



# Writing, Curriculums, and Disciplines in Canadian Higher Education

## WAC @ UofA

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# WAC development

## **Schryer et al at Laurentian U (c. 1992)**

- WAC as part of “writing as discovery/invention”
- Literacy practices in disciplinary communities

## **Giltrow & Strachan, Simon Fraser U (c. 1996, 2002)**

- Giltrow and Valiquette: genre & disciplinary differences in the writing centre tutorial
- CWIL: a genre approach to writing intensive courses; genre changes what it means for students to work in a discipline



# International WAC Mapping Data for Canada

How many WAC programs are there in Canada?

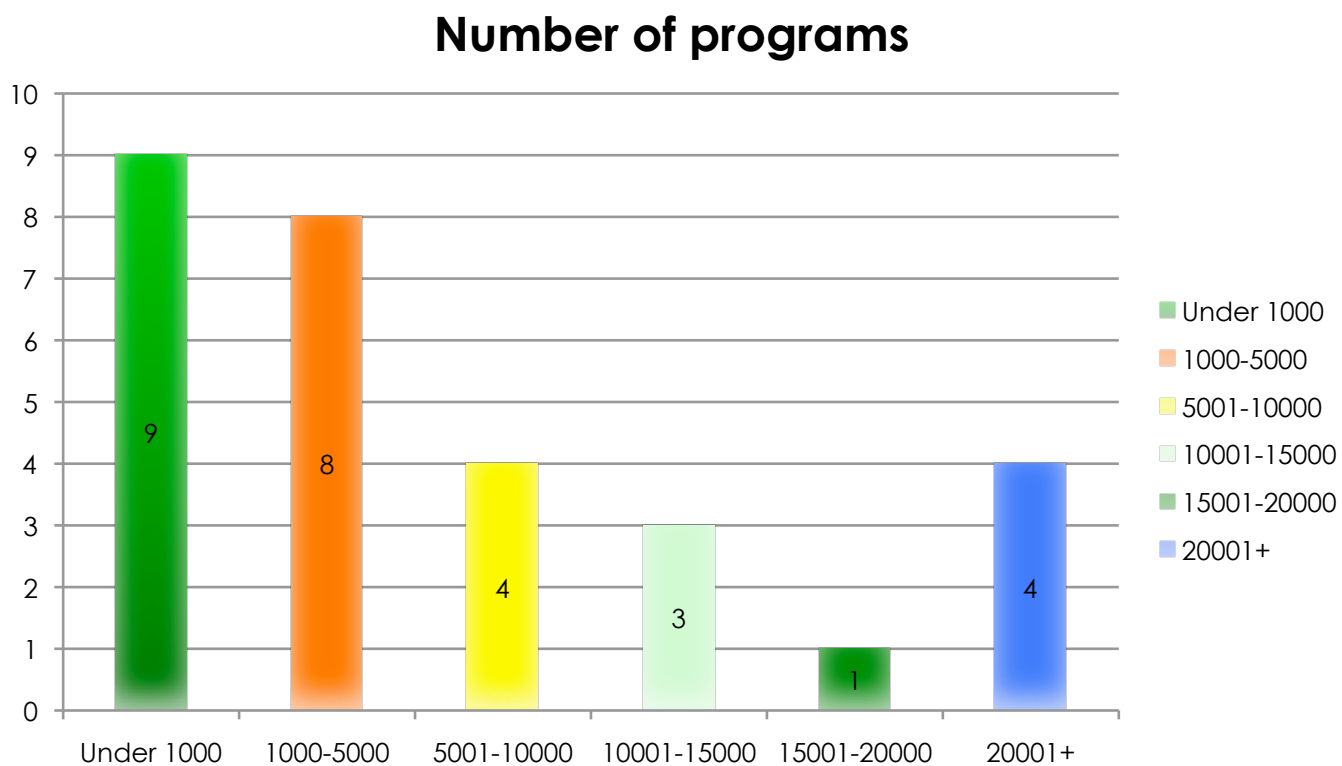
- 28, with 13 planning to develop programs
- Had but no longer operate: 20

Issues:

- **Remediation:** WAC/WID aimed at weaker students
- **Champions:** promises not fulfilled
- **Location:** entry courses in English or communication

