

**To:** Sue Abbotson, Chair of UCC  
**From:** Mike Michaud, Chair of Writing Board  
**Date:** 5/10/24  
**Subject:** Annual Report (2023/24)

I am pleased to submit this report summarizing the activity of the Writing Board (WB) and Writing Board Chair for the academic year 2023/24.

**Writing Board Membership (2023/24 and 2024/25)**

The table below indicates Board membership for this past academic year and the year ahead. The numbers in parentheses indicate year of service within a two-year term.

<b>Position</b>	<b>2023/2024</b>	<b>2024/2025</b>
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Michaud (2)	Mike Michaud
<b>Director of Writing</b>	Becky Caouette	Becky Caouette
<b>Director of Writing Center</b>	None	TBD
<b>Director (FCTL)</b>	Chris Marco	Chris Marco
<b>Faculty (FAS) (2) -- 1 Math/CS</b>	Mike Michaud (2), Lisa Humphreys (2); Sherri Cummings (1)	Mike Michaud (1), Lisa Humphreys (1); Sherri Cummings (2)
<b>Faculty (FSEHD) (1)</b>	Martha Horn (2)	Carolyn Obel-Omia (1)
<b>Faculty (SOSW) (1)</b>	Cary Donaldson (1)	Cary Donaldson (2)
<b>Faculty (SOB) (1)</b>	Susan Weiss (2)	Paul Jacques (1)
<b>Faculty (SON) (1)</b>	Sylvia Ross (2)	Penni Sadlon (1)
<b>Faculty (Adams Library)</b>	Veronica Denison (1)	Veronica Denison (2)

Membership Issues to Consider:

1. Last year I wrote:

I am the only person to serve as the Board chair since the Board was reconceived and restructured a decade or so ago. Further, no other Board member has ever run for Chair. Should we continue the process of having the Chair run for election every two years? My feeling is that we should not. Instead, perhaps the Board Chair could serve in renewable terms (3-years?) at the discretion of the UCC chair or Provost.

Can't recall if we resolved this? This year completes my sixth two-year term as WB Chair so if we are going to have an election it will need to be ASAP.

### **Work of the Writing Board**

**Meeting Dates:** 9/27, 10/25, 11/29, 1/24, 2/28, 3/27

The major work of the Writing Board this year was two-fold:

1. Analyze, discuss, and disseminate the results of the spring 2023 Writing in the Disciplines (WID) Needs Analysis Survey. I've included here a copy of the report that we submitted to Provost Masters in December **2023** (Appendix A). Additionally, we held a panel discussion to share the results with the campus community on 11/29. I shared the results of the survey with WID faculty at our spring meeting (3/20 and 22).
2. Lay the groundwork for the creation of WID guidelines. As I noted in my annual report last year, COGE and UCC voted in spring 2022 to allocate administrative responsibility for and oversight of the college's Writing in the Disciplines (WID) requirement to the Writing Board. Our first step, having gained responsibility for WID, was the Needs Analysis Survey, which we designed and distributed last year and analyzed this year. Our second step is to begin the process of drafting guidelines for the teaching of WID at RIC. This spring we got to work examining WAC/WID guidelines from other institutions and we will spend much of next year drafting guiding documents to support our faculty and posting these to our website.

We are grateful to Provost Masters for restoring release time to the chair this year (two FLH per term; previously it was four). Additional funding for the Board to support professional development continues to remain at zero and has not been restored since it was eliminated entirely in the spring/summer of 2020.

### **Work of the Writing Board Chair**

In my report last year I shared a number of priorities for the 2023/23 academic year that I'd like to revisit:

1. Revisit & revise (as necessary) the language of initial WID Requirement;
2. Design and implement a process/protocol whereby programs/departments regularly report on changes to their WID (i.e. curriculum updates, new courses, etc.);

As I mentioned above, the Board got to work on items 1 and 2 on this list this spring. Our first step was essentially examining how WAC/WID programs elsewhere accomplish this work. Board members need a context for what we're trying to do and so I shared information from award-winning WAC/WID programs to initiate discussion on how we can create guidelines for and greater clarity about expectations of our program. This ties in to one of our findings from our needs analysis survey, as well, and that is that our faculty want to better understand guidelines/expectations for teaching WID courses.

3. Establish a regular WID assessment schedule and work with the college Assessment Coordinator to guide departments/programs in the assessment of WID;

In April I met with Tanni Chaudhuri to discuss assessment of WID. I did not understand that she only represents FAS and that assessment is handled differently in other colleges. Assessment is part of our plan for a grant proposal so the work here is ongoing. As far as I know, no colleges or departments/programs are assessing WID at this time.

4. Interface with campus entities (e.g., campus communications, departments/programs) to ensure that communications to faculty and students about WID are up-to-date/accurate;

An important new development here: With the creation of the "W" designation in the college catalog (thank you Sue Abbotson!) I am now able to obtain a list each semester of WID courses and who is teaching them. This provides me, for the first time, with the opportunity to interact and communicate directly with our WID faculty.

This spring I held a first-ever WID Faculty Mid-Semester Meeting to share information and as I mentioned above, the results of our needs analysis survey. Between the in-person and online versions of the meeting roughly 20-30 faculty attended. I plan to continue holding such meetings once a semester to offer professional development and field questions/concerns about WID and to build community. These meetings will speak to an important finding of our needs analysis survey and that is that those who teach WID desire both more PD and increased opportunities for community-building around the teaching of writing.

Another important initiative I participated in this year is the creation of a Writing @ RIC landing page that will be a one-stop-shop for all writing-related initiatives on campus. This was spearheaded by Dr. Becky Caouette, Director of Writing and will create greater visibility for all of our various writing programs.

5. Collaborate with the FCTL and Grants Office to identify external funding for writing PD.

Director of Writing Becky Caouette and I took important steps in this direction this year, identifying the Davis Foundation as a potential funder for the writing work we hope to do in the coming year (and consulting with prior Davis grant winners, i.e. Landmark College). As it turns out Davis has regularly funded writing-related PD in and around New England over the past ten or so years. I have written a draft proposal which Becky will read/edit/revise this summer with a plan to present the proposal to the Board for its feedback in September and to then take to the administration. So far the proposal has three elements: 1) work to create more verticality in RIC's writing curriculum (i.e. FYW → WID), 2) create department/program WID learning outcomes/assessment, 3) create flexible online PD for WID faculty and recommend all such faculty complete it.

