

WRITE FROM THE START



NSU's Quality Enhancement Plan

SACSCOC

April 2017

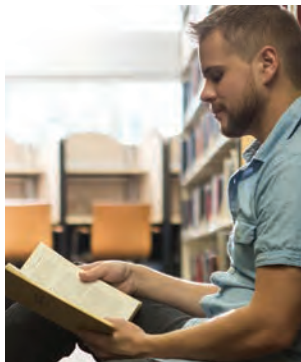
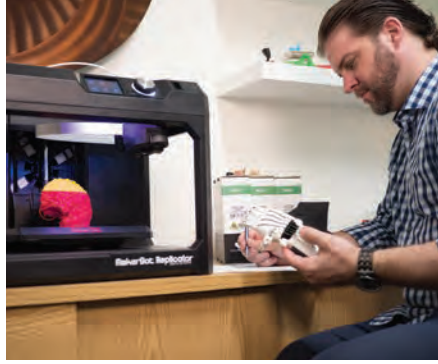




NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY QEP II—WRITE FROM THE START

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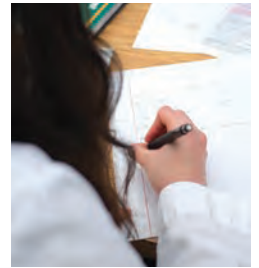
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WRITE FROM THE START NSU'S QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nova Southeastern University's Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Committee used institutional research and results from focus group interviews with faculty members and students to determine that the focus of the university's second QEP would be enhancing student writing. The committee learned that faculty members and students considered writing to be a critical component to student success, both during and after college, and that writing support across campus was disconnected and not adequately available to students at all levels and in all formats. Thus, the committee recommended that the university focus the QEP on enhancing student writing through the creation of a unified writing center that offers writing assistance to students at all learning levels in all delivery formats and provides faculty members with support for teaching writing in the disciplines. The name of the QEP would be *Write from the Start*.



The QEP Proposal Team researched best practices in the fields of writing, rhetoric and composition, and writing centers and determined five student learning outcomes that address student writing at all levels.

1. Produce academic writing that demonstrates an awareness of context, purpose, and audience that is appropriate to the specific discipline.
2. Locate, evaluate, and properly integrate primary and secondary research sources.
3. Demonstrate writing as a process that includes invention, drafting, revision, and editing.
4. Present writing that is free of serious grammatical and mechanical errors.
5. Assess and explain the major rhetorical choices students make in their writing.

In order to achieve the five student learning outcomes, the QEP Committee developed strategies that focus specifically on student learning, as well as faculty development. All writers need multiple levels of support. For students, this support begins in the classroom with faculty members who have been trained to teach writing in the disciplines. The university will offer a variety of writing support programs to students and faculty members through a centralized NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center. Specifically, the center will

1. offer general writing assistance to all NSU students
2. facilitate an expanded undergraduate writing fellows program
3. provide graduate student writing workshops and events
4. offer faculty member support for teaching discipline-specific writing
5. develop online writing resources



Each of these strategies, along with faculty resources, focuses on helping students become better writers who understand and work carefully through the writing process. The QEP chairs will work with the NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center staff on the on-going assessment of these activities, implementing a series of direct and indirect measures of student learning, including the use of a common rubric to assess student writing. Assessment results will be used to improve the QEP throughout the course of its implementation.

The QEP Committee has developed a marketing strategy to inform all students and faculty and staff members about the QEP. This includes developing a timeline that shows how on-site and online resources and services will be delivered to all students, regardless of modality. The QEP Committee also developed a new organizational chart to demonstrate project leadership and a budget that will fund the QEP from its initial stages through completion. Documentation for each of these can be found in the appendices of this proposal.

II. QEP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Introduction

The Mission of Nova Southeastern University ... is to offer a diverse array of innovative academic programs that complement on-campus educational opportunities and resources with accessible distance-learning programs to foster academic excellence, intellectual inquiry, leadership, research, and commitment to community through engagement of students and faculty members in a dynamic, lifelong learning environment.

Nova Southeastern University (NSU) is a complex, primarily graduate and first professional institution with a diversity of programs and audiences, including a diversity of colleges, academic levels, and programs and an array of delivery models (including campus-based, fully online, and blended teaching/learning options). In addition to its Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus, NSU offers programs at its Oceanographic Campus in Hollywood, Florida; and its North Miami Beach Campus in North Miami Beach, Florida. NSU also has regional campuses in Fort Myers, Jacksonville, Miami, Miramar, Orlando, Palm Beach, and Tampa, Florida, and in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Offering a diverse array of programs is a key part of our mission. Yet, NSU's commitment to fostering academic excellence and intellectual inquiry at both the undergraduate and graduate levels requires a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that keenly focuses on core aspects of student learning common throughout the institution. The challenge faced by any large, complex institution is to identify an area of focus that allows for flexibility in implementation to ensure near universal acceptance and support. This was NSU's framework for identifying its QEP topic area.

Institutional Process

Leadership

NSU's Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Leadership Team, chaired by George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D., president, determined that a

QEP Committee, a structure that had served well in the development, implementation, and assessment of NSU's first QEP, would lead the development of the topic area and subsequent action plan. In the summer of 2014, Hanbury asked Barbara Packer-Muti, Ed.D., and Amon Seagull, Ph.D., to cochair the QEP Committee. Packer-Muti, NSU's executive director of institutional and community engagement, had served as QEP director for NSU's first QEP, which was approved in 2007. Seagull, associate dean at NSU's College of Engineering and Computing, had served as vice chair of the QEP Committee that developed the first action and assessment plan.

QEP Committee membership was established in the winter of 2014. Input on committee membership was sought from deans and faculty from 18 academic units across the university to ensure that each one was represented and that membership on the committee included both faculty and administration. In early 2015, library representatives were added to the committee. Committee membership was adjusted after the summer of 2015, when the university realigned its academic units so undergraduate and graduate programs within the same discipline would be in the same colleges. The membership adjustment ensured that the revised academic units would still be represented, while maintaining as much continuity of members as possible. The membership roster is kept current and publicly available within the NSU QEP website at the following URL: nova.edu/qep/members.html.

The QEP Committee is further enhanced by student membership from NSU's Pan Student Government Association, which is composed of two students representing each college. The QEP cochairs visit Pan Student Government Association meetings at least once per semester in order to gain input and ideas from students, as well as to ensure that NSU's QEP is well known to, and understood by, student leadership.

Topic Development

Packer-Muti and Seagull first worked to identify institutional data that had been collected through existing planning and assessment efforts. Like any large, complex institution, NSU engages in a variety of assessments for a number of goals, many of which overlap with student learning. Those assessment activities produce substantial data sets, which Packer-Muti and Seagull reviewed during the fall of 2014. Those resources included the following:

- *NSU Student Surveys*—One of the many outgrowths of the initial NSU QEP was an implemented student engagement instrument, conducted annually (since 2007) as a student survey. The 2013, 2014, and 2015 survey results (compiled as one report for each of the academic units) were reviewed for potential topics. Students' comments were coded, and they showed that a majority of students supported enhancing instruction, often through the use of technology; supporting students who are online or at a regional campus; and providing accessibility to tutoring (writing labs) for graduate students.
- *"Town Hall" Meetings*—President Hanbury annually convenes multiple town hall-style events where students and employees, in separate meetings, receive updates about current university initiatives and voice questions or concerns. Those questions are logged and are publicly available; the 2014 and 2015 data sets were reviewed for possible data supporting a QEP topic. Student comments, particularly at regional campus sites, supported the need for accessibility and resources for enhancing writing in multiple disciplines and at a variety of degree levels.





- *National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)*—NSU participates regularly in the NSSE initiative. The instrument has specific items that can gauge undergraduate participation and engagement in a number of areas, including leadership, civic engagement, diversity, writing, and numeracy. NSSE mean scores (Likert range 1–4, 4 being best) for writing-related prompts appear in Table 1 below.

As indicated in the table, NSSE scores from the writing-related survey questions indicate that NSU’s undergraduate students have more favorable perceptions of writing preparedness than the national average. However, these data run contrary to anecdotal faculty member reports heard in multiple focus group sessions that academic writing tends to be a hurdle for students. Although no formal assessment is currently taking place, it is believed that this discrepancy could be due in part to the fact that the writing support units currently provided by NSU are not adequate in terms of the depth needed to change the student’s quality of writing. Writing support at NSU is currently only available to a limited number of students.

Table 1

NSSE Mean Scores for Writing Related Prompts, 2004–2014

Survey Questions	2014		2011		2010		2009		2007		2004	
	NSU	NSSE	NSU	NSSE	NSU	NSSE	NSU	NSSE	NSU	NSSE	NSU	NSSE
Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	2.80	2.50	3.07	2.69	2.89	2.70	3.03	2.69	3.01	2.64	3.29	2.70
Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress	3.20	2.90	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Providing support to help students succeed academically	3.30	3.10	3.20	3.12	3.02	3.11	3.13	3.08	3.18	3.02	3.15	3.10
Using learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.)	3.20	3.10	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Writing clearly and effectively	3.10	2.90	3.20	3.03	3.18	3.05	3.29	3.02	3.26	2.95	3.21	2.97

- *Course Evaluation Instruments*—Course surveys are existing instruments that measure items related to student learning. Though there were no university standards establishing common items in the 2013 and 2014 evaluation forms that were reviewed, a number of items regarding productive use of technology were common to many forms. Also commonly noted was students’ perception that writing is critical to success. Additionally, students reported that some faculty members did not provide sufficient or specific feedback for performance improvement.

- *First-Year Experience Initiative*—In fall of 2013, NSU contracted with the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education to enhance the first-year experience of undergraduate students. Over the next year, more than 200 faculty and staff members worked on nine dimensions of the student experience in a self-study effort that culminated in a set of recommendations targeting students’ first-year experience at NSU. The recommendations provide opportunities for raising awareness of student support services, particularly those focused on writing.
- *NSU Alumni Surveys*—Another outgrowth of the initial NSU QEP was the annual NSU alumni survey. This annual assessment of all graduates at NSU (targeting those who were degree completers during the preceding five years of the annual survey) included questions about important job skills felt to be necessary upon graduation and the degree to which NSU provided assistance to that skill area. The tables below provide mean responses to the questions that were writing/communication related.



Table 2

NSU Alumni Survey. Question: *How important in your life are these skills?*

Importance	Very	Moderately	A little bit	Not at all	Total	2015 Mean	2014 Mean	2013 Mean	2012 Mean	2011 Mean	2010 Mean
Write effectively	84%	14%	2%	0%	2562	3.81	3.80	3.83	3.82	3.84	3.84
Communicate well orally	90%	9%	1%	0%	2558	3.89	3.89	3.90	3.90	3.91	3.90

Table 3

NSU Alumni Survey. Question: *How did NSU contribute to the skills noted above?*

Contribution	Very	Moderately	Very little	No	Total	2015 Mean	2014 Mean	2013 Mean	2012 Mean	2011 Mean	2010 Mean
Write effectively	46%	37%	13%	3%	2336	3.27	3.24	3.28	3.26	3.27	3.26
Communicate well orally	35%	40%	19%	5%	2327	3.05	3.03	3.04	3.10	3.12	3.13

These data attest to the importance of writing and communicating upon graduation for NSU alumni in their work settings over time (2010–2015) and, additionally, attest to the gap to be filled by NSU to assure that both writing and communication achieve a place during the college experience.

While the review of the extant data did not reveal one particular need area in which to enhance student learning, the review showed a broad need to take action to enhance student learning (i.e., do a QEP) and to be mindful of technology and the inclusion of students outside of the main campus. The review also surfaced that writing was an area of concern for students at multiple colleges, in diverse programs, using multiple learning modalities, and across degree levels.