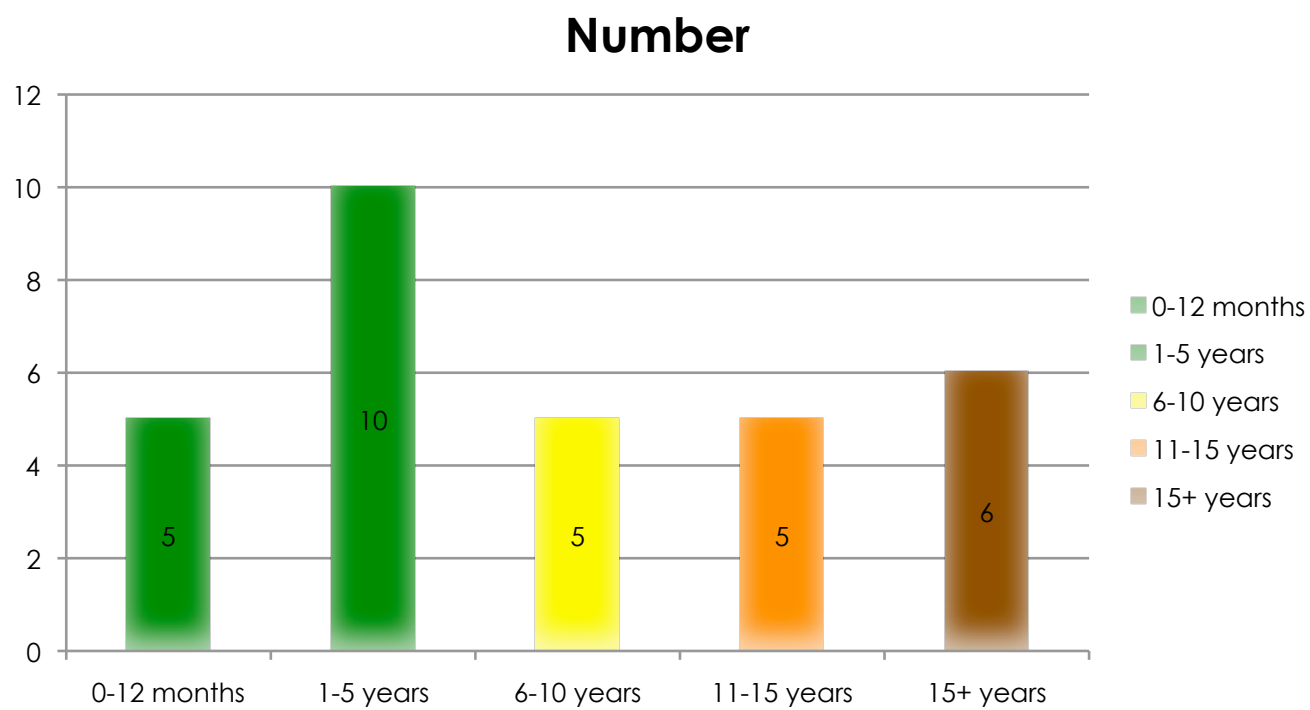


# Size of institutions with WAC





# Longevity





# Names for WAC

- Critical Reading & Writing for University
- Learning support centre
- Student Success Centre
- Writing Proficiency Assessment -Reading into Writing Course
- English Composition Introduction to College
- Foundations Programme
- Writing Across the Disciplines
- Writing for the Arts
- Academic Writing Writing seminar
- University Writing Minor WAC Workshops
- WAC Writing Intensive Classes Writing Centre
- Writing Intensive Learning



## Kinds of WAC

Category	Number
WAC or WID	17
CAC	4
WAC emphasis in writing centre	17
WAC emphasis in courses	3
Other	4

Other includes tests, workshops, student learning commons.



# Program emphasis

Program emphasis	Number
Learning disciplinary conventions of writing	29
Critical thinking	26
Proficiency in standard written English	24
Writing to learn	22
Preparing students for the workplace	10
Applying new technologies to learning	9
Other (learning to write at University; research in core and disciplines)	4





# WAC faculty development

Components	Number
Faculty workshops	14
Informal but regular gatherings	14
Program sponsored travel to conferences	12
Follow-up interviews/meetings with faculty	11
Faculty seminar	8
Collaborative faculty research projects	7
In-house program-related publication	7
Other	8

Other includes testing, curriculum development, consultations, graduate student training.



