A Writing Enhanced Curriculum at Stetson University
Writing Requirement Proposal (Revised 2/26/15)

A.1. The 2 + 3 Model
The proposed Writing Enhanced Curriculum program eliminates the current writing requirement (ENGL 101- Writing and Rhetoric) and instead embeds writing across the curriculum via five courses.

- One FSEM
- One JSEM
- Three additional Writing Intensive (WI) or approved Writing courses* either in or out of a student’s major (*for example, a ‘basic’ writing course)

A.2. Accommodation of Transfers Students

a. 0-24 credits
   i. New-First Time Enrolled in College Student
      - FSEM, JSEM + 3 WI/Writing courses (Course total = 5)
   ii. Transfer Student
      - FSEM, JSEM + 3 WI/Writing courses (Course total = 5)

b. 25-40 credits
   i. New-First Time Enrolled in College Student
      - FSEM, JSEM + 2 WI/Writing courses (Course total = 4)
   ii. Transfer Student
      - JSEM + 3 WI/Writing courses (Course total = 4)

c. 41-59 credits
   i. New-First Time Enrolled in College Student
      - FSEM, JSEM + 1WI/Writing course (Course total = 3)
   ii. Transfer Student
      - JSEM + 2 WI/Writing courses (Course total = 3)

d. > 60 credits
   i. New-First Time Enrolled in College Student
      - FSEM & JSEM (Course total = 2)
   ii. Transfer Student
      - JSEM + 1 WI/Writing course (Course total = 2)

A.3. Faculty Development Series & Writing Fellows Program Components of the Model
To make this curriculum model most effective, two additional programs will be essential: a robust faculty development series; and additional, course-based student support in the form of a Writing Fellows program

i. Faculty Development Series
The faculty development component is critical to support faculty in acquiring the understanding and comfort level necessary to teach with a writing intensive pedagogy. Faculty would be offered regular and proactive mentoring, training, and support for responding to student writing, teaching for transfer of concepts and skills, strategies for sequencing assignments, and ongoing discussion and development of writing intensive courses. Resident experts, invited speakers, and workshop leaders will form a corps of support structures for faculty to continue to grow in their fields and as part of Stetson’s body of teacher/scholars.
ii. Writing Fellows Program
The Writing Center, as the primary resource for student writing at Stetson, will develop a Writing Fellows program. Writing Fellows are advanced students who are “assigned” to specific courses to support writing instruction. Faculty and Fellows work collaboratively on the goals and stages of writing assignments and feedback/support. A Fellows program would be coordinated through the Writing Center and would be under the joint leadership of the Writing Center Director and the Writing Program Director. BIOL courses already employ this model, known as SPIs, which research shows is highly effective. (See Brown, Tufts, Barnard, DePaul; among our peer schools, Williams and Bowdoin also offer successful Writing Fellows Programs.)

B.1 Why a “Writing Enhanced Curriculum”?
The proposed model is consistent with views held by a considerable majority of small colleges and universities, writing studies scholars, and virtually every report on the valuable employee. In fact, many, if not most, of our comparison and aspirational schools—including Swarthmore, Elon, Puget Sound, Bowdoin, Drake, Furman, and Valparaiso—incorporate multiple writing experiences in multiple academic areas. These schools foster writing enhanced programs that distribute writing instruction across the curriculum and target student learning via high impact practices. We believe that adopting a program to enhance our students’ learning via their writing experiences is a natural fit for a Stetson education, which prepares students not just for success but for life-long learning. Development of a WI course within a major or discipline is encouraged, but as proposed, the Writing Enhanced Program does not require a WI course in one’s major; thus, it is a relatively flexible program for both students and departments. Less pressure would be put on those departments/schools in which a WI course does not currently exist and the creation of one would be problematic at this point in time.

B.2 Writing Intensive Courses (brief description & guidelines)
i. Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU)- Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP)
The AACU-LEAP descriptions point out that WI courses “emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences in different disciplines.” (AACU, emphasis added) A writing-intensive course is a course taught using writing.

*Produce and revise:* Key writing assignments specify the goals of the project and assign interim due dates for production of specific sections of an assignment. This sequence allows time for students to learn and master differing elements and for faculty to properly and effectively mentor students through stages of learning and revision.

*Various forms of writing:* Writing assignments need not be essays. They can be lab reports, reviews of research, memos, summaries, pamphlets and brochures, resumes, letters to the editor, op-eds, reflections, proposals, journals, business plans, lists of equipment, or budgets.

*For different audiences:* Professors in different courses who use writing in their teaching help to teach students a keen understanding of the rhetorical situations they live in every day: students who are aware of the different needs of professors, classmates, potential employers, potential
customers, grant administrators, public and private sector interests, authors, and editors are students who can understand the context and appropriateness options.

*In different disciplines:* Professors across the campus who pay careful attention to writing in their disciplines, even if these are not courses specifically focused on writing in the discipline, collectively create a unified experience for students who, in the normal course of events, will be taking a variety of courses. A student who can write equally well in both Physics and in History has a better understanding of the language of each discipline.

