

# Proposal for Implementing the Q.E.P. in Upper Division Courses

2<sup>nd</sup> Draft  
March 31, 2009

## **Purpose:**

As a means of accomplishing Goal 2 of the Q.E.P. (p. 22: “To create a university-wide culture of writing by establishing learning outcomes related to writing in all academic programs”) and to help achieve the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> specific learning outcomes (pp. 23-24), I would like to propose that the university implement the following.

## **Proposed Degree Requirement:**

*To earn a baccalaureate degree from Texas A & M International University, a student must complete at TAMIU three courses beyond freshman English that are identified in the course schedule and on the transcript as “writing intensive” courses. Only one of these courses may be at the 2000-level, and at least one must be in the major field in which the student is getting a degree.\**

*\* Chairs, with their dean’s endorsement, may approve transfer courses at the 3000-4000 level as meeting up to two of the three required writing intensive courses if the student can provide documentation deemed adequate to justify such a substitution. The requirement that at least one of the writing intensive courses must be taken at TAMIU in the student’s major may not be met by the substitution of a transfer course. Effective Spring 2010.*

## **Justification:**

After the freshman writing program, students need intensive practice if they are to build on the basic compositional skills acquired in freshman English and to leave the university as graduates who have effective written communication skills. They especially need guidance and practice in the discourse requirements of their academic and occupational areas of study. This proposal would help achieve these educational goals while maintaining maximum curriculum and scheduling flexibility.

## **Curriculum Implications and Scheduling:**

No new courses need be created. Courses that are currently being offered could be designated as “writing intensive” (WI) courses or converted into “WI” courses. Further, a course might be offered as a “WI” course one semester but not in another semester (e.g., if the writing assignments are reduced and enrollment caps raised). Each semester, each degree granting discipline would offer at least one course that it designates as being “WI.” Non-degree granting disciplines could also offer such courses for students wishing to take them as electives or as part of a minor. Capstone courses for a discipline should be “WI” and should feature a research and documentation component (see below).

### **Defining “WI” Course:**

“WI” courses may be defined as such if 60% or more of the course grade is based on a “significant” number of formal and informal writing assignments appropriate to the discipline.

Essays on exams, formal academic papers, lab reports, proposals, business letters, journals, critiques – the range of appropriate informal and formal writing tasks is great. Because the fifth learning objective of the Q.E.P. is that students will learn to deploy the research and documentation expectations of their discipline, the capstone course for a degree would need to feature an appropriate research project requiring a written, properly documented paper that conforms to the written conventions of that field of study or work. The chair and the dean of the college will certify courses as being “WI” based on proposals submitted by faculty members and verified later by course syllabi.

### **Class Sizes:**

In order to provide students with the opportunity to get sufficient faculty guidance in their development as writers, enrollments in “WI” classes will be limited to no more than 30 students. In exceptional cases, the chair and the dean will want to lower this limit.