



Quality Enhancement Plan

Texas A&M International University
2005

**TEXAS A&M INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
5201 University Boulevard
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QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

***WRITE ON, TAMIU!*
ENHANCING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT WRITING**

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Executive Summary

***WRITE ON, TAMIU!* ENHANCING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT WRITING**

Quality Enhancement Plan

The purpose of the *Write On, TAMIU!* Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) at Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) is to improve undergraduate student writing and to develop a campus culture that not only fosters writing as the logical product of coursework or program requirements, but regards writing as an important tool that students must embrace if they are to be successful professionals and lifelong learners. *Write On, TAMIU!* promises to prepare students for success in their professional lives by embracing writing. One of the central measures of the Institutional Mission is to prepare students for leadership roles in their chosen professions, as indicated below:

Texas A&M International University, a Member of The Texas A&M University System, prepares students for leadership roles in their chosen profession in an increasingly complex, culturally diverse state, national, and global society. A&M International provides students with a learning environment anchored by the highest quality programs built on a solid academic foundation in the arts and sciences. To fulfill its mission, the University offers a range of baccalaureate and master's programs and the Doctor of Philosophy degree in International Business Administration. In addition to offering excellent undergraduate and graduate programs, the University pursues a progressive agenda for global study and understanding across the disciplines.

Through instruction, faculty and student research, and public service, Texas A&M International University embodies a strategic point of delivery for well-defined programs and services that improve the quality of life for citizens of the border region, the State of Texas, and national and international communities.

In keeping with Core Requirement Twelve, as outlined in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, the QEP addresses the four primary Indicators of Acceptability: (1) Focus of the Plan, (2) Institutional Capability for the Initiation and Continuation of the Plan, (3) Assessment of the Plan, and (4) Broad-Based Involvement of the Community. The QEP has been developed to clearly support student learning by focusing on the enhancement of quality student writing. Further, the QEP provides a feasible management and financial plan for the implementation of its writing objectives, as well as relevant quantitative and qualitative measures for monitoring its progress and for tying the continuous assessment of undergraduate writing to student learning. The involvement of students, faculty, administrators, staff, and community members is necessary to ensure the success of the QEP.

The QEP proposes concrete objectives, criteria, and means of assessment to improve the quality of undergraduate student writing. The University believes that the teaching, practice, and use of writing is far broader than the mere teaching of English and thus commits itself to creating an institutional culture that values writing in all its forms. The institution is confident that enhanced student writing will be valued by co-workers and employers, as well as community groups.

Because writing enhancement takes time to effect and the transformation of the campus into a community of writers is difficult to achieve quickly, the QEP phases in its goals and multiple means of assessment. Over the next five years, QEP activities will become part of the University culture. Therefore, the University has gathered support from the entire campus community for the successful promotion of *Write On, TAMIU!*

In line with state goals for higher education outlined in *Closing the Gaps: The Texas Higher Education Plan* (<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/AdvisoryCommittees/HEP/0096.htm>), the QEP was developed in four tiers: participation, success, excellence, and research. TAMIU envisions preparing qualified writers for its academic programs (Tier I, Participation: Writing Fundamentals); increasing the numbers of students successfully completing their programs with basic and professional writing skills (Tier II, Excellence: Creating a Culture of Writing); satisfying employers' expectations of TAMIU graduates' writing skills (Tier III, Success: Writing in the Community); and evaluation and dissemination of best practices (Tier IV, Research: Success of the QEP).

The first three tiers of the QEP correspond to the three principal target student populations—first-year students in the year long composition sequence, upper-level students in major and elective courses, and graduates of TAMIU. Thus, the QEP builds upon the basic writing skills of first-year students, extends and expands those skills throughout its academic programs and administrative/educational support units, and evaluates those skills in the marketplace by surveying employers in the community about the graduates' use of writing skills in their chosen professions. Tier IV, Research: The Success of the QEP, incorporates the

research components of the plan to inform the University and wider community of the results of the QEP and its component efforts.

Background of the Quality Enhancement Plan

As its name implies, Texas A&M International University is an international university, poised at the Gateway to Mexico and serving as the intellectual center of a vibrant bilingual and bicultural community. Laredo is 156 miles south of San Antonio, 158 miles west of Corpus Christi, and 153 miles north of Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, México.

Texas A&M International University draws its students primarily from five counties: Webb, Zapata, Maverick, Jim Hogg, and La Salle, with a disproportionate share of 80% from the Webb County urban area. All of these counties are predominantly Hispanic (of Mexican descent). The per capita income for each county follows: Webb, \$10,759; Zapata, \$10,486; Maverick, \$8,758; Jim Hogg, \$12,185; La Salle \$9,692 (Source: Texas State Data Center, <http://txsdc.utsa.edu/subjindex/>). A brief profile of the service area demonstrates the relevance of the Institutional Mission to the affected population.

Median Age	26.9
Educational Attainment	14% baccalaureate degree or higher
Family income below poverty level	25%
Family language used other than English	91% (primarily Spanish)

In Fall 2004, Texas A&M International University had 4,269 undergraduate and graduate students, 164 full-time faculty, 255 classified staff, 108 administrative staff, and more than 10,600 alumni. In keeping with its international designation, the student body included representatives from 32 different countries. The typical undergraduate student was female,

Hispanic, 25 years of age, receiving financial aid, working at least part-time, and the first member of her family to attend an institution of higher education. The average ACT score was 18 while the average SAT was 892. Thirty-eight percent of first-time freshmen were enrolled in at least one developmental education course.

Since the University expanded to four-year status in 1995, the retention rate for first-time, full-time freshmen has ranged from a low of 50% to a high of 70% for the 2004 cohort.

The data suggest that most University students work at least part-time and will take longer than four years to graduate. It is not uncommon for students to stop out for a semester or more thereby taking them longer to graduate. The six-year graduation rate for the 1995 first-time freshmen cohort was 27% while the 1998 cohort was 37%. All of these factors were taken into consideration in the development of the QEP as the University seeks to eliminate barriers to student achievement, particularly as it relates to writing. The decision to base the QEP on enhancing writing performance reflects the University's commitment to nurturing an intellectual environment, and preparing students for their chosen careers.

With the economic boom and the increase in the labor force created by the North American Free Trade Agreement in the early 1990's, employers from both the public and private sectors in Laredo and in the surrounding regions began to scrutinize the reading and writing skills of entry-level employees more carefully than ever before. As Ronald Williams writes in his report, *A Skill Essential to Progress*, "When students enter the workforce, they will be expected to possess the ability to write to a certain standard" (62). Thus, these employees' value depends on their ability to respond appropriately, coherently, and logically in whatever form of writing their profession demands. TAMIU is committed to rigorous standards in writing so that

all graduates can compete successfully in a global marketplace. Without strong writing skills, graduates cannot hope to adapt to shifts in the market such as those that might occur through job outsourcing, emerging technologies, corporate or agency downsizing, or job obsolescence. Ultimately, specialized knowledge may not be as important as basic skills including writing and critical thinking which can help displaced workers make the transition from one career to another. The perception of employers of students' writing skills is the driving force behind Tier III, Success: Writing in the Community.

Review of Literature

Early attempts to improve writing at the national level often involved Writing Across the Curriculum and Writing in the Disciplines (WAC/WID); however, faculty were uneasy about a WAC/WID project because they did not want a bureaucratic management system to assert authority or establish direct oversight of writing activities within their classrooms. That sort of managerial control was not the original intent of WAC/WID projects, developed in the 1970's and 1980's, and included in writings by James Britton, Peter Elbow, Janet Emig, Toby Fulwiler, C. Williams Griffin, Susan H. McLeod, Nancy Martin, Margot Soven, and Christopher Thaiss. By the 1990's, it had become clear that the placement and enforcement of WAC/WID programs within University curricula sometimes occurred without ongoing faculty input.

Deborah Holdstein writes that by 1990, WAC had essentially become "a top-down phenomenon" (43). TAMIU had one experience along these lines in the 1980's and early 1990's when it attempted a system of writing-intensive courses across disciplines. The results were mixed and insufficiently assessed. Indeed, as current research shows, the Writing Intensive (WI) label may create additional chaos and disagreement about how faculty and program

administrators interpret the meaning of “intensive,” as well as what to do in cases in which the writing is not perceived as sufficiently “intense.” WAC can also become “a short-term Band-Aid to temporarily seal open political wounds regarding the poverty of students’ writing abilities and to veneer such public relations annoyances as appropriate forms of assessment” (Holdstein 44). Re-evaluations of WAC/WID in the 1990’s, often by the original exponents of the movement, culled many of the positive components of WAC, while simultaneously recognizing its theoretical and ideological shortcomings. Critics began to connect writing to an analysis of discourse and rhetoric, as well as the need for students to gain insight into the problematic nature of their own disciplinary writing.

Leaders in higher education have debated how to address the problem of students’ writing as a critical matter of public policy. In the 2003 report from The National Commission on Writing, “The Neglected “R”: The Need for a Writing Revolution,” the authors recommend a sweeping “writing agenda” for national policymakers. They suggest increasing the amount of time students spend writing, measuring those results in a “fair and authentic way,” and applying emerging technologies “to the teaching, development, grading and assessment of writing.” Other research not only points to the need for more emphasis on the quality of student writing, but on stressing the importance of writing in all professional fields and disciplines. For example, in a report entitled, *Cognitive Level and Quality of Writing Assessment: Building Better Thought Through Better Writing*, Teresa Flateby and Elizabeth Metzger report that enhancing the quality of writing at the University of South Florida required the creation of a “Learning Community” within the institution, involving faculty outside the traditional disciplines associated with the teaching of writing. This new instructional community resulted in “the integration of content

across disciplines,” permitting students to develop higher thinking and problem-solving skills and to incorporate more effectively “perspectives from multiple disciplines.” Other authors, including Joseph Harris, Mark Wiley, and Steve Parks and Eli Goldblatt, also indicate the need to explore the conceptual connections between quality writing and community—arguments that delimit the definitions of the terms yet deploy them in an effort to provide different kinds of institutions the flexibility to establish writing communities according to their unique circumstances and pressing needs.

Recent scholarship on writing attests to the increased attention that colleges and universities must pay to the quality of writing. In a recent issue of *Peer Review*, David Tritelli, the journal’s editor, states that writing should be at the center of the undergraduate curriculum, and he recommends writing as a way of learning, and not merely a skill set, an idea that Stanley Aronowitz questions in one of the volume’s essays. Further, Jonathan Monroe, Professor of Comparative Literature at Cornell University, says that a focus on writing across disciplines encourages faculty members to embrace writing as an institutional goal. He writes: “Effective writing is central to the work of higher education...accordingly, an expanded sense of faculty ownership of questions of writing and disciplinarity at all levels of the curriculum must be continuously cultivated.” (4)

Peter Elbow and Pat Benaloff propose a wide “spectrum” of “writing tasks” in their workshops—freewriting, focused freewriting, clustering or mapping, invisible writing [technique to break through writer’s block in which students turn off their computer screens and continue writing without immediately reviewing their work], public freewriting, letters, collaborative writing, and process journals (4-13).

In describing “writing utopias,” Daniel Mahala particularly urges dialogic forms of faculty response to and reinforcement of student writing—response designed not only for student intervention but for faculty self-discovery as well. Such a dialogic format, he writes, “demands a self-questioning: to read students’ writing as knowledge is also to question the meaning of one’s intellectual specialties by imagining their usefulness within the circumstantial horizons of particular students” (785).

There are many forms of writing that students must learn. What remains critical for them, however, is to develop their own rhetorical perception so they may, in the words of Charles Bazerman, “distance [themselves] from the everyday practice of the world’s business in order to reveal and evaluate the hidden mechanisms of life” (62). The point is this: students must be in dialogue with their own professional discourse and work through acts of writing and rewriting. “[T]hey learn to locate themselves,” Bazerman adds, “and their work on an ever-changing, complex field where communal projects, goals, and knowledge are constantly negotiated” (63).

Relevant literature about the broader issues of assessment include Barbara E. Walvoord’s *Assessment Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments, and General Education*, Mary J. Allen’s *Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education*, and Peggy L. Maki’s *Assessing For Learning: Building a Sustainable Commitment Across the Institution*. Of particular relevance to TAMIU’s QEP are Walvoord’s suggestions about building an array of assessments, making explicit the criteria for those assessments, and creating a rubric that “translates informed professional judgment into numerical ratings on a scale” (19). While

“something is always lost in the translation,” she continues, the “advantage is that these ratings can now be communicated and compared” (19).

Mary Allen’s work provides a framework for assessment planning and for embedding integrated assessment throughout the curriculum. Moreover, she affirms how necessary it is to create a culture of assessment throughout the institution so that all the students’ efforts can be gauged and adequately judged. She writes, “Faculty can embed single exam questions, entire tests, in-class activities, fieldwork activities, and homework assignments that are designed to reflect how well students have mastered learning objectives” (157). More pointedly, she urges faculty to collect this “evidence to assess the program, and they can ask students to reflect on their learning, perhaps within the reflective portfolios which document their achievements” (157).

