

Bylaws of the University of Massachusetts Amherst Writing Program

I. Statement of principles

Effective governance supports structures and practices that help to create a collegial environment and efficient procedures with which to conduct the affairs of the UMass Amherst Writing Program (WP). Therefore, in accordance with Article 12 of the UMass-MSP Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), these bylaws have been adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members of the Writing Program at UMass Amherst.

Nothing in these bylaws should be construed as contrary to University policies; rather they are intended to facilitate the work of the WP as outlined in the MSP Collective Bargaining Agreement. Federal and state laws, UMass Trustee policies (including, but not limited to T76-081, the Academic Personnel Policy, aka the “Red Book”), the CBA, and other established university policies will prevail in all instances of conflict with these bylaws.

II. Description of program

The UMass Amherst Writing Program is a stand-alone program in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts at UMass Amherst. The Writing Program has five primary functions: 1) teaching first-year writing courses, including EnglWrit 111 and EnglWrit 112/112H the only course on campus that fulfills the CW General Education requirement; 2) administering writing placement for incoming students; 3) coordinating pedagogical and financial support for Junior Year Writing; 4) providing one-on-one support to writers across campus through the Writing Center; and 5) acting as a central resource for writing education across campus.

III. Writing Program positions, rights, and responsibilities

The Writing Program’s functions are carried out by faculty members and professional administrative staff in several types of positions. The WP’s administrative team includes a term-limited Faculty Director, a permanent Administrative Director, a Writing Center Director, an Associate Director for Assessment and Curriculum, an Associate Director for Teacher Training, Associate Directors for Junior Year Writing, and the HR manager/bookkeeper. The administrative team is the primary decision-making entity in the Program and collaborates to make decisions about curriculum and curricular materials, instructor training and professional development, assessment and placement, program communications, and program budgeting and development. In these bylaws, “Directors” indicates any position with “director” in the title.

The Associate Directors for Junior Year Writing (JYW) include one faculty member from inside and another from outside of the English Department. JYW Associate Directors serve on the University Writing Committee, act in mentoring capacities, and provide professional development opportunities for instructors of junior-year writing courses. Both JYW Associate Directors submit AFRs to their home departments.

The WP's instructional staff includes 1) full-time professional instructors who are lecturers with a 3-3 teaching load and service responsibilities specified under the MSP contract; 2) part-time temporary instructors who are lecturers with varied teaching loads and no service responsibilities; and 3) graduate student teaching associates (TOs) with 1-1, 1-2, or 2-1 teaching load. Professional instructors' service responsibilities allow structural input into the shape and activities of the WP.

All WP directors and professional instructors, except for the Associate Directors for JYW, serve on standing and ad hoc committees, act in mentoring capacities, and develop curricular or assessment-driven improvements to the program. All WP directors and professional instructors, except the Faculty Program Director, must serve rotating three-year terms on the WP Personnel Committee. WP directors and professional instructors demonstrate fulfillment of service and teaching effectiveness through submission of teaching evaluations and summarizing development of new curricula and teaching approaches in their Annual Faculty Review (AFR). WP directors and professional instructors should also convey evidence of participation in service (including professional societies; school, college, and university committees; or community engagement) on their AFR.

WP directors and professional instructors are encouraged to pursue professional development opportunities. Professional development is encouraged in order for WP members to stay connected with their field and maintain practices aligned with current disciplinary thinking. Such professional development could include reading, conducting, and publishing research in their field; attending conferences, symposia, or institutes; or participating in internal and external in-person or online workshops.

WP voting members include the administrative team and professional instructors. Voting members have the right to vote on matters brought before them, except as specified otherwise below and elsewhere in these bylaws. Full-time directors and professional instructors on paid leave (including, but not limited to, family leave, sabbatical leave, and sick leave) maintain their rights but not their responsibility during the leave to participate in the governance of the Program with the exception of sick leave which would be prescribed by the parameters of that approved leave. In the case of all paid leaves, decisions that directly impact an individual's area of responsibility shall not be made in the absence of that member. Unless the leave is taken in an emergency, professional instructors on leave must make prior arrangements for students whose grades may be affected by the leave.

