to free writing, informal writing is a more focused form of self-instruction. However it is equally random, uncensored, observational, reactive, colloquial, associated and free of outside criticism or feedback. It usually includes information gathered from reading, discussion, or experiential work and often involves synthesizing such material with the student's own developing point of view. Its primary goal is discovery, specifically the discovery of ideas. Often the ideas that will be expressed on the level of formal writing are uncovered through the informal writing process. It is usually ungraded; but if a grade is applied then that grade is based on completion rather than on writing competence. While informal writing is still preliminary and spontaneous, it is also transitional, moving the writer through self-instruction to discovery and to the awareness of the need to shape these discoveries for communication to others. It is essentially a collecting and discovering activity, gathering ideas, facts, even specific words and patterns of sentences or arguments that may reappear in a more formal writing product.

Formal writing, often academic, is distinguished from informal in that it is explicitly reader-based. It takes full account of audience at every level, from the clear identification of thesis and development of argument to the recognition of the need for accuracy in word choice and grammar and in the full acknowledgment and proper formatting of sources. It is also "formal" on the level of style in that it is non-colloquial, error-free, written in full sentences and completed paragraphs and encourages an increasingly sophisticated awareness of craft in word choice and sentence structure. In the RFT, it is usually developed through attention to process, moving through stages of drafting, revising and editing to full completion. Its topics may be assigned although attention should be given to the essential skill of developing self-generated topics. It clearly distinguishes between "topic" as an area of inquiry and "thesis" as a specific, argued, exemplified and documented point of view within that area. It is always graded. Finally, while formal writing is always accountable in development and format to the discipline and/or audience to which it is addressed, it should be reiterated that the ability to produce formal, reader-based, writing is an adaptable skill, the essence of which is a flexibility arising out of the writer's deftness in discerning the needs of a particular audience and in meeting those needs with the full resources of language and intellect.

Revision is an activity that, at its most successful, becomes fully integrated in the writing process. At the level of the RFT, this process needs to be distinguished, defined and practiced. Most importantly, it must be distinguished from “editing”, or proofreading, which is the practice of correcting and/or reshaping discrete parts without altering the whole. “Revising”, by contrast, is a global reshaping, involving the conscious altering of a text from the inevitably writer-based first draft to the final, reader-based, and polished product. It is, as its root suggests, a re-vision, a re-seeing. It takes account of the given that all successful writing is initially a process of finding out what one wants to say. Through drafting, the student turns those discoveries into a paper which addresses itself to an audience. Thus the skill of revising is perfected through attention to feedback. Students can begin with the audience of the self by reading their own essays out loud, an activity that inevitably turns the writer into a reader who hears the errors that the silent reader-writer misses. Reading to other students in small workshop groups is also a highly effective exercise, especially as those other students become familiar with the techniques of suggesting guides to revision (again, not editing). For example, student audiences can be taught to listen for the hidden “better essay” only obliquely present in a first draft, or to assist in the development of a clearer thesis for its writer, or to suggest ways in which a final paragraph might make a more appropriate opening. Student writers can also work at the revising process in pairs or with the WITS (writing-intensive tutors) and RITS (research-intensive tutors) through the resources of the Horrmann Library Writing Center.

At all levels, however, each of these activities should involve the student’s active engagement and should be clearly distinguished from passive acceptance of another’s authority. The final responsibility, it should be stressed, always rests with the student.

Faculty will recognize that not everything in the preceding paragraphs is applicable to their individual RFTs. Instead, faculties are encouraged to pick and choose, add and adapt. What is proposed here is a roughly common format and a shared vocabulary that can be used to launch students into their initial college writing experience of the RFTs. Faculty can expect to encounter a need for this shared vocabulary when they meet these students again in upper-level courses through the semesters of their undergraduate years as the students pursue mastery of the written communication skill in the general education program and within their chosen majors and minors..