Broad-Based Involvement

Topic Selection



The QEP Committee first convened in January 2015 and reviewed the results of the above institutional data sets. The committee determined that to maximally engage faculty membership, QEP leadership would meet with each college's faculty to discuss areas of opportunity to enhance student learning. The result was a series of faculty focus groups, each germinating a collection of ideas for areas in which to focus the QEP. It can be found at nova.edu/qep.

Between February 23 and May 6, 2015, Packer-Muti and Seagull met with each college's, and the library's, QEP representative, dean, and faculty members to (a) explain the QEP and its role in regional accreditation and (b) gather feedback on areas of opportunity in student learning. As some colleges did not have college-wide faculty meetings during that span, a total of 21 meetings were held across the 18 academic units. In some cases, faculty members were connected through video conferencing to maximize inclusion. Furthermore, Packer-Muti and Seagull met with NSU's PanSGA, a body comprising leadership from each student government, to gather additional feedback. All told, this process involved hundreds of faculty members, staff members, and students over a 10-week period.

Once the ideas generated in the meetings were coalesced and tabulated, the top 10 items (each mentioned by at least six of the faculty groups) were presented to the QEP Committee for discussion and then voting. In descending order of frequency of mention, they were the following:

1. Writing*
2. Acculturation to college
3. Technology (to enhance pedagogy)*
4. Communication, broadly (including presentation skills, listening, and reading)
5. Research skills (including library instruction, IRB, plagiarism education, statistics, etc.)
6. Theory to practice/service learning*
7. Critical thinking/evidence-based decision-making
8. Peer-to-peer learning/teamwork/learning through teaching*
9. Diversity/internationalism
10. Cross-center collaboration*

** Items were also mentioned by students at the PanSGA meeting.*

Following rich committee discussion, each academic unit ranked its top three choices for the QEP topic area. The top three areas were (a) Writing, (b) Acculturation to college, (c) Technology (to enhance pedagogy).

The three top areas were then brought forward to the NSU SACSCOC Advisory Council for discussion and voting. The council was composed of the membership listed in Table 4.

Table 4

NSU SACSCOC Advisory Council

Name	Title
George L. Hanbury II	NSU President and Chief Executive Officer
Ralph V. Rogers	Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Jacqueline A. Travisano	Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
Fred Lippman	Chancellor, Health Professions Division
Lydia M. Acosta	Vice President for Information Services and University Librarian
Stephanie G. Brown	Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services
Donald Rudawsky	Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness
Tom West	Vice President for Information Technologies and Chief Information Officer
Brad A. Williams	Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean, College of Undergraduate Studies
Meline Kevorkian	Associate Provost, Academic Quality, Assessment, and Accreditation
Ronald Chenail	Associate Provost, Undergraduate Academic Affairs
Jane Duncan	Director of Assessment and Accreditation
Lisa M. Deziel	Dean, College of Pharmacy
J. Preston Jones	Dean, H. Wayne Huizenga College of Business and Entrepreneurship
Guy Nehrenz	Associate Dean, College of Osteopathic Medicine
Jennifer Jordan	Assistant Dean, College of Osteopathic Medicine
Kevin Dvorak	Professor and Writing Center/WAC Coordinator, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences
Fran Tetunic	Professor, Shepard Broad College of Law
Barbara Packer-Muti	QEP Cochair
Amon Seagull*	QEP Cochair

*Replaced by Dana Mills, winter 2016



During two meetings with extended discussion and an eventual vote, the council selected writing as the focus area for NSU's QEP.

Action Plan

In September 2015, following the topic area selection, Packer-Muti sent an email blast soliciting a call to action to all faculty and staff members within the NSU community to submit a short, 3–5 page, mini-proposal for a specific, implementable plan to enhance student writing. The solicitation reminded faculty members of their participation in faculty focus groups, nearly all of which had identified writing as a need area for enhancement. By the end of October 2015, nine mini-proposals were received from nine different colleges and staff-member groups, reinforcing the broad appeal of the topic area.

Also in the fall of 2015, Packer-Muti convened a QEP Mini-Proposal Review Committee that consisted of a small group of faculty members from the larger QEP Committee, including Kevin Dvorak, Ph.D., coordinator of the existing writing center for first-year composition and graduate students in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. This sub-committee reviewed the mini-proposals and drafted the particular strategies of the overall NSU plan, incorporating elements from all nine proposals. The action elements and proposed assessments were reviewed by the QEP Committee, whose members took the ideas back to their respective faculty groups for discussion and refinement. Ultimately, an action plan resulted that had been vetted by each faculty group at the university, as well as by PanSGA representatives.



Process Summary

NSU's QEP Committee explored dozens of institutional datasets from the past few years to identify expressed areas of need—opportunities on which a QEP might focus. The committee found multiple areas of opportunity across the campus, and subsequently engaged in an intensive series of faculty and student focus groups to surface those ideas that proved to be most valuable across diverse NSU constituencies: undergraduate, graduate, and first professional students. Once the topic of writing was identified, the QEP cochairs worked with faculty members from the Department of Writing and Communication and from the library to draft details of the plan.

III. TOPIC IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF QEP STRATEGIES AND OUTCOMES

Topic Naming

As previously indicated, through a review of institutional data as well as data collected during formal faculty and student focus groups, the topic of enhancing writing for all NSU students was selected and later ratified by the NSU SACSCOC Advisory Council. An announcement of the final topic was disseminated to the entire NSU community—including students, faculty and staff members, and administrators—through email blasts and was, additionally, prominently placed on the NSU QEP website at nova.edu/qep.

The QEP cochairs met with the student leaders of the NSU PanSGA to advise the students of the topic choice and to solicit additional input/information. Based on student feedback, a student naming contest was undertaken. In January 2016, an invitation/contest to name the QEP was emailed to more than 24,000 NSU students, asking for creative names to capture the content area, and offering a \$500 gift certificate to the NSU Bookstore to the winner. Students suggested more than 317 unique names. A QEP sub-committee determined a list of 10 finalists, and the full QEP Committee selected the winning entry: *Write from the Start*. The student winner was notified, given his gift award, and information was disseminated to students and stakeholders and placed on the QEP website.

Development of QEP Strategies

A new QEP sub-committee, the QEP Proposal Writing Team, was convened in March 2016. The new QEP Proposal Writing Team was composed of the two QEP cochairs, Barbara Packer-Muti and Dana Mills (the latter had replaced Amon Seagull, who left the university); the content area expert, Kevin Dvorak; and one member of the university-wide QEP Committee, Dustin Berna, Ph.D.

Packer-Muti and Dvorak reviewed dozens of QEP proposals online that had been previously submitted to SACSCOC, completed an extensive literature review, and brought forward ideas for student learning outcomes that would best measure the learning outcomes for solution strategies previously identified during the review of the nine mini-proposals submitted by NSU faculty and staff members. Packer-Muti then created a program logic model that has served as NSU's blueprint for its *Write from the Start* QEP Proposal. A program logic model “displays what a new program or focused change effort might contain from start to finish. The elements in a program logic model consist of the

recipe for a bounded investment of financial and social capital for a specified result” (Knowlton & Phillips, 2013, p. 35). NSU’s QEP Program Logic Model includes the resources, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact for *Write from the Start* and has served as a graphical representation of NSU’s plan, which provides key stakeholders with a deeper understanding of the QEP’s components (see Appendix A).

During the course of the winter 2016 semester, Packer-Muti, Seagull (replaced by Mills), and Dvorak facilitated a series of QEP presentations/conversations with departments and colleges across the university. This was a critical step in developing community involvement, particularly with faculty members, who asked many important questions and provided significant suggestions concerning the implementation and rollout of our QEP. This provided opportunities for the entire NSU faculty to contribute to the QEP topic development. The chart below lists the presentation dates, colleges, and departments.



Table 5

List of Winter 2016 College and Department QEP Presentations/Discussions

College	Department	Date	Contact
College of Psychology	Psychology and Neuroscience	2/16	Glynn Scheyd/Mindy Ma
College of Health Care Sciences	Health Care Sciences	2/24	Peter L. Taylor
College of Psychology	Counseling	3/7	Glynn Scheyd
College of Psychology	Clinical and School Psychology	3/7	Glynn Scheyd
Halmos College of Natural Sciences and Oceanography	Mathematics	3/8	Jason Gershman
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	Literature and Modern Language	3/9	Marlisa Santos
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	History and Political Science	3/10	Andrea Shaw Nevins
College of Engineering and Computing	Engineering and Computing	3/15	Marti Snyder
Abraham S. Fischler College of Education	All Departments	3/15	Roxanne Molina/David Ross
College of Optometry	Optometry	3/16	Josephine Shallo-Hoffman
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	Conflict Resolution	3/16	Dustin Berna
College of Osteopathic Medicine	Osteopathic Medicine	3/18	Delfina A. Wilson
Halmos College of Natural Sciences and Oceanography	Chemistry and Physics	3/30	Robin L. Sherman
Halmos College of Natural Sciences and Oceanography	Marine and Environmental Science	3/31	Robin L. Sherman
College of Pharmacy	Pharmacy	3/31	Elizabeth Frenzel Shepherd
Halmos College of Natural Sciences and Oceanography	Biology	4/5	Robin L. Sherman
Mailman Segal Center for Human Development	Mailman Segal Center	4/5	Donna Hillier
NSU University School	NSU USchool (Upper School)	4/5	David Spangler
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	Justice and Human Services	4/7	Dustin Berna
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	Visual and Performing Arts	4/8	Mark Duncan
Shepard Broad College of Law	Law	4/8	Michele Struffolino
College of Medical Sciences	Medical Sciences	4/11	Cheryl Purvis Lechnar
College of Dental Medicine	Dental	4/13	Richard Singer



College	Department	Date	Contact
H. Wayne Huizenga College of Business and Entrepreneurship	Business	4/14	Sharon Greenberg
College of Nursing	Nursing	4/28	Barbara Barrett
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	Family Therapy	5/11	Dustin Berna

Development of Student Learning Outcomes

The QEP Proposal Writing Team worked with faculty members from the Department of Writing and Communication to develop and finalize the QEP's Student Learning Outcomes. QEP Student Learning Outcomes were created based on feedback from faculty and students, as well as recommendations from the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition, which were approved by the CWPA on July 17, 2014. As will be demonstrated in the literature review and by other QEPs, the CWPA's outcomes can be used for various levels of writing, not just for first-year composition.

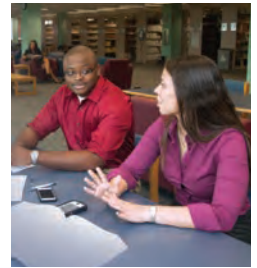
The CWPA recommends that writing programs create learning outcomes for the following four categories: 1. Rhetorical Knowledge; 2. Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing; 3. Processes; and 4. Knowledge of Conventions (Council of Writing Program Administrators, 2014). NSU's QEP Student Learning Outcomes include a fifth category, Reflection, which is critical to the learning process.