Peggy Maki’s work speaks to the need for a “continuum of learning” which lies beyond an “aggregation” of courses. The reasons for establishing this continuum, Maki contends, lie in the evaluation of student achievement “over time” (32). Maki writes: “The maturational process occurs by establishing intentional links or connections with other campus structures, processes, decisions, and channels of communication, oftentimes resulting in complementary or new relationships or new institutional behaviors” (173). The “maturation process” that Maki identifies depends upon the recognition of changes in institutional terrain, particularly in the area of assessment activities, as well as upon perceiving how an assessment program “has its own ecology” (Condon, et al, 193). That is to say, an institution must bear in mind factors affecting student performance that are not, strictly speaking, student centered. Haswell asks: “How do teachers and advisors feel about [assessment]? What do students tell their parents about the

assessment? How do administrators at all levels view the assessment program? How do they describe the assessment to new faculty, to outsiders?” (193).

Methodology: Application of the Review of Literature

The University’s QEP is organized in four tiers: participation, success, excellence, and research.

Tier I, Participation: Writing Fundamentals, prepares qualified writers for academic programs. Applying the recommendations of the National Commission on Writing and incorporating best practices, the First-Year Writing Program prepares students to meet the writing requirements of their major curricula.

Faculty, building on current best practices, seek to improve weak writing and strive for the recognition of writing as a necessary component of any academic process. In the First-Year Writing Program, four assessments of student writing are conducted within the English 1301 - English Composition I and English 1302 - English Composition II writing sequence: diagnostic essays at the beginning to determine student writing proficiency and terminal essays at the end of each course to assess student improvement.

Tier II, Excellence: Creating a Culture of Writing, increases the numbers of students successfully completing their programs with basic and professional writing skills by incorporating writing activities into all academic programs and administrative/educational support units. Writing-to-learn activities “engage a student’s personal experience and knowledge ... [by] bridging from the student’s experience to the discipline’s concepts and principles” (Cooper and Odell 137). Writing-to-demonstrate learning activities involve the assessment of what students have actually learned from course concepts and materials (Elbow 1-4). Writing-to-

learn and writing-to-demonstrate learning activities are encouraged by most specialists of writing as a process and are included within the University's writing inventory for both academic programs and administrative/educational support units.

TAMIU had mixed results with WAC/WID in the 1980's and early 1990's when it attempted a system of writing-intensive courses across disciplines. This was not the path the University wished to take. Regardless of scholarly disagreements about the direction of the WAC/WID movement, TAMIU looks to incorporate several of its most important discoveries and strategies. For the purposes of this QEP, the work of Mahala is closer to the mark, incorporating dialogue and a variety of approaches to improve writing. In addition, Allen's recommendation that faculty document student achievement becomes the theoretical impetus for the use of senior portfolios for students to reflect on their writing experiences at TAMIU.

Tier III, Success: Writing in the Community, addresses perception of writing needs within the marketplace and how well those needs are met by TAMIU graduates. Developing a culture of writing at TAMIU provides graduates with opportunities for entry, advancement, and success in their chosen profession. Graduates acknowledge that without the ongoing development of writing, they cannot succeed in a commercial world whose contours continue to change.

Tier IV, Research: Success of the QEP, through research and assessment, examines areas including instructional strategies and external stakeholder perception of writing effectiveness to ensure student writing success through an integrated plan that links to ongoing assessment and strategic planning processes. The continuum of writing enhancements suggested by the QEP becomes part of "maturation" (Maki 171).

One means of assessment is the use of analytical rubrics to evaluate student writing across all disciplines (Walvoord 19). While the requirements for academic writing vary from discipline to discipline, they are sufficiently similar to derive useful data that reveal how well students are writing at all levels. Without some quantifiable means of assessment, it becomes difficult to know which activities support and improve students' writing. Other factors, such as different delivery systems of course materials, students' professional interest in course materials, or simply personal growth and maturity may have an equally powerful effect on the quality of students' writing. In order not to overstate the value of specific interventions in students' writing (Ochsner and Fowler 3), the QEP has several means of assessment to evaluate the results of the institution's efforts toward quality enhancement. (see page 46, Assessment of the Quality Enhancement Plan.)

The Evolution of Writing Assessment at the University

Historically, TAMIU has made both the acquisition of writing skills and the assessment and evaluation of writing central to its mission. In fact, TAMIU has required an evaluation of all students' writing for over 25 years, creating a rich storehouse of information from which to analyze the University's successes and failures in the area of writing. The timeline below represents milestones in the University's assessment of student writing.

Year	Action Taken
1977	In response to employer concerns about the level of writing of graduates, Dr. Billy Cowart, the first president of the University, established the Language Proficiency Program (LPP) as a pilot program to improve student writing.
1977 - 1979	The LPP offered tutoring services and, upon request by a faculty member, assessed students' writing. The initial assessment instrument was a locally developed objective test administered by faculty in their classes. However, students advised of their deficiencies in writing failed to take advantage of tutoring services.
1979	Faculty agreed to mandate a more comprehensive writing assessment which would produce a more complete picture of the students' writing skills. The Educational Testing Service (ETS) and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) had identified the use of holistic rubrics as a best practice. The University used these rubrics for evaluating student writing.
1979 - 1981	The University took the following actions: (1) sent the Director of the Language Proficiency Program to ETS headquarters for training in holistic evaluation; (2) hired ETS consultants who traveled to TAMIU (then Laredo State University) to train a core faculty group and assist faculty with the development of a holistic rubric; and, (3) mandated that all students take the writing assessment.
1981	Data results of two years of holistic evaluation indicated that nearly 50% of the student population had serious writing deficiencies. The faculty agreed to make passing the LPP writing examination a requirement for graduation and to offer writing instruction through the LPP tutoring program as a way of addressing student difficulties in writing. Subsequently, students who failed to pass the LPP were required to take ENGL 3301 (English for the Professions) and then re-take the LPP examination.
1981-2003	The University had several iterations of the University Writing Assessment (UWA), including a writing portfolio, an Exit Examination in ENGL 1301 (English Composition I), and a Rising Junior Examination (RJE). The UWA brought about large-scale curricular discussions, most recently regarding the first-year composition sequence.

Year	Action Taken
2004	<p>The Chair of the Department of Language and Literature met with members of the Building Engagement and Attainment for Minority Students (BEAMS) Team, a program to increase minority student learning and success, and the Director of the Writing Center to formulate a pilot program for 2004-2005. In the pilot program, students take ENGL 1301 and 1302 courses with the same instructors and with a newly conceived curriculum. The pilot program was initiated and evaluated; then the faculty adopted a unified composition sequence (First-Year Writing Program) which more effectively addressed the deficiencies identified by the UWA results.</p>

The Development and Chronology of the

Quality Enhancement Plan

In line with state goals for higher education outlined in *Closing the Gaps: The Texas Higher Education Plan* (<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/AdvisoryCommittees/HEP/0096.htm>), the QEP was developed in four tiers: participation, success, excellence, and research. TAMIU envisions preparing qualified writers for its academic programs (Tier I, Participation: Writing Fundamentals); increasing the numbers of students successfully completing their programs with basic and professional writing skills (Tier II, Excellence: Creating a Culture of Writing); satisfying employers' expectations of TAMIU graduates' writing skills (Tier III, Success: Writing in the Community); and evaluation and dissemination of best practices (Tier IV, Research: Success of the QEP).

The first three tiers of the QEP correspond to the three principal target student populations—first-year students in the year long composition sequence, upper-level students in major and elective courses, and graduates of TAMIU. Thus, the QEP builds upon the basic writing skills of first-year students, extends and expands those skills throughout its academic programs and administrative/educational support units, and evaluates those skills in the marketplace by surveying employers in the community about the graduates' use of writing skills in their chosen professions. Tier IV, Research: The Success of the QEP, incorporates the research components of the plan to inform the University and wider community of the results of the QEP and its component efforts.

The following section outlines the activities conducted by the University in the development of the Quality Enhancement Plan.

Fall 2003 Semester

The University President led several discussions on the development of the QEP and as a result the enhancement of student writing was ultimately selected as the focus of the QEP. The University has accumulated many years of data on student writing. However, there have been few institutional changes to correct a growing problem—the number of students who were delayed or could not graduate because they could not pass the University Writing Assessment. Focusing the QEP on writing was seen as a way of evaluating and improving student success. University stakeholders conducted an inventory of writing activities across campus as a useful way of focusing attention upon the QEP and documenting the diversity of writing already existing within academic programs and administrative/educational support units. In addition, experts in the field of writing were invited to address the campus community.

Spring 2004 Semester

The University is an active participant in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), a national initiative engaging students and faculty in effective educational practices. Through NSSE, the University was invited to join the American Association of Higher Education's Building Engagement and Attainment for Minority Students (BEAMS) Project (<http://www.aahe.org/BEAMS/>). The project allows the University to analyze the scope and character of students' engagement in their learning and implement well-designed action plans for improvement of engagement, learning, persistence, and success. Since student writing is an area

addressed in the NSSE instrument, the institution selected writing as the focus of their BEAMS action plan, thereby linking it to the QEP.

Several forums were held with University stakeholders to discuss and develop the QEP. The stakeholders included students, faculty, staff and administrators. In addition, the departments held meetings to identify strategies for embedding, assessing, and tracking writing skills in all programs and services.

Faculty and administrative staff attended a writing workshop led by Evelyn Posey and Kate Mangelsdorf of The University of Texas El Paso and the West Texas Writing Project. The workshop detailed pragmatic methods and explored types of assignments that faculty and staff might employ during the coming year that would enhance the quality of writing at TAMIU. During the lecture and breakout sessions, academic and administrative/educational support units discussed Posey's useful distinction between writing-to-learn and writing-to-demonstrate learning and were encouraged to consider a variety of activities for their academic programs and support areas.

A week in April was designated to focus on activities relevant to institutional assessment, such as departmental or college meetings to review data, and distribution and administration of standardized examinations.

Summer 2004 Semester

Five members of the University's BEAMS Work Group attended the American Association for Higher Education BEAMS Summer Academy in Stowe, Vermont, to develop an action plan that addressed writing issues. In particular, the team focused on short writing assignments as well as strategies for writing enhancement processes across disciplines.

Fall 2004 Semester

One of the initiatives that resulted from the BEAMS Summer Academy was the invitation of fourteen faculty members to serve as a pilot cohort for the Scholars Alliance for Learning and Teaching (SALT). The selection of the faculty for the first SALT cohort was deliberate. Participants represented a cross section of academic disciplines who were teaching course work from freshmen to senior level. This cohort referred a small control group of their students to the Writing Center with short writing assignments and in formats specific to the professional content of the SALT members' courses. The first cohort of SALT faculty constituted the genesis of a desired center for teaching excellence. A complete listing of the first cohort is included in Appendix A - Scholars Alliance for Learning and Teaching (SALT) Faculty Roster 2004-2006.

The QEP was revised following information received at the Annual SACS Meeting as well as input from various constituencies from the University community, including the Executive Committee, the University Assessment Committee, the Faculty Senate, the Student Government Association, the Provost's Advisory Council, the Council of Deans and the University SACS Leadership Team.

Spring 2005 Semester

In early April, the SACS Visiting Committee analyzed the QEP and recommended significant and specific revisions to the plan. Subsequently, the QEP Subcommittee was expanded to include an undergraduate and a graduate student as well as additional members of the University community. The committee was renamed the University Quality Enhancement Plan Committee (UQEPC). Two subcommittees responded to the eight recommendations from

the SACS Visiting Committee. The First-Year Writing Program subcommittee was charged with devising more appropriate writing assessments for the ENGL 1301-1302 writing sequence. The QEP Assessment Integration subcommittee focused on formalizing an assessment plan.

The UQEPC invited Dr. Richard Haswell, the Haas Professor of English at Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi, to work with TAMIU stakeholders to identify appropriate and achievable outcomes and assessments for student writing in all academic programs and administrative/educational support units. The QEP is a project involving all stakeholders and is integrated with ongoing processes of institutional effectiveness and continuous assessment. (Appendix B – Haswell Letter of Endorsement)

Mission and Goals of the Quality Enhancement Plan

The mission of the Quality Enhancement Plan of Texas A&M International University is to develop a “culture of writing” across the University that instills within all students and faculty a sense of the critical contribution that effective writing makes to academic and professional success. The QEP provides a framework of objectives and strategies that create multiple opportunities for all undergraduate students at TAMIU to improve their writing.

The assessment activities outlined in the QEP ensure that the University’s commitment to improved student learning outcomes is supported by organizational processes that promote continuous improvement of all aspects of the undergraduate academic program related to writing. The QEP functions within the established assessment processes of the University and within the framework of the Strategic Plan so that all research resulting from the four tiers is linked to the planning and budgeting processes.