### *Other Work*

Additional work in which I engaged this year includes the following:

1. *Draft Masters Proposal*: In the fall the Writing Board answered Provost Masters' call and put forward a proposal to run an ambitious series of PD offerings this spring/summer, akin to what we used to run with the Summer Seminar for Teaching Writing. Ultimately, we were unsuccessful in securing funding.
2. *Draft Needs Analysis Report*: a good deal of my time in the fall term was taken up with drafting the report of the results of our needs analysis.
3. *Professional Development*: I collaborated with the FCTL to offer several PD opportunities for faculty this spring term:
  - a. Did AI Write That? February 23, 2024, 1230-130pm
  - b. How Do I WID When There Are So Many Bodies in the Room? (w/Mary Backer) March 7, 12:30-1:30 p.m.
  - c. Working with Multilingual Learners (initiated with FCTL, project was taken in a more expansive direction and will return to it in fall)
  - d. The How To of Great Writing Assignments, week-long online asynchronous mini-course, April 8-14, 2024
4. *Individual Consultations*: I met with numerous faculty to discuss professional development, WID course caps, WID department/program plans

### **Work For the Year Ahead:**

1. Secure support for grant proposal from administration and submit to Davis by late fall 2024.
2. Draft WID expectations/guidelines, disseminate to WID faculty for feedback, implementation in spring 2025.

3. Draft WID course creation/change guidelines, share with UCC for feedback, implementation in spring 2025
4. Update Writing Board website to communicate WID guidelines and policy to campus community
5. Establish regular/weekly “office hours” for WID faculty to consult on writing pedagogy
6. Continue to communicate expectations for WID Course Caps to departments/programs/colleges.

I'd like to thank Provost Masters for her support of the Writing Board. Also thanks to Sue Abbotson and UCC for continued collaborations on matters related to WID. Thanks to Becky Caouette for ongoing discussions and collaborations about writing @ RIC. And thanks to members of the Writing Board for their service:

Becky Caouette  
Chris Marco  
Lisa Humphries  
Sherri Cummings  
Martha Horn  
Cary Donaldson  
Susan Weiss  
Sylvia Ross  
Martha Horn

In particular, I would like to thank outgoing Board members Susan Weiss, Sylvia Ross, and Martha Horn for their service. Sylvia and Susan were new to the board in the past two years but Martha has been on since 2012 (without ever rotating off). Martha has been an awesome advocate for thoughtful writing instruction at RIC for years and her contributions to the WB have been numerous and significant. Martha, we thank you for your years of service!

Welcome aboard to Penni Sadlon (Nursing), Paul Jacques (Business), and Carolyn Obel-Omia (Education).

## Appendix A

**To:** Dr. Carolyn Masters, VPAA/Provost

**From:** The Writing Board

**Date:** 12/11/23

**Subject:** Report on Results of Writing in the Disciplines Needs Analysis Survey

### Executive Summary

Key findings from the Writing Board's 2023 needs analysis survey on the experiences of faculty who teach Writing in the Disciplines (WID) courses include the following:

1. RIC faculty who teach WID courses feel well-prepared and confident in their skill, knowledge, and ability to teach such courses effectively;
2. RIC faculty ~~faculty~~ who teach WID courses desire more professional development and community building in the area of writing pedagogy;
3. RIC faculty who teach WID courses engage their students in a range of high-impact pedagogical activities and practices;
4. Barriers to the successful teaching of WID include:
  - a. courses with too many students
  - b. course content that occupies too much of class time
  - c. students who are ill-prepared for college-level writing and insufficient resources to support them.

Action recommendations drawn from this needs analysis survey include the following:

1. Allocate resources for WID professional development and community building;
2. Conduct additional data gathering to understand the status of WID at RIC;
3. Discuss and advise departments/programs on course caps for WID classes;
4. Explore/investigate student-facing writing resources on campus to better understand student experiences and needs;
5. Restore course reassignment for the Writing Board chair.

These findings and recommendations are further elaborated below, along with a draft plan of work for spring 2024. Appendix A contains a detailed review of survey results.

## **Background**

Leading up to the spring/summer of 2020, when funding for WID and the college Writing Board (the entity responsible for the administration of WID) was suspended, the college had provided funding for writing professional development (PD) dating back to the mid-1990s. These resources had steadily increased in the 2000s and 2010s, to the point where the college was annually allocating financial support as follows:

1. Writing Board PD (\$8-10K)
2. Summer Seminar for Teaching Writing (\$10-12K)
3. release time for Writing Board chair (4 FLH/semester)

In the spring of 2022, weighing the possibility of restored funding for the Writing Board/WID, then-Provost/VPAA Dr. Helen Tate invited the Board to conduct a campus-wide needs analysis survey to better understand the experiences and needs of faculty in the area WID and writing pedagogy.

The Writing Board spent the fall 2022 semester designing a survey which it then administered during the spring 2023 semester. The Board has spent the fall 2023 semester analyzing and discussing the data from the survey and conducting follow-up discussions with survey participants.

## **Survey Overview**

Our survey contained 13 questions designed to elicit information from RIC faculty who teach WID courses about their experiences with and needs for teaching such courses. The survey was announced and distributed by VPAA/Provost Dr. Carolyn Masters on April 3, 2023 with a completion date request of April 15, 2023. Additional survey recruitment followed through local channels.

The audience of/for the survey was primarily full-time/tenure-line faculty members, as WID courses are typically disciplinary classes at the 200-level and above that students must take to complete their major. In theory, then, WID courses are taught by full-timers. Having said this, both visiting and adjunct faculty, both of whom do teach some WID courses at the college, completed our survey. Completion data is as follows:

- 128 individuals initiated the survey;
- By the time survey participants reached the fifth question, which asked whether they had taught or currently did teach a WID course, participation stood at 114;

- 86 of these 114 participants (75%) indicated that they had taught or currently did teach a WID course and so proceeded into the main section of the survey;
- 28 participants (25%) indicated that they did not teach WID courses and so were directed towards a completion screen.

Given this data, our survey was effectively completed by 86 faculty members who have taught or currently teach WID courses. To contextualize this number, consider the following:

- The number of full-time faculty at the college stands at 300-302, so our survey was completed by nearly  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the full-time faculty (29%); further,  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the faculty are or have been engaged in the teaching of WID;
- A search of faculty names associated with the “W” designation in the college catalog yields a list of 124 unique names, so nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of faculty who teach WID courses at the college completed our survey (69%);
- Of the 36 departments and programs on campus, we received responses from 24 (66%) (Note: faculty in interdisciplinary programs like Environmental Studies, which had zero respondents, may have indicated membership on the survey in other units, for example Anthropology).

In Appendix A we have included data from all 13 questions on the survey. In what follows we elaborate on key findings and recommendations described in the Executive Summary, above.

## **Findings and Recommendations**

### **Findings**

We’d like to begin our discussion of survey findings by acknowledging some of the most encouraging information we’ve gleaned from the survey:

1. Three decades of professional development on writing and pedagogy has had a positive impact on the teaching of writing at RIC. As data from our survey show, faculty who teach WID courses regularly engage their students in numerous high impact writing pedagogies;
2. As important, RIC faculty have come to see the value and necessity of professional development for writing pedagogy and would like to see the college restore support for such work.

We’d like to underscore the significance of these initial findings because they signal important faculty attitudes about and practices with writing and pedagogy. There was a time when college faculty, at RIC and beyond, believed that a) it was the sole duty and responsibility of



writing/English faculty to teach writing, and b) the teaching of writing was no great challenge, something that could be done by anyone who “has written a dissertation,” as one faculty member memorably put it.