Table 6

Definitions for Council of Writing Program Administrators Learning Outcomes (Council of Writing Program Administrators, 2014)

CWPA Learning Outcome	CWPA Definition
Rhetorical Knowledge	The ability to analyze contexts and audiences and then to act on that analysis in comprehending and creating texts. Rhetorical knowledge is the basis of composing. Writers develop rhetorical knowledge by negotiating purpose, audience, context, and conventions as they compose a variety of texts for different situations.
Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing	The ability to analyze, synthesize, interpret, and evaluate ideas, information, situations, and texts. When writers think critically about the materials they use—whether print texts, photographs, data sets, videos, or other materials—they separate assertion from evidence, evaluate sources and evidence, recognize and evaluate underlying assumptions, read across texts for connections and patterns, identify and evaluate chains of reasoning, and compose appropriately qualified and developed claims and generalizations. These practices are foundational for advanced academic writing.
Processes	Writers use multiple strategies, or composing processes, to conceptualize, develop, and finalize projects. Composing processes are seldom linear: a writer may research a topic before drafting, then conduct additional research while revising or after consulting a colleague. Composing processes are also flexible: successful writers can adapt their composing processes to different contexts and occasions.
Knowledge of Conventions	The formal rules and informal guidelines that define genres, and in so doing, shape readers' and writers' perceptions of correctness or appropriateness. Most obviously, conventions govern such things as mechanics, usage, spelling, and citation practices. But they also influence content, style, organization, graphics, and document design.

Though the fifth outcome, reflection, is not used or defined by the CWPA, it is still critical to the learning process. Reflection, as defined by the National Council of Teachers of English Conference on College Composition and Communication, is a process by which students “identify and evaluate the different kinds of learning [...] In particular, students may explain how various forms of instructive feedback (from faculty, Writing Centers, peers, and other readers) have influenced the composition and revision” of their writing (Principles and Practices in Electronic Portfolios).



Student Learning Outcomes

Using the five categories listed above, faculty and committee members designed the following Student Learning Outcomes, which address student writing at all institutional levels.

1. Produce academic writing that demonstrates an awareness of context, purpose, and audience that is appropriate to the specific discipline. (rhetorical knowledge)
2. Locate, evaluate, and properly integrate primary and secondary research sources. (critical thinking, reading, and composing)
3. Demonstrate writing as a process that includes invention, drafting, revision, and editing. (processes)
4. Present writing that is free of serious grammatical and mechanical errors. (conventions)
5. Assess and explain the major rhetorical choices students make in their writing. (reflection)

Faculty Outcomes

The NSU QEP will seek to change the culture surrounding the emphasis on writing within the university. To that end, it is expected that demonstrable change will occur for faculty members across several domains. Specifically, faculty member outcomes will include

1. increased knowledge and use of writing resources by faculty and staff (writing support services)
2. increased participation in writing workshops designed to assist faculty members in providing writing-related feedback to students (pedagogical support)
3. increased meaningful, strategic, and productive feedback to student writing that is appropriate to the stage of writing (rough draft or finished product) and that provides strategies for revision

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

NSU has chosen to focus its second QEP on enhancing student writing across the curriculum, with a special emphasis on writing in the disciplines. For NSU, improving student writing across the university begins by establishing a unified, university-wide writing center, which will become “the center of consciousness about writing” on campus (North, 1984, p. 446). The writing center director and writing faculty members will work together—through the writing center—to help faculty members and students across the university learn to both embrace the importance of writing and improve their



pedagogical and practical writing skills, respectively. The center will offer individual and group appointments, while also facilitating supplemental, discipline-specific programming, including an undergraduate writing fellows program and online writing resources. The combination of these initiatives is designed to enhance writing for NSU students. This section reviews the literature that serves as the scholarly foundation of these efforts.

The Importance of Strong Written Communication Skills

The ability to accurately and concisely express meaning through writing is a prerequisite for success in today's fast-paced world (Mizrahi, 2015). Writing is a more complex skill than most people recognize; it is learned through a sequential process that combines the use of many interrelated components such as fine motor control, attention, language, memory, logistics, and organization (Burney, 2015). Academically, effective writing can enhance students' growth for critical thinking and learning (Bean, 2011). Thus, improving students' writing requires consistent student-faculty member interaction to develop fundamental concepts and address specific mechanical issues (Bok, 2006). Students that receive reinforcement in communication concepts such as professionalism, accuracy, clarity, and brevity show improvement in both their writing skill level and confidence (White, 2015). Moreover, it is essential for students to develop strong writing habits to communicate to a variety of audiences, including academic, professional, and personal (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2012).

After graduation, written communication skills have a profound impact in one's career, whether as a recent graduate seeking employment or as a seasoned employee trying to advance in his or her profession (Mizrahi, 2015). Graduates who enter the workplace with the ability to effectively communicate through writing are viewed by employers as major assets (Washington, 2014). In their *Job Outlook 2015* survey report, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) found that more than 70 percent of employers consider writing skills as a crucial determinant in their hiring processes (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2014). Moreover, the report found that "when considering new college graduates for job openings, employers are looking for leaders who can work as part of a team and communicate effectively." The primary form of communication referenced throughout the report focused on writing, which is not only critical to academic success but professional success as well.

It is no surprise that writing was considered one of the most important skills for new employees. Writing and communication have been appearing on such surveys and reports for years, including

- National Commission on Writing (nwp.org)
- National Council of Teachers of English: Commission on Writing Teacher Education (ncte.org)
- Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University (reinventioncenter.colostate.edu/the-boyer-report)

It is imperative to acknowledge that most employers consider it the responsibility of colleges and universities to improve their students' written communication skills (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2012). Accordingly, it is vital that students receive writing

instruction to help them prepare for their studies, as well as their future careers. Ultimately, students with superior writing skills are considered more professional and, consequently, a greater value to the company than students with insufficient writing skills (Lentz, 2013).

Writing Centers

U.S. News & World Report, as well as colleges and universities across the United States and around the world, recognize the importance of writing centers when it comes to enhancing students' written communication skills. Since the 1970s, the writing center field has grown quite significantly, and most U.S. colleges and universities now offer such programs. University-wide writing centers provide individualized writing assistance and extracurricular programming to students at all levels, from first-time in college students learning basic conventions of university-level academic discourse to graduate students preparing dissertations and publications.



At the most basic level, there are two types of individualized assistance writing center staff members offer to students: (a) generalist and (b) specialized (by discipline). A generalist writing tutor is recognized as someone who provides writing assistance without disciplinary knowledge or experience; he or she acts as a general, lay reader who has a strong understanding of writing and the writing process. A specialized tutor is someone who understands and has experience using discipline-specific discourse, in addition to having a strong understanding of the writing process; thus, he or she can provide students with specialized feedback in that area. While some early writing center theorists gravitated toward generalist tutors being the most effective (Hubbuck, 1988), a second group of researchers suggested that centers should also employ specialist tutors who can provide discourse-specific assistance to students across the curriculum (Kiedaisch & Dinitz 1993; Walker 1998).

Writing centers also provide programming beyond individualized writing assistance, which allows them to diversify their contributions to student learning. Such programming can have direct connections to curricula and courses (Carpenter, Whiddon, and Dvorak, 2014), and can be in collaboration with libraries (Elmborg & Hook, 2005). In addition, writing center programming can be extracurricular, targeting various areas of writing, including general writing groups (Kramer, 2016); creative writing groups (Reid, 2008); writing groups and initiatives for faculty (Eodice & Geller, 2013; Fels, 2008); academic and professional workshops; and other events that attract students, faculty members, and community members (Dvorak & Bruce, 2008).

While most writing center praxis has focused on undergraduate students, there has been a surge in writing center offerings to graduate students, both in the form of direct assistance, particularly for dissertations (Barron & Ciccirelli, 2016), and in programming (Brady & Singh-Corcoran, 2016; Reardon, Deans, and Maykel, 2016). Writing center services have become more in demand at the graduate level, as universities have recognized that many graduate students, particularly English language learners, face significant challenges with academic and professional writing.

Writing centers also provide critical services to multilingual students and English language learners (ELL) (Bruce & Rafoth, 2009; 2016). Writing centers with multilingual staff members can offer specialized assistance to multilingual students (Dvorak, 2016; Ronesi, 2009), as well as discipline-specific assistance to ELL students across the



curriculum (Craig, 2016). They also complement campus diversity initiatives. As Grimm (2009) noted, in the 21st-century writing center, the core value is productive and flexible engagement with linguistic, social, racial, and cultural diversity. Communication problems are understood as arising from competing (and often confusing) contexts rather than by negligent or lazy or underprepared students. Multilingualism and bidialectalism are understood as norms rather than aberrations. Literacy learning is recognized as a profoundly social and transformative undertaking in which learners shuttle among discourses. (p. 15)

Writing center staff members have the ability to work with students across the university curriculum in an effort to enhance students' written communication skills, which is one of the most important skills they need for academic and professional success. Writing centers provide individualized writing assistance that many students need to become more effective communicators, and centers can provide programming tailored to meet the needs of diverse student bodies. In sum, they can have powerful impacts on student learning and the educational environment in which they are located.

Writing in the Disciplines

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) programs have been an integral part of academic efforts to improve student writing since the 1970s. WAC recognizes that writing occurs in all academic disciplines and that practicing writing often can help students both learn about the content they are studying and improve their writing acumen. As noted by McLeod and Miraglia (2001),

WAC, broadly conceived, focuses on writing as an essential component of critical thinking and problem solving, key elements in a liberal arts education. If writing is a mode of learning, if it is a way of constructing knowledge, then the integration of writing with learning will continue, in one way or another, to be seen as a central feature of the learning process. (p. 3)

To implement WAC initiatives, universities can focus on Writing in the Disciplines (WID), which is a focused WAC program designed to introduce or give students practice with the language conventions of a discipline as well as with specific formats typical of a given discipline. For example, the engineering lab report includes much different information in a quite different format from the annual business report (The WAC Clearinghouse, "What is Writing in the Disciplines?").

Two common pedagogical approaches to WAC/WID, Writing to Learn and Writing to Communicate (Thaiss & McLeod, 2013), can help distinguish the differences between a general WAC approach and a more focused WID initiative. As Thaiss and McLeod stated, "Writing to Learn pedagogy encourages teachers to use frequent writing exercises, often informal and ungraded, to help learners probe what they know, what they need to learn, and ways to think about what they study" (p. 284). These exercises can include journals, response papers, freewrites, and annotations. General WAC programs can use these types of assignments across the curriculum.

WID initiatives are more likely to use Writing to Communicate pedagogy, which, according to Thaiss and McLeod (2013), "focuses on writing to an audience outside the self, usually for a formal purpose ... [It] uses the styles and vocabulary of a particular discourse

community or shifts language for a different purpose and audience” (p. 286). Writing to Communicate exercises include formal academic papers, research essays, lab reports, business reports, etc. Practice using the discipline-specific discourse is important for students, because “even though students read disciplinary texts and learn course material, until they practice the language use of the discipline through writing, they are less likely to learn that language thoroughly” (The WAC Clearinghouse, “Why Assign WID Tasks?”).

Faculty members should be aware of activities that lead to WAC and WID outcomes and incorporate them into course-based assignments when appropriate. Much of WAC/WID practice is at the undergraduate level, but it is not necessarily connected to first-year composition. Rather, it focuses on writing in upper-level courses, particularly in the majors.

Though writing support for graduate students has long been absent from WAC/WID literature and practice, WID initiatives have become increasingly popular at the graduate level. According to Brooks-Gillies, Garcia, Kim, Manthey, and Smith (2015), “at the graduate level, writing is the dominant way in which knowledge is presented and assessed. This happens through coursework, comprehensive exams, theses and dissertations, conference presentations, and publications” (“Graduate Writing Across the Disciplines, Introduction”). Despite this wide range of genres, the researchers suggest that universities pay too little attention to teaching graduate students how to write effectively, either through classroom instruction or support services.



Writing Fellows and Classroom-Based Tutoring Programs

Writing centers commonly carry out WAC/WID initiatives in two ways: (a) through writing fellows programs, and (b) through classroom-based tutoring programs. While similar, these models offer some different methods for reaching students where they write.