FORMAL WRITING GUIDELINES

In addition to informal writing, at least three formal, graded writing assignments must be part of the RFT. Each student must submit a minimum of 20 pages of graded, formal writing to his/her instructor. FYP Faculty must **assign at least one research paper**. Consult the Library Resources/Information Literacy section of this Faculty Guide for detailed suggestions on involving students in using the library for this paper. Faculty should also assign at least **one analytical paper** requiring the student to take a position on a question that is open to interpretation. At least one of these papers must involve the drafting and revision process. The exact nature of these assignments will naturally vary from one RFT to another; however, the aim of the assignments, taken as a sequence, should be consonant with the goals for student writing both within the RFT (see above) and according to the requirements within the general education program for an intensive designation in written communication. .

EN012 FOUNDATIONS IN WRITING

EN012 *Foundations in Writing* is a zero unit course for incoming first-year students who have been identified by a first-year program faculty member, the director of writing, or have self-identified as in need of extra writing support during the first semester.

Identifying Students: Typically, faculty work with the director of writing to identify prospective EN012 students. FYP faculty will provide students with an in-class writing prompt of the faculty

member's choice during the first week of classes. With a provided rubric designed by the director of writing, they will identify students who need additional writing support. For the students who have been identified, the faculty will email the director of writing a copy of the student writing, completed rubric, FYP syllabi, and incentive option (see below). From this, the director of writing will determine whether the student needs to be enrolled in the course or required to regularly meet with a WIT in the writing center. Students may also self-select, in consultation with the director of writing, to participate in EN012.

Timeline:

- First week of classes: FYP Faculty assign a short writing assignment for assessment.
- Second week of classes: FYP Faculty assess their students' writing and communicate with the director of writing only about the students who are potential candidates. Faculty will send the director of writing a copy of the potential student's writing, the completed rubric, the FYP syllabi, and the incentive option (see below).
- Third week of classes: FYP Faculty and the director of writing meet with the students to explain EN 012. The director of writing also sends out an official email to the students.
- Fourth week of classes: EN 012 starts.

Assessment/Incentives for Students (EN 012 is Pass/Fail): In order to motivate students to work on their first year papers during EN 012, the RFT will include assessment/incentive for students. While option one is preferred, the professor may choose which option s/he prefers.

- **Option 1:** The RFT final grade has 5% (which equals a half a letter grade) for students in EN 012. If students pass EN 012, they receive the whole percentage. If students fail EN 012, they receive 0% (similar to labs in the sciences). At the end of the semester, the director of writing will contact faculty about whether or not the student received the full percentage. Sample syllabus language: "In the event that you are enrolled in EN 012, 5% of your final RFT grade will be determined based on your performance in EN 012. To earn the full 5%, you are required to pass EN 012."
- **Option 2:** Each individual writing assignment will have a percentage determined by the faculty that is connected to EN 012. In this case, the director of writing will provide an update for each assignment if the student worked on the paper during class or not. Similar to Option 1, the student will either receive the full percentage or not depending on whether or not they worked on the assignment.

READING

STANDARDS

The FYP serves as an introduction to critical reading to variable degrees that depend on the particular LC in which they are enrolled. Critical reading involves a process of moving beyond a superficial understanding of a text to notice critical details and underlying positions, question assumptions, consider a range of interpretive possibilities, draw out the implications of the observations, and put interpretations in conversation with relevant texts and contexts. Critical reading is a skill students will use to approach academic texts, literary works, historical documents and other kinds of material culture.

It should go without saying that critical reading is essential to a liberal education for its own sake and not simply as a means for strengthening writing. Nevertheless, because the nature of appropriate reading varies from discipline to discipline, some further discussion of the nature of such reading in a learning community is warranted. Students should be assigned reading that tests their abilities to grasp increasingly interesting and complex ideas as the semester progresses. Such reading should spark discussion as well as engender reasoned responses through writing.

Students should emerge from the FYP with an understanding of the distinctions between different kinds of publications and styles of writing. While reputable newspapers and magazines may be useful for drawing connections between the two different disciplines linked in the LC, or for demonstrating the relevance of abstract or historical material, the readings in the LC should not be limited to popular sources. *Students should be taught how to engage with difficult texts.* At the end of the FYP they should be able to read for content, structure, academic significance, and the writing conventions of the particular discipline.