We see little in our survey to support such outdated notions. Many of our faculty respondents understand that a) it is their responsibility to teach their students to write for their disciplines, and b) it is important, in order to teach disciplinary writing well, to engage in professional development. As one survey respondent acknowledged, “[Teaching WID] is a great experience, but there are scopes for me to improve.” As another put it, “I am a skilled professional writer but I am not an expert in teaching techniques of basic english (*sic*) composition skills.” That faculty understand and are able to say such things is a testament to the college’s decades-long investments in professional development for writing and to the work of the countless faculty members who have served on the Writing Board over the past four decades.

Building on these initial findings, in what follows we would like to elaborate on some of the other findings and the recommendations discussed above.

### *1. Confidence and Preparation*

We were surprised and not-so-surprised to read our respondents’ responses in the Subjective Experiences of Teaching WID section of the survey. In general, respondents indicated that they feel both well-prepared to teach WID courses and confident in their ability to do so (many, also, seem to enjoy such work). The fact that respondents seem to feel confident and well-prepared can perhaps be traced to the numerous professional development initiatives that many, no doubt, have participated in over the years. We are pleased that survey respondents feel confident and prepared to do the challenging work of teaching writing and yet we note that many respondents also indicate a desire for additional professional development. This can be seen as a strength (“I now know what I didn’t know I didn’t know before...”) or a weakness (“I’m actually not as confident as I claim to be...”).

A further two-part cautionary note is in order in this area of preparedness and confidence as well: 1) it’s not unusual for survey respondents to overstate subjective feelings of competence and skill when asked directly, and 2) our experience as writing consultants suggests that there are college faculty at RIC and beyond who express what we would call “false” or “unearned” confidence in the area of writing pedagogy. These faculty *think* they are implementing evidence-based teaching practices and therefore feel confident in their ability to teach writing but upon close examination of their actual teaching materials (syllabi, assignment guidelines, etc.), an experienced and knowledgeable observer discovers that these faculty are, in fact, often inexperienced in writing pedagogy, and therefore their confidence is unearned.

In sum, we are glad to see that our respondents feel confident and well-prepared to teach WID but feel further study, ideally an examination and analysis of actual teaching materials, is necessary to better understand teaching practices and knowledge.

## 2. *Professional Development and Community Building*

As indicated above, a key finding of our survey is that faculty desire opportunities for both professional development and community building in the area of writing pedagogy. One respondent accurately noted the absence of such opportunities in recent years:

A while ago there were several WID workshops for faculty which were most helpful and deliberately mindful of creating a positive cultural (*sic*) of writing and communicating. FCTL has done some follow-up. More recently, perhaps in response to Covid and other trends and issues, there has been little, with more focus on course design and online teaching. We need to get back to writing and assignments.

Additional such comments are as follows:

- Bring back January Writing Workshops
- I would like to do another version of the May PD that was offered in the past.
- I miss the Writing Board and their PD opportunities, which were usually great!
- College sponsored workshops or conference participation for WID faculty
- Workshops to exchange expertise & experiences with colleagues

We will have more to say below on how to operationalize these requests to meet faculty needs.

## 3. *Teaching Practices in WID Courses*

We were pleased to review the data in our survey on teaching practices and find that many faculty who teach WID courses regularly engage their students in a range of evidence-based activities and practices for teaching writing. We note, for example, that roughly 90% of respondents report that they *always* provide their students with both written assignment guidelines and written or oral feedback on their completed work. Further, we find that large numbers of survey respondents

- a. provide written or oral feedback (i.e., formative assessment) on student work-in-progress (64%);
- b. engage students in low-stakes/writing-to-learn activities as a means of learning course content (61%);
- c. provide models or examples of writing assignments for students to examine (59%).

These are encouraging findings that speak to the good work our faculty are doing in the teaching of WID. There is, though, room for improvement. We see the following activities as opportunities for future, targeted professional development:

- Low-stakes/writing-to-learn course content and build formal writing projects;
- Staging and sequencing formal writing assignments;
- Brainstorming writing assignments with professor and/or classmates;
- Peer/student review of written assignments;
- Engage in reflection about writing skills/knowledge.

In sum, our survey indicates both that our faculty have learned and are implementing evidence-based pedagogies and that there is more to learn.

#### *4. Barriers to the Successful Teaching of WID*

Over a decade ago, WID was rolled out by the Committee on General Education (COGE) as a new college requirement. Departments and programs were to identify the course(s) at the 200-level or above in which disciplinary writing would be taught and report these to COGE. Like many colleges/universities first venturing into WID, RIC took the path of least-resistance in its initial approach. As such, not surprisingly, most departments/programs took a look at their existing curriculum and selected courses to “become” WID and in this way WID was effectively “bolted onto” existing curriculum. This initial process set the college on a path that has brought us to where we are today, where many of our survey respondents express concern that they have both too many students to teach in WID classes and too much content to teach them. This is not the first time and we are not the first institution where well-meaning efforts to institutionalize the teaching of writing (beyond the first year) have been thwarted by the twin-problems of “too many students, not enough time.”

There is at least one potentially simple solution to the problem of too much content/not enough time: departments/programs need a clearer answer to the question: *How much should a WID course devote itself to teaching writing and how much should it devote itself to covering content.* Such guidance was never provided by COGE when it oversaw the WID requirement and, as a result, faculty have been left alone and without resources to sort out this critical issue. Not surprisingly, many are frustrated. As one of our respondents put it, “With our course structure we are supposed to present a great deal of material just to do justice to the course title and intent. This is always in conflict and requires a balance between content, engagement-assessment, and writing culture best practices with drafts, peer review, and feedback.”

Moving forward, the Writing Board, in collaboration with other entities (i.e. UCC) can work to clarify the balance between *process* (i.e. teaching writing) and *content* in WID classes. We can and should do more to answer the question posed by a new RIC faculty member at one of our workshops several years ago: “How exactly *is* a WID different from a regular course?” We’ll have more to say, below, on the “how to” of this work.

The issue of course caps (i.e. how many students are suitable for a WID course) is a perhaps more challenging one to address, especially in a climate where departments/programs are feeling squeezed for faculty to cover courses. And yet, our survey respondents were clear in articulating the negative impact of having too many students in WID classes, as we see in the following two comments:

Teaching writing is very time consuming. With 30 students per class, giving feedback on drafts takes many days, and individualized meetings are not possible.

I just want to emphasize the need for lower course caps. I usually teach a section of 30 students in the upper-level WID course and it is really difficult to cover all the research material and give comprehensive feedback along the way.

In 2020 the college council approved a Recommendation for a Policy on Class Size proposed by UCC (this proposal was never signed by then-president Sanchez). In this Recommendation, UCC proposed that WID or writing-intensive courses should have *up to 20 students*, but no more. Within the English Department and First-Year Writing program, in keeping with best-practices as articulated by professional organizations in composition, writing courses are typically capped at around 20 students. The college has taken initial steps to ensure that WID classes have a similar number of students, but as our survey shows, and as we know anecdotally, many WID classes have more than twenty.