The first writing fellows program was started at Brown University in the early 1980s. Programs have since been established at hundreds of institutions across the country. Writing fellows are course-embedded writing assistants who provide additional writing support to students; the support can occur in and/or out of class, though the latter model is more prevalent. Writing fellows are typically undergraduate or graduate students trained in writing center pedagogy who also have experience with the discipline-specific writing conventions they help students practice and learn. While program models vary from institution to institution, most have several common traits. Typically, writing fellows

- are connected to courses that involve a significant amount of writing
- work closely with faculty members teaching said course to develop an understanding of course and assignment goals and objectives
- provide writing assistance, written and/or oral, to students outside of class

Similar to writing fellows programs, classroom-based tutoring programs connect a writing tutor to a specific course, and the tutor works closely with the faculty members and students. The key difference is that classroom-based tutors visit class meetings, which allows them to work with students during workshop times. Spigelman and Grobman (2005) stated that “classroom-based writing tutors facilitate peer writing groups, present programs, conference during classroom workshops, help teachers to design and carry out assignments, and much more” (p. 1). A growing number of writing centers have



been implementing course-embedded and classroom-based writing support programs (Carpenter, Whiddon, and Dvorak, 2014). When writing centers offer such assistance, they are able to make strong diplomatic connections with faculty members and students—which can increase the number of student visits to the writing center. Tutors can demonstrate writing center pedagogy in the classroom, where students are already comfortable, and can negotiate with faculty members how to best work with the students in the class (Decker, 2005). These positive experiences are designed to lead to more effective pedagogies used in the classroom, as well as stronger writing habits among the students.

Writing Fellows Work with Students at all Educational Levels

Writing fellows programs, in their many forms, have proven to be effective with students at a variety of academic levels. They have been shown to improve student writing in first-year college composition courses (Dvorak, Bruce, and Lutkewitte, 2012). They have also proven to be effective change agents for upper-level college courses (Zawacki 2008; Mullin, Schorn, Turner, Hertz, Davidson, and Baca, 2008), while helping students understand specialized discourses (Severino & Trachsel, 2008).

While the bulk of writing fellows research has focused on the undergraduate level, recent scholarship shows how universities can incorporate writing fellows programs into graduate and professional programs. Simpson, Clemens, Killingsworth, Rae, and Ford (2015) showed how fellows can be incorporated into STEM-related programs to improve student writing while changing a culture of writing on campus, while Hallman (2014) discusses effective strategies used for connecting a writing fellow to a graduate-level business course. Even secondary schools have begun effectively using writing centers and versions of writing fellows programs (Fels & Wells, 2011; Kent, 2006).

Writing Fellows Programs in Multiple Formats

Writing fellows programs have proven to be effective not only for ground courses, but in online formats as well. Arzt, Barnett, and Scopetta (2009) found that when fellows were actively involved with classes, they were able to conduct online sessions with relative ease, which led to student satisfaction with the program. Out of 144 students who responded to their end-of-the-semester survey administered, “74 percent of survey participants found having a writing associate in their class to be very helpful; 24 percent found the presence of an associate somewhat helpful; and only 1 percent reported that a writing associate was not helpful” (“Student Data” section).

Institutional QEPs That Include Writing

Over 50 SACSCOC institutions have developed QEPs that include writing. The QEP Proposal Writing Team reviewed many of them and found the following to be most useful for enhancing NSU’s QEP.

- 1. East Carolina University (ECU): *Write Where You Belong* (2013)**

ECU’s QEP provides several levels of writing support to their university, including the development of a new university writing center, the implementation of a writing mentors (a.k.a., writing fellows) program, and faculty support.

2. Eastern Kentucky University (EKU): *The Development of Informed, Critical, and Creative Thinkers Who Communicate Effectively* (2007)

One critical outcome of EKU's QEP was the development of a "Studio for Academic Creativity" where students can receive writing support.

3. University of Mississippi: *Write Here. Write Now. Enhancing Student Writing* (2009)

This QEP helped initiate the university's Center for Writing and Rhetoric and improve and expand the university's writing center. The University of Mississippi's five learning outcomes are closely associated with outcomes supported by the Council of Writing Program Administrators.

4. Old Dominion University (ODU): *Improving Disciplinary Writing* (2012)

ODU's QEP focuses largely on developing a strong WAC/WID initiative, providing faculty members with support and assisting academic programs with developing action plans for their units to enhance student writing. In addition, ODU uses both NSSE and FSSE as part of their assessment.

5. Tennessee State University (TSU): *WRITE: Write Reflect Integrate Transfer Excel* (2011)

TSU's QEP used an earlier version (from 2000) of learning outcomes supported by the Council of Writing Program Administrators as a foundation for their learning outcomes. Their QEP also focused on developing their university writing center and providing faculty support with teaching writing.

6. University of North Carolina—Pembroke (UNCP): *Write to the Top: Enhancing Student Writing through a Writing Intensive Program* (2010)

UNCP's QEP focused on student success both in college and after graduation by developing their general and professional writing skills. To that end, the university developed designated "writing enhanced" classes beyond first-year composition, as well as a required "writing in the disciplines" course for each major.

7. McNeese State University: *Write to Excellence* (2006)

McNeese State's QEP focused on enhancing student writing skills by incorporating more writing into designated first- and second-year general education courses. These courses were identified as "writing-enriched" courses. The university also developed a writing center to support students.

While each QEP is unique, they all strive to support student learning through the creation or enhancement of a university writing center (or similar support unit), most incorporate faculty support for teaching writing as an integral part of enhancing student learning, and ECU developed a writing mentors program to provide students with discipline-specific writing assistance outside of class. Also, ECU, Mississippi, ODU, TSU, and UNCP use research from and best practices supported by the Council of Writing Program Administrators as foundations for their projects. Finally, UNCP and McNeese State both identified and labeled specific undergraduate courses as "writing enhanced/enriched" in an effort to provide support to students enrolled in and faculty members teaching those courses.



V. CURRENT CAMPUS WRITING ACTIVITIES



This section describes various NSU campus initiatives that currently focus on writing instruction and assistance; the section after it outlines how the NSU proposed QEP will expand on them, centralize the organization, and provide access and resources to all students and faculty members. This section reviews existing writing-focused curricula and cocurricular programs and opportunities that provide students with writing instruction. It shows how, prior to the QEP, writing support programs across NSU colleges were disconnected from one another, sometimes overlapping and, at other times, providing inadequate assistance to all students, suggesting that the university needs to implement an institutional shift that brings writing support programs together under one umbrella, with accessibility to all.

Existing Curriculum

Undergraduate

There are only two academic programs at NSU that focus primarily on teaching writing at the undergraduate level: first-year composition and the writing minor. Both are facilitated by the Department of Writing Communication in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. Since first-year composition is a requirement only for undergraduates, a small percentage of NSU students receive significant formal writing instruction while at the university. While graduate/first professional faculty members are versed in discipline-specific content, they are not typically trained in teaching students how to communicate effectively via writing in their disciplines, as acknowledged by faculty members during focus-group meetings. In addition, there is little formal writing instruction for undergraduates beyond composition, particularly outside the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. The following list describes existing curricula focused on writing instruction.

- *First-Year Composition (COMP)*: Similar to most colleges and universities, NSU offers first-year composition courses as part of its general education program. The first-year composition sequence includes two required courses: COMP 1500 College Writing and COMP 2000 Advanced College Writing. COMP 1000 Basic Writing is offered to students who need additional writing practice. Though all undergraduate students are required to complete six credits of composition courses (or their equivalent), many complete that requirement prior to matriculating at NSU, and not all are required to take a writing-focused course beyond this sequence.
- *Writing Minor*: NSU offers a 15-credit Writing Minor. Courses include Civic and Community Writing, Business Writing, Scientific and Technical Writing, Writing Center Studies, and Writing for Technologies. Only six students were enrolled as writing minors at the start of fall 2016.
- *Writing-Based Courses Across the Disciplines*: Though limited, there are courses across the curriculum that focus on teaching discipline-specific writing. However, the university does not provide pedagogical support or professional development regarding writing instruction for faculty members teaching these courses. The QEP Committee investigated coursework across the colleges that focused on discipline-specific writing and developed the following short list.

Table 7

Sample Undergraduate Courses that Focus on Teaching Discipline-Specific Writing

College	Program(s)	Course
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	Criminal Justice	CRJU 3250 Interview, Interrogation, and Report Writing
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	History and Political Science	HIPS 2900 Research Methods in History and Politics
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	Paralegal Studies	LEGS 2100 Legal Research and Writing I
College of Health Care Sciences	Multiple	BHS 4100 Academic and Professional Writing
College of Health Care Sciences	Exercise Science	EXSC 4300 Research Methods in Sport and Physical Education
College of Psychology	Psychology	PSYC 3000 Psychological Research Methods

**Graduate**

Unlike the undergraduate curriculum, there are no graduate-level programs that focus solely on writing. The Department of Writing and Communication has revised its M.A. in Writing program into an M.A. in Composition, Rhetoric, and Digital Media. The program's focus has shifted slightly away from the production of texts to focusing more on the teaching of writing and digital media. The QEP Committee reviewed university-wide coursework at the graduate level for courses that focused on teaching discipline-specific writing and developed the following short list.

Table 8

Sample Graduate Courses that Focus on Teaching Discipline-Specific Writing

Level	College	Program(s)	Course
Master's	College of Health Care Sciences	Speech-Language Pathology	SLP 6070 Research Methods
Master's	College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	Conflict Resolution	DCRS 5020 Research Design
Doctoral	College of Health Care Sciences	Health Science, D.H.Sc.	DHS 8180 Medical Writing
Doctoral	College of Health Care Sciences	Multiple	MHS 5205 Writing for Medical Publication
Doctoral	College of Pharmacy	Pharmaceutical Sciences	HPH 7610 Scientific Writing
Doctoral	College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	Family Therapy	SFTD 5004 Reading/Writing /Editing for Doctoral Scholars

The review of NSU's curricula shows that while undergraduate students (who attend NSU as first-time in college for the full four-year program) are required to pass two sections of first-year composition, there are few non-WRIT courses beyond the first-year that focus significant attention on writing. The first-year composition courses, however, are not typically taken by transfer students; thus, not all undergraduates currently benefit from writing instruction at NSU. At the graduate level, there are also few courses that focus significant attention on writing instruction. Based on faculty member focus-group responses from across the institution, there is also limited support for faculty members teaching those courses outside the Department of Writing and Communication in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences.



Existing Cocurriculum

The university offers a few cocurricular programs that provide writing assistance to students. Each is operated by a different college, and their collective efforts do not provide assistance to all students at all levels in all colleges. The proposed QEP will unify and expand the programs listed below into one organizational structure (see Appendix B) that will support writing throughout the university and will be facilitated by experts in the fields of composition and rhetoric and writing centers. The unified program will provide writing assistance to all NSU students, undergraduate and graduate, at all campuses and online.

Writing Assistance: Tutoring

- **College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Writing Center**

The College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Writing Center provides writing assistance to students enrolled in first-year composition courses and College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences graduate programs. The college's Writing Center does not provide assistance to students enrolled in upper-level undergraduate courses in the college or to students outside the college, though anecdotal evidence indicates that many students in these areas have asked for assistance.