FORMAL GUIDELINES

The courses linked in the LC's differ widely in the amount and nature of reading that is suited to their specific disciplines, and professors find varying strategies in the RFT to connect them. Therefore it is more appropriate to offer guidelines for the entire LC than to limit them to the RFT.

The LC as a whole should *accustom students to the reading demands appropriate to the college level.* This should include the primary materials discussed below and not be limited to popular writings. Furthermore, they should gain experience with *challenging scholarly materials.*

At the end of the FYP, students should be able to do the following:

- Evaluate both printed and electronic sources (see the guidelines for information literacy).
- Distinguish between primary and secondary literature in the field. Depending on the discipline, examples of primary literature could be a literary text, an historical document, or a foundational treatise.
- Distinguish between recreational and popular publications, different levels of newspapers, and scholarly journals in the discipline.
- Identify the most important argument or ideas in a text.

INFORMATION LITERACY

STANDARDS

The FYP serves as an introduction to information literacy to variable degrees that depend on the particular LC in which they are enrolled. As defined by our general education curriculum, the learning outcome goals of information literacy are to help students develop “the ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively and responsibly use and share that information for the problem at hand” (AAC&U Information Literacy VALUE Rubric, 2013).

All courses with a practice exposure in information literacy require students to critically analyze information to support course content. Students demonstrate their exposure to or practice of information literacy through at least one **substantial research-based assignment**, such as a research paper, speech, marketing or business plan, annotated bibliography, or presentation. FYP faculty work closely with the Horman Library staff to introduce students to the library and to train them in basic information literacy.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Horrmann Library staff members work with students beginning in the first year to promote skills and activities essential for the information-literate student. All first-year students are introduced to the library through an orientation to its resources, and an introduction to the methods of effective library research. The Horrmann Smart Lab computer classroom, available on the lower level, contains 30 computer workstations and *SmartBoard* technology for information literacy instruction, and a guided research experience with the librarians. The best way to make these introductory library sessions most effective, is to relate the instruction as closely as possible with the student’s actual research. Students can more easily see the relevance of the library’s electronic resources, when they connect to actual research assignments. One option is to schedule a bibliographic instruction session early in the semester for a library overview, and then schedule a 2nd workshop session for later in the semester, when students are actively involved in researching sources for their final papers. This additional workshop gives the students hands-on experience with the library’s resources while researching their papers, with guided help from the librarian.

The library staff also offers the following services:

- In-class visits to provide instruction in information evaluation, plagiarism prevention, and the difference between internet information and subscription database resources
- Collaboration with faculty to embed information literacy components into syllabi
- Preparation of course and assignment-specific research guides. Librarians have created library research guides (Libguides) for the major subject areas, to help students better locate the most relevant databases and journals for their area of research. On request, the Librarians can also create specialized Libguides for individual courses. These guides can help student’s better sort through the dozens of database options, and focus on the resources that will be most relevant to their coursework. Our current research guides are available on our web site at <http://wagner.libguides.com/>. Individual guides can be linked directly to course Moodle pages as well.

Projects involving library research must be incorporated into the syllabus of each Learning Community to promote information literacy. Information Literacy encourages critical thinking and reflection in the context of increasingly expanding amounts of information available through a wide range of technologies. The FYP will adhere to the guidelines established by the Association of College and Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association, which recommend that the information-literate student be able to:

- Determine the nature and extent of the information needed.
- Access needed information effectively and efficiently.

- Evaluate information sources critically (print, media, electronic databases and the internet).
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.
- Use information ethically and legally.

The resources of the library (print, audiovisual, electronic) are carefully selected to complement and enhance the teaching and learning initiatives of the faculty.