Finally, we note findings in our survey that indicate that some RIC faculty are troubled by their perception of students’ lack of preparation for college-level writing (i.e., “Some students come in at such a low level, the amount of instruction needed is beyond my class time”) and/or the lack of resources on campus to support purportedly unprepared students (i.e., “Lack of support from the writing center”). While we have mixed feelings about the first of these concerns (i.e. college faculty have expressed concerns about students’ writing abilities, or lack thereof, for millennia), we note that in recent years the make-up of the RIC student body has changed. Today, we have more students than ever who come from some of the most under-performing school districts in the state. Our students have always worked too much and many continue to be the first in their families to attend college. Further, an increasing number of our students are multilingual, with English not necessarily their first language. RIC prides itself on being an institution that provides access and opportunity to so-called “non-traditional” students. Such students, however, require

support. With a new Writing Center director arriving soon (we hope), the Board looks forward to collaborating with other campus entities to better understand the needs and experiences of our students when it comes to writing.

## **Recommendations**

1. *Resources for WID PD* The Board has already taken positive steps towards restoring PD opportunities for faculty by submitting a proposal for Faculty Development Funds for spring/summer 2024. We are hopeful that our proposal will receive funding but our understanding is that this is a one-time only allocation and so there is the need to discuss a budget for the Writing Board, to regularly and consistently allocate funds for PD, as there has been in the past.
2. *Initiate Further Study of WID* The needs analysis survey has been a beneficial first step for the Writing Board, to learn more about the status of WID as well as faculty experiences and needs in the teaching of WID. WID was last assessed, however, in 2017, nearly seven years ago. Our needs analysis survey was not an official assessment. We feel that now is the time to continue to try to learn more about the status of WID at RIC and that collaborations with the college Assessment Coordinator are now in order. Minimally, we recommend the following “next steps”:
  - a. Analysis of teaching materials from WID courses (i.e. syllabi, assignment guidelines, etc.);
  - b. A survey aimed at students, to better understand their experiences of/in WID courses.
3. *Publicize Policy on Class Size* While the Recommendation for a Policy on Class Size remains unsigned by the president, we feel that it is an important first step in initiating conversations with faculty and administration about how many students should be enrolled in WID courses. We feel, though, that many departments/ programs and individual faculty members are unaware of this Recommendation. The Writing Board can initiate discussion on campus about this issue and educate departments/programs and faculty about the work that has already been done in this area. Further, it can collaborate with UCC to raise the issue with the current administration, with the hope of a presidential signature.
4. *Student Facing Writing Resources* This fall the Academic Success division has conducted a search for a new Writing Center director. Once this individual is in place we feel that we can begin to explore/investigate student-facing writing resources on campus to better understand student experiences and needs.

5. *Restore Writing Board Chair Course-Reassignment* Our survey indicates a clear desire for restored opportunities for professional development and community building. In the past this work was accomplished because the Writing Board chair was given 4 FLH of re-assigned time to plan and facilitate it and the Board was provided with the financial resources necessary to successfully carry it out. The duties of the chair are codified in the UCC manual and have only expanded in recent years, as the Writing Board assumed oversight of WID. We recommend that in order to meet the PD needs of WID faculty AND facilitate oversight of the WID requirement, release-time for the chair should be created, starting with a restoration of the 4 FLH that was previously in place.

### **“Draft” Work Agenda (spring 2024)**

Should funding be restored for the Writing Board chair, potential initiatives for spring 2024 include the following:

1. Establish weekly “Office/Consulting Hours” to better support WID faculty;
2. Re-establish monthly PD webinars/workshops on topics related to writing and pedagogy;
3. Initiate once-per-term updates/check-ins with WID faculty, following the model of USS’s Department Technology Liaisons (DTL);
4. Restore existing online/asynchronous PD course offerings;
5. Initiate discussions with college Assessment Coordinator to expand investigations into the status of WID at RIC;
6. Publicize Recommendation for a Policy on Class Size and consult with faculty/departments on how to better manage course caps on WID classes;
7. Instigate initial consultations with new Writing Center director to learn about student needs and experiences of support resources.

### **Closing**

We would like to thank the dozens of faculty members who took our survey in spring of 2023 and the five who attended our Focus Group follow-up discussion this fall (Jessica Pearson, Steve Ramocki, Preveena Gullapalli, Melissa Marcotte, and George Ladd). We would also like to thank Lexi Rogel and Provost Masters for their help distributing and promoting the survey. Finally, as chair I would like to thank the members of the Writing Board for their assistance in discussing, analyzing, and making sense of the survey data.

## Appendix A

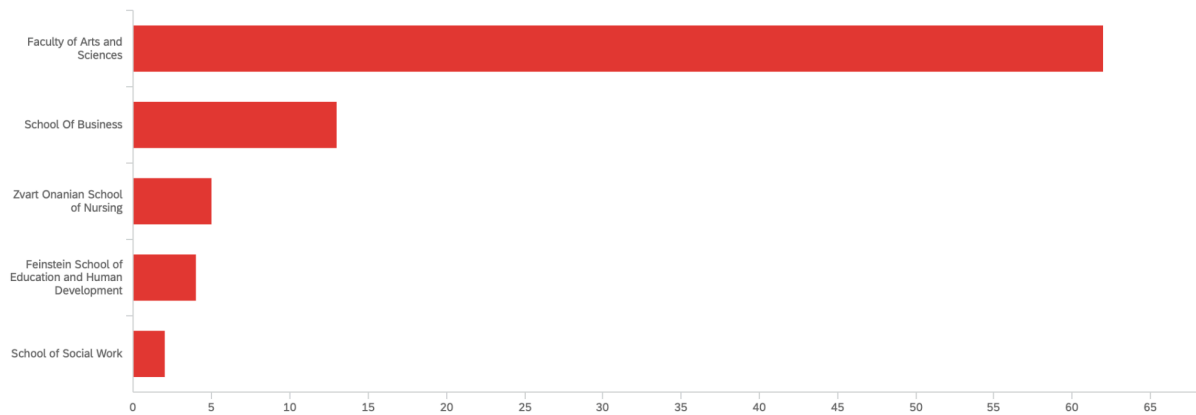
In what follows we share results for the 86 participants who completed our survey.

### DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Our survey began with a series of questions meant to elicit demographic information about our participants.

#### *Your College or Division (Q1)*

As can be seen below, the majority of those who completed the survey, 72%, came from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Having said this, participation in the survey came from all five of RIC's schools/colleges.



#	Field	Choice Count
1	Faculty of Arts and Sciences	72.09% 62
2	School Of Business	15.12% 13
3	Zvart Onanian School of Nursing	5.81% 5
4	Feinstein School of Education and Human Development	4.65% 4
5	School of Social Work	2.33% 2
		86

#### *Department/Program (Q10)*

Here we provide the number of survey participants by school and department/program.