# U of A in Canadian context

Our program

- Is young
- Is large
- Focuses on disciplinary writing
- Exists in the context of 18 faculties, many with a professional focus
- Coordinates with 4 writing centres at three campuses



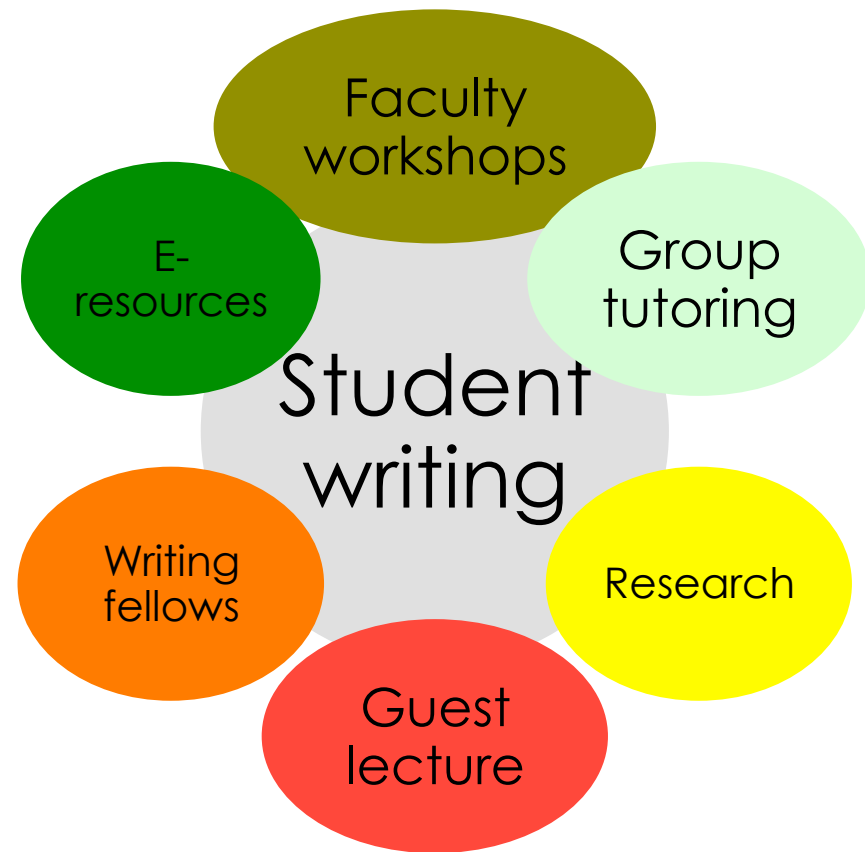
## U of A Goals for WAC

- **Fit programs to curriculums:** one size does not fit all programs of study at all levels and campuses
- **Focus on a genre approach to WID:** disciplinary writing contexts, genres, cultures through research
- **Move expertise about writing into the disciplinary curriculum,** directly (lectures) or indirectly (web resources)
- **Conduct research to determine the needs of student writers:** what are they asked to write?



# U of A: Strategies

1. Faculty workshops that help instructors to create contexts that support students
2. Guest lectures by the WAC director to help students as they begin to work on writing assignments
3. Group workshops in disciplinary courses
4. Research into writing assignments
5. WAC Undergraduate teaching fellows at Augustana campus
6. Facebook; [wacmail@mailman.srv.ualberta.ca](mailto:wacmail@mailman.srv.ualberta.ca) ; e-resources



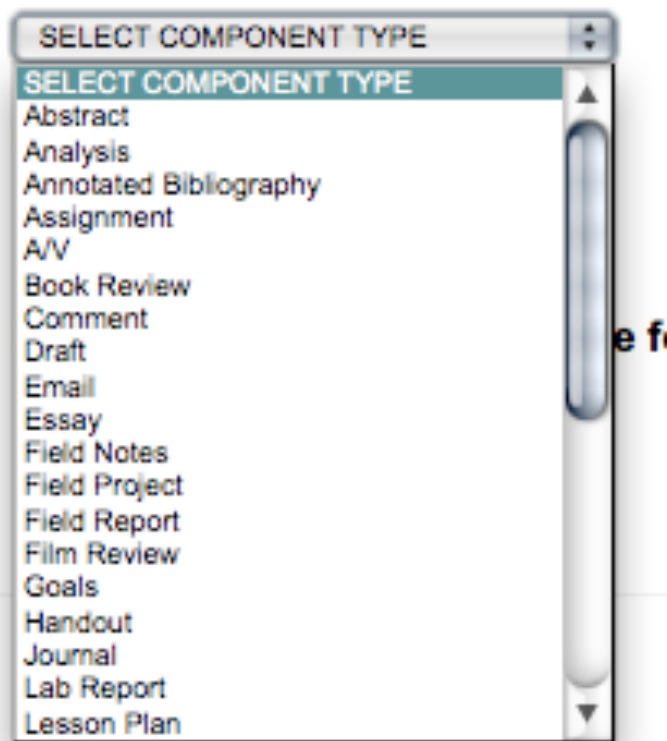


# Guest lectures: WAC as Consultancy

- We attempt to build ongoing relationships with instructors, with curricular units, and with students to ensure that **we learn** as much as we can about how students in a particular discipline write.
- 2010-2011: 33 lectures on a variety of writing assignments
- Focus on clarifying the assignment, idea-generation, and writing strategies
- C. Schryer (1994). "A Consultancy Model of Research," in *Contextual Literacy: WAC*. Winnipeg: Inkshed Publications.
- J. Jablonski (2006). *Academic Writing Consulting and WAC*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.