Emerging from this mission, three distinct goals guide the University in its implementation of the QEP. The following table presents the linkages between the QEP goals and the Strategic Plan.

Table 1: QEP Goals and the 2001-2005 Strategic Plan

QEP Goal	Strategic Plan Goal / Objective	Strategic Plan Strategy
<p>1. To provide entering students a strong foundation for academic success through the development of a comprehensive First-Year Writing Program.</p>	<p>Goal II: “Ensure mechanisms are in place to evaluate and improve academic and educational support service programs; the admission, recruitment, advisement, retention and graduation of qualified students; the expansion of programs at all levels including educational collaborations; and achieving accreditation from national, professional or specialized accrediting bodies.”</p> <p>Objective II.2.0 To increase student retention, involvement and academic success at Texas A&M International University.</p>	<p>II.2.12 Strategy: Provide quality instruction to prepare graduates for leadership roles in their chosen profession.</p>
<p>2. To create a university-wide culture of writing by establishing learning outcomes related to writing in all academic programs.</p>	<p>Goal II: “Ensure mechanisms are in place to evaluate and improve academic and educational support service programs; the admission, recruitment, advisement, retention and graduation of qualified students; the expansion of programs at all levels including educational collaborations; and achieving accreditation from national, professional or specialized accrediting bodies.”</p> <p>Objective II.2.0 To increase student retention, involvement and academic success at Texas A&M International University.</p>	<p>II.2.2 Strategy: Establishment of a Writing Center</p> <p>II.2.12 Strategy: Provide quality instruction to prepare graduates for leadership roles in their chosen profession.</p>
<p>3. To ensure that TAMIU graduates have mastered those writing skills necessary for professional success in their chosen careers.</p>	<p>Goal II: “Ensure mechanisms are in place to evaluate and improve academic and educational support service programs; the admission, recruitment, advisement, retention and graduation of qualified students; the expansion of programs at all levels including educational collaborations; and achieving accreditation from national, professional or specialized accrediting bodies.”</p> <p>Objective II.2.0 To increase student retention, involvement and academic success at Texas A&M International University.</p>	<p>II.2.12 Strategy: Provide quality instruction to prepare graduates for leadership roles in their chosen profession.</p>

Flowing from the QEP goals are the six specific student learning outcomes listed below.

- Upon completion of the freshman composition sequence, students will be able to produce short writing samples that:
 - 1) reflect an awareness of audience, situation, and occasion, and exhibit the use of writing strategies appropriate to the stated purpose of the writing task (*focus*).
 - 2) develop a central idea supported by appropriate and effectively chosen evidence. The writing follows a logical plan of organization, and is composed of unified sentences and paragraphs (*organization and development*).
 - 3) demonstrate an awareness of simple and complex sentence structure and the ability to vary sentence structure in appropriate ways. The writing shows evidence of effective diction and syntax (*sentence structure*).
 - 4) are largely free of spelling, mechanical, and punctuation errors, and demonstrate knowledge of standard English usage (*grammar and usage*).
- Upon completion of their academic major, students will be able to produce short writing samples that:
 - 5) demonstrate the ability to employ external sources to support and develop their writing in ways that are appropriate to their academic major (*research*).
 - 6) demonstrate an awareness of strategies and requirements appropriate to their academic major, and reflect their ability to approach complex writing

tasks that demand creativity and/or higher-order critical thinking skills
(discipline-specific writing).

An analytical scoring rubric that produces quantitative measures of student performance on each of these outcomes was developed for use by faculty review committees, departmental assessment committees, and departmental and college curriculum committees. The analytical rubric is included as Appendix C – Analytical Rubric for Writing Assessment.

Organization of the Quality Enhancement Plan

The four tiers of the Quality Enhancement Plan are a continuous and integrated series of writing assessments that enable the UQEPC to construct more accurate profiles of students and their writing as they progress through their coursework, graduate from the University, and assume positions of responsibility within their communities. The tiers of the Quality Enhancement Plan are derived from the *Closing the Gaps* initiative of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to enhance participation of students, excellence in their academic programs, and success in their chosen careers.

Furthermore, the four tiers do not exist independently from one another, but are tied together by the research embedded at each level and by the research that connects the University to the community it serves. Thus, the ensuing research is tied back to program assessment and curriculum development, as well as to the planning and budget processes that the University undertakes each year.

Tier I, Participation: Writing Fundamentals, outlines a detailed series of ongoing assessments that ensure the basic writing skills of first-year students. Tier II, Excellence: Creating a Culture of Writing, initiates the process of incorporating writing activities and their assessment within academic programs across the University. Transforming TAMIU into a culture of writing promises to reinforce and expand the writing abilities of students in all academic programs, to assure that TAMIU students continue to strive for the improvement of these skills throughout their degree programs. The results of the Graduation Candidate Information Survey, May 2002 – May 2005, (Appendix D - Graduation Candidate Information Survey) suggest that over 90% of TAMIU graduates recognize that using effective verbal and

written communication skills had a moderate to major impact on their experiences at the University. Tier III, Success: Writing in the Community, measures the degree to which the University has embedded basic writing skills in its graduates and the degree to which those skills match the needs of employers for better writing and communication skills. Tier IV, Research: The Success of the QEP, incorporates the research components of the plan to inform the University and wider community of the results of the QEP and its component efforts. The following sections describe in greater detail some of the planned and completed activities included in each tier.

Tier I, Participation: Writing Fundamentals

Writing Sequence for the Core Curriculum (ENGL 1301 and ENGL 1302)

A major goal of the QEP is to establish a strong foundation for good writing skills to be used throughout students' academic career. In Fall 2004, the Department of Language and Literature hired an Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Composition to serve as the department's first Director of Composition and to revamp English 1301 and English 1302. The Director of Composition re-designed English 1301 and 1302 into a year long First-Year Writing Program (FYWP).

Instead of one introductory composition course followed by an introduction to literature course, which had been the model for the Core Curriculum, a new sequence was developed. During Fall 2004, the University Curriculum Committee approved the new sequence, effective Fall 2005. The following are the old sequence course descriptions and the new sequence course descriptions:

Old Sequence (2004-2005 Catalog):

ENGL 1301 *English Composition I*. Three semester hours.

Through extensive writing assignments, students in this course will develop the ability to write effective expository and argumentative essays, including a research project. Students will also learn to use the library effectively, conduct research using both print and electronic sources, and document properly their use of information sources. Prerequisite: DENG 0370, a satisfactory score on standard assessment test, or exemption from Texas Higher Education Assessment.

ENGL 1302 *English Composition II*. Three semester hours.

A continuation of English 1301, this course is a writing-intensive course with papers based on an analytical and interpretative reading of texts in a variety of literary genres. Special emphasis is given to an examination and use of rhetorical and literary devices and for effective interpretative strategies. Included in the writing assignments is a research project. Prerequisite: ENGL 1301.

New Sequence (2005-2006 Catalog):

ENGL 1301 *English Composition I*. Three semester hours.

The goal of this course is to develop students' expository and analytical writing skills by guiding them through the multiple stages of the writing process and by creating an awareness of authorial voice, audience, purpose, and occasion. Students will also employ critical thinking and reading skills in the evaluation of selected readings designed to further emphasize the writing process. This course will provide an introduction to writing the documented essay, to acquiring information literacy skills,

and to evaluating both printed and electronic sources. Prerequisite: DENG 0370, a satisfactory score on standard assessment test, or exemption from any TSI test.

ENGL 1302 *English Composition II*. Three semester hours.

This course offers a continuation of the expository and analytical writing skills developed in English 1301 and introduces the principles of argumentation and more extensive interpretation of selected readings. Students will again be engaged in all steps of the writing process, generating argumentative essays based on thoughtful analysis and discussion of reading assignments. In addition, students will be guided through the steps of more sophisticated research writing techniques, information literacy skills, and evaluation of primary and secondary sources, culminating in a series of essay-length research projects. Prerequisite: ENGL 1301.

The First-Year Writing Program provides students with the results of a diagnostic assessment in ENGL 1301/1302, gears instruction to improve student writing deficiencies and refers them to the Writing Center for assistance as necessary. A terminal essay in each course is used to assess student progress in line with the first four student learning outcomes.

In addition, the Department of Language and Literature conducts a random sampling of portfolios of students completing their first year of writing instruction. Using data from the diagnostic and terminal essays, and the random sampling of portfolios, an institutional profile of the writing skills of students completing the First-Year Writing Program is developed by the Department of Language and Literature assessment committee. Students also complete a course evaluation for ENGL 1301 and 1302 with the purpose of providing their perception of course

content and teaching effectiveness. Results of the profile and student evaluations are sent to the UQEPC and thence to the University Assessment Committee for additional review and analysis.

In an effort to effect an immediate improvement in the FYWP, two instructor positions in the Department of Language and Literature were converted to tenure-track professor lines in Rhetoric and Composition. In Fall 2005, an assistant and an associate professor joined the Director of Composition along with a current faculty member, who has a Ph.D. in English with a specialization in Rhetoric and Composition, to form the core of the writing program faculty. These four professors are responsible for implementing the revised curriculum for the FYWP. The Director of Composition provides adjunct faculty members and those on the tenure line with a common course outline and a common textbook and orients them to the new course objectives, learning outcomes, methodology, and assessment techniques. Furthermore, the four writing program professors are accountable for assessing a random sample of FYWP portfolios at the end of English 1302 and for submitting suggested program revisions to the department assessment committee and curriculum committee.

With the intention of further strengthening the writing program, two additional professors will be hired over the course of the next two years. A new tenure-track senior faculty line in Rhetoric and Composition will be available to begin Fall 2006. A person with training and experience in Rhetoric and Composition, including knowledge of and experience in writing assessment will be sought for this position. A sixth person will round out the core faculty in the writing program beginning Fall 2007. The Chair of the Department of Language and Literature anticipates searching for a candidate with a doctorate in Rhetoric and Composition with specialization in teaching writing to students with limited English language proficiency.

With a core of six writing program faculty and the newly developed FYWP curriculum, the first goal of the QEP will be within reach. Furthermore, the need for more writing program faculty is justified in order to help create and then preserve academic excellence in writing. The writing program faculty's role is expanding to include training teaching assistants for the FYWP, providing portfolio guidelines and training materials to University faculty in all disciplines so that they may evaluate the senior portfolios, and facilitating faculty in other academic departments as they create discipline-specific writing intensive courses. The writing program faculty will also develop additional writing courses if the data collected indicates a need for more practice in writing.

Tier II, Excellence: Creating a Culture of Writing

In Spring 2004, all academic programs and administrative/educational support units were requested to report on ways in which their activities contributed to the enhancement of student writing. Following up on the writing inventory and in an effort to raise awareness of writing across the disciplines, Evelyn Posey and Kate Mangelsdorf of the University of Texas – El Paso and the West Texas Writing Project, conducted a workshop which detailed pragmatic methods and explored types of assignments that faculty and staff might use to enhance writing at TAMIU. During the lecture and breakout sessions, academic departments and administrative/educational units discussed Posey's useful distinction between writing-to-learn and writing-to-demonstrate-learning and the usefulness of both types of writing to enhance student performance. Faculty and staff were encouraged to consider a variety of activities for their academic programs and support areas.

The UQEPC will conduct another writing inventory among academic programs and administrative/educational support units during Fall 2005 and biennially thereafter. Results of the Spring 2004 inventory are described below:

Writing Inventory of Undergraduate Academic Programs by Department

- Accounting, Economics, and Finance: Assign written evaluations of topical business problems and score the responses for accuracy, conciseness, clarity, logic, and analysis. The department also plans to improve the quality of the business communications course, including shorter deadlines for students with long-term projects in order to deliver earlier feedback for improvement in student writing. The department also intends to assign additional essay exam questions, summaries of research projects, and Internet-based written exercises.
- Behavioral, Applied Sciences and Criminal Justice: Incorporate journal and e-mail assignments into their courses as writing-to-learn activities, as well as increased reliance on mixed media writing (e.g. photo essays) and online discussions of course materials.
- Biology and Chemistry: Require research presentations that faculty assess with departmentally generated rubric.
- Curriculum and Instruction: Model, demonstrate, and explain different kinds of writing required for courses and programs. Examples include written statements of philosophy of teaching, summary of relevant research articles, construction of various graphic organizers that order material covered in class, and written summary of that material. These written assignments combine to solidify understanding of course content.

- Fine and Performing Arts: Art (studio) classes require gallery/museum reports, written class critiques, and reference notes for historical time periods. Art (lecture) classes require both essays and written components on midterm and final examinations. Dance (performance) classes require research project that focuses on the music, culture, dance, or costume of the practiced style. Dance (lecture) classes require both essays and written components on midterm and final examinations. Music (performance/ensemble) require performance critiques on composers and performers studied during the semester; students compose program notes that accompany performances. Music (lecture) classes require both essays and written components on midterm and final examinations.
- General University: Intensive writing in developmental English and many writing exercises in developmental reading as well as in the freshman seminar class, Theories and Applications of Learning. Developmental math students write about what they have understood or failed to understand at the end of most classes.
- Language and Literature: English, Spanish, and communication courses incorporate both writing-to-learn and writing-to-demonstrate-learning activities. Writing-to-learn activities include article reviews, peer review, peer editing, microteaching, community language research projects, and writing workshops. Writing-to-demonstrate-learning activities include portfolios, research papers, reading quizzes, and essay examinations. Communication courses also prepare majors to analyze concrete professional problems, clarify practical writing skills, and conform to common conventions for resumes in the field.