The Horrmann Library is also the site of comprehensive tutoring services: research (Research Intensive Tutors – RITs), writing (Writing Intensive Tutors – WITs), and academic subjects (Peer Tutors). Peer tutoring is available in the Horrmann Study Center, on the lower level, and Research and Writing tutors are available on the library's main level. At the end of each semester, FYP faculty are asked to submit names of students who would be good WITs, RITs, or Peer Tutors. Ideally, every LC will generate at least one student candidate for tutoring. The Writing Center (420-4080) maintains a webpage with writing resources. FYP faculty may contact the Writing Center director (390-3430) to have WITs come to RFT classrooms to talk about a specific aspect of writing papers or about writing in general. RITs may also be contacted individually or by group e-mail (RIT@wagner.edu). Tutoring schedules are posted on the appropriate webpage's during the semester. The web addresses are:

RITs - www.wagner.edu/library/tutors

WITs - www.wagner.edu/cace/academic-support/writing-center/

ADDITIONAL LIBRARY RESOURCES FOR FACULTY

A complete list of the library's resources and materials, databases, and brief descriptions of each, is available on the library web site at <http://www.wagner.edu/library/>.

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

As students work with resources and ideas they must be instructed in how to honestly credit sources of all kinds: internet, personal, written and media. Definitions of academic dishonesty and the College's policies on plagiarism and cheating can be found in the *Student Academic Honesty & Integrity Handbook*, which every student is expected to read and understand. Faculty is responsible for ensuring that the attached acknowledgement forms are signed and returned to the Academic Honesty Committee. RFT instructors are encouraged to work closely with the students as they learn to work with various sources of information and proper citation.

There are various strategies by which plagiarism in formal writing may be avoided, or at least minimized. For example, in suggestion of topics for a paper, the instructor can suggest focused topics, rather than broad subjects. Formal instructor approval of the topic and/or thesis statement, an annotated bibliography requirement, and establishment of an article as a point of departure for a given paper assignment are also effective methods.

CRITICAL THINKING, INQUIRY, AND ANALYSIS

Critical thinking, inquiry, and analysis are not singled out as distinct skills in the Key Skills and Knowledge curriculum for general education. This is reflected in the description of our undergraduate program in our bulletin: "The basis of the practical liberal arts is the development of critical thinking, inquiry, and analysis. These foundational skills are developed across all courses and disciplines." In constructing the curriculum, the faculty recognized that critical thinking, inquiry, and analysis are foundational skills that are implicit in the work that we do in the classroom--regardless of discipline.

As a general goal across the 36 units, we recognize it as a goal of the FYP, without assigning it to any one piece of the FYP.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMPONENT OF THE RFT

Since the inception of the FYP in 1998, the RFT was viewed as a space in which to house conversations and experiences that encouraged reflection on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). In the twenty-one years since the program began, the general education curriculum has shifted significantly to respond to, among other concerns, the role of DEI in the curriculum of the institution as a whole.

Under the **Key Skills and Knowledge** curriculum (instituted in fall of 2018), skills are assigned to discipline specific courses. “Intercultural understanding (UU/U)” is the skill that is assigned to courses that speak to the institution’s DEI goals. The granting of this skill designation is guided by the Academic Policy Committee according to criteria approved by the college as a whole. In the old gen ed, content courses in the FYP could have (D) or (I) designations.

Given this significant shift in the general education curriculum, the RFT no longer serves the role as potentially the sole vehicle for DEI in the FYP. Some of the discipline specific courses in the FYP LC may bear the skills designation as approved by APC. Regardless, all faculty should support DEI goals within the FYP and RFT in the following ways:

- When advising freshmen, faculty should include a discussion of the reasons for the Intercultural Understanding requirements (intensive and practice/exposure) in the Wagner curriculum.
- Faculty are encouraged to provide in their RFT syllabus a statement which indicates the course and LC commitment to teaching and learning methods that are reflective of a diverse society and practices that consist of multiple strategies that influence the inclusivity of a classroom. Examples of these statements, and resources that support DEI in the classroom are available on the FYP moodle page.
- FYP faculty members will encourage their students to attend a variety of college events related to DEI issues.
- In order to support the diversity component of the FYP, it is recommended that a workshop on facilitating discussions of DEI issues among students be held every year at the May FYP Retreat.