#### School of Business

- Accounting (0)
- Computer Science and Information Systems (3)
- Economics and Finance (3)
- Health Care Administration (2)
- Management and Marketing (8)

#### Zvart Onanian School of Nursing

- Undergraduate Department of Nursing (5)

#### School of Social Work

- Bachelor of Social Work Program (2)

#### Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

- Counseling, Educational Leadership and School Psychology (0)
- Department of Educational Studies (2)
- Department of Elementary Education (0)
- Department of Health and Physical Education (2)
- Department of Special Education (0)

#### Faculty of Arts and Sciences

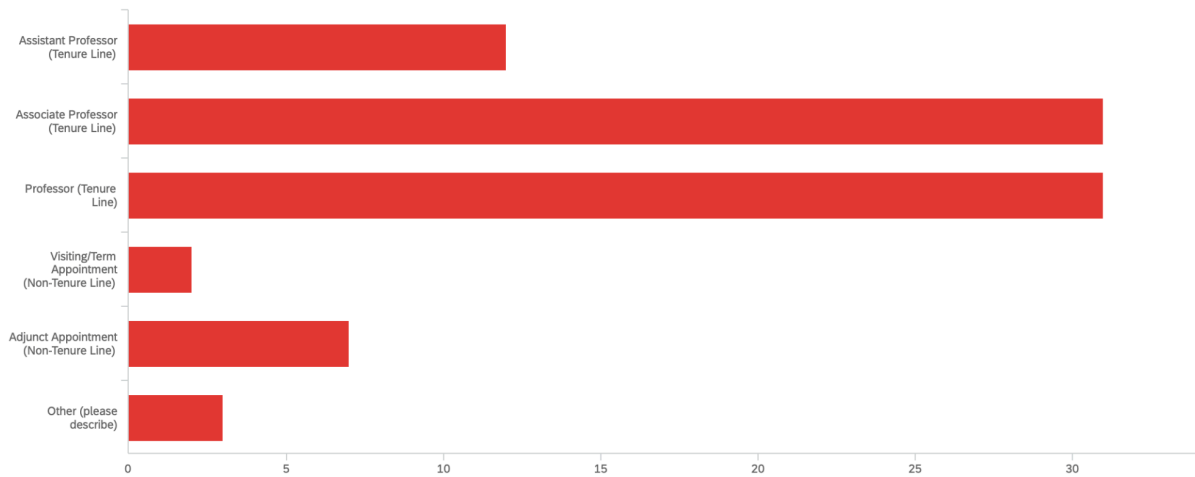
- Africana Studies (1)
- Anthropology (3)
- Art (2)
- Biology (2)
- Communication (5)
- English (9)
- Environmental Studies (0)
- Film Studies (1)
- Gender and Women's Studies (1)
- Health Sciences Program (0)
- History (3)



- INGOS (0)
- Liberal Studies (0)
- Mathematics (8)
- Modern Languages (2)
- Music, Theater and Dance (3)
- Non-Profit Studies (0)
- Philosophy (1)
- Physical Sciences (3)
- Political Science (1)
- Portuguese Studies (0)
- Psychology (9)
- Medical Imaging Program (1)
- Sociology (4)

*Faculty/Status (Q3)*

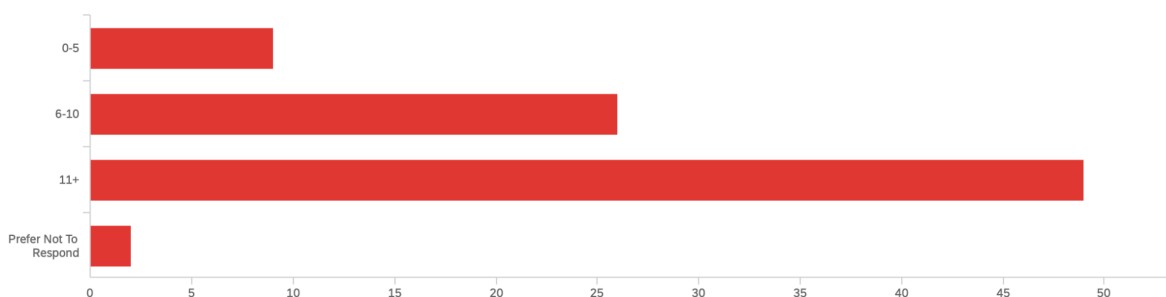
The majority of our survey respondents, 72%, hold the rank of associate or full professor. 14% are off the tenure-track.



#	Field	Choice Count
1	Assistant Professor (Tenure Line)	13.95% 12
2	Associate Professor (Tenure Line)	36.05% 31
3	Professor (Tenure Line)	36.05% 31
4	Visiting/Term Appointment (Non-Tenure Line)	2.33% 2
5	Adjunct Appointment (Non-Tenure Line)	8.14% 7
6	Other (please describe)	3.49% 3
		86

### *Years at Rhode Island College (Q4)*

Nearly half of all respondents, 49%, have been at RIC over 11 years.



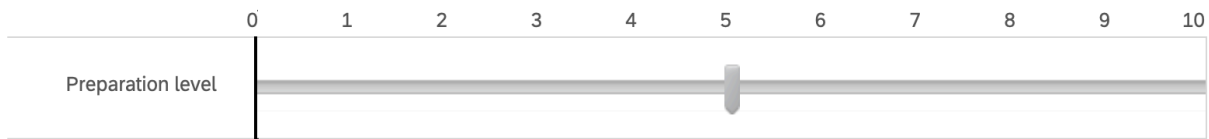
#	Field	Choice Count
1	0-5	10.47% 9
2	6-10	30.23% 26
3	11+	56.98% 49
4	Prefer Not To Respond	2.33% 2

86

### **SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHING WID**

Three questions on our survey attempted to better understand participants' subjective experiences of teaching WID. Here, participants encountered a slider set to the middle point, which they were then asked to move in whichever direction best captured their experience, with 0 indicating "Not at all" and 10 indicating "Very Much." Here's an example of what this looked like from participants' view:

Please move the slider to indicate how **well-prepared** you currently feel to teach WID courses. (0 = Not at All; 10 = Very Much)



Data in the area or subjective experiences of teaching WID suggest that faculty feel fairly well-prepared to teach such courses, that they have confidence in their ability to do so, and that they somewhat enjoy the experience.