The College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Writing Center, led by the Department of Writing and Communication, supports first-year composition via a Writing Fellows Program that focuses solely on first-year composition. The program is in its fifth year and students and faculty members have reported a high level of satisfaction with the program (Dvorak, Bruce, and Lutkewitte, 2012). During the 2015–2016 academic year, the college offered 95 sections of COMP (57 fall, 36 winter) to approximately 800 students. Fellows were embedded in all of these classes. The fellows visited more than 300 class sessions and conducted more than 2,400 individual sessions with COMP students outside of class.

At the graduate level, the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Writing Center employs a professional writing coach who is assigned to work with graduate students. During 2015–2016, the writing coach offered more than 150 sessions to only 38 students in the college, which enrolls more than 1,200 students (fall 2016).

- **Health Professions Division Effective Writing Center for the College of Health Care Sciences**

The College of Health Care Sciences, part of NSU's Health Professions Division, offers the Effective Writing Center for the College of Health Care Sciences only to students enrolled in that college. As of August 2016, the College of Health Care Sciences enrolled 2,881 students, out of the Health Professions Division's 7,734 students. For the past few years, faculty members and students from other colleges in the Health Professions Division (Dental Medicine, Medical Sciences, Nursing, Optometry, Osteopathic Medicine, and Pharmacy) have attempted to use the College of Health Care Sciences Effective Writing Center, but opportunities have been limited. Three writing coaches offer mostly online appointments, and conduct approximately 700 sessions per year.

- **SharkWrites: The Abraham S. Fischler College of Education (FCE) Writing Resource Center**

SharkWrites is an online resource designed to connect students, faculty and staff members, alumni, and community members with resources that can help them to enhance their writing and research skills. The site includes resources created or gathered by Abraham S. Fischler College of Education faculty members and Alvin Sherman Library staff members on topics such as American Psychological Association (APA) formatting style, grammar, paraphrasing/quoting, and how to locate library resources. There are links for NSU students to request assistance from a librarian or a writing tutor from the College of Undergraduate Studies Tutoring and Testing Center (by appointment, in person, or via technology).



- **College of Undergraduate Studies Tutoring and Testing Center**

NSU's College of Undergraduate Studies provides academic support to undergraduate students through their Tutoring and Testing Center. The Tutoring and Testing Center offers undergraduate students support in a variety of ways, including tutoring in writing and math, general tutoring, and testing. The Tutoring and Testing Center has provided limited writing assistance to graduate students. During the academic year, 2015–2016, 575 students (423 undergraduate, 152 graduate) used the Tutoring and Testing Center's writing tutoring services for a total of 1,408 sessions. More than 60 percent of the services requested at this center are for math and sciences.

Writing Assistance: Workshops and Events

Some of the colleges offer writing-based workshops and events to their respective students and faculty members, some on a regular basis and others as needed. For example, the Health Professions Division offers APA Workshops and the College of Health Care Sciences moved a course in APA style to a series of self-paced online modules. Health Care Sciences faculty members have organized workshops designed to help the faculty teach writing more effectively. The Health Professions Division's College of Nursing offers a Student Success Seminar that provides students support with scholarly writing, Blackboard training, and using MS Word and other university resources.

The Abraham S. Fischler College of Education offers a series of dissertation workshops and the College of Engineering and Computing offers a series of technical writing workshops to their students and the general university community.

The Shepard Broad College of Law facilitates a Legal Research and Writing Outreach Program, which includes events on time management for writers, citation, professionalism in persuasive writing, and wellness. Professors volunteered to help organize the outreach events to reinforce the skills taught in Legal Research and Writing and help engage students with the larger legal community.

During the 2015–2016 academic year, faculty members in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, primarily from the Department of Writing and Communication, also offered writing workshops in conjunction with the Alvin Sherman Library, Farquhar Honors College, Office of Undergraduate Student Success, and the Veterans Resource Center. The departments of Conflict Resolution Studies and Family Therapy also offer workshops on dissertation writing.



While various colleges and departments provide writing support services to their students, from tutoring and mentoring to workshops and events, the services are not consistent with one another; there is limited, if any, formal assessment of these programs; and there are large numbers of students who are in colleges that do not offer such services. The only colleges that offer formal one-to-one writing support to their students are the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (only to first-year composition and graduate students), the HPD College of Health Care Sciences, and the College of Undergraduate Studies. These three colleges enroll 8,068 out of the university's 21,625 students (based on fall 2016 data; first-year composition students were counted as part of the College of Undergraduate Studies in order to not duplicate). Therefore, almost two-thirds of NSU students are enrolled in colleges that do not offer formal one-to-one writing support to their students. As noted, the Tutoring and Testing Center does offer appointments to graduate students, but their office is housed within the College of Undergraduate Studies and visits are significantly low (only 152 graduate students during 2015–2016). There is no similar structure offered to graduate students across the university. Thus, there is a significant gap in the writing support services offered by the university.

VI. QEP STRATEGIES

This section outlines new and expanded QEP strategies for improving student writing at NSU. QEP Committee members developed these strategies based on feedback from faculty members and students, as well as from best practices supported by the fields of composition-rhetoric and writing centers. Specifically, this section shows how NSU will develop a university-wide writing and communication center that will (a) offer general writing assistance to students at all levels in all formats; (b) facilitate an expanded undergraduate writing fellows program; (c) provide graduate student writing workshops and events; (d) offer faculty support for teaching discipline-specific writing, and (e) develop online writing resources.

NSU's Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center

Through the QEP, NSU will consolidate and expand its writing assistance programs, creating a unified, university-wide writing and communication center that will help the university carry out its mission. The university has committed to providing appropriate space and resources to support the center in its effort to enhance student writing.

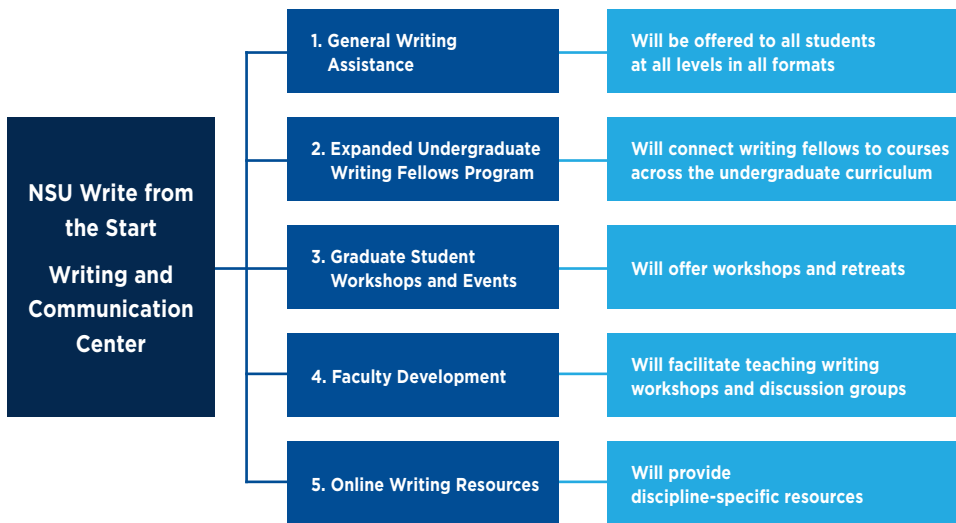
NSU's Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center will be a **student-centered**, cocurricular, academic program that will help students achieve **academic excellence**. Students of all levels, from first-semester undergraduates to dissertation-writing doctoral students, will be able to receive one-on-one and group writing assistance from peer and professional writing consultants. The NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center will provide faculty members and students with **innovative** teaching, learning, and **scholarship opportunities**, both in and out of the classroom. Students will work with, and learn from, a **diverse community** of writers and researchers. The NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center will support the university's mission and core values.

While much of the work of the NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center will be to offer individualized writing assistance to students across the curriculum, the center will facilitate student programming and faculty development opportunities designed to further enhance students' writing skills. A time line for the implementation and growth of the NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center can be found in Appendix C, while [Table 9](#) shows an overview of QEP strategies.



Table 9

Overview of Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center Strategies



Strategy 1. General Writing Assistance for Students at All Levels in All Formats

Like most writing centers, the NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center will offer individualized writing assistance to students at all levels, in all programs, and in all formats. Students will receive assistance at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming through final editing, and will also work with NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center staff members on developing and strengthening general writing skills and rhetorical knowledge.

Strategy 2. Expanded Undergraduate Writing Fellows Program

NSU's College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences currently facilitates a writing fellows program that embeds writing assistants into first-year composition courses. The NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center will expand that program to have writing fellows connected to undergraduate courses across the curriculum that teach writing in the disciplines.

Writing fellows will be connected to select "writing-enriched" (WE) undergraduate courses across the curriculum. The National Census of Writing, a comprehensive survey of 900 writing programs at universities and colleges in the United States, defines writing-enriched



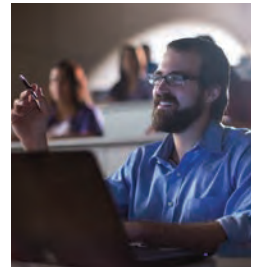
courses, also referred to as writing-intensive courses, as “a writing requirement that extends writing beyond first-year writing. Each institution has its own criteria for what constitutes a writing-intensive course” (“Glossary and Notes” section). Having reviewed required elements for writing-enriched courses at other universities, including two universities (UNCP and McNeese State) that had writing-based QEPs, the QEP Committee worked with faculty members to develop the following criteria for writing-enriched courses at NSU:

1. *Multiple Discipline-Specific Writing Assignments*—Graded writing assignments will demonstrate discipline-specific writing and occur throughout the course of the semester.
2. *Revision*—Writing assignments will go through the revision process. The instructor, and/or a writing consultant/fellow, will provide formative feedback prior to the project receiving a final grade.
3. *Rubrics*—Writing assignments will be evaluated based on well-defined rubrics (See Appendix D).
4. *Syllabus*—Course syllabi will encourage students to work with writing fellows and/or writing consultants at the NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center.
5. *Faculty Support*—Faculty members teaching writing-enriched courses across the curriculum will receive support and pedagogical assistance from NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center staff members, including writing fellows.
6. *Assessment*—The NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center and QEP Committee will work together to assess various facets of the writing-enriched initiative, including student writings. Assessment plans will be outlined in the assessment section.

Faculty members teaching writing-enriched courses will apply to have the NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center support their classes via an expanded version of the university’s writing fellows program. Similar to most writing fellows programs, the NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center Writing Fellows will be undergraduate and graduate students who have experience with discipline-specific writing conventions and will be educated in writing center pedagogy. In addition, the writing fellows will

- be connected to courses that involve significant discipline-specific writing
- work closely with faculty members to develop an understanding of course and assignment goals and objectives
- provide writing assistance, written and/or oral, to students outside of class
- not be involved with the final evaluation or grading of writing assignments

Once writing fellows are connected to writing-enriched courses, NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center staff members will work with faculty members teaching writing-enriched courses to determine how the writing fellows can best serve students in their courses. Every course is unique, so faculty members teaching writing-enriched courses will learn various models for meeting the needs of students and determine guidelines prior to the start of the semester. They will outline these guidelines for students in their syllabi or course materials, and NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center staff members will review guidelines with the writing fellows.



Strategy 3. Graduate Student Writing Workshops and Events

The NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center will provide NSU graduate students with a variety of opportunities to improve their writing. To that end, the center will offer a series of programs designed to meet the specific needs of graduate students, including those listed below:

- ***General Writing Assistance***—All graduate students will be able to work, face-to-face or online, with trained writing consultants as they complete writing-related projects. Graduate students will also be able to ask for assistance with developing their general writing skills.
- ***Dissertation Boot Camps***—These events will provide graduate students working on dissertations with “structured time and space” to write (Reardon, Kristina, Deans, and Maykel, 2016), as well as writing consultants who will provide conversations, feedback, and assistance.
- ***Discipline- and Profession-Specific Writing Retreats***—Graduate students are often required to write for professional purposes, from creating resumes to writing professional/personal statements (for residency programs, etc.). These retreats will provide students with opportunities to write and receive feedback on their professional documents.
- ***Graduate Writing Workshops***—Sessions will focus on a variety of graduate writing-related topics, including personal statements, conference proposals, abstracts, and papers.