All WP directors and instructional staff will fulfill the responsibilities of teaching, administration, and service as stipulated by their contract, as well as uphold the mission of the UMass Amherst Writing Program.

IV. WP Personnel Committee

As mandated by the MSP contract, the WP will establish and maintain a personnel committee (WP PC) in order to exercise the responsibilities described in the collective bargaining

agreement. These include but are not limited to the review of AFRs, reappointments, and promotions. WP directors and professional instructors, except the Faculty Director and the Associate Directors of JYW, will serve on the WP PC on a rotating basis for a period of three years. Only members of the MSP bargaining unit are eligible to serve on and participate in the discussions within the WP PC.

A. Election and constitution of the WP PC

The WP PC will be composed of three members each year. All WP directors and professional instructors with the exception of the Faculty Director must take turns serving on the WP PC and rotate the Chair role. No WP PC member should serve as Chair for more than a year. A member coming on in their first year will help the new chair with their duties. During the second year, that member will serve as the secretary and maintain minutes of all WP PC meetings. For the final year, that member will serve as the chair of the WP PC. The WP PC will keep a list of members and the rotation schedule. In exceptional cases, a PC member may request postponement of service. In this case a new member will be appointed.

B. Duties of the WP PC and PC chair

The WP PC will perform all the functions assigned to it by the WP including reviewing the AFRs to ascertain effectiveness of teaching, administration, and service; making recommendations on promotions and merit within the WP; participating in review of WP directors and professional instructors; and participating in the review process of the Faculty Director.

The WP PC chair will schedule and convene regular meetings. The WP PC chair is also responsible for adhering to the MSP collective bargaining agreement and Red Book policies. The WP PC chair addresses any apparent conflict interests by voting members who should be recused from particular decisions.

C. WP PC vacancies

Should a member not be able to serve out his or her elected term, the next member in the WP rotation will assume WP PC responsibilities, and the affected member will assume the next spot in the rotation that s/he is available to serve.

D. Independence of the WP PC

On personnel actions for which the CBA identifies independent roles for the WP PC and the Faculty Director—such as AFR reviews, reappointment, promotion, and hiring recommendations—the WP PC will operate independently. No one, including the Faculty Director or any other member of the administration, may attempt by any means to influence the deliberations or judgment of the members of the WP PC.

V. Curriculum Committee

The WP's curriculum committee oversees each course's curriculum—111, 112, 112h—on a rotating basis. The curriculum committee will have no fewer than five standing members: The Faculty Director, the Associate Director for Assessment and Curriculum Development, the Associate Director for Teacher Training, a professional instructor, and two graduate student TOs. The Faculty Director will invite WP members to serve a one-year term on the curriculum committee. The curriculum committee will conduct regular rotating reviews of the WP curriculum, including EnglWrit 111 and EnglWrit 112, to ensure course readings, assignments, and activities reflect research-based best practices consistently across sections. The curriculum committee will share their findings annually with the WP Directors.

VI. Assessment Committee

The WP's assessment committee has three central charges: 1) oversee curricular assessment of EnglWrit 111 and EnglWrit 112/112H learning objectives and outcomes; 2) provide input on the WP's placement process; and 3) act as a center of program information on feedback, grading, and evaluation. The assessment committee will have no fewer than four standing members: the Administrative Director, the Associate Director for Assessment and Curriculum Development, a professional instructor, and a graduate student TO. The Faculty Director will invite WP members to serve a one-year term on the assessment committee. The assessment committee will conduct regular assessment of EnglWrit 111 and EnglWrit 112 course materials, in conversation with program instructors and students, to ensure learning objectives are being met. With special attention to assessing bias in the WP's placement, feedback, and grading processes, the committee acts as an accountability mechanism for achieving equity in the WP's evaluative functions. The assessment committee will share their findings annually with the WP Directors.