- Management Information Systems and Decision Science: Require written reports that interpret statistical results, reflecting knowledge of and skills in the use of statistical packages and online software.
- Mathematical and Physical Sciences: Designate a writing intensive course for its programs and develop an electronic discussion thread on projects or assignments with writing components.
- Nursing: Augment peer review process for student papers and refuse to accept papers not first reviewed with a tutor at the Writing Center.
- Social Sciences: Require a writing component for all classes. Possibilities include: essay questions incorporated into tests and final exams, student portfolios of written assignments, academic conference participation, journals, case briefs and research papers appropriate to the class level. The goals of synthesis, integration, and critical thinking are intended outcomes. The Department of Social Sciences also requires students to be familiar with the various writing styles appropriate to their disciplines such as the Chicago Style Manual (CSM), American Political Science Association (APSA), and Modern Language Association (MLA).

Writing Inventory of Administrative/Educational Support Units

- Academic Affairs, International Programs, Institutional Advancement, Public Affairs, Admissions, and Special Programs: Activities reported from these units include: 1) request students write to donors and scholarship providers; 2) encourage more written feedback on questionnaires; 3) inform all staff to check their own work for grammar and spelling prior to distribution to the public; 4) encourage a more uniform writing

style from all campus offices; 5) identify additional sources of external funding for the Writing Center, which will increasingly be called upon by faculty and staff for its services; 6) establish service requirements for students that would entail written reports and oral presentations about their participation outcomes; and, 7) support enhancement of writing through informational flyers, bulletins, and brochures.

- Career Services: Develop workshops for resume writing and formulate resume critiques. Critique personal statements for graduate or professional school. Require written assignments as part of individual career counseling. Mandate written application materials for on-campus recruitment program.
- Center for the Study of Western Hemispheric Trade: Supports writing by providing informational materials to students for reports of presentations as part of the Keynote Speaker series. The Center publishes a report of student research projects and works with the Western Hemispheric Trade Information Center and the Texas Center for Border Economic and Enterprise Development (TCBEED) to evaluate and review manuscripts for presentation and/or publication.
- Enrollment Management and School Relations: Shares essay writing tips during presentations given at the high schools and in the unit's quarterly newsletter distributed to prospective University students. Recruiters also assess student scholarship application essays prior to submission.
- International Programs: This division consists of three departments: The International Language Institute, the Office of International Education, and International Student Services. The International Language Institute's (ILI) English as a Second Language

(ESL) program prepares students for academic course work. The ESL program consists of two sections: Listening/Speaking/Grammar (LSG) and Reading/Writing (RW). In the LSG section students engage in writing activities including note-taking, outlining for oral presentations, using new grammatical structures in written responses, and forming sentences and paragraphs with targeted grammatical structures. The RW section engages students in academic ESL writing activities including drafting, peer evaluations, persuasive and descriptive essay writing, and journal writing. Moreover, the ILI requires a writing sample as an integral part of its placement test. The Office of International Education (OIE) encourages students participating in a study-abroad program to maintain a journal of experiences and to communicate in writing regularly with the Director of OIE on their progress. Students applying for competitive study-abroad scholarships submit an essay as part of the qualification process. The International Student Services (ISS) office requires each student applicant for the Optional Practical Training (OPT) program to write a personal letter requesting approval of his or her application. The letter states the applicant's willingness to comply with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) requirements. ISS staff reviews the letters for USCIS content compliance and grammatical structure.

- Office of Financial Aid: Provide review and feedback for Financial Aid Appeals letter and General Scholarship Essay.
- Office of Student Activities: Provide access to bulletin boards for students to post written notices, which have been previously reviewed by staff. The office also provides computers to student service organizations to maintain written documentation of

club/organization activities. In addition, the Writing Center staff provides presentations at New Student Orientation regarding services available to enhance writing.

- Student Health Services: In an effort to improve student writing, dictionaries are available throughout the clinic for student use to find the proper spelling of common complaints. Office staff review written phone messages by student workers for spelling errors and provide feedback to students.
- Writing Center: Provide writing workshops to assist entering students with the written portion of Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA). Additionally, the Writing Center continuously trains tutors to meet increasing student needs.

The University Quality Enhancement Plan Committee (UQEPC) will assess the results of the Fall 2007 inventory to determine if the QEP has qualitatively enhanced writing activities and forward its findings to the University Assessment Committee (UAC), which will send its analysis to the University Planning and Budget Council (UPBC).

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

The University is an active participant in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which is a national initiative engaging students and faculty in effective educational practices. The survey is administered to freshmen and senior students. Emphasis is placed on educational effectiveness in five clusters of activities linked to high levels of learning and development. The five clusters are:

1. Level of Academic Challenge – the University sets high expectations for student achievement and emphasizes the importance of academic effort.

2. Active and Collaborative Learning – the University provides opportunities for students to work together to solve problems or master difficult material.
3. Student-Faculty Interactions – the University provides opportunities and encourages interaction inside and outside the classroom whereby teachers become role models, mentors and guides for life-long learning.
4. Enriching Educational Experiences – the University provides access to technology, opportunities for internships, community service, and capstone courses where students can integrate and apply knowledge.
5. Supportive Campus Environment – the University provides a positive atmosphere for students to interact with faculty and diverse student groups and the support necessary to thrive socially.

Through NSSE, the University was invited to join the American Association of Higher Education’s Building Engagement and Attainment for Minority Students (BEAMS) Project (<http://www.msi-alliance.org/beams.asp>). The project allows the University to analyze the scope and character of students' engagement in their learning and implement well-designed action plans for improvement of engagement, learning, persistence, and success. Since student writing is an area addressed in the cluster of Level of Academic Challenge, the University selected writing as the focus of the BEAMS Action Plan. The data compiled from previous NSSE administrations indicated that students at the freshmen and senior levels perceived that they had not been assigned sufficient written papers or reports of fewer than five pages (short writing assignments).

To evaluate the data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and to recommend actions that address institutional deficiencies identified by the NSSE data, the

University President appointed the BEAMS Work Group (Appendix E – BEAMS Work Group Roster). Members of the BEAMS Work Group attended the American Association for Higher Education Summer Academy and developed an action plan to address the perceived lack of short writing assignments for first-time and senior students (Appendix F – NSSE Short Writing Assignment Responses). The BEAMS Work Group tied its efforts to the QEP with the creation and activities of the Scholars Alliance on Learning and Teaching (SALT) and the focus on increasing short writing assignments within all disciplines. This initiative will be evaluated with future NSSE administrations to see if students perceive that this intervention has increased the number of short writing assignments in their classes.

Scholars Alliance for Learning and Teaching (SALT)

The BEAMS Work Group convened the first cohort of 14 faculty members to assist with the establishment of SALT, the initial step to creating an institutional standard of teaching excellence. Working in conjunction with the department chairs from each academic department, the BEAMS Work Group identified faculty members who already incorporated innovative ideas with writing in their courses (Appendix A - SALT Faculty Roster 2004-2006).

The first SALT cohort participated in a pilot program in which they referred a small control group of their students to the Writing Center with short writing assignments in formats specific to the professional content of the SALT members' courses. During Summer 2005, a survey (Appendix G – Undergraduate Student Writing Survey) was administered to students referred to the Writing Center by SALT members to establish use and efficacy benchmarks. The first cohort will continue its efforts through academic year 2005-2006. Cohorts of faculty will be phased in over a five-year period, thus transforming the institutional culture incrementally. By

the end of the five-year period, four cohorts, or about 70 faculty members, will be participants in SALT.

The Scholars Alliance for Learning and Teaching involves faculty from across the disciplines in the incorporation and assessment of writing within their courses. SALT is the key to creating a culture of writing across the campus. The BEAMS Work Group and the UQEPCC will guide and direct the efforts of SALT.

SALT Members' Impressions of the Initiative

The first SALT cohort met during the Fall 2004 semester to discuss and share ideas about honing and shaping its activities, specifically about writing activities embedded in courses across the disciplines and throughout the curriculum, and more generally about the future of SALT.

The first SALT cohort also provided first impressions of their participation in the pilot program. A partial list of the impressions of SALT members who referred students to the Writing Center for assistance during Fall 2004 follows:

“I had never used the Writing Center’s referral form before. Though I had often recommended that students go to the center, I feared that the referral might bear a kind of stigma of remediation. I was wrong about that; in this case, students were generally positive and responsive to the referral. But the really pleasant surprise was the way in which the tutor response on the referral form will help me to work with specific students.” *(SALT member in English)*

“This semester I referred students from the Dance Performance: Modern class for writing assistance. I picked this class because I tend to get more inexperienced students (i.e. less experienced writers) in that class...The students

keep a log of what goes on in class every class period. The journal is written in paragraph form and it details what choreography we worked on in class and also highlights what their sentiments are with regard to the movement that we are working on...”

(SALT member in Dance)

“I was particularly impressed by the number of students I had this semester who initiated their own contact with a tutor and who have revealed that they went to the Writing Center often. In fact, my final for my freshman composition class was to have my students discuss what they learned about themselves as writers and to chart their growth as writers...In these essays, my students commented that they felt unprepared for freshman composition and realized that they needed additional training in grammar and punctuation...Often students commented that tutors were particularly helpful with invention and prewriting.”

(SALT member in English)

“My impressions with the writing center are: (a) tutors have guided the students on APA format writing, citation, and proper arrangement of references list; (b) [tutors guided the students on] correction on sentence grammar, spelling, and sentence construction; and (c) the tutors have guided the students to follow the specific elements needed for the project”

(SALT member in Nursing)

“I think the Writing Center (WC) is doing a good job under tremendous pressure—clearly, they need additional help. I think that it was helpful too that some of the tutors are majors in other subjects...which allows them to help

students think about writing in the disciplines...If only to have gotten the students in the door of the WC, I'd do it again..." (*SALT member in History*)

"I would not hesitate to send my classes to the WC in the future. The students who visited the center benefited from the assistance provided to them. The students learned how to organize their ideas, use better vocabulary, and use punctuation correctly. The WC staff was very patient and helpful to my students, and I truly appreciate their time" (*SALT member in Biology*)

Despite the variety of disciplines represented, all SALT respondents felt that referring students to the Writing Center, especially those whom they could identify as being at risk in their courses, benefited their students. SALT members agreed that the Writing Center needed additional full-time employees but that they were remarkable and adept at responding to students' individual writing problems and assignments. They also believed that assigning shorter writing exercises were more manageable for the tutors and for QEP research purposes than much larger assignments (such as research papers), which usually require far more intervention by the faculty themselves. In Fall 2005, SALT members will analyze and then frame future activities in their areas that support the Quality Enhancement Plan.

Writing Center Data and SALT Referrals

In Fall 2001, the University initiated a Title V Grant entitled "A Comprehensive Retention Strategy for First-Time Students." One of the components of the grant was the establishment of a Writing Center. Professional staff include a director with extensive experience in writing and students with strong writing skills trained according to the Writing

Tutor Association guidelines. The mission of the Writing Center is to improve writing skills of all students by reaching across disciplines and across skill levels.

One of the initial goals of SALT was to increase the number of student visits to the Writing Center. Information regarding Writing Center visits and requests for tutoring services, from its inception through Fall 2004, may be found in Appendix H – Writing Center Student Visits and Requests for Tutoring Services Spring 2002 – Fall 2004.

During Fall 2004, when SALT faculty began referring students to the Writing Center, there was a 12% increase in the number of one-on-one tutoring requests. While these numbers represent an indirect measure of the effect of SALT referrals, they do suggest that increased instructor involvement in the process of improving the quality of student writing encourages students to use tutoring and other support services of the Writing Center. Nonetheless, SALT members and the Writing Center Director need to devise a method for distinguishing between students' visits as the direct result of SALT referrals and the total number of visits to the Writing Center for all students. In addition, SALT faculty evaluate the impact of Writing Center assistance on student's writing. The Writing Center also administers questionnaires that probe the efficacy of and satisfaction with writing-related services offered by the Writing Center.

Tier III, Success: Writing in the Community

The Texas Center for Border Economic and Enterprise Development, a research unit within the College of Business Administration, developed two survey instruments that integrate community perceptions about writing into the Quality Enhancement Plan. The first survey instrument assesses employers' perceptions of writing and how writing fits into their particular work environments. This survey yields information about the kind(s) of writing that employers

expect their employees to possess on the job. The second survey assesses whether or not the University has succeeded in aligning its writing curriculum to the expectations of the marketplace, asking employers their perceptions about the writing skills of TAMIU's graduates. In both cases, the data feed back into the FYWP and the upper-level curricula, suggesting ways in which writing embedded in students' courses might more readily connect to the writing skills they need in their future professional capacities.