*Please move the slider to indicate how well-prepared you currently feel to teach WID courses. (0 = Not at All; 10 = Very Much) (Q30)*

Mean Score: 8.41

*Please move the slider to indicate how confident you currently feel in your skill/ability to teach WID courses well. (0 = Not at All; 10 = Very Much) (Q24)*

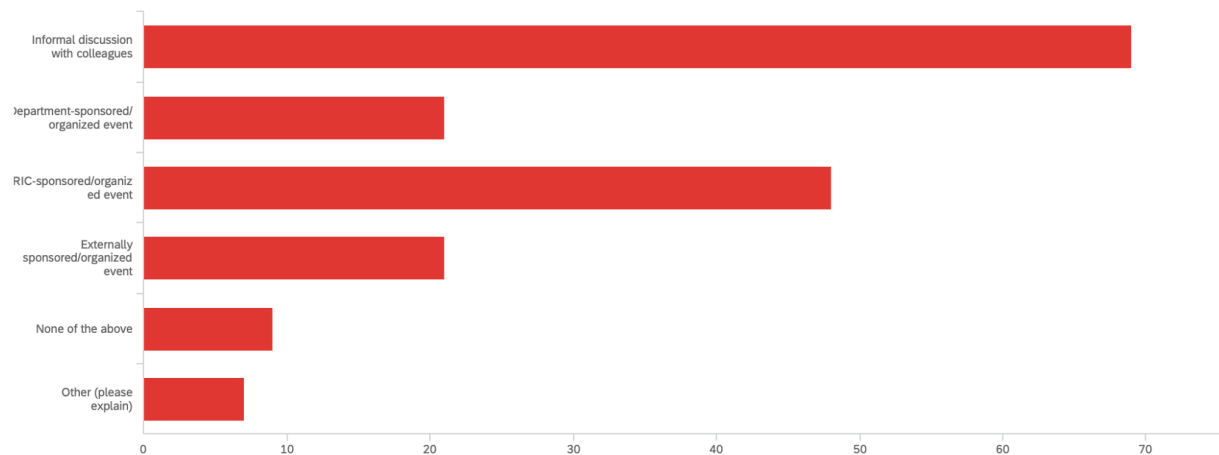
Mean Score: 8.38

*Please move the slider to indicate how much you enjoy teaching WID courses. (0 = Not at All; 10 = Very Much) (Q26)*

Mean Score: 7.95

## **PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

In this section of our survey we asked just one question, about whether respondents had participated in writing-based professional development and if so, which kind(s) (participants were allowed to select multiple options from a list). The majority had participated in informal discussions with colleagues and nearly half had participated in RIC-sponsored/organized events.



#	Field	Choice Count
1	Informal discussion with colleagues	39.43% 69
3	Department-sponsored/organized event	12.00% 21
4	RIC-sponsored/organized event	27.43% 48
5	Externally sponsored/organized event	12.00% 21
6	None of the above	5.14% 9
7	Other (please explain)	4.00% 7
		175

## WID PEDAGOGICAL ACTIVITIES

In this section of our survey we were interested to learn more about the kinds of activities in which our respondents ask students to engage in WID classes. Towards these ends we asked just one question:

*Which of the following activities do students participate in in your WID classes? (Q26)*

The table below articulates the 13 activities we inquired about and the frequency with which participants ask students to engage in these activities (i.e., *Always*, *Sometimes*, or *Never*).

Among important findings here, we note the following:

- Nearly 90% of respondents indicated that they *always* engage students in the activity of receiving oral or written feedback on completed written work;
- 82% of respondents indicated that they *always* engage students in the activity of receiving written assignment instructions and reviewing them in class;

- 64% of respondents indicated that they *always* engage students in the activity of receiving oral or written feedback on drafts of written work;
- 61% of respondents indicated that they *always* engage students in the activity of informal or low stakes writing as a tool for learning course content;
- 59% of respondents indicated that they *always* engage students in the activity of reviewing models/examples of writing assignments with the professor and/or classmates.

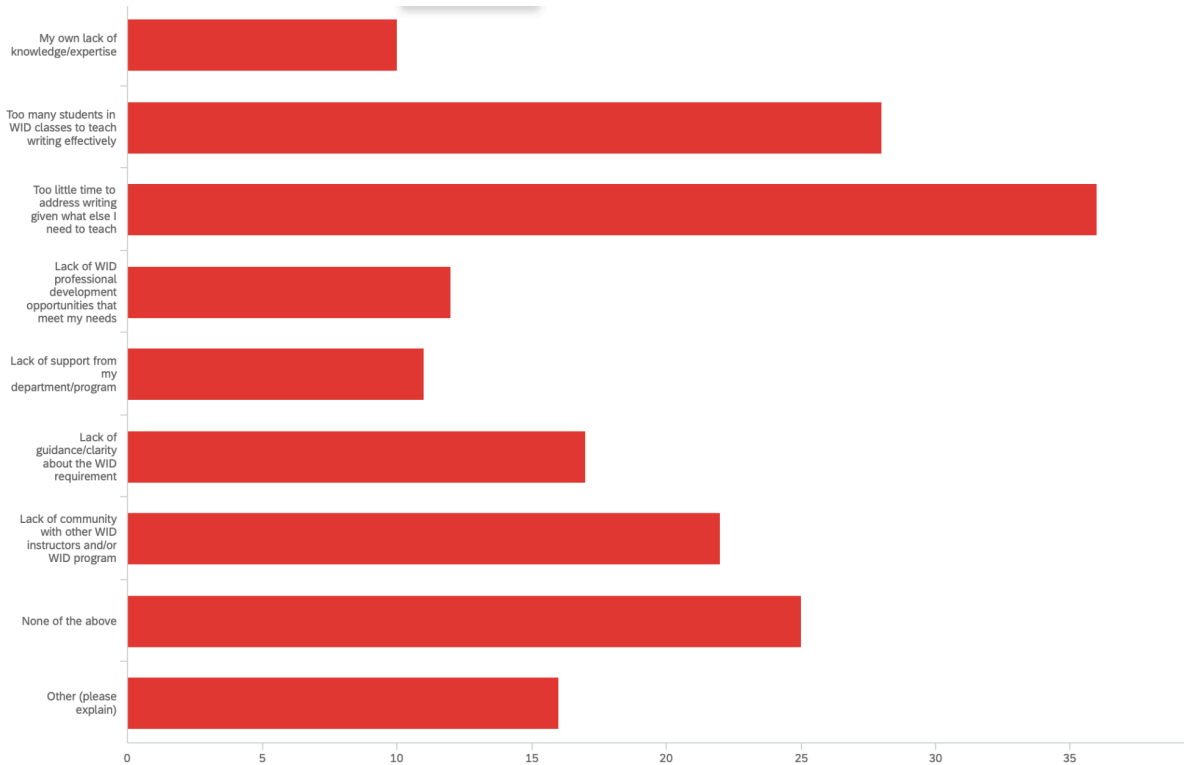
#	Field	Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
1	Receive written assignment instructions and review them during class	81.93% 68	14.46% 12	3.61% 3	83
2	Review models/examples of writing assignments w/professor and/or classmates	59.04% 49	34.94% 29	6.02% 5	83
3	Brainstorm/plan writing assignments with professor and/or classmates	42.17% 35	38.55% 32	19.28% 16	83
4	Participate in a staged or sequenced progression for writing assignments	56.63% 47	36.14% 30	7.23% 6	83
5	Participate in peer/student review of written drafts	31.33% 26	51.81% 43	16.87% 14	83
6	Participate in required individual and/or group writing conferences with professor	25.30% 21	46.99% 39	27.71% 23	83
7	Receive oral or written feedback from professor on drafts of written work	63.86% 53	31.33% 26	4.82% 4	83
8	Receive oral or written feedback from professor on completed written work	89.16% 74	10.84% 9	0.00% 0	83
9	Engage in reflection about newly acquired writing knowledge and skills	27.71% 23	46.99% 39	25.30% 21	83
10	Develop awareness of transferability of newly acquired writing knowledge and skills (e.g., to other courses or writing situations)	39.76% 33	51.81% 43	8.43% 7	83
11	Engage in informal/low-stakes writing as a tool for learning course content	61.45% 51	31.33% 26	7.23% 6	83
12	Engage in informal/low-stakes writing as a tool for building larger writing projects/papers	51.81% 43	42.17% 35	6.02% 5	83
13	Other additional activities (please describe)	33.73% 28	25.30% 21	40.96% 34	83