GOVERNANCE

RFT MODELS

Instructors of the First-Year Learning Community have a wide degree of flexibility in designing two RFT sections. Depending on the nature of the two courses and the preferences of the LC pair, the RFTs can range from identical syllabi and co-teaching to completely distinct sections that only rarely meet together. Some possible models are discussed below:

- ***In the first model***, the RFT sessions include writing from both disciplines, with each discipline having equal time. Writing in this model also includes the common theme from the LC. Co-teaching both RFT groups and having identical syllabi are characteristic of this model.
- ***In the second model***, the RFT is a writing extension of the primary course. In this case, the RFTs are distinctly different and intimately linked to one of the two courses; therefore, it becomes important to ensure that one RFT group does not have an undue advantage over the other in the primary courses. Uniformity can be achieved by co-teaching the RFT sessions, rotating the instructors through the two RFT sessions, or

- having each instructor teach both groups every other week.
- ***In the third model***, the RFT should neither include nor extend from either of the paired courses. It can, however, be an extension of the common theme of the LC. Both RFTs can select similar reading/writing assignments in accordance with the preferences of the instructors.

Within one LC, RFTs scheduled at the same time provide the opportunity to combine both classes when appropriate. As LC partners develop the RFT, this scheduling caveat should be considered in accordance with preference.

SCHEDULING

The summer before the student's first-year, descriptions of the Learning Communities are shared and students are asked to identify LCs in which they are most interested. A first-year student, for instance, may be enrolled in an LC that pairs a Chemistry course with a Philosophy course. A typical schedule for a student enrolled in the LC might look like this:

Learning Community 9: I, Robot: Minds, Machines and Human Beings

- Medical Ethics (PH 202, 1 unit)
- General Chemistry I (CH 111, 1 unit) (Must enroll in CH 111L)
- General Chemistry Lab (CH 111L, 0 units)
- Reflective Tutorial* (1 unit)
- 1-2 additional units to be chosen by Academic Advisement over the summer. Schedules may be adjusted during the Drop/Add period.

**The RFT includes the Experiential Component, averaging 26-30 hours per week, depending on the activity.*

FIRST YEAR PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE

- *FYP coordinator; Chair of FYPRC; must be tenured; 3 yr. term, rotating in the same years as Department Chairs*
 - *Director of Writing (attends meetings only when writing is discussed)*
 - *Dean of Integrated Learning*
 - *Associate Dean of Academic Advisement*
 - *Three representatives (untenured faculty eligible) elected from FYP faculty for rotating 3-year terms*
- FYP coordinator and all faculty representatives to the FYPRC are nominated and elected by full FYP at annual May Retreat; FYP Coordinator serves a 3-year term.
 - If a FYPRC member leaves the FYP, he or she will be replaced in an election of the full FYP.
 - Care should be taken, in the nomination process, to be sure that the various divisions of the college are represented, if at all possible, in the composition of the FYPRC.
 - All FYPRC members are voting members of the committee
 - Meetings: When needed, particularly in November, December and January as new LC's are proposed and the fall course schedule is developed. FYPRC members must be accessible via email over spring and summer break, when urgent issues may develop that require the committee's deliberation and vote.
 - The FYP secretary, elected for a one-year term by the FYP at the annual Retreat, will not serve on the FYPRC.

DUTIES/PURVIEW OF FYPRC

- To make recommendations to the FYP
- To plan the agenda for FYP meetings and FYP annual retreat, which will be approved by full FYP
- To allocate FYP funds applied for in September by individual LC's
- To oversee the development of new LC's and the revision of existing ones. (see next page for policy for revising LC's)
- To review applications, as requested by either the FYP faculty coordinator or the dean of integrated learning, to offer an LC in the FYP
- To recommend approval of atypical LC's to full FYP and then to APC
- To demonstrate that ongoing LC's have met the criteria outlined in FYP Guide (see next page for criteria). LC syllabi, particularly the RFT syllabi, must be submitted to the FYPRC by the end of September.
- To intervene in support of faculty teaching in FYP