Tier IV, Research: Success of the QEP

Tier IV, Research: Success of the QEP, incorporates data collection for questions such as:

- Can students write effectively in their disciplines?
- What specific writing proficiency is expected in degree programs at entrance and exit and why?
- Has the culture of writing changed at the University?
- What is the perception of writing preparation by students? Employers?
- How can the knowledge and skills developed in the FYWP be reinforced in other core courses?
- What types of assistance do writers seek to address their needs? Why do students seek these alternatives?
- Why do faculty choose different types of writing assignments?
- What instructional strategies and resources do faculty members use to help students become proficient writers in their chosen major?
- What do students perceive to be effects and benefits of this emphasis on writing?

- How do program faculty and administrators convey high expectations in writing proficiency to students?
- What written collaborative problem solving experiences are provided in courses?
- How do students identify mentors and role models to support their interest and development in writing?

The complexity of the University's QEP requires a multidimensional and integrated approach to assessment. In line with the Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning developed under the auspices of the American Association for Higher Education (now dissolved) Assessment Forum, "Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time."

TAMIU has built into the writing assessments within Tiers I-III the means to collect, analyze, and disseminate data that result from best practices, as well as to construct a longitudinal assessment of that data that runs through all tiers.

The QEP is connected to ongoing practices of institutional effectiveness through the monitoring and oversight of the UQEPC and the UAC. The UAC forwards its findings to the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. In collaboration with the deans and director of the Canseco School of Nursing, the Provost prioritizes the results and their effects on budgeting and presents his recommendations to the UPBC, which makes recommendations to the University President regarding any budgetary and planning implications that the data suggest.

The results of Tier IV, Research: Success of the QEP, will be disseminated throughout the University and broader community. The university-wide community of writers, building on current best practices, seeks not only to improve weak writing, but to recognize exemplary

writing. The University will increasingly be in a position to evaluate the effectiveness of a diverse set of writing products in helping students internalize the skills associated with writing and recommend best practices to campus constituents and higher education colleagues through presentations and publications.

Assessment of the Quality Enhancement Plan

Assessment is an integral part of institutional effectiveness and informs the planning and budgeting process at Texas A&M International University. Assessment allows the University to increase organizational effectiveness and improve performance across all areas of the institution. The Texas A&M International University rule on assessment is cited below and is published on the Institutional Effectiveness and Planning web page (<http://www.tamui.edu/adminis/iep/>):

Texas A&M International University is responsible for assessing all programs and services provided by the institution. All academic programs and administrative/educational support units conduct an annual assessment of student learning and program outcomes. In addition, academic and service units conduct external reviews on a cycle determined by the college/school/division and approved by the appropriate vice president.

The strategic planning process focuses the University's energy in working toward common goals, assesses and adjusts the University's progress toward these goals, results in a disciplined effort producing decisions and actions, and shapes and guides the University in a changing environment. The University Strategic Planning Committee (USPC) conducts ongoing and continuous review of the Strategic Plan, with special emphasis on the proposed revisions that flow from the annual assessment and programmatic review procedures, and makes recommendations for revisions or changes to the UPBC. The UPBC receives and evaluates reports and recommendations from the USPC as well as the UAC; makes resource allocation decisions that reflect priorities based on the Strategic Plan; and makes final recommendations to the University President as to revisions to the Strategic Plan and the annual budget.

Assessment guides the strategic planning process by providing data for development of action plans and constructive change, development of priorities and allocation of resources. Components of assessment include developing student learning outcome criteria that reflect elements of both the Institutional Mission and the Strategic Plan; selecting appropriate methodologies to assess achievement of outcomes; gathering and analyzing data by applying the methodologies; sharing the results of the analysis; and making evidence-based improvements when necessary. Each AIER report is submitted through the appropriate unit head to the UAC. The UAC provides an annual report detailing the progress made toward achieving unit goals to the University President as well as to the UPBC documenting the overall effort in assessment and institutional effectiveness. The individual completed AIER reports and the annual UAC report are posted on the Project INTEGRATE web page. Assessment results guide the UPBC in making resource allocation decisions that reflect institutional priorities based on the Strategic Plan. This process identifies costs and other resources to support implementation of planning and evaluation activities.

The UAC provides an annual report to the UPBC detailing the progress made toward achieving unit goals and continuous quality improvement. Assessment results guide the UPBC in making resource recommendations that reflect priorities based on the Strategic Plan. This process identifies costs and other resources to support implementation of planning and evaluation activities following the institutional effectiveness process in place at the University outlined in Figure 1, page 56. The UQEPC monitors the activities of the QEP, sending its findings to the UAC. The UAC recommends action to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. In collaboration with the deans and the director of the Canseco School of Nursing, the Provost

reviews all data from the academic units and the QEP to develop a list of budget priorities for the coming academic year. The Provost then brings the findings of academic affairs to the UPBC. The UAC also reports to the academic programs for possible curriculum modifications.

Monitoring for Continuous Improvement

In keeping with the University evaluation process, the QEP goals and their associated student learning outcomes follow. The criteria for success are targets that may be adjusted after data have been collected and analyzed each year for continuous quality improvement.

QEP Goal 1

To provide entering students a strong foundation for academic success through the development of a comprehensive First-Year Writing Program.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the freshman composition sequence, students will be able to produce short writing samples that:

1. reflect an awareness of audience, situation, and occasion, and exhibit the use of writing strategies appropriate to the stated purpose of the writing task (*focus*).
2. develop a central idea supported by appropriate and effectively chosen evidence. The writing follows a logical plan of organization, and is composed of unified sentences and paragraphs (*organization and development*).
3. demonstrate an awareness of simple and complex sentence structure and the ability to vary sentence structure in appropriate ways. The writing shows evidence of effective diction and syntax (*sentence structure*).
4. are largely free of spelling, mechanical, and punctuation errors, and demonstrate knowledge of standard English usage (*grammar and usage*).

Means of Assessment

Four assessments of student writing are conducted within the ENGL 1301-1302 sequence:

1. Diagnostic essay at the beginning of ENGL 1301
2. Terminal essay at the end of the ENGL 1301
3. Diagnostic essay at the beginning of ENGL 1302
4. Terminal essay at the end of ENGL 1302

Criteria for Success

1. After completion of the revised English 1301, 80% of students will demonstrate an increase in proficiency on each of the learning outcomes identified as criteria for success based on the comparison between the diagnostic essay score and the terminal essay score.
 - If criterion is met, it may be modified.
 - If the specific learning outcome is not met, teaching/learning strategies of the course will be modified in response to data.
2. After completion of the revised English 1302, 80% of students will demonstrate an increase in proficiency on each of the learning outcomes identified as criteria for success based on the comparison between the diagnostic essay score and the terminal essay score.
 - If criterion is met, it may be modified.
 - If the specific learning outcome is not met, teaching/learning strategies of the course will be modified in response to data.

QEP Goal 2

To create a university-wide culture of writing by establishing learning outcomes related to writing in all academic programs.

Program Outcome

1. Academic programs will identify a 4000-level discipline-specific course that includes a student learning outcome related to writing.
2. Increase writing university-wide.

Means of Assessment

1. An inventory to identify 4000-level discipline-specific courses with a student learning outcome related to writing will be compiled.
2. Users of the Writing Center (students, faculty and staff) are asked to complete a survey that probes the efficacy of and satisfaction with writing-related services offered by the Writing Center.
3. A random sampling of first-time freshmen and senior students complete the National Survey of Student Engagement.

Criteria for Success

1. At the end of the first year, 80% of all academic programs will identify a 4000-level discipline specific course that includes a student learning outcome related to writing.
 - Each year, writing performance in the designated 4000-level course will be evaluated.
 - Course will be modified in response to the data acquired.
2. At the end of the first year, 85% of Writing Center users surveyed will express satisfaction with the services provided.
 - Users will be asked to participate in focus groups to identify strategies for improvement.
 - If benchmark is met the criterion may be modified.
3. Student responses to the National Survey of Student Engagement question relating to the number of short writing assignments will increase from a 2003 response of (1 to 4) to (5-10) within five years.
 - Student responses will be evaluated each year for progress toward final goal.
 - If improvement is not continuous further assessment of writing in the disciplines will be conducted.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of their academic major, students will be able to produce short writing samples in their discipline that:

1. reflect an awareness of audience, situation, and occasion, and exhibit the use of writing strategies appropriate to the stated purpose of the writing task (focus).
2. are largely free of spelling, mechanical, and punctuation errors, and demonstrate knowledge of standard English usage (grammar and usage).
3. demonstrate the ability to employ external sources to support and develop their writing in ways that are appropriate to their academic major (research).
4. demonstrate an awareness of strategies and requirements appropriate to their academic major, and reflect their ability to approach complex writing tasks that demand creativity and/or higher-order critical thinking skills (discipline-specific writing).

Means of Assessment

1. At the end of the first year, 80% of all academic programs will identify a 4000-level discipline specific course that includes a student learning outcome related to writing.
 - Each year, writing performance in the designated 4000-level course will be evaluated.
 - Course will be modified in response to the data acquired.
2. Scholars Alliance for Learning and Teaching (SALT) faculty will analyze and evaluate writing activities in the disciplines to identify the strengths and needs of students in their respective disciplines.

Criteria for Success

1. Faculty will evaluate the writing portfolios of seniors in their disciplines according to the established learning outcomes and the Analytical Rubric for Writing Assessment to develop baseline data.
 - Writing performance in the portfolio will be evaluated by faculty in the discipline.
 - Program will be modified as needed in response to the data acquired.
2. At the end of the first academic year, SALT members will conduct a comprehensive summary assessment of discipline-based writing activities that will indicate the extent to which the culture of writing has been established in SALT members' respective disciplines.
 - The results of this assessment will be shared with the chairs, deans and directors to establish appropriate benchmarks.
 - In subsequent years, benchmarks will be reviewed and recalibrated as appropriate

QEP Goal 3

To ensure that TAMIU graduates have mastered those writing skills necessary for professional success in their chosen careers.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. reflect an awareness of audience, situation, and occasion, and exhibit the use of writing strategies appropriate to the stated purpose of the writing task (focus).
2. are largely free of spelling, mechanical, and punctuation errors, and demonstrate knowledge of standard English usage (grammar and usage).
3. demonstrate the ability to employ external sources to support and develop their writing in ways that are appropriate to their academic major (research).

4. demonstrate an awareness of strategies and requirements appropriate to their academic major, and reflect their ability to approach complex writing tasks that demand creativity and/or higher-order critical thinking skills (discipline-specific writing).

Means of Assessment for QEP Goal 3

1. Each graduating class completes the Graduation Candidate Information Survey.
2. Selected employers complete a survey of their perception of the writing needs within their designated professions.

Criteria for Success

1. 90% of students completing the Graduation Candidate Information Survey will respond that the University had a moderate or major impact on the attainment of verbal and written communication skills.
 - If criterion is met, it may be modified.
 - If benchmark is not met, writing in the program will be modified in response to data.
2. By the end of FY 2007, 80% of graduates will demonstrate writing proficiency as judged by a community employers' survey conducted by TCBEED.
 - Employers will be asked to participate in focus groups to identify strategies for improvement.
 - Benchmark will be modified as appropriate.

Following is a schedule for assessment of student writing that spans a student's academic career. Student writing is assessed at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the academic career using multiple methods of assessment, and incorporating various types of writing tasks.