Strategy 4. Faculty Support for Teaching Discipline-Specific Writing

In addition to working directly with students, the NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center will offer faculty support for teaching writing in the disciplines. This support will be available to full- and part-time faculty members, and will be offered on campus and online.

- ***NSU Write from the Start Faculty Writing Delegates***: Select faculty members in each college will act as liaisons between their college and the NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center. Participation can be counted toward university service, leadership, and engagement.



- *Writing Pedagogy Learning Communities:* Communities will be assisted by NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center faculty and staff members and faculty writing delegates. Community members—typically formed by a college—will identify concerns about student writing and writing instruction and investigate best practices to address those issues. Participation will be counted toward university service and engagement.
- *Teaching Writing in the Disciplines Series:* NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center faculty and staff members will offer workshops and seminars on the teaching of writing across the curriculum. Faculty members who want to utilize the writing fellows program will complete this series. Participation will be counted toward university service and engagement.
- *“Writing Dialogues” Series:* A quarterly forum for discussions about writing and the teaching of writing. Faculty and staff members from across the institution will be encouraged to submit proposals to present/lead discussions.
- *Writing Pedagogy Symposium:* Faculty and staff members from the NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center will organize an annual one-day symposium where faculty members can share best practices across the disciplines.

Strategy 5. Online Writing Resources

NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center staff members will work with faculty members and students to develop discipline-specific online writing resources to assist faculty members and students. These online resources will be available on the center’s website. NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center staff members will also provide synchronous online writing assistance to students at a distance who cannot visit the physical center on campus. Online resources and assistance will be especially critical to the success of the QEP, as almost one-third of NSU students are online.

- *Discipline- and Course-Specific Resource Pages:* NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center staff members will work with faculty members to develop online writing resources tailored to specific disciplines and courses. This will reduce student confusion when navigating the Internet. NSU’s Alvin Sherman Library creates class-specific library resource pages, so they will be used as a foundation for this approach.
- *General Writing Resource Pages:* Consistent with most online writing center work, the NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center staff members will create general writing resource pages designed to assist students through the writing process.
- *Synchronous Online Writing Assistance:* NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center staff members will offer synchronous online support to students at all levels. Online writing consultants will be educated and trained in current best practices for utilizing online platforms, including the use of audiovisual aides, telephones, and text-based commentary.

While most strategies will be offered to students at the undergraduate and graduate levels, the most significant differences between the offerings will be that (a) the expanded writing fellows program will only occur at the undergraduate level and (b) the facilitation of graduate level-specific workshops and events will be focused on postbaccalaureate students. Table 10 shows a breakdown of QEP strategies by undergraduate and graduate levels.



Table 10

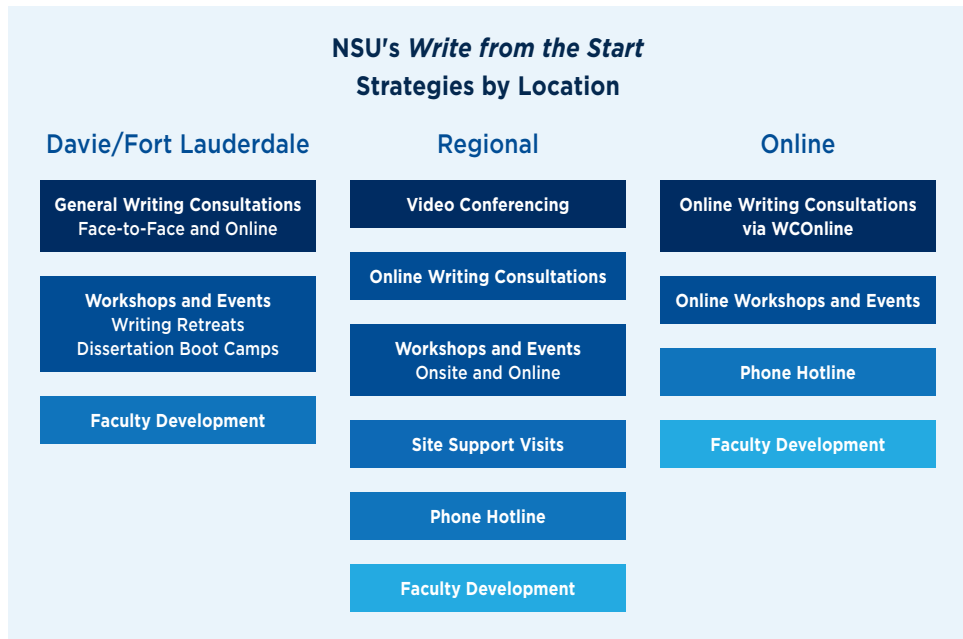
NSU QEP Strategies by Level

NSU Write from the Start Strategies by Level	
Undergraduate	Graduate
<p>General Writing Assistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Students • All Formats • All Modalities 	<p>General Writing Assistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Students • All Formats • All Modalities
<p>Expanded Writing Fellows Program</p>	<p>Workshop and Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Writing Assistant • Dissertation Boot Camps • Discipline- and Profession-Specific Writing Retreats
<p>Faculty Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Pedagogy Learning Communities • Teaching Writing in the Disciplines Series • “Writing Dialogues” Series • Writing Pedagogy Symposium 	<p>Faculty Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Pedagogy Learning Communities • Teaching Writing in the Disciplines Series • “Writing Dialogues” Series • Writing Pedagogy Symposium
<p>Online Writing Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipline and Course-Specific Writing Resource Pages • General Writing Resources • Synchronous Writing Consultations 	<p>Online Writing Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipline and Course-Specific Writing Resource Pages • General Writing Resources • Synchronous Writing Consultations

Since NSU provides instruction in multiple modalities and at multiple locations, the NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center will provide writing assistance in a variety of formats. Table 11 shows how the center will provide assistance based on students’ educational location.

Table 11

NSU QEP Strategies by Educational Location



VII. MARKETING/COMMUNICATION PLAN

NSU's *Write from the Start* QEP Marketing Committee commenced regular meetings during the summer of 2016. The QEP Marketing Committee currently consists of NSU staff members and students as noted in the following table.

Table 12

QEP Marketing Committee Members

Name	NSU Affiliation
Barbara Packer-Muti	QEP Cochair
Dana Mills	QEP Cochair
Kevin Dvorak	Professor and Writing Center/WAC Coordinator, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences
Michaela Greer	Undergraduate Student
Brandon Hensler	Public Relations and Marketing Communications
Samantha Hull	Graduate Student
Eddie Jitraphai	Student Affairs and College of Undergraduate Studies
Mercedes Lardizabal	Student Affairs and College of Undergraduate Studies
Jacqueline Lytle	Undergraduate Student
Alejandrina Matias	Graduate Student
Jonathan May	Student Affairs, College of Health Care Sciences
Nicholas Pascucci	Institutional and Community Engagement
Marcia Perez-Del Valle	Public Relations and Marketing Communications
Ronald Ryan	Office of Publications, Business Services
Mark Schuknecht	Innovation and Information Technology
Joycelyn Vogt	Office of Regional Campuses

The committee's minutes and contact information is available at <https://www.nova.edu/portal/qep/marketing-committee.html>.

The committee was charged with creating a marketing/communication plan that would target multiple audiences, including students at all levels (undergraduate, graduate, and first-professional), faculty and staff members, and administrators. Inherent in the process was to create a QEP brand that will be instantly recognizable.

The first task of the committee was to review and approve the QEP logo. NSU's Office of Publications, along with members of the Student Affairs media team, created a variety of QEP logos. These logos were presented to the QEP committee and to student and faculty focus groups. The final selection, approved by the QEP Marketing Committee, will be used in all messaging about the NSU QEP, including on the QEP website, on QEP documents, and the like.

The committee also agreed that the cornerstone of the QEP campaign would be a short (30-60 second) promo video that will be featured on the website; sent out via mass email to all students and NSU employees; and featured on social media, SharkTube, and at university-wide events, such as Team 2020 and the Student Events and Activities Board's SEA Thursday.

The QEP Marketing Committee will continue to partner with the following NSU offices to collaborate on a uniform QEP message: NSU's Office of Publications, NSU's Office of Innovation and Information Technology (OIIT), NSU's OIIT Digital Media Services, the Office of Human Resources, the Office of Regional Campuses, and the Office of Public Relations and Marketing Communications.

The QEP marketing campaign will commence in January 2017 and will continue throughout the calendar year. During that time period, the following public relations information on the QEP will be disseminated:

- ads on NSU's SharkLink
- pop-up information displayed on SharkLearn for every student prior to registration
- announcements at meetings for the Student Government Association, President's 64, and President's Town Hall (for students and for employees)
- information brochures provided to all academic advisors
- bookmarks and information available in residence halls, the Don Taft University Center, in classroom buildings, and at a variety of events
- banners posted in the Welcome Center, each of the Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus buildings, and at each regional campus building
- email blasts sent to all employees and students
- information on the QEP website (nova.edu/qep) and on the NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center website.



The QEP Marketing Committee recommended QEP events, including a QEP kick-off event and a Fridays with the Fellows event (both live on all campuses and online).



After the initial calendar year (2017), the QEP Marketing Committee will continue to market the strategies and services available at the NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center. In order to do so, the committee intends to utilize various websites, SharkBytes, SharkFins, SharkTube, the Journey Wall, mass emails, cork boards, and *The Current* (student newspaper), in addition to including information about enhancing writing during orientation for all students (undergraduate, graduate, and first-professional). Information about writing services through the NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center will continue to be provided to faculty members through department chairs and deans.

VIII. ASSESSMENT PLAN

NSU's QEP is intended to enhance student writing across the curriculum, with a special emphasis on writing in the disciplines. The overall plan will include focusing on the development of writing strategies that are designed to give students practice with the language conventions of a discipline, as well as with specific formats typical of a given discipline. Calling on best practices in the field, the strategies to help facilitate this process will include the expansion of the NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center, employment of writing fellows to assist faculty members in providing constructive feedback in designated writing-embedded courses, development and implementation of a workshop series focusing on graduate student writing, development and implementation of a series of faculty-support workshops aimed at helping faculty members learn the most effective ways to provide feedback to develop writing skills, and development of a series of online writing resources aimed at providing assistance to students at a distance in both synchronous and asynchronous formats.

The purpose of the assessment process is to measure the degree to which the QEP is achieving its goals. Results obtained from a variety of assessment instruments will be used to evaluate the success of the QEP's implementation and inform decision-making should changes need to be made. The assessment plan details the processes for evaluating the extent to which student writing has been affected by the myriad QEP strategies detailed throughout the proposal. The plan contains relevant direct and indirect measures of student learning and measures outcomes throughout the entire implementation of the QEP.

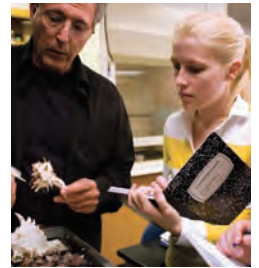
Implementation of Assessment Software

In order to effectively collect assessment data for the QEP, NSU will purchase the software solution LiveText. LiveText develops and offers campus-wide applications for assessment of student learning achievement and associated data reporting. As a byproduct of these activities, NSU will have the enhanced capacity to report and demonstrate progress on *planning, teaching, and learning* associated with the QEP strategies.