## CHALLENGES/DIFFICULTIES AND NEEDS

In this section of the survey we asked participants to reflect on the challenges they face in teaching WID courses and the support the college could offer to help address these challenges. Towards these ends we asked two questions.

*What challenges/difficulties do you experience teaching WID courses? (choose all that apply) (Q30)*

We note that among the greatest challenges faculty face in teaching WID courses are: 1) Too many students in WID courses to teach writing effectively and 2) Too little time to address writing given what else I have to teach.



1	My own lack of knowledge/expertise	5.65%	10
2	Too many students in WID classes to teach writing effectively	15.82%	28
3	Too little time to address writing given what else I need to teach	20.34%	36
4	Lack of WID professional development opportunities that meet my needs	6.78%	12
5	Lack of support from my department/program	6.21%	11
6	Lack of guidance/clarity about the WID requirement	9.60%	17
7	Lack of community with other WID instructors and/or WID program	12.43%	22
8	None of the above	14.12%	25
9	Other (please explain)	9.04%	16

Responses we received for “Other (please explain)” include the following, which we have grouped into three categories, Faculty Preparation, Infrastructure/Resources, and Student Barriers.

### *Faculty Preparation*

- I am a skilled professional writer but I am not an expert in teaching techniques of basic english composition skills

- lack of continuity throughout other courses in the degree program - writing can be taught in specific courses, but skills should be supported and reinforced in every course
- **How to assist English Language Learners.**

### *Infrastructure/Resources*

- Please bring back the teaching writing workshops!
- Lack of resources for students who need extra support
- Lack of support from the writing center. The students I teach have often never used the writing center before coming to class. I encourage them to use the writing center throughout the semester. Unlike the experience they have with our library liason, who spend one class period offering them information about how the library can support their writing, my efforts to have a similar session with staff from the Writing Center have not been successful. I believe that having someone from the writing center visit my class, or visiting the Writing Center with my students, would increase my students' use of the Writing Center, which would enhance their experience with the WID portion of the class.
- Our former dean specifically rejected my request to get all WID instructors in our department/school trained by Mike Michaud last summer (summer 2021(?)). Furthermore, designating a course a WID course is essentially an unfunded, uncompensated mandate. No adjustment in class sizes as a result of WID designation. As such administration has done what's in their realm of possibilities to disincentivize quality teaching of WID courses.
- Current Dept chair insists on disregarding WID descriptions in favor of old "oral skill/conversation" requirements. Some FT faculty proficiency in the target language may be a reason for not wanting to enforce WID requirement. No assessment has ever been done on WID courses in MLAN.
- A while ago there were several WID workshops for faculty which were most helpful and deliberately mindful of creating a positive cultural of writing and communicating. FCTL has done some follow-up. More recently, perhaps in response to Covid and other trends and issues, there has been little, with more focus on course design and online teaching. We need to get back to writing and assignments. In a best case scenario, a perfect roll-out of WID means a small course content. With our course structure we are supposed to present a great deal of material just to do justice to the course title and intent. This is always in conflict and requires a balance between content, engagement-assessment, and writing culture best practices with drafts, peer review, and feedback.
- The course was established years ago and we have done little to help new faculty understand and use the skills to reinforce for students. No end of program evaluation of competency

### *Student Barriers*

- Lately students just don't turn stuff in on time so the whole peer review process falls apart. I end up being the "peer" for the student(s) who turn stuff in on time so they can make progress.
- Lack of interest or commitment by students
- Student reluctance to engage in the writing process
- Students ill prepared to write
- Some students come in at such a low level, the amount of instruction needed is beyond my class time. Recommendations are often made to visit the writing center.
- Students whose writing skills are below high school level need to be flagged and coached much earlier! We shouldn't have students in a senior seminar who are unable to write a simple sentence.

*How can the college better support your efforts to teach WID courses effectively (choose all that apply)? (Q32)*

Having asked participants about the challenges/difficulties they face in teaching WID, the survey also asked how participants' experience might be improved. Lower course caps for WID classes received the most responses, followed by a greater sense of community around teaching WID and greater clarity about the WID requirement.





1	Lower course caps	25.45%	42
2	More discussion of WID within my program/department	12.12%	20
3	Greater guidance/clarity about the WID requirement	20.00%	33
4	Greater sense of community around the teaching of WID	21.21%	35
5	I feel adequately supported now, nothing needed	9.09%	15
6	Other professional development or means of support (please explain)	12.12%	20

Responses we received for “Other (please explain)” include the following, which we have grouped into four categories, Professional Development, Institutional Issues/Concerns, Departmental Issues/Concerns, and Student Barriers.

### *Professional Development*

- Professional training
- Workshops to exchange expertise & experiences with colleagues
- I would like to do another version of the May PD that was offered in the past.
- Continued support as offered in previous years
- Renew January PD days, more summer seminars, additional FLH for teaching WID
- Bring back January Writing Workshops
- Coaching on best practices for facilitation and moderating team writing assignments
- College sponsored workshops or conference participation for WID faculty
- funding for program-specific software
- I miss the Writing Board and their PD opportunities, which were usually great!

### *Institutional Issues/Concerns*

- appropriate credit level
- Western Kentucky U. has developed an entire WID program proposal. It contains a systems perspective that serves to integrate WID efforts in a way that WID courses have an element of consistency. In contrast, we affix WID course labels and nothing more
- WID is not unique to RIC. Instead, it's a nationally recognized initiative. We need to be exposed to benchmarking WID best practices at other colleges/universities and, most certainly, WID training. Admitting we're unqualified to conduct WID training is the first step to improvement.

### *Departmental Issues/Concerns*

- Chair needs to respect WID course requirements and not revert syllabi to pre-WID descriptions.