Table 2: QEP Assessments

Assessment	Timeline
Diagnostic essay, entry into ENGL 1301	1st Semester Freshman Year
Terminal essay, ENGL 1301	1st Semester Freshman Year
Student course evaluations of ENGL 1301	1st Semester Freshman Year
Diagnostic essay ENGL 1302	2nd Semester Freshman Year
Terminal essay ENGL 1302	2nd Semester Freshman Year
Student course evaluations of ENGL 1302	2nd Semester Freshman Year
Random sampling of First-Year Writing Program (FYWP) portfolios	2nd Semester Freshman Year
Inventory and evaluation of student writing in the disciplines	Junior Year
Senior portfolio writing assessment	Senior Year
Graduation Candidate Information Survey	Senior Year on Graduation
Student reflection paper on writing	Senior Year
National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	Senior Year
Writing Center Satisfaction Survey	Annually
Survey of faculty members of Scholars Alliance for Learning and Teaching (SALT) to gather data related to type and quality of writing activities in the disciplines	Annually
Employer surveys of graduates' writing skills	Annually, Post-Graduation

Data collected through these assessments are analyzed, reviewed, used for program improvement, and published using various outlets. These include:

- Publication of the QEP and updates by the UQEPC on the University's website
- Development and implementation of assessment training workshops for faculty and administrators who collect and analyze data about student writing
- Analysis of previous years' data on student writing and any effects on the University's budget at the annual college/school/department retreats
- Dissemination of information and discussion of QEP implementation at open meetings with students, faculty and administrative/classified staff
- Distribution, discussion and request for feedback from students through: Student Government Association, Lead to Succeed Spring Conference (student organization

presidents), First-Year Success Program advisors, Writing Center tutors, Freshman and Transfer Student Orientation participants, Scholarship Recipients' Orientation participants, and student focus groups

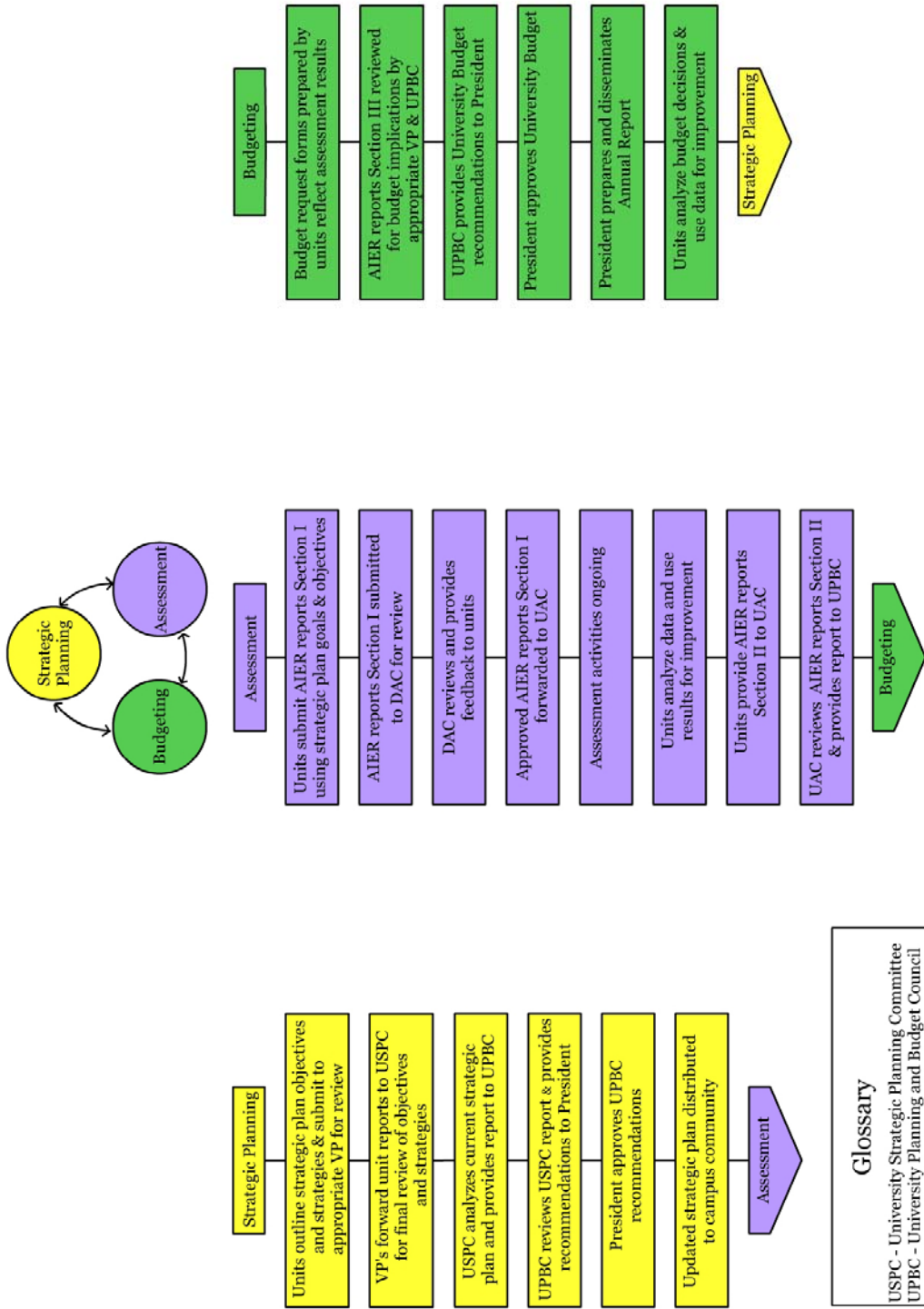
- Dissemination of the President's Annual Report to include the status of the Quality Enhancement Plan

Continuous feedback is critical to the success of the QEP. The feedback channels include:

- Department assessment and curriculum committees analyze writing data, suggest any necessary program changes and submit report to the UQEPC.
- After analyzing writing assessment data, the UQEPC reports its findings to the UAC.
- The UAC recommends action to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- In collaboration with the deans and the director of the Canseco School of Nursing, the Provost reviews all data from the academic units and the QEP to develop a list of budget priorities for the coming academic year.
- The Provost then brings the recommendations of academic affairs to the UPBC.
- The UPBC considers all budgetary impacts of the data and make its recommendations to the University President.
- The University President makes final budgetary decisions and relays this information to the campus community through the President's Annual Report.

The feedback channels are outlined in Figure 1 below and illustrate the flow of assessment information, monitoring and reporting.

Figure 1: Institutional Effectiveness Process



Glossary

- USPC - University Strategic Planning Committee
- UPBC - University Planning and Budget Council
- AIER - Annual Institutional Effectiveness Review
- DAC - Department Assessment Committees
- UAC - University Assessment Committee

The specific processes for the analysis, discussion, documentation, and sharing of results; the documentation of decisions arising from these interactions; and the manner in which the impact of actions arising from these decisions are monitored and evaluated are described below. The processes are organized according to the relevant QEP goal.

QEP Goal 1: To provide entering students a strong foundation for academic success through the development of a comprehensive First-Year Writing Program.

Processes for analysis, sharing, and application of results: Data from the First-Year Writing Program assessments including diagnostic and terminal essays as well as random sampling of portfolios are analyzed by the Department of Language and Literature assessment committee. Based on its assessment, this committee develops a profile of student writing skills. The analysis is forwarded to the department chair and the department curriculum committee. Curricular change recommendations are forwarded through the department and university curriculum committees to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The analysis of results is also copied to the UQEPC. After its analysis, UQEPC reports its findings to the UAC, which, in turn, recommends action to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. In collaboration with the deans and director of the Canseco School of Nursing, the Provost reviews all data from the academic units and the QEP to develop a list of budget priorities for the coming academic year. The Provost then brings the findings of academic affairs to the

UPBC. The UPBC considers all budgetary impacts and make its recommendations to the University President.

QEP Goal 2: To create a university-wide culture of writing by establishing learning outcomes related to writing in all academic programs.

Processes for analysis, sharing, and application of results. A matrix documenting the nature, extent, and quality of student writing at the senior level within the disciplines is compiled by degree coordinators working with department faculty and is sent to each department assessment committee for analysis. These committees review the results for programmatic and budgetary implications and make appropriate recommendations. These recommendations are forwarded to and reviewed by department chairs and the UQEPC. The UQEPC reviews all data and forward its analysis to the UAC. The UAC analyzes the results and sends their recommendations, if any, to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs who then brings findings to the UPBC. Recommendations relating to program improvement and new initiatives with budgetary implications originating during this process are discussed during the annual University planning cycle.

Faculty evaluate the writing portfolios of seniors in their disciplines according to the established learning outcomes and the common analytical rubric. For programs with large numbers of graduates, sampling will be permitted. The portfolio process assists in the establishment of baseline data to be used in determining whether changes should be made on a university-wide basis to help

the institution achieve the goals of the QEP. All data are collected and analyzed by the departmental assessment committees. The assessment committees forward their findings and recommendations for programmatic improvement to the departmental curriculum committees and the department chairs. Recommendations with budgetary and programmatic implications are introduced during the annual University planning cycle. The UQEPC makes specific recommendations to the UAC about the need for additional writing interventions.

NSSE data regarding short writing assignments are collected by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (IEP). The data are provided to SALT to determine if the increase in the number of short writing assignments (1-5 pages) in selected courses had any effect on the student perception of increases in the number of written assignments. Data are collected about student perceptions on the quantity of writing at the freshman and senior levels. This indirect measure provides information about the length and number of writing assignments at the beginning and end of students' college experience. The IEP Office sends the data to the UQEPC for analysis. Should the findings reflect that no changes have occurred in the student perception on the number of short writing assignments, the UQEPC works with the program coordinators to ensure that all degree programs include frequent short writing assignments. After its analysis, UQEPC reports its findings to the UAC, which, in turn, recommends action to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. In collaboration with the deans and the director of the Canseco School of Nursing, the Provost reviews all data from the academic

units and the QEP to develop a list of budget priorities for the coming academic year. The Provost then brings the findings of academic affairs to the UPBC. The UPBC considers all budgetary impacts and makes its recommendations to the University President.

QEP Goal 3: To ensure that TAMIU graduates have mastered those writing skills necessary for professional success in their chosen careers.

Processes for analysis, sharing, and application of results: The IEP Office includes questions on writing in its survey of graduating seniors. Coupled with the results from the students' narratives about their writing, these data add to the institution's knowledge about students' perceptions of their achievements in writing and the need for writing in their professional programs. Moreover, the data might suggest ways in which to improve or refine writing during all phases of the students' experiences at the University.

Finally, the TCBEED creates and conducts surveys about employers' perceptions of graduates' writing and specific professional needs for writing. The results are sent to departmental assessment committees for evaluation in order to discern ways in which programs might align writing objectives for courses with employers' perceptions of needs for writing in their professions. The results also go to the UQEPC. After its analysis, UQEPC reports its findings to the UAC, which, in turn, recommends action to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. In collaboration with the deans and director of the Canseco School of Nursing, the Provost reviews all data from the academic units and the

QEP to develop a list of budget priorities for the coming academic year. The Provost then brings the findings of academic affairs to the UPBC. The UPBC considers all budgetary impacts and make its recommendations to the University President.

The impact of decisions and modification of the QEP are monitored by the UQEPC, as well as the UAC. Budgetary and programmatic planning issues are addressed by the UPBC and final recommendations made to the University President. The final step in the decision process and the communication loop rests with the President, who presents the progress of the QEP as part of his annual report to the University and the wider community.

The University has instituted a QEP in which multiple means of assessment measure student learning outcomes in writing. The various means of assessment are connected to course objectives and student learning outcomes and are integrated into a system of reporting tying resulting data on writing to both the academic programs and to the ongoing evaluation of the QEP.

Resources and Management Plan for the

Quality Enhancement Plan

Resources

The resources outlined in the financial plan identify the University commitment to implement the processes and procedures outlined in the QEP within the next five academic years. The budget includes costs already incurred for some activities undertaken. Also included are estimated costs for new faculty to be phased in gradually beginning in the third year. The total costs outlined are an accurate reflection and assessment of the University's present and future resources, matching financial capacity with curricular goals and institutional expectations.

Table 3: Quality Enhancement Plan Budget identifies both direct and indirect costs, testing materials, supplies and travel for SALT members, staffing for the Writing Center, additional faculty lines for the Department of Language and Literature, and ongoing monies for the BEAMS Project. The University has for years committed resources to support the enhancement of writing, including taking over the costs of the Writing Center once the Title V grant has expired. The University administration believes that the QEP budget is realistic to ensure the successful implementation of the QEP.

Table 3: Quality Enhancement Plan Budget

	FY00-04	FY 04-05	FY 05-06	FY 06-07	FY 07-08	FY 08-09	Total
FACULTY		Yr. 1	Yr. 2	Yr. 3	Yr. 4	Yr.5	
1 Composition/ Rhetoric Faculty (Senior Level)				\$ 65,000	\$ 66,950	\$ 68,958	\$ 200,908
1 Composition/ Rhetoric Faculty (Junior Level)					\$ 45,000	\$ 46,350	\$ 91,350
STAFF							
3 Full-Time Writing Center Staff	\$ 222,794	\$ 116,951	\$ 119,290	\$ 121,676	\$ 124,110	\$ 126,592	\$ 608,619
Writing Center (New Positions)			\$ 25,000	\$ 51,500	\$ 79,568	\$ 84,954	\$ 241,022
TESTING							
NSSE	\$ 9,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,500	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,500	\$ 6,000	\$ 31,000
Standardized Exams	\$ 30,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 50,000
SALT							
Travel & M.O.		\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 56,000
BEAMS							
Travel		\$ 5,904	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 13,904
INDIRECT COSTS							
Public Relations Materials		\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 2,500
Associate Provost (25%)		\$ 20,000	\$ 20,188	\$ 20,794	\$ 21,417	\$ 22,060	\$ 104,459
Executive Director, PASE (10%)		\$ 7,207	\$ 7,424	\$ 7,646	\$ 7,876	\$ 8,112	\$ 38,265
Director, Testing Center (20%)		\$ 7,676	\$ 7,830	\$ 7,987	\$ 8,146	\$ 8,309	\$ 39,948
Director, Institutional Effectiveness & Planning (30%)		\$ 12,000	\$ 12,360	\$ 12,730	\$ 13,112	\$ 13,506	\$ 63,708
Benefits	\$ 62,382	\$ 45,874	\$ 53,786	\$ 80,453	\$ 102,530	\$ 106,075	\$ 388,718
	\$ 324,176	\$ 242,112	\$ 274,878	\$ 398,286	\$ 499,709	\$ 515,416	\$ 1,930,401

Management Plan

The management of the QEP encompasses a collaboration of all institutional components. While some departments have specific responsibilities, the entire campus community is involved in the implementation and management of the plan. The plan calls for consistently re-evaluating goals and objectives, revising activities when necessary, producing reports that update relevant data, soliciting evaluation of data from campus stakeholders, and proposing solutions to ongoing and/or emerging issues. The bulleted items illustrate the management of information derived from the QEP.