POLICY FOR REVISING LCs

- It is expected that faculty teaching in an LC undertake a 3-year commitment to teaching with that partner in that LC. If, for personal or departmental reasons, one or both members of an LC must withdraw from the program, then the FYP faculty coordinator or the dean of integrated learning must be contacted as soon as possible in order to allow time for mediation. In most cases this should be *no later than the end of the first semester*.
- If the match between partners isn't working, the partners should discuss the problems themselves or in consultation with the FYP coordinator or the dean of integrated learning, if they wish. If one or both partners would like to switch LC's or leave the FYP, they should notify the FYP coordinator or the dean of integrated learning before **December 1st**. Given that the dissolution of FYP partnerships can involve sensitive information, the FYP coordinator or the dean of integrated learning will serve as the point people for these conversations, and will communicate relevant information about LC changes to the FYPRC.
- In all situations outlined above, the FYPRC will act as consulting body or as mediator.

CRITERIA FOR FYP FACULTY

By the signing the FYP faculty agreement, faculty acknowledge that they are committed to the goals outlined in the FYP Faculty Guide:

- Experiential Learning and Reflection
- Interdisciplinary Learning
- Written Communication (WW)
- Critical Reading and Analysis
- Information Literacy
- Critical Thinking, Inquiry, and Analysis

In addition, faculty are responsible for:

- Attendance at FYP meetings and Retreat
- Student FYP survey results
- Prompt response to queries about freshman advisees from the Dean of CACE, Assistant Dean for Learning Disabilities, Assistant Athletic Director for Academic Affairs, Dean of Integrated Learning, and the Registrar.
- Submitting RFT syllabi to the Faculty Coordinator or Dean of Integrated Learning

CRITERIA FOR PDS (PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMESTER)

Any tenured or untenured faculty member may commit to teaching in the FYP, as well as

teaching an overload **for 3 years** (4 – 3 load), *without an overload stipend*, and be released from teaching responsibilities for one semester. Faculty are eligible to take the PDS **four years after** the first semester taught in the FYP with the plan to take a PDS.

- Faculty must teach 3 years in the FYP and 24 courses total before they are eligible to take the PDS.
- If faculty teach a fourth class in the 4th year, it is compensated as overload work, and cannot be banked for a future PDS. This arrangement will be contracted with departmental approval, and through the office of the Dean of Learning Communities.
- PDS may not be taken in the Fall semester
- Faculty seeking to take PDS immediately before or after a sabbatical will need express permission from the Provost.
- PDS may not be taken in a semester when another departmental member is on sabbatical.
- PDS semester is guaranteed, but not guaranteed immediately following the 4 years after the first semester taught in the FYP.
- The semester in which the PDS is taken must be coordinated with departmental needs, and approved by the Provost

POLICY FOR FAILING THE FYP-RFT

Students who fail to pass the formal writing component of the Reflective Tutorial will fail the course and must take EN 101 College English their following spring semester.

If a student fails to complete the experiential learning component, the student receives an “I” grade for the course, and upon completion of the hours in the spring semester, is assigned a grade for the RFT. If this “I” grade becomes an “F”, the student is required to take a Civic Engagement course as well as an additional “W” course (for a total of two, successfully completed ‘W’ courses).

If a student needs to withdraw or fails one or both of the content courses the student will need to make up such a course as with any other. However, there is no penalty related to the completion of the FYP. If the student withdraws or fails the RFT, then the student must successfully complete EN 101 in the subsequent spring semester. In either case the Students' advisor will inform the Dean of Integrated Learning.'

RESPONSIBLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION RESOURCES

All members of the Wagner College community who use the College’s computing and network facilities need to use them in an ethical, responsible and legal manner. College policies guiding the use of technology can be found in the guide book *Responsible Use of Technology and Information Resources Handbook*, which every student is expected to read.

Computers in residence halls must be registered with Wagner College before they will be allowed to access the Wagner College network. The registrant is responsible for all network activity originating from the registered computer regardless of the individual operating the computer, either directly or remotely. All network activity originating from the computer must follow the policies outlined in this document.

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