Direct Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Writing-Enriched Course Assignments

Assessment of assignments will take place at the course level for the expanded writing fellow program. Briefly, a writing-enriched course is one that assigns considerable writing in the discipline of the student's major. These writing-enriched courses will provide students with structured writing activities in their respective discipline and will include feedback to enhance their writing skills. The data to be collected from the writing-enriched courses will include at least one course assignment/writing artifact completed during a given semester, as well as an end-of-the-semester reflection on their writing. These documents will be analyzed qualitatively to determine themes for review to inform change, if needed. Quantitative assessments for the writing-enriched course assignments will take place annually.



Assignments from the writing-enriched courses will be assessed using a standardized rubric (see Appendix D). The rubric is designed to evaluate the QEP student learning outcomes and will help to create a score that can be used to quantify student success in attaining the outcomes explicated earlier in the proposal (rhetorical knowledge, critical thinking, reading and composing, processes, conventions and reflection). The results of the analysis will help inform the QEP Committee as to which outcomes seem to be most positively affected by the various strategies, as well as indicating those areas where improvement gains are less apparent. Data analysis will allow for the QEP Committee to modify, if necessary, the implementation plan to ensure that consistent growth is seen across the five outcomes. On the basis of this analysis, improvements will be incorporated into the curriculum, pedagogy, faculty preparation, or other areas to address the weaknesses for each course.

The rubric that will be used in the writing-enriched courses was developed by the QEP content area expert, Kevin Dvorak, and his colleagues in the Department of Writing and Communication. The process of rubric development/adaption included consideration of other widely used rubrics, including the Written Communication Value Rubric developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Writing Center Resource Utilization and Satisfaction

Utilization changes for the NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center will be assessed through the collection of descriptive data. The center will collect data for visits to the physical location, inquiries/assistance services provided online, and postsession client satisfaction questionnaires. These data will track (a) total number of visits, (b) an unduplicated count of unique visits, (c) average number of visits per user, and (d) satisfaction with service provision as documented in brief reflection statements collected on postsession client evaluations. Data will be disaggregated for the online and face-to-face services.

The current writing fellows program, which only works with first-year composition courses, has been collecting client satisfaction surveys since 2011. The assessment team will continue collecting data to assess client's level of satisfaction with each session attended, as well as an assessment of overall satisfaction with the services provided by the writing fellows. In addition to assessing satisfaction, data will be collected to assess the factors



that led a student to seek writing help (e.g., faculty member referral or self-referral). It is expected that the referrals from faculty members will increase as a result of the increased emphasis and development of the NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center services. Overall, preimplementation response data for each question will be compared with postimplementation response data. In addition, NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center usage data for each year of the QEP will be compared to usage data for previous years, including years prior to the opening of the new center space. Usage over time (monthly and/or weekly) will also be compared, to see whether changes are consistent or vary during the year.

Writing Fellows Assigned to Courses

The writing fellows will be assessed through surveys distributed to students and faculty members in the writing-embedded courses that are served by fellows. Student questions will focus on the usefulness/helpfulness of the writing fellows. Faculty members will be asked similar questions, assessing their perceptions of the value of adding writing fellows to their courses in terms of enhancing student learning. Since the writing fellows program has not been formally implemented university-wide at the undergraduate level, no pre-QEP data exists for comparison. Questions will be asked on the faculty survey regarding the development of student writing skills pre- and postimplementation to gain some understanding as to the feelings faculty members have about the addition of the fellows.

Graduate Student Writing Workshops

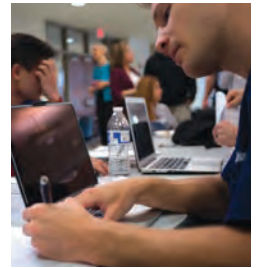
In addition to collecting attendance data, the graduate student writing workshops will include a pre-posttest assessment to examine knowledge gains of participants. Prior to each workshop, a 3-5 question assessment will be administered by the facilitator of the workshop. Each workshop assessment will be unique, measuring only the skills that will be addressed in the corresponding workshop. This assessment strategy will allow empirical feedback for the writing center staff to help inform how well the objectives for each workshop session are being met. The instrument will also collect reflections from participants relative to ways in which attendees will utilize newly learned writing skills.

Faculty Workshops and Events

Briefly, faculty members participating in the workshops and events, face-to-face and online, will learn about best practices in the teaching and assessing of writing. Faculty member participation will be assessed through the collection of descriptive data. The NSU Write from the Start Writing and Communication Center will collect data for both attendance at the live sessions provided on campus and the synchronous and asynchronous workshop sessions delivered online. These data will track total number of faculty members attending each workshop and event and an unduplicated count of unique faculty member attendance. Data will be disaggregated for the online and face-to-face services.

Also, surveys for the faculty member workshop participants will be conducted immediately after the workshop is completed, as well as at the end of the semester within which the workshop was offered. The faculty member surveys will be designed to assess the extent to which the workshops achieved their objectives. Focus groups of participants will be held at least one semester after the faculty members complete the workshops to discuss their impact on the faculty members' teaching and their students' learning. Developers

and facilitators will be informed of the results so they can make improvements where necessary. In addition, faculty members will be asked to voluntarily provide students' written artifacts from the course they taught prior to the workshops, as well as students' written artifacts from the same course taught after participation in the workshop. This will enable pre- and postassessments of the faculty member feedback on students' writing through a cross-sectional research design.



Indirect Assessment of Student Outcomes

In addition to the direct assessment strategies listed above, a set of indirect assessments will be employed to provide insights into the overall success of the QEP. NSU's overarching goal is for the QEP to serve as a catalyst of change for the development of permanent structures and processes aimed at creating a campus environment that puts writing proficiency in the forefront of student learning. While this goal is lofty and somewhat difficult to measure, the QEP Assessment Team will collect and analyze data through several indirect assessments. These indirect assessments will allow the university to gain perspective on the cultural shifts that may be occurring as a result of the successful implementation of the QEP.

National Survey of Student Engagement

NSU has been administering the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in the winter semester every third year since 2004. The data collected by the NSSE survey include students' self-reports of quantity and frequency of engagement in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development. For the purposes of the QEP, the assessment team will focus on the NSSE questions from the "Experiences with Writing" module. According to NSSE, "This module is the result of an ongoing collaboration between NSSE and the Council of Writing Program Administrators. The questions touch on three aspects of good writing assignments—interactivity, meaning-making, and clarity. It complements questions on the core survey about how much writing students do, the nature of their course assignments, and perceived gains in written expression," (NSSE, 2016). NSSE data are collected by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and disseminated to the university community. The QEP Assessment Team will review the data over time to ascertain changes in students' responses from the "Experiences with Writing" module after QEP implementation. The assessment team will also use national NSSE data to compare NSU's student responses to the national norms regarding the extent to which student engagement with writing has changed over time.

The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)

NSU has been administering the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) in the winter semester every third year since 2004. The FSSE instrument will be administered to faculty members as an indirect measurement of students' critical thinking skills. In addition to examining changes in the overall FSSE scores, particular attention will be paid to the results of the "Experiences with Writing" (EW) module. The EW module is designed to assess three aspects of good writing assessments: interactivity, meaning-making, and clarity. The QEP Assessment Team will review the data over time to ascertain changes in faculty member responses from the EW module after QEP implementation. The assessment team will also use national FSSE data to compare NSU's student responses to the national norms regarding the extent to which student engagement with writing has changed over time.



Course Evaluations

NSU administers course evaluations online for each course section after each semester. The course evaluations assess several dimensions of the course including course format, relevance to the field of study, and overall organization. In addition, a set of questions assesses student perceptions of the instructor, including the quality of instructor feedback. Specific questions will be added to the evaluation instrument to help gain perspective on whether students perceive the quality of feedback relating to writing as effective. These questions provide indirect assessment of student learning outcomes 3 (writing process) and 5 (reflection).

Annual Student Survey

NSU developed a web-based student survey that has been administered annually since 2007. This annual survey is provided to all NSU students (undergraduate, graduate, and first-professional) in the fall semester and is analyzed by NSU institutional researchers at the overall university level, as well as at the college level, with additional analysis by degree level within colleges. Beginning in the fall 2016 semester, six additional questions have been added to the NSU annual student survey, in preparation for QEP assessment purposes. The additional questions, with a writing focus, are as follows:

- NSU has prepared me to meet the expectations of college level writing.
- Faculty members in my discipline are committed to helping me become a better writer.
- Faculty members in my discipline have helped me become a better writer.
- I am aware of the writing services available at NSU.
- I use the writing services available at NSU.
- NSU's writing services have helped me become a better writer.
- What prompts you to use NSU's writing services? (possible answers: to get another reader's perspective; faculty recommendations; understand faculty feedback; clarification; writer's block; I do not use the services; other)

The NSU annual student survey additional writing questions will provide for an indirect assessment of student learning outcomes 1 through 4.

Annual Alumni Survey

The Alumni Survey is administered annually by the Office of Institutional Research. The data collected reflect graduates' attitudes about their level of satisfaction with their academic experience. The Alumni Survey currently includes three questions regarding the importance of writing in the alumni's current careers, as well as perceptions of their preparedness to communicate effectively orally and in writing in their jobs. Data from the Alumni Survey is not intended to directly assess any outcomes in particular, but to provide data to demonstrate whether alumni report favorable attitudes toward their preparedness to write and communicate effectively in the context of their jobs. Historical data from the

last three years will serve as a baseline against which data from students affected by the implementation of the QEP will be compared as they complete the Alumni Survey. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will work in collaboration with the assessment team to collect and analyze the results from all respondents for each relevant question.

Table 13 lists assessment information regarding the QEP.

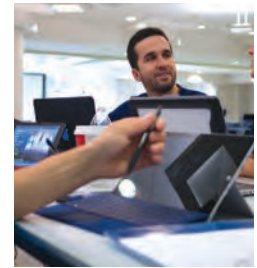


Table 13

NSU QEP Assessment Methods

Assessment Instrument	Purpose	Data Source	Direct/Indirect Measure
Writing Enriched Course Assignments	Assess student writing as defined by the student learning outcomes.	student assignments from the identified, writing-embedded courses; student reflections	Direct
Writing Center Resource Utilization and Satisfaction with Services	Assess the frequency/incidence rates for, and satisfaction with, the writing center.	total student visits, number of visits per student, nature of the visit; brief, postsession client reflections.	Direct
Writing Fellows Effectiveness Survey	Assess the perceived effectiveness of writing fellows in courses.	Students and faculty members from courses with an assigned writing fellow	Direct
Faculty Workshops in Best Practices Pedagogy	Assess the perceived benefits and learning associated with faculty workshops.	faculty member surveys completed by workshop participants	Direct
Graduate Student Writing Workshops	Assess the learning outcomes of individual workshop sessions.	pre and postassessments completed by graduate student workshop participants; postworkshop reflection statements.	Direct
National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	Review NSSE data both pre- and post-QEP to assess whether any changes have been demonstrated institutionally. Comparisons to benchmark institutions will also be made.	overall NSSE assessment and the "Experiences with Writing" module	Indirect
Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)	Review FSSE data as indirect measurement of students' critical thinking skills, both pre- and post-QEP, to assess whether any changes have been demonstrated institutionally. Comparisons to benchmark institutions will also be made.	overall FSSE assessment and the "Experiences with Writing" module	Indirect
Student Course Evaluations	Collect data regarding the quality of feedback relating to writing as effective in courses across the curriculum.	questions from the overall student course evaluations completed each semester	Indirect
Annual Student Survey	Collect data regarding students' perceptions of NSU's writing resources.	questions from the NSU Annual Student Survey	Indirect
Alumni Survey	Assess alumni attitudes about their level of satisfaction with their academic experience related to preparedness for writing in their careers.	questions from the annual alumni survey	Indirect