- The UQEPC oversees the implementation of the QEP and works with all faculty, administrative, and student constituencies, distributing information on the progress of the QEP, soliciting feedback on the accumulated data, and revising the QEP accordingly.
- The UAC oversees the annual assessment of the QEP.
- The Director of the Writing Center analyzes all Writing Center data and reports findings to the UQEPC and assists with SALT-related projects.
- The Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning collects all NSSE data and maintains records of all QEP relevant surveys and materials.

Future Directions of the Quality Enhancement Plan

The entire campus community wishes to enhance student writing, which has effects beyond the University. As a result, students become writers who can **think analytically and logically** and can function as writers in their workplace and within their own communities. TAMIU graduates demonstrate sharpened communication skills and **assume “leadership roles** in their chosen profession and in an increasingly complex, culturally diverse state, national, and global society,” as stated in the Institutional Mission.

All stakeholders within the campus community recognize that this plan only begins to address issues pertaining to student writing. The following are future directions the QEP may take to maintain institutional standards and objectives, as well as to take on new challenges that shape the lives of students at TAMIU:

- Evaluate graduate student writing. Faculty remain concerned that graduate students may not always display the more sophisticated, complex writing skills they need to write professional papers, theses, or publishable essays.
- Reflect bilingual reality of region by training students to write well in both English and Spanish; engage in outreach support in the community for dual language programs.
- Investigate the relationship between academic honesty and writing and address the extent to which plagiarism has become a problem for the campus community.
- Through the Laredo Educational Systems Coalition, encourage school districts to adopt SAT and ACT as exit assessments for student writing.

- Collaborate with school districts on extracurricular writing projects such as the writing camps sponsored by TAMIU's Reading Research Center.
- Analyze the use and effectiveness of writing in distance education classes and other web-assisted courses, and how writing functions as a stimulant in this type of learning environment.
- Expand the emphasis on writing to include the arena of creative writing.
- Publish and present research on the effectiveness of writing enhancement activities at professional meetings to disseminate outcomes to the broader academic community.

Armed with the knowledge that writing is an extensive process, students continue to evaluate their writing skills throughout their college careers and long after they graduate and move on to their professional lives. The enhancement of writing through the QEP at TAMIU integrates all academic programs and administrative/educational support units through a common belief that students appreciate and practice intellectual exploration more completely if writing, in whatever shape or form, becomes central to their lives.

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Appendix A
Scholars Alliance for Learning and Teaching (SALT)
Faculty Roster 2004-2006

Appendix A
Scholars Alliance for Learning and Teaching (SALT)
Faculty Roster 2004-2006

Name	Most Advanced Degree and Discipline	Other Degrees and Academic Credit	Courses Taught
Barker, E. Ellen ebarker@tamiu.edu Director of Composition and Associate Professor of English	Ph.D. Rhetoric and Composition Georgia State University	M.A. B.S.	ENGL 1301 English Composition I
Blackwell, Deborah dblackwell@tamiu.edu Associate Professor of History	Ph.D. History University of Kentucky	M.A. B.A.	HIST 1301 The U.S. to 1877 HIST 4366 Building Modern America (1865-1914) HIST 5315 Seminar 20th Century U.S. History
Chadwell, Sean schadwell@tamiu.edu Associate Professor of English	Ph.D. English Texas A&M University	M.A. B.A.	ENGL 1302 English Composition II ENGL 2327 American Literature to the Civil War ENGL 4323 Early 20th Century American Literature
Coronado, Jennifer jcoronado@tamiu.edu Visiting Instructor of Education	Ph.D. Curriculum and Instruction Capella University	M.Ed. B.S.	EDCI 4993 Field Performance and Induction
Farmer, Todd tfarmer@tamiu.edu Instructor of Education	M.S. Physical Education Linfield University	B.S.	EDFS 1111 Weight Training EDFS 1152 Health and Wellness EDFS 2316 Health & Movement EDFS 2303 Athletic Training (IS) EDFS 2325 First Aid and Athletic Training
Goonatilake, Rohitha harag@tamiu.edu Associate Professor of Mathematics	Ph.D. Mathematics Kent State University	M.A. M.A. M.Sc. B.Sc.	MATH 1342 Introductory Statistics MATH 1350 Fundamentals of Math I MATH 4335 Advanced Calculus MATH 5305 Real Analysis
Kock, Nereu Florencio nkock@tamiu.edu Interim Chair and Associate Professor of International Business	Ph.D. Management Information Systems University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand	M.Sc. B.E.E.	MIS 3310 Management Information Systems MIS 4310 Information System Design and Implementation MIS 4399 Issues in Information System

Name	Most Advanced Degree and Discipline	Other Degrees and Academic Credit	Courses Taught
Krishnamurthy, Sushma skrishna@tamiu.edu Associate Professor of Biology	Ph.D. Marine, Estuarine, and Environmental Sciences University of Maryland and Eastern Shore	M.S. B.S.	BIOL 1006 General Biology I Lab BIOL 1406 General Biology ENSC 2010 Principles of Environmental Sciences Lab ENSC 2410 Principles of Environmental Sciences
Leyendecker, Bede bleyendecker@tamiu.edu Assistant Professor of Dance	M.Ed. Education, Dance Specialization University of Houston	B.S.	DANC Ballet I-VIII DANC Performance Dance Modern DANC Performance Dance Flamenco DANC 3100 Dance/Theatre & Children DANC 4182 Concert Choreography DANC 1131 Dance Conditioning
Mukherji, Jyotsna jyo@tamiu.edu Associate Professor of Marketing	Ph.D. Business Administration (Marketing) The University of Memphis	M.B.M. B.A.	MKT 3310 Principles of Marketing MKT 3320 Consumer/ Buyer Behavior MKT 5310 Seminar Marketing Management
Rodríguez, Antonio rodriguez@tamiu.edu Associate Dean and Professor of Finance	Ph.D. Economics University of Alabama	M.A. B.A.	Fin 3360 Managerial Finance
Shepherd, Terry tshpherd@tamiu.edu Associate Professor of Education	Ed.D. Special Education Ball State University	M.S. B.S.	EDSE 3305 Introduction to Special Education EDSE 4330 Special Education Law & Practice EDSE 5330 Academic Achievement Assessment
Teranishi, Christy cteranishi@tamiu.edu Assistant Professor of Psychology	Ph.D. Psychology University of California at Santa Cruz	M.A. B.A.	PSYC 4314 Health Psychology PSYC 5305 Human Development Across the Life Span PSYC 5320 Research Design & Statistics
Torregosa, Marivic mtorregosa@tamiu.edu Assistant Professor of Nursing (RN, FNP- BC)	M.S.N. Family Nurse Practitioner Texas A&M University Corpus Christi	B.S.N.	NURS 1302/3302 Cultural Determinants of Hlth Behavior NURS 2312 Foundations of Professional Nursing NURS 2313 Basic Nursing Skills NURS 3665 Introduction to Adult Health

Appendix B
Haswell Letter of Endorsement

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

College of Arts and Humanities
6300 Ocean Drive, Corpus Christi, Texas 78412 361-825-2651

Jeffrey Cass
Associate Provost
Texas A&M International University
Laredo, TX 78401-1900

Dear Provost Cass:

I have read the revised Quality Enhancement Plan (June 2005) of Texas A&M International University, very carefully, looking especially for changes in the plan that dealt with the request of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to make sure that TAMIU's assessment was practical and integrative.

Without reservation, I endorse this new and revised plan of self-assessment for the University.

It is very thorough, well documented, and fully versed in current theory and practice of writing-program validation. Although the plan is quite comprehensive, stretching from first year to senior year, it lays out a method of assessment from implementation to outcomes in full detail.

All told, TAMIU has committed itself to a program that is ambitious, complex, and multi-faceted. Few universities in the nation have as thorough a system of writing assessment. I especially appreciate the wide, integrative vision of this program. Again few universities have writing assessment strategies that aim at four targets: first-year foundational work, writing across the curriculum for all four years in all disciplines, end-of-program mastery in all disciplines, and post-graduate career success. I was particularly impressed by the statements from departments identifying the kinds of discipline-specific writing they will continue or begin to require. The university's commitment to hire new faculty with expertise in writing is also impressive.

There is no doubt that this assessment strategy will result in increased cross-faculty interaction and trading of information, enhanced teaching of writing at multiple points, renewed enthusiams for writing within committed groups such as the Scholars Alliance for Learning and Teaching, and over all an major improvement in the writing skills of TAMIU graduates.

As I say, the assessment plan is ambitious and complex, but it is also pragmatically conceived and theoretically solid. I fully endorse it, and wish TAMIU the best of luck in implementing it in the coming years.

Sincerely,



Richard H. Haswell
Haas Professor of English
Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi
June 9, 2005



Appendix C
Analytical Rubric for Writing Assessment

Appendix C

Analytical Rubric for Writing Assessment

	Exceptional 4/A	Better Than Average 3/B	Average 2/C	Poor Pass 1/D	Failing 0/F
	Prompt is completely & clearly addressed	Prompt is clearly addressed	Prompt is addressed	Prompt is partially or unclearly addressed	Prompt is partially or not addressed
	Clear, interesting central idea stated or implied so focus of the piece is evident or gradually revealed	Clear central idea, stated either explicitly or implicitly	Central idea may not be immediately clear but is evident by the end of the piece	Ambiguous or unclear central idea	Unclear or no central idea
Focus	Writing appropriate for & clearly directed at a specific audience &/or for a specific situation or occasion.	Writing demonstrates awareness of audience, situation, & occasion	Writing demonstrates occasional awareness of audience, situation, & occasion	Little or no awareness of audience, situation, or occasion	Inconsistent or no awareness of audience, situation, or occasion
	Well developed, enticing opening leads to essay's central idea.	Effective, though less detailed opening leads to central idea	Adequate opening leads to central idea	Rudimentary opening to writing sample	Rudimentary or no opening to writing sample

	Exceptional 4/A	Better Than Average 3/B	Average 2/C	Poor Pass 1/D	Failing 0/F
Organiza- tion & Develop- ment	Consistently logical & effective paragraphing with smooth transitions between & within paragraphs	Usually logical & effective paragraphing with mostly smooth transitions between & within paragraphs	Logical paragraphing with transitions between & within paragraphs	Rarely logical, mostly ineffective paragraphing with some abrupt transitions between & within paragraphs	No paragraphing and/or absent or illogical transitions between & within paragraphs
	Consistently clear & logical structure	Usually clear & logical structure	Organization is sometimes unclear or illogical	Organization is often confusing	Lack of organization consistently confuses reader
	Body paragraphs provide substantial detailed evidence and thorough discussion & explanation	Frequent evidence, proof, discussion in body paragraphs with only occasional lapses	Body paragraphs contain adequate though sometimes inconsistent levels of evidence & examples	Body paragraphs lack adequate examples, details, & explanations	Body paragraphs provide little or no evidence, discussion, and/or explanation
	Effective, convincing discussion of topic	Mostly convincing, competent discussion of topic	General, occasionally convincing discussion of topic	Content of essay is rarely convincing	Ineffective, unconvincing discussion of topic
	Interesting, effective, insightful ending	Ends paper effectively	Final paragraph(s) offer sufficient closure	Weak, mechanical, or incomplete ending	Missing, ineffective, dull, incoherent, or irrelevant ending

