Description

In May 2010, Colby College launched an initiative to improve students’ writing skills across the disciplines. Approved by the faculty, this initiative reflects the commitment of the Colby community to excellence in writing as a lifelong practice. Now named the Colby Writing Program, the initiative is expanding the number of writing-intensive courses throughout the curriculum in a fashion that engages our students in repeated opportunities to improve their writing skills across all four years of study. The first phase of the Colby Writing Program invites faculty across all disciplines to create introductory writing-intensive experiences; these W1 courses will fulfill the W1 requirement for first-year students. All introductory writing-intensive courses will be capped at 16 students. The curricular content of these courses will reflect the discipline in which they are offered but will differ from other courses within a department or program in terms of their writing intensity.

With the generous support of a Davis Educational Foundation grant, the Colby Writing Program Steering Committee is now inviting faculty with continuing academic appointments to submit proposals for introductory writing-intensive courses to be taught beginning in the 2013-2014 academic year. Successful applicants will receive a grant of $3,000, priority access to curricular development workshops and training seminars, and preferential support from the Farnham Writers’ Center that includes access to writing fellows to provide tutorial and pedagogical support when the courses are taught. Up to three more W1 grants will be awarded during the 2012-2013 academic year.

Common Understandings for First-Year Writing Courses (W1s)

An important aspect of an expanded introductory writing-intensive curriculum at Colby is the focus it brings to shared principles of excellent writing, no matter the discipline. Whatever the subject, W1 course proposals should include curricular content that incorporates the following common understandings for introductory writing-intensive courses at Colby:

1. Students must write on a weekly basis, either formally for a grade or in an ungraded fashion across a variety of modes.
2. During the course, students will normally be expected to write three to four essays, with revision, for a term total of approximately 20 pages of graded writing.

3. Course work may include peer editing, in-class writing, and other writing opportunities such as journals, blogs, speeches, editorials, summaries, response papers, and position papers.

4. W1 professors will use rubrics or explicit guidelines in the assessment of their students’ writing. These guidelines will be communicated to the students in advance of the assigned writing exercise.

5. For each writing assignment, students will receive feedback on their writing in an individual conference with the W1 professor or the writing fellow assigned to the course.

6. W1 professors must assign a grammar and usage handbook, or its equivalent, as a reference.

7. Students will learn and use appropriate documentation and citation styles.

8. Students will learn the meaning and consequences of plagiarism.

9. All W1 professors may be asked to submit student papers for the purpose of evaluating the program and designing the best possible assistance for W1 faculty, including workshops and Writers’ Center supports. All submissions will be kept confidential and assessed in the aggregate.

**Grant Guidelines**

- Proposals for introductory writing-intensive courses (W1s) are welcome from Colby faculty members with continuing appointments.
- Proposals for revisions to existing courses will be considered, and are encouraged.
- Each successful applicant should plan to teach the newly developed course in at least two of the next three academic years, beginning in 2013-14. Recipients will receive their grant in the initial pay period of the term they first teach their course.
- Instructors may teach the newly developed courses more than once in the same academic year.
- Each faculty member teaching a W1 course will have the support of a writing fellow trained and employed by the Farnham Writers’ Center. Writing fellows will serve as liaisons between the instructors and the students and may provide tutorial instruction as well as peer review and tutoring sessions for assigned essays or papers.
- Applications for team-taught courses will be considered, either in conjunction with an
Integrated Studies Program Cluster or for two courses with a thematically-tied curriculum across multiple terms (e.g., fall/JanPlan or JanPlan/Spring). Proposals will be strongest if the proposed W1 course can stand alone if necessary.

**Curricular and Pedagogical Course Development Support**

Faculty members who receive grants are encouraged to participate in curriculum development workshops to be held in the spring of the 2012-2013 academic year and in subsequent academic years. These workshops will provide specific pedagogical and curricular design support to faculty as they develop their courses. The Colby Writing Program and the Farnham Writers’ Center will provide support for training seminars for all faculty to facilitate a sharing of best practices in the teaching of writing, additional support for methods of assessment, tutorial assistance, and curriculum development.

**Application Process**

Please submit your application electronically and include:

1) Your name and academic appointment;

2) A draft description of your proposed course that articulates the key learning goals;

3) A preliminary syllabus or tentative outline of topics to be covered in the course;

4) A statement describing how this course will meet the W1 Common Understandings outlined above and how your course might make use of a writing fellow; and

5) A statement of support from your department chair or program director that addresses how this offering will affect both staffing and the broader curricular goals for the major, and which years and semesters it would be offered. Remember, the course must be offered at least twice in the next three years.

**Timetable**

The deadline for this round of applications is Friday, February 22, 2013. Please email your application to Stacey Sheriff (ssheriff@colby.edu).