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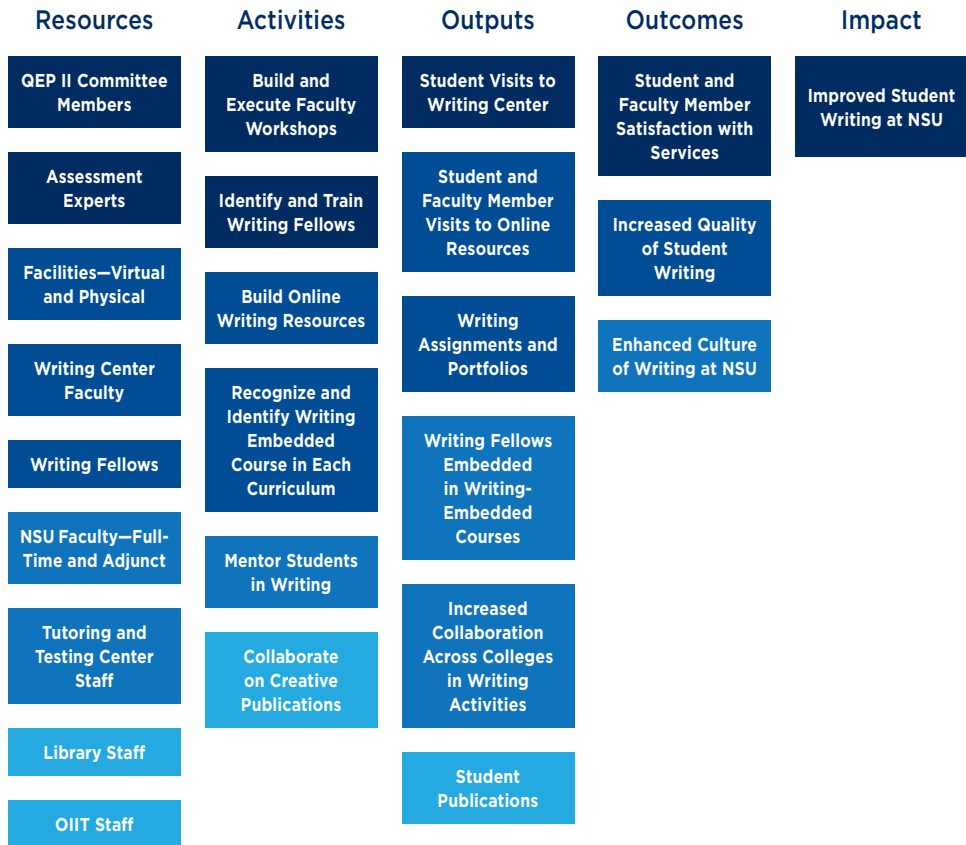
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X. APPENDICES

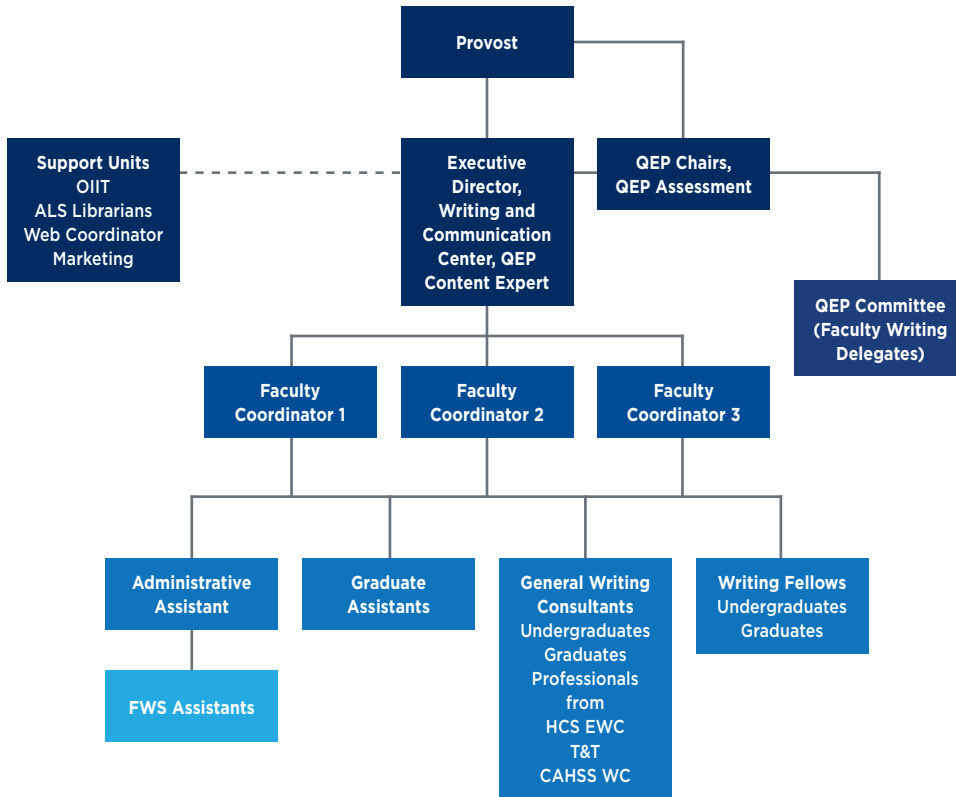
Appendix A—QEP Program Logic Model



Appendix B—Organizational Structure

NSU Write from the Start

Writing and Communication Center Organizational Chart



Organizational Structure

Provost

- QEP Cochairs (Assessment)
- QEP II Committee
- Executive Director, Writing and Communication Center
 - Faculty Coordinator #1
 - Faculty Coordinator #2
 - Faculty Coordinator #3
 - Administrative Assistant
 - Undergraduate Student Employees
 - Graduate Assistants
 - Writing Fellows (Graduate and Undergraduate)
 - General Writing Consultants (Professional and Peer)
- Support Units: OIT, ALS Librarians, Web Coordinator, Marketing

Appendix C—QEP Timeline

QEP Strategies

- 1) Offer general writing assistance to all NSU students.
- 2) Facilitate an expanded undergraduate writing fellows program.
- 3) Provide graduate student writing workshops and events.
- 4) Offer faculty member support for teaching discipline-specific writing.
- 5) Develop online writing resources.

Strategies are connected to actions in the timeline below.

Date	Strategy	Action
Winter 2017		
	1-5	promote QEP
	1	identify physical writing and communication center
	2	recruit writing fellows
	2	identify potential undergraduate writing-enriched (WE) courses
	2	identify pilot WE courses with writing fellows for fall 2017
	3	identify graduate-level writing concerns
	3	begin developing graduate programming
	4	identify faculty writing delegates
	2, 4	identify writing enriched courses
	5	develop initial WCC website
	1-5	assess
Fall 2017		
	1-5	promote QEP
	1, 5	recruit general writing consultants
	2	recruit writing fellows
	1-3	educate and train writing consultants and writing fellows
	2	facilitate pilot WE courses with writing fellows
	2	identify WE courses for winter 2018
	3	pilot graduate student programming
	4	facilitate faculty development workshops and events
	4	train faculty members to use software
	5	enhance online resources
	1-5	assess
Winter 2018		
	1-5	promote QEP
January	1	open writing and communication center
	1	offer general writing assistance to all NSU students
	1, 5	recruit general writing consultants
	2	recruit writing fellows
	1-3	educate and train writing consultants and writing fellows
	2	facilitate writing-enriched courses with writing fellows

	2	identify WE courses for fall 2018
	3	facilitate graduate student programming
	4	facilitate faculty development workshops and events
	4	train faculty members to use software
	5	enhance online resources
	1-5	assess
Fall 2018		
	1-5	promote QEP
	1	offer general writing assistance to all NSU students
	1, 5	recruit general writing consultants
	2	recruit writing fellows
	1-3	educate and train writing consultants and writing fellows
	2	facilitate writing-enriched courses with writing fellows
	2	identify WE courses for winter 2019
	3	facilitate graduate student programming
	4	facilitate faculty development workshops and events
	4	train faculty members to use software
	5	enhance online resources
	1-5	assess
Each Semester 2019-2023		
	1-5	promote QEP
	1	offer general writing assistance to all NSU students
	1, 5	recruit general writing consultants
	2	recruit writing fellows
	1-3	educate and train writing consultants and writing fellows
	2	identify future WE courses
	2	facilitate writing-enriched courses with writing fellows
	3	facilitate graduate student programming
	4	facilitate faculty development workshops and events
	4	train faculty members to use software
	5	enhance online resources
	1-5	assess

Appendix D—QEP Writing Assessment Rubric

	SLO 1	SLO 2	SLO 3	SLO 4	SLO 5
	Rhetorical Knowledge	Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing	Processes	Conventions	Reflection
	<i>Produce academic writing that demonstrates an awareness of context, purpose, and audience that is appropriate to the student's discipline.</i>	<i>Locate, evaluate, and properly integrate primary and secondary research sources.</i>	<i>Demonstrate writing as a process that includes invention, drafting, revision, and editing.</i>	<i>Present writing that is free of serious grammatical and mechanical errors.</i>	<i>Assess and explain the major rhetorical choices made in the writing.</i>
4 Excellent	The writing demonstrates strong awareness of context, purpose, and audience, using discipline-specific language appropriately and effectively.	The writing shows a strong use of appropriate sources, primary and/or secondary, that add depth and knowledge to the content. The resources are integrated seamlessly and are formatted correctly.	The writing process shows significant, effective time spent through each stage.	The writing is grammatically and mechanically strong. It is free of errors and mistakes involving spelling, punctuation, and diction. Writing is free of fragments, comma splices, and run-ons.	The writer demonstrates heightened awareness of rhetorical choices, providing examples of choices regarding the use of discipline-specific language and conventions, as well as task-based requirements.
3 Above Average	The writing demonstrates a solid awareness of context, purpose, and audience. It uses discipline-specific language appropriately, though it could have been more effective.	The writing uses primary and/or secondary sources effectively. They make the content stronger, though there may be minor issues with integration and/or formatting.	The writing process shows effective time spent through most stages.	The writing is grammatically and mechanically sound. It has a few mistakes, though they do not distract readers. There are few fragments, comma splices, and run-ons.	The writer demonstrates a solid awareness of rhetorical choices, though may not provide strong examples of choices made regarding language, conventions, and purpose.
2 Adequate	The writing demonstrates an awareness of context, purpose, and audience, though it struggles at times. It uses discipline-specific language, but not always appropriately or effectively.	The writing uses primary and/or secondary sources, though they may not always be effective. There are occasional issues with integration and/or formatting.	The writing process shows that the writer worked through each stage, though more effective work could have been completed at each stage.	The writing is coherent, though there are some noticeable mistakes, and possible errors that may distract readers.	The writer demonstrates some awareness of rhetorical choices, though may not provide clear examples of them.
1 Inadequate	The writing clearly struggles to identify its context, purpose, and/or audience. It struggles to use discipline-specific language correctly.	The writing shows a lack of primary and/or secondary sources, and does not use them effectively. There are significant issues with integration and formatting.	The writing process is not clear, and the writer may not have completed each stage.	The writing shows significant problems with grammar and mechanics, making it difficult to read. There are frequent errors.	The writer demonstrates little awareness of rhetorical choices and does not provide examples.

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