### *Student Barriers*

- Student evaluation of competence is needed beyond the course level
- How about a pass/fail writing exam before students can enroll in 300 and 400 level classes? It's a tragedy to see seniors arrive at the end of their academic career, and they will fail a WID course for their Major, ergo, unable to graduate. How is it possible that major writing errors were not caught by faculty earlier?
- Not sure how to address student commitment
- More support for students who struggle with writing

## **RESPONDENTS' FINAL THOUGHTS**

At the end of our survey we provided participants with an opportunity to add final comments/thoughts/suggestions via this question:

*Anything else or more you'd like to add about teaching WID at RIC? (Q35)*

We've grouped participants' responses to this question into several categories, Generally Positive/Supportive Comments, Workload, Curriculum Related, Discipline/Departmental Focused, Resources, and Misc. We provide examples of comments in each category below (the full list of responses can be found in Appendix C).

### *Generally Positive/Supportive Comments*

- Always room to grow and improve, but on balance I think the program has been a positive and we have a more literate population now than in the past. (I have been here a long time and am going back decades.) Also am mindful that the challenges of Covid and post-Covid have been most difficult and we are still not fully recovered in terms of going forward academically.
- Writing is obviously important. I do have written assignments in almost all my courses, even those not designated as WID.

### *Workload*

- Teaching writing is very time consuming. With 30 students per class, giving feedback on drafts takes many days, and individualized meetings are not possible.

- I just want to emphasize the need for lower course caps. I usually teach a section of 30 students in the upper-level WID course and it is really difficult to cover all the research material and give comprehensive feedback along the way.
- This is such an essential course, and it is vitally important to have enough time to look closely at all student work assigned.

### *Curriculum Related*

- Too much emphasis on WID. It is important, but so are many other skills.
- A college-wide commitment to WID (and writing) at RIC
- more consistency in requirements among professors who teach the same course an integrated (light) WID assessment could be helpful.
- We have faculty in my department who do not know how to use quotation marks, for example. It might be helpful to have a basic WID guide where we can rally around acceptable standards of U.S. English. If we can get on the same page, that might reduce the mixed messaging that perhaps some students experience.
- We need to change which classes are WID in our department. Wasn't sure if we were going to keep the requirement with the new gen ed.
- I think that the current understanding of WID is not general enough to include all of the WID aspects of WID that already occurs in STEM subjects.
- If students have had WID or writing intensive courses before their senior year, many do not demonstrate previously developed writing skills.
- Our WID courses are typically offered at the 400 level and technically rigorous. Students are learning 1) how to formulate a research question and 2) answer it using empirical tools and persuasive writing. Our WID courses are the de facto research methods courses, therefore high-value for students preparing for the job market and/or graduate school. Some professional development opportunities on teaching professional writing would be greatly appreciated.

### *Discipline/Departmental Focused*

- My department pretty much never talks about WID. It is a non-issue for us, even though we have identified our WID classes.
- The process is incredibly discipline-specific. As with any curricular program, the point is often lost as courses pass from instructor to instructor. You may strengthen the WID program simply by asking about it.
- The Department of History has always kept a sharp focus on WID courses as they are essential for student success in our discipline.

### *Resources*

- It's important and should be given more support from the administration
- Simple request: train faculty in WID and reduce class sizes to 10-20). See studies by Kuther & Holtzman (2017, Journal of Faculty Development, 31(1), 77-83; Walvoord & McCarthy (1990), College English, 52(5)? 494-508
- FCTL Workshops on WID would be an asset
- We will see the value that the College places on WID by the degree that College administration puts their "skin in the game." If no resources are provided to train and coach faculty on WID implementation in a way that students learn from WID initiatives, then we'll accomplish nothing more than providing lip service and exhortations in the false hope that something meaningful will be accomplished.

*Misc.*

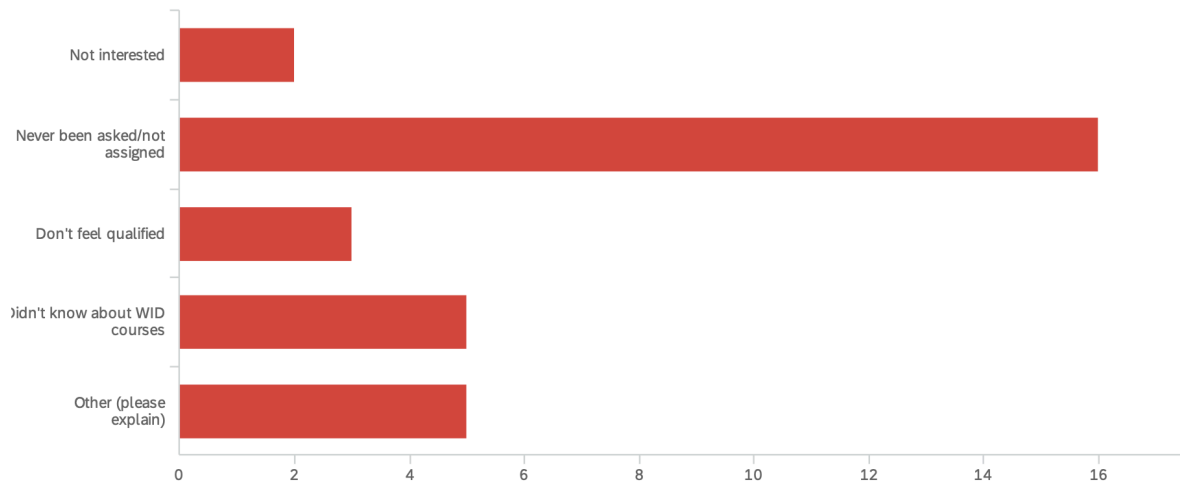
- I answered the questions at the course level, not individual days. So, when I say always, I mean that we always do that in the course, not we do that every single day. I wasn't sure what was intended.
- It's a great experience, but there are scopes for me to improve.
- I understand the need for the W attached to the course number but it makes advising and course searches cumbersome.
- Faculty writing work and publications should be showcased - easier for students to access

## **RESPONSES OF NON-WID FACULTY**

As indicated above, 28 participants in our survey indicated that they did not teach WID courses and so were directed towards a completion screen, where they were asked two questions. We report on the data collected from these participants below.

*If you do not or have not taught your department/program's WID course(s), why is this (choose as many as apply)? (Q19)*

As we see below, the most common reason participants give for why they have not taught WID courses is that they've Never been asked/assigned. This, most likely, is due to the fact that when WID was first established at the college departments/programs were asked to identify the course(s) in their majors most appropriate for the teaching of disciplinary writing. Not all faculty teach all courses in a major so if one's area of specialization does not interact with designated WID courses one will not teach WID.



1	Not interested	6.45%	2
2	Never been asked/not assigned	51.61%	16
3	Don't feel qualified	9.68%	3
4	Didn't know about WID courses	16.13%	5
5	Other (please explain)	16.13%	5

Responses received under “Other (please explain)” include the following:

- It is not my role at the college and that is ok.
- It only carries 2 credit load hours.
- These courses are extremely time consuming to teach and with our work loads already at the maximum it has been hard to be able to say yes to this.
- I teach at the graduate level. There was no choice for graduate nursing for a department on this survey