# Genres across the disciplines



- Instructors assign dozens of genres
- Research segment of this presentation will show how they vary on a number of scales
- Genres linked to values in the discipline: Nursing students asked to reflect critically as a way of developing the sense of agency they will need to speak back to the government



# Nursing 494: The essay

1. Introduction
2. Search and Selection
3. Annotations
4. Application to Clinical
5. Conclusion
6. References
7. Appendices

**7-10 pages**



# Chem 419/519: Research proposal

3 pages

- **Introduction and Context:** importance of the problem; strong statement of aim [thesis]
- **Background:** elaborate on the research area; give preliminary results (describe what has been done)
- **Research Plan:** Rationale; General objective & specific aims; Specific aim 1 (elaborated); Specific aim 2;
- **Significance**
- **References:** List all references you have cited in your text (page 4)





# Econ 999: Structure of paper

1. Introduction
2. Review of Literature and Industrial Context
3. Relevant Economic Theory
4. Econometric Model
5. Data Sources and Summary Statistics
6. Econometric Results and Discussion
7. Conclusions
8. References
9. Tables and Figures

**30 pages**



# Faculty workshops: WAC Portfolio

- This summer we are building an ePortfolio of Powerpoint slides and other materials to distribute electronically and on flash drives to instructors

## **Documents:**

- A quickstart guide to WAC
- Grading guidelines from Walvoord/Anderson and Bean
- Guidelines for Creating Writing Assignments

# Presentation slides

## ASSIGNMENTS AS INSTRUCTIONS

### Creating good writing assignments

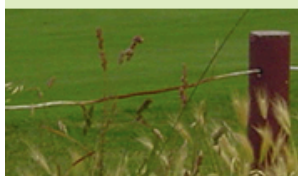


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<http://www.humanities.ualberta.ca/WAC/>



# More information



## Roger Graves

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September 27, 2011

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writing initiatives

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WRS 302

As Director of Writing Across the Curriculum, I work with faculty and students across the university to improve student writing. I consult with instructors and departments, and I teach writing in a wide variety of courses--everything from Animal Science to Religious Studies--when students in those courses are starting a writing assignment.

I am the author, co-author, or editor of eight books and 20 articles, including *Writing Instruction in Canadian Universities*. My current research interests include writing assignments across disciplinary fields and rhetorical approaches to text encoding. The SSHRC-funded research project on writing assignments across the curriculum extends our work at the University of Alberta across Canada.

Currently I serve as co-President of the [Canadian Association for the Study of Discourse and Writing \(CASDW\)](#), the Executive Committee of the

### Recent presentations to classes

This page contains links to slides displayed at presentations I've given to classes.

### Research and faculty presentations

#### Digital rhetoric




[www.ualberta.ca/~graves1](http://www.ualberta.ca/~graves1)



www.humanities.ualberta.ca/WAC/



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New for Winter 2011: **Group tutoring** for writing assignments in your classes. Free tutoring is available for groups of students in your classes to help them as they draft their essays, papers, reports or other written assignments. [Click here for more details.](#)

Click [here](#) to subscribe to the WAC newsletter.

Would you like to improve the writing of your students? Improve their learning of your lecture material? Are you looking for new ways to engage your students in your course materials? If this interests you, contact [Roger Graves](#): or 492.2169

What can we do for individual instructors:

- meet to talk about ways to incorporate informal (short, impromptu) writing assignments into any class, small or large
- review via email any assignment you give students that has a writing component to help make it clearer for students and to help develop grading rubrics to improve the speed and accuracy of grading
- visit your class to help students get started on your writing assignments

What can we do for departments:

- hold workshops on creating good writing assignments
- host discussions of how to improve the writing of students in your programs
- conduct reviews of writing assignments in your departments courses to identify exactly what your students are being asked to write—and to ensure that they have access to resources on how to write (online and on-campus)



**Presentations to Classes**

**C4W**

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**WRS Courses**

**Roger Graves**

**Blog**

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