**ii. Writing Intensive Course Guidelines at Stetson (brief descriptions)**

The established guidelines for WI designation were developed in 2009, and they are the foundation on which all of our WI courses—*now more than 50 across A&S, Music, and Business*—have been approved. *(Please refer to list of departments offering WI courses below)*

Although every college and university must find comfortable space within these guidelines, the guidelines themselves are essential:

- **Class size.** Following national best practices, which point out that additional faculty investment of time in student writing is best achieved with a smaller class, Stetson assigns lower course caps to WI courses. The national average ranges between 18 and 25; currently, WI courses are capped at 22, with FSEM and JSEM being capped at 16.

- **Types of assignments.** Writing should be spread throughout the course in a sequence of related assignments rather than concentrated in a large term paper. A lengthy term paper, no matter how demanding, is counterproductive to the writing-to-learn and writing-to-communicate pedagogy employed in WI courses.

- **Amount of writing.** The total page count is not as important as the writing process that students complete. Typically, each student in a writing intensive course may produce about 15-25 pages of writing, but again, it’s the process and not the quantity that will result in student learning.

- **Revision.** In a writing intensive course, at least some student writing is revised as a result of peer and instructor feedback and resubmitted in a final form. Instructors and students should both understand that feedback and revision must involve more than pointing out and/or correcting surface errors.

- **The weight of writing in the final grade.** In a WI course, grades on written work make up a significant percentage of the course grade (50% if not more). In the WI course, the writing reveals the learning; therefore, the final grade should be calculated accordingly.

- **Assignment-related instruction and evaluation of papers.** Faculty in WI courses can help students learn through writing by means of a combination of the following: in class draft workshops; collaborative projects; hands-on, directed lessons on research techniques; a sequence of writing assignments; feedback on drafts that focuses on development rather than only editing.

**Departments and Programs already offering WI courses:**

Africana Studies  
American Studies  
Art History  
Biology  
Business Administration
C. Faculty Concerns

1. “What about our weakest writers?”
   The English Department will continue to offer courses like the current “ENGL 100 course” for those students who need such placement. During the preparation year (2015-2016), the criteria for placement into such a course should be revisited. This writing course would count toward the +3 WI or Writing courses required by the model. The faculty will need to determine whether a minimum grade (e.g. C, C-) would be required in order to proceed onto other WI courses.

2. “Shouldn’t students take writing from an English professor” and/or “I can’t teach a WI course, I am not an English professor.”
   The research indicates that students learn to be good writers more consistently and thoroughly in a program in which writing is taught across the curriculum and not simply via the traditional first year composition writing requirement. The intent of the preparation year, via the Faculty Development series, is to provide assistance to faculty who want to develop a WI course. Not everyone must or should teach a WI course. It should be noted, however, that in each of our schools, a number of faculty are already teaching WI courses, FSEMs and/or JSEMS. The English Department does plan to offer every year a great many WI courses for those students wanting to take a WI course in that discipline. Certainly, the ability of the English Department (as well the ability of other departments) to do so is predicated on staffing. Support from the administration is a necessity.

3. “Will there be enough WI courses offered” and “Will some departments be disadvantaged” (e.g. having to offer larger sections due to the caps on WI courses in other departments)
   For the original proposal report (dated March 2014), Institutional Research provided data indicating that increased class sizes to “buy” a sufficient number of smaller classes would not be necessary.
   To determine the number of WI classes needed per year, the original committee used these assumptions:
   - most students will (necessarily) use the FSEM and JSEM as two of their Gen Ed WI courses,
   - the student body will reach 3100 as projected by Institutional Research,
   - students will complete the 5 WI courses within 4 years, and
   - FSEM and JSEM will be capped at 16 and other WI courses will be capped at ~22.
Currently, there are a sufficient number of FSEMs and JSEMs for every student who is required to take them, so this writing proposal will not increase the need for those classes (beyond the expected growth to 3100 students). To provide enough other WI courses, we would need approximately 106 WI courses per year. Stetson already schedules 50-55 WI courses each year (exclusive of FSEM and JSEM), and the additional 45-50 WI courses would not be difficult to identify for enhancement with writing intensive pedagogy, especially if faculty members consider some of the many courses (approximately 350 at the 100-300 level) already capped at 15-25 students as potential WI courses. In addition, as mentioned above, the English Department has plans to create WI courses. Following these guidelines, we should not have any need to increase the class size of non-WI courses. Another analysis to confirm the predicted number of courses needed should be conducted in the preparation year.

4. “Will all schools be able to adopt the proposal as is?”
The School of Music, especially the Music Education program, will have the most difficulty adopting the program as described due to the requirements of these majors. If certain classes were enhanced with writing intensive pedagogy, then these programs could possibly be accommodated. However, we have no intention of requiring that certain courses become writing intensive; that decision is up to faculty members and their departments. Faculty members and administrators will need to discuss workable options.