	Exceptional 4/A	Better Than Average 3/B	Average 2/C	Poor Pass 1/D	Failing 0/F
Sentence Structure	Sophisticated, effective, appropriate diction	Sometimes sophisticated, mostly accurate diction	Unsophisticated but generally accurate diction	Often limited, frequently imprecise diction	Limited, imprecise diction prevents communication of complex ideas
	Consistently varied, sophisticated sentence length and structure	Frequently varied sentence length & structure	Some variety in sentence length and structure	Mostly simple, rarely varied sentence length and structure	Repetitive, unsophisticated sentence length & structure
	Consistent tone	Usually consistent tone	Occasionally inconsistent tone	Frequently inconsistent tone	Inconsistent, inappropriate tone
	Consistently maintains task-appropriate voice	Frequently maintains task-appropriate voice	Occasional lapses in task-appropriate voice	Frequent lapses in task-appropriate voice	Consistently uses task-inappropriate voice
	Consistently smooth, clear, readable syntax	Frequently smooth, clear, readable syntax	Clear, relatively free of unidiomatic syntax & expressions	Some unidiomatic expressions & syntax, but not distracting	Frequent & distracting unidiomatic syntax & expressions
	Free of errors in sentence structure, i.e., fragments, run-ons, and comma splices	Infrequent errors in sentence structure, i.e., fragments, run-ons, and comma splices	Occasional errors in sentence structure, i.e., fragments, run-ons, and comma splices	Frequent errors in sentence structure, i.e., fragments, run-ons, and comma splices	Widespread errors in sentence structure make meaning unclear
	No wordiness	Little wordiness	Some wordiness	Frequent wordiness	Excessive wordiness

	Exceptional 4/A	Better Than Average 3/B	Average 2/C	Poor Pass 1/D	Failing 0/F
Grammar & Usage	Free of grammatical errors, i.e., errors in subject-verb agreement, verb & adjective forms, pronoun-referent agreement, etc.	Infrequent grammatical errors, i.e., errors in subject-verb agreement, verb & adjective forms, pronoun-referent agreement, etc.	Some grammatical errors, i.e., errors in subject-verb agreement, verb & adjective forms, pronoun-referent agreement, etc.	A distracting number of grammatical errors, i.e., errors in subject-verb agreement, verb & adjective forms, pronoun-referent agreement, etc.	Excessive errors in grammar and/or mechanical conventions distort and/or obscure writer's intended meaning
	Free of mechanical errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, use of numbers, etc.	Infrequent mechanical errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, use of numbers, etc.	Some mechanical errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, use of numbers, etc.	A distracting number of mechanical errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, use of numbers, etc.	
Discipline - specific Writing	Demonstrates exceptional creativity and/or higher order critical thinking skills appropriate for discipline	Demonstrates frequent creativity and/or higher order critical thinking skills appropriate for discipline	Demonstrates adequate creativity and/or higher order critical thinking skills appropriate for discipline	Infrequently demonstrates creativity and/or higher order critical thinking skills appropriate for discipline	Demonstrates little or no creativity or higher order critical thinking skills appropriate for discipline

	Exceptional 4/A	Better Than Average 3/B	Average 2/C	Poor Pass 1/D	Failing 0/F
Research	Consistently uses reliable, relevant, appropriate sources	Frequently uses reliable, relevant, appropriate sources	Uses sources, most of which are reliable and relevant	Uses frequently unreliable and/or irrelevant sources	Lacks sources or uses unreliable, irrelevant, inappropriate sources
	Consistently and correctly cites sources both in-text and parenthetically	Infrequent errors citing sources both in-text & parenthetically	Occasional errors citing sources in-text and/or parenthetically	Frequent errors citing sources in-text and/or parenthetically	Missing citations and/or widespread errors citing sources in-text or parenthetically
	Unfailingly uses appropriate documentation style	No or few lapses in use of appropriate documentation style	Occasional lapses in use of appropriate documentation style	Frequent lapses in use of appropriate documentation style	Little or no evidence that writer understands how to use appropriate documentation style
	Thoughtful, insightful synthesis of writer's ideas with info from sources	Often insightful synthesis of writer's ideas with info from sources	Some effective synthesis of writer's ideas with info from sources	Attempts to synthesize writer's ideas with info from sources but rarely succeeds	No or consistently ineffective synthesis of writer's ideas with info from sources

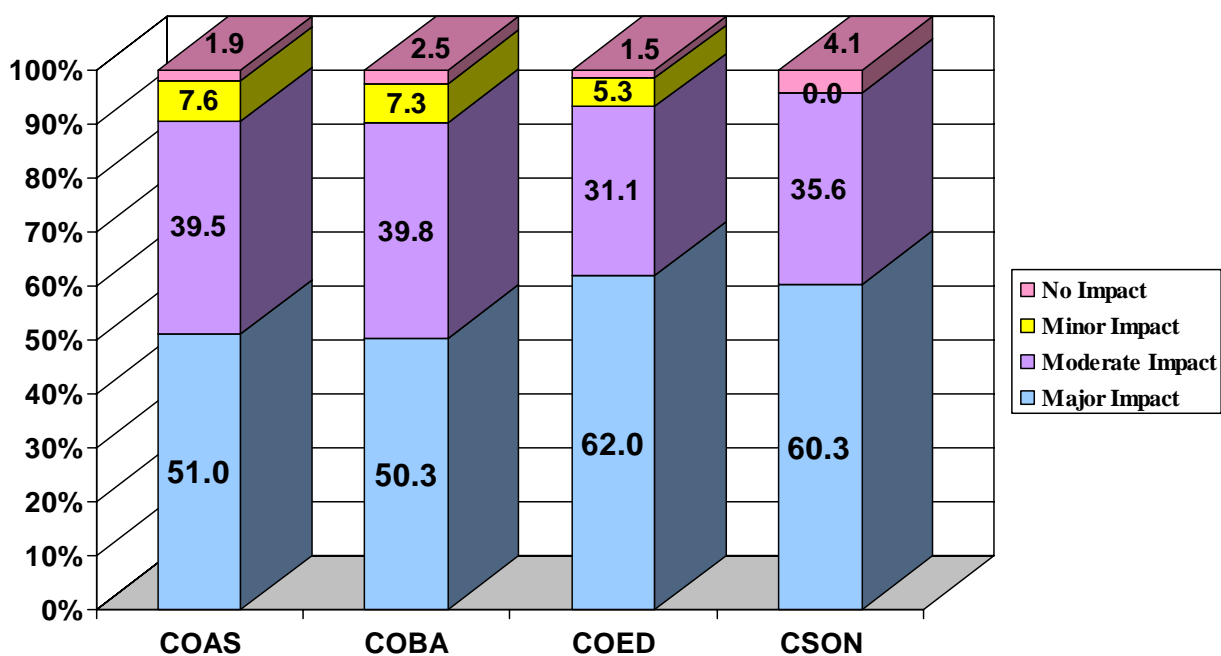
Appendix D
Graduation Candidate Information Survey
May 2002 – May 2005

Appendix D

Graduation Candidate Information Survey

Student Perception of Verbal and Written Communication Skills
May 2002 – May 2005

Indicate the impact of your experiences at this school on your attainment of each skill:
Recognizing and using effective verbal and written communication skills.



Legend

COAS College of Arts and Sciences
 COBA College of Business Administration
 COED College of Education
 CSON Dr. F.M. Canseco School of Nursing

Appendix E
Building Engagement and Attainment for
Minority Students (BEAMS)
Work Group Roster

Appendix E

Building Engagement and Attainment for Minority Students (BEAMS) Work Group Roster

Jeffrey D. Cass	Associate Professor of English and Associate Provost
Katherine Cogburn	Student
Steve Harmon	Director of Public Relations, Marketing, and Information Services
Conchita Hickey	Executive Director, Programs for Academic Support and Enrichment
Ray Keck	University President
Randy Koch	Director of Writing Center
Elizabeth Martínez	Research Analyst
Elizabeth N. Martínez	Associate Vice President for Administration
Verónica G. Martínez	Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning
Dan Mott	Associate Professor, Associate Dean and Chair, Biology and Chemistry
Kati Pletsch de García	Associate Professor and Chair, Language and Literature
Minita Ramírez	Associate Vice President for Student Success
Monica Ramírez	Student
Daniel Segovia	Student
Mary Treviño	Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
Pedro Villanueva	Student

Appendix F
National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
Short Writing Assignment Responses

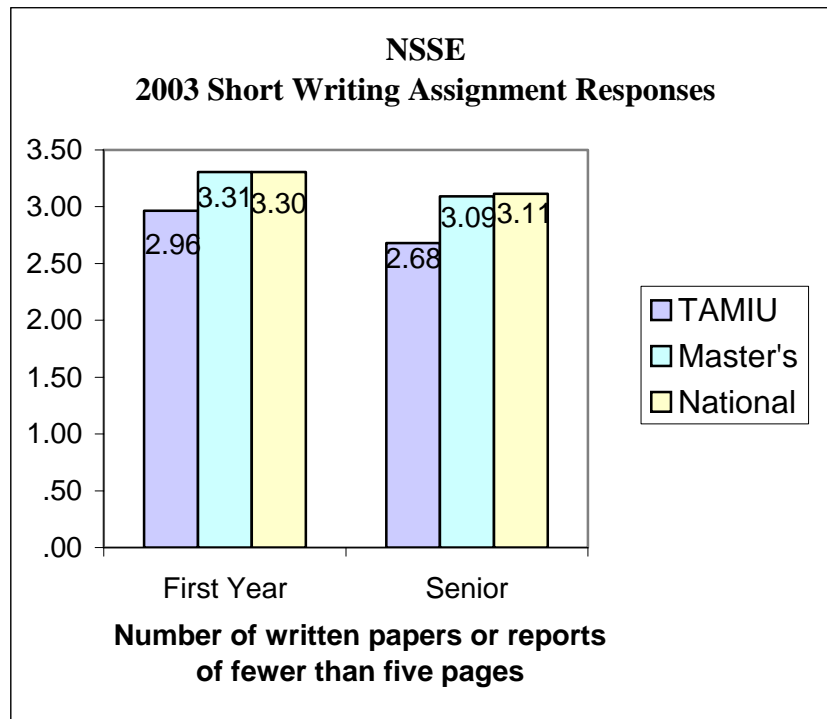
Appendix F

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Short Writing Assignment Responses

This chart illustrates the comparison of data among master's level (Carnegie classification), national average and Texas A&M International University responses to the question, "During the current school year, about how much reading and writing have you done?" The responses to this question may include:

1. None
2. Between 1 and 4 written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages.
3. Between 5 and 10 written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages.
4. Between 11 and 20 written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages.
5. More than 20 written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages.



Appendix G
Undergraduate Student Writing Survey

Appendix G

Undergraduate Student Writing Survey

This is a short survey about who you are and your perceptions about writing. Please complete the following questions as openly and as honestly as possible. It is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Your survey will remain confidential and anonymous.

You may skip any questions that make you feel uncomfortable and may discontinue the survey at anytime.

1. What is your gender? (Circle one) F M

2. What is your age? _____

3. What is your current grade level? (Circle one)

 Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

3. What is your current University GPA? _____

4. What was your score on your last SAT? _____

5. What year did you start attending TAMU? _____

6. On average, how many classes do you have per semester that require some type of writing assignments?
(Circle one) 1 2 3 4 5

7. On average, how many short writing assignments do you write per semester?
(Circle one) 1 2 3 4 5

8. On average, how often do you utilize the Writing Center per semester? (Circle one)
 - a. Not at all.
 - b. Rarely
 - c. Once or twice per semester
 - d. Once a month
 - e. Once per week
 - f. Often (more than once per week)

9. If you have gone to the Writing Center for feedback, was it useful? (Circle one)
Yes No
Please explain:

Please indicate your response to the next set of questions on the following 7-point scale:

- 7-Very strongly agree
- 6-Strongly agree
- 5-Agree
- 4-Neither agree nor disagree
- 3-Disagree
- 2-Strongly disagree
- 1-Very strongly disagree

- | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Short writing assignments make me feel anxious. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2. Short writing assignments are important for my academic progress. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3. I enjoy short writing assignments as part of my course work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4. I am able to write high quality short essays. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 5. I am able to write short essays quickly and efficiently. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 6. I am able to organize my ideas easily in a short essay. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 7. I feel rushed and anxious when completing a test with short essay questions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8. I prefer short essay questions over multiple choice exams. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 9. I avoid classes that have a lot of writing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 10. I enjoy writing in my journal or writing short stories and poetry during my own free time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Thank you very much for your participation. We appreciate your time and honesty in answering the questions.

Appendix H
Writing Center Student Visits
and
Requests for Tutoring Services
Spring 2002 - Fall 2004

Appendix H

Writing Center Student Visits and Requests for Tutoring Services Spring 2002 - Fall 2004

Semester	Dates	Student Visits	Requests for Tutoring	Enrollment
Spring 2002	1/14-5/9	1,333	940	3,332
Summer 2002	5/10-8/10	1,801	866	3,861
Total	1/14/02-8/10/02	3,134	1,806	7,193
Fall 2002	8/26-12/14	4,269	978	3,724
Spring 2003	1/6-5/9	3,225	930	3,736
Summer 2003	5/12-8/9	1,785	436	3,835
Total	8/26/02-8/9/03	9,279	2,344	11,295
Fall 2003	8/25-12/13	6,170	1,700	4,078
Spring 2004	1/20-5/15	3,364	1,622	4,100
Summer 2004	6/7-8/14	1,550	880	3,755
Total	8/25/03-8/14/04	11,084	4,202	11,933
Fall 2004	8/25-12/17	5,603	2,221	4,269
Total	8/25/04-12/17/04	5,603	2,221	4,269