For the first time, in the fall of 2014, The College of Engineering launched a writing instruction and student accountability curriculum. This was done to substantively help students enrolled in senior capstone courses add a component of writing quality to their senior projects.

The main objectives for the program are: content development, facilitating students’ understanding of the context and the purpose for writing, appropriating use of evidence and sources that will advance and promote academic, and career development skills.

Introduction
• Help promote effective writing and assist students with the newly launched College of Engineering Writing Resources Center.

• Offer detailed guidance to students on their writing assignments.

• Hold weekly office hours to provide advising to students.

• Respond to students’ inquiries and offer communication through BeachBoard.

• Grade and provide qualitative feedback on writing assignments.

• Evaluate students’ final oral presentations.

Program Role
Written Communication – Increase students’ written communication skills

**Objective 1** – Context of and purpose for writing.
- Demonstrate knowledge of writing circumstances surrounding the writing task(s), audience analysis etcetera

**Objective 2** – Content Development
- Demonstrate knowledge of using appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject.

**Objective 3** – Sources and Evidence
- Demonstrate knowledge of appropriate use of sources that are high-quality, credible, and relevant for the writing discipline.

Learning Objectives
Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) – Used to measure the learning objectives.

**Purpose for Writing:** Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.

**Content Development:** Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveys the writer’s understanding, and shapes the whole work.

**Disciplinary Conventions:** Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) including organization, content, presentation, and formatting.

**Evidence:** Demonstrates skillful use of sources to develop ideas.

**Syntax and Mechanics:** Uses graceful language that communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is error-free.

**Learning Outcomes**
Throughout the semester, provide written and oral communication instruction, attend class sessions when required, and advise students.

- Individual team guidance, when necessary
- Recommendations to Chapters

Conceptual design stage; Embodiment design stage; Manufacturing stage; etcetera

- End-of-semester PowerPoint presentation

What to Expect – Case in point: MAE471
• Purpose for writing
  (Critical Thinking)
• Content Development
• Structure
• Strong Evidence
• Syntax and Mechanics

Grading Rubric
5 (A) – Superior/Excellent:

**Critical Thinking:** A thoughtful, in-depth argument, developed through the use of compelling topic sentence ideas and careful rhetorical choices that demonstrate advanced awareness of audience and purpose of proposal. Effective introduction and conclusion.

**Structure:** Clear organization with effective thesis statement, topic sentences, development, coherence, and transitions.

**Evidence:** Demonstrates clear selection of superior sources. Expertly integrates source material.

**Sentences:** Sophisticated structure, demonstrating a command of a variety of sentence constructions including use of parallelism, coordination, subordination, verbal phrases, and appositives.

**Vocabulary:** Employs precise and vivid word choices.

**Syntax & Mechanics:** Contains very few errors, demonstrating a mastery of the conventions of written English.
Writing Portion Grading Scale

- **Individual writing:** 10% of individual writing assignments
- **Team writing:** 10% of team assignments
- **Final Oral Presentation** – 5%
- **Writing assessment and Oral Presentation** = 25% of total course grade
- You will receive a combined grade for the writing and engineering portion for each writing assignment.

Grading Scale
• Logic flow or flawed arguments
• Unclear thesis statements
• Lack of details, specifics, or analysis
• Abrupt transitions from one idea to another
• Overarching assumptions
• Citing sources incorrectly
• Colloquial language
• Hasty proofreading
• Sentence structures – Wordiness, Run-on sentences, Incomplete sentences, Punctuation

Common Writing Pitfalls
Introduction (abstracts and proposals):

• Should directly illustrate what the paper will discuss.
• Clearly announce the paper’s agenda or topic.
• Written economically, the entire paper should ration the verbiage used.
• The intro must clearly and concisely amplify the paper’s objective.
Hook —
• The best way to begin an introduction is by drawing in the interest and attention of reader(s).
• Use a “hook” such as an eye-opening statistic, provocative quote or other relevant and appropriate attention-grabber.

Map —
• After the hook, lay out a general map in order to make clear what the chronology of the paper will entail.

List points —
• Once the prompt is re-stated in the announcement of the paper’s general map, enumerate the specific points the paper will examine.
Body (proposal, problem clarification/project planning, conceptual and embodiment design phase):

Topic sentences —

• Substantive points should be framed as individual paragraphs.
• Each paragraph should begin with a topic sentence that encapsulates each paragraph’s central ideas.
Coherence and audience analysis –

• Coherence or connectivity between paragraphs so ideas in each paragraph inform the next.
• The logical flow should exhibit a natural progression that leads the reader(s) to the conclusion.
• Audience analysis is clear such that the author is successfully gearing discussion points toward a particular audience’s interest.

Writing Checklist – Body
Conclusion:

General and specific –

• The conclusion synthesizes the introduction and body paragraphs by “sandwiching” both general points examined and specific points explored in the body paragraphs.

• The conclusion re-states, in summary, all of the main points.
Reinforce salient points –

• No new information should be introduced in the conclusion since this is the forum designed to re-capitulate the body paragraphs after all discussion is complete.

• Avoid extra verbiage such as general afterthoughts or “fluff.”

• The conclusion’s purpose is to reinforce ideas expressed in the paper and leave the reader(s) with a clear idea of what the paper discussed.

• Include key ideas the audience should do or take away.

• This is the final opportunity to ensure that the discussion in the paper resonated with reader(s).
College of Engineering Writing Resources Center (WRC) VEC 128B

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