VII. Publications Committee

The publications committee creates and maintains resource publications related to Writing Program textbook needs. This includes but is not limited to the Best Text Collection, The Student Writing Anthology, and other textbooks for EnglWrit 112 (for example, a reader and a style handbook). The publication committee will consist of one director from the administrative team and graduate teaching associates selected annually according to program needs. The publication committee will select Best Text winners from EnglWrit 112 submissions and prepare winning entries from EnglWrit 112, EnglWrit 111, and Junior Year Writing for publication annually. EnglWrit 112 textbooks will be created and published as needed on a three to five year rotating basis.

VIII. Searches

After securing approval for an instructional or administrative hire, the Faculty Director calls the search and works with the directors to determine relevant qualifications for the new hire. The

Faculty Director composes a search committee of 4-6 members; WP directors, professional instructors, English department faculty specializing in composition/rhetoric, and TOs are eligible to serve on the search committee. As the appointing authority, the Faculty Director cannot serve on the committee.

A chair is appointed by the Faculty Director and should be a WP director, instructional lecturer, or comp/rhet faculty member from the English Department. The committee chair follows University policies and protocols for conducting searches, and consults with the Faculty Director about final candidates' qualifications. The Faculty Director may also elect to interview finalists at the campus visit stage. The search committee gathers input from the Writing Program instructional staff and administrative team and, in consultation with the Faculty Director, creates a ranked finalist list to send to the Faculty Director. The Faculty Director then works with the Dean of CHFA to extend an offer to the candidate ranked most highly, moving down the list if candidates decline.

IX. Faculty Director

The Writing Program shall be headed by a Faculty Director who is a tenured faculty member in the field of Composition/Rhetoric in the English Department, working on a nine-month administrative and teaching appointment with 3 course releases from the English department, subject to availability of resources and approval by the Chair and Dean. Faculty Directors are expected to work in the Writing Program in the summer and receive \$9,000 ad comp for this work, which may be negotiated by each incoming Faculty Director. Also negotiable in consultation with the English department chair is a one-semester release from teaching upon completion of service in the Writing Program, to be covered by the English department. This release would occur at the end of service, not in the middle of two consecutive terms.

The Faculty Director reports to the Dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts and works in collaboration with the Chair of the English Department, the English Department Graduate Program Director, and the Director of the MFA Program on issues related to the Writing Program.

The Faculty Director's roles and responsibilities include:

- maintaining research-based best practices in WP's curriculum, teacher training, professional development, and placement and assessment practices;
- acting as a leader in the campus writing culture and advocating for WP resources to support it;
- developing and maintaining long-range planning, including collaborating with the Administrative Director and HR Manager/bookkeeper in budgeting processes and decisions;
- advocating for the WP by corresponding with other academic units as needed (e.g. CHC, Disability Services, CTL, Labor Relations, HFA Deans, Vice Provost for undergraduate studies), including taking the lead in high-stakes programmatic decisions or situations;
- serving on university- and college-level administrative committees related to the health and function of the WP;

- collaborating with English Department GPD and MFA Director to negotiate graduate student admissions and hiring timeline for WP's graduate student instructors;
- collaborating with WP directors on special projects and revisions to program curriculum, assessment, teaching materials, and staff development;
- assigning teaching, service, and administration duties among WP directors and professional instructors;
- providing professional development opportunities for WP administrative team and larger instructional staff;
- supporting the Associate Director of Junior-Year Writing and the Director of the Writing Center;
- acting as search committee appointing authority; and
- coordinating administrative matters related to personnel actions and personnel issues including PMP and AFR reviews and approvals and keeping WP directors and instructional staff informed of their rights and responsibilities.

A. Selection of the Faculty Director

Nominees for the position of Writing Program Faculty Director will originate with Comp/Rhet faculty in the English Department who will consider internal candidates interested in and qualified for the position, as the Faculty Director must be a tenured member of the English Department specializing in Comp/Rhet. After consultation with the Chair of the English Department, Comp/Rhet faculty will send a recommendation to the WP voting members.

If a majority of the WP voting members accepts the recommendation, and if the Chair of the English Department agrees, then the Chair of the English Department will make the recommendation to the Dean of CHFA and the Dean will proceed with the appointment. If a majority of the WP voting members reject the recommendation, the Chair of the English Department and the Comp/Rhet faculty will meet with the WP administrative team to try to resolve the matter. If that fails, or if there are no interested Comp/Rhet faculty members from the English Department, the Chair of the English Department and the Comp/Rhet faculty will meet with the Dean of CHFA to find a resolution.

B. Resignation or removal of the Faculty Director

If wishing to resign, the Faculty Director must write a letter of resignation to the WP PC and the Chair of the English Department. Should the WP PC or the Chair of the English Department disagree on how to proceed after a resignation, the matter shall be referred to the Dean of CHFA. If, at any time, a sizable portion of the WP directors seek removal of the Faculty Director, it would be of vital importance and in the interest of harmony for those mentioned above to consult with the WP PC prior to making a decision about removal. In the case of disagreement, the matter shall be referred to the Provost. *[see Trustee Doc. 70-62A]*

C. Appointment of an interim Faculty Director

In an emergency, the Dean of CHFA in consultation with the Comp/Rhet faculty shall appoint an interim Faculty Director. Members of the current Comp/Rhet faculty in the English Department will be given preference for the position if they are deemed by the WP voting members and the Dean as suitable and appropriate for the WP's current needs. The normal term of an interim appointment should not exceed one year. This term of office may be extended only with the consent of the Interim Director and the WP PC.

D. Term of office and review for the Faculty Director

The WP Faculty Director will be appointed for a term of three years. This term is renewable subject to an end-of-term performance review of the Faculty Director by the WP PC, which will then, in consultation with the WP voting members, the Chair of the English Department, and the Dean of CHFA recommend whether to reappoint the Faculty Director for a subsequent three-year term.

The Faculty Director will be evaluated during every third year in office in a review process initiated by the WP PC, according to the procedures set forth in *Senate Document 82-021*. By petition of a majority of the WP voting members, an evaluation of the Program Director may be requested at any time, to be completed by the Personnel Committee within six months of the request.

X. Writing Program staff meetings

Writing Program staff meetings, attended by the WP administrative team, shall be convened by the Faculty Director for the purpose of coordinating day-to-day operations, sharing information, seeking counsel, and conducting other WP business. Meetings will be scheduled by the Faculty Director on an as-needed basis, usually weekly. Notification of meetings will be sent by the Faculty Director by email. Any member of the administrative team may request a meeting to be scheduled, and any team member may request to have an item added to the agenda. People who are not members of the WP administrative team may attend meetings only with permission from the administrative team.

WP all-staff meetings, which include all WP directors and the entire instructional staff, shall be convened by the Faculty Director for the purpose of sharing information, providing professional development, and conducting other WP business. Meetings will be scheduled by the Faculty Director, usually once per semester. Notification of meetings will be communicated to all directors and instructional staff by the Faculty Director by email and in weekly newsletters.

XI. Writing Program annual retreat

Writing Program annual retreats, attended by the WP administrative team, shall be convened by the Faculty Director for the purpose of revisiting the WP strategic plan and discussing goals,

roles, and projects for the upcoming academic year. Meetings will be scheduled by the Faculty Director on an annual basis and usually occur prior to the start of the fall semester. Notification of meetings will be sent by the Faculty Director by email. Any member of the administrative team may request to have an item added to the retreat agenda. If events or conditions don't allow for an annual retreat, the administrative team can vote to forego the retreat in that given year.

XII. Bylaw adoption and amendments

Bylaws shall be adopted by a vote of at least two-thirds of the WP voting members, not counting abstentions. Should the bylaws not be approved, the Faculty Director shall convene a meeting to discuss any disagreements to facilitate an amended document and to vote again. Bylaws will become effective immediately upon the results of voting.

Amendments to the bylaws can be brought by the WP PC. The proposed amendment must be circulated for at least ten days before a meeting to discuss the amendment. After discussion and amendment, the proposal must again circulate as a written referendum before a final vote of WP voting members by secret ballot.