Report on the Writing Intensive Learning Communities Pilot Project for Fall 2012

Submitted on December 14th, 2012, Updated February 1st, 2013, by Dan Cryer, Senior Writing Fellow
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Introduction
This document serves as a progress report on the Writing Intensive Learning Communities pilot project. It includes a brief introduction, statements of the project's guiding philosophies and goals for students and instructors, a background, descriptions of the project's first three phases, an assessment of the teaching partnerships in the current WILCs, and a brief set of recommendations.

Definitions and Overview
A Writing Intensive Learning Community (WILC) is a course pairing in which both courses are focused on teaching the habits of mind and writing conventions of a specific field. One course, usually an English 102, is taught by a Writing Fellow, and the other, usually a 100- or 200-level course that introduces a particular discipline, is taught by a faculty member interested in developing strong writing habits among his or her students. For example, a WILC consisting of an English 102 and a Linguistics course in Fall 2012 taught the habits of mind and writing conventions of Linguistics by having each student invent and describe her/his own unique language. As of now, the WILCs are a pilot project administered by the Department of English, the College of Arts & Sciences, and University College, with participation from faculty in the School of Law, the Department of Emergency Medicine, the Department of Linguistics, the Department of English, and the School of Fine Arts. Faculty from various disciplines have expressed strong interest in teaching future WILCs, pending continuance of the program, including Sustainability Studies, Women Studies, Africana Studies, and Language, Literacy and Sociocultural Studies (LLSS).

The practices exemplified in the WILCs are strongly supported by educational scholarship. Properly administered and taught, they hit as many as six of the ten "high-impact educational practices" recommended by one of the most highly regarded and comprehensive studies of 21st century higher education, The National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP):
1. First-year Seminars and Experiences: small groups of students studying a focused area of inquiry with frequent writing and feedback
2. Learning Communities: small groups of students with multiple common courses in which instructors from each collaborate in their teaching
3. Writing-intensive courses: courses that emphasize writing, including pre-writing and revision, at all levels of instruction.
4. Collaborative assignments and projects: students must share responsibility for completing a single long-term project.
5. Undergraduate research: students learn to pose focused, significant questions, seek answers to them from reliable sources, and evaluate their findings.
6. Diversity/Global learning: students explore cultures, experiences and worldviews different from their own, including "difficult differences" that include power imbalances such as ethnic, racial and gender differences.

The WILC project is between its third and fourth phases (see "WILC Project Phases" below). In Phase 3, Fall 2012, the first WILCs were taught and a set of guiding principles and outcomes for student learning and teaching partnerships, as well as a process by which WILCs might be administered in coming semesters, were developed. The WILCs themselves were assessed in terms of their teaching partnerships (see "Results of Fall 2012 WILCs" below), just as they will be assessed in terms of student learning in Phase 4, Spring 2013. In addition, the Special Assistant to the Dean and the Senior Writing Fellow participated in the University-wide Foundations of Excellence initiative aimed at improving first-year education at UNM.

Project Goals
The short-term goals of the pilot project are to establish WILCs within the regular menu of Learning Communities offered to students at UNM, and to expand the number offered from five to fifteen within a
year. Included in this goal is a desire to offer WILCs in as wide a variety of disciplines as possible, including the STEM disciplines. This desire is driven by a belief that a wide-ranging and sustained conversation about the communication practices and habits of mind in and across majors can markedly improve our teaching and our students’ learning.

With this belief in mind, the long-term goal of the pilot project is to help establish a University-level Writing Advisory Committee, comprising voices of diverse ethnic and disciplinary backgrounds, in which UNM might deliberately and thoughtfully plan approaches to the teaching and assessment of writing across disciplines, as well as offer support to faculty who must produce written scholarship to earn tenure. Writing links the university at all levels; formalizing this connection can go a long way toward strengthening our academic community.

**Guiding Philosophy**

A short list of observations and values form the purpose and justification of the WILCs:

- Participation in learning communities\(^3\) and guided, meaningful writing tasks\(^4\) increase students' overall engagement and success.
- Cognitive and personal development among students is more likely when instructors make priorities of "student-faculty contact, cooperation among students, active learning, prompt feedback, and respect for diverse talents and ways of learning."\(^5\)
- Transferring knowledge and skills from one course to another, particularly when they are in different fields, is hard for students. But they are more likely to do so when cross-disciplinary faculty work together to make skill-transfer a Learning Community goal.
- Student success is tied to instructors' high expectations, an important element of which are the higher-order learning skills encompassed in "integrative learning."\(^7\)
- Courses and curricula that emphasize the value of human diversity, including ethnic, cultural, and disciplinary diversity, which further includes methods of inquiry from different fields and subfields, increase likelihood of students' academic and professional success.\(^8\)

**Teaching-Partnership Goals for Instructors**

These goals were designed by the Writing Fellows with input from partnership goals established by the Freshman Learning Communities program:

- Instructors will articulate to one another and to students the habits of mind that are most valued in their field of study.
- Instructors will articulate practices of knowledge-making of the disciplinary communities.
- Instructors will articulate how these habits of mind relate to the writing practices, such as genre conventions and rhetorical moves, most relevant to students being introduced to their field.
- Instructors will work together to create assignments that help students understand, develop and articulate these field-specific habits of mind and writing practices.
- To facilitate transfer of students' skills between and beyond WILC courses, instructors will show students how their fields' habits of mind and writing practices both overlap with and are distinct from those of other fields.
- To facilitate transfer of students' skills between and beyond WILC courses, instructors will help students identify the cross-cultural literacies they already possess, and to use this knowledge to facilitate their transition into academic discourse communities.
Learning Goals for Students (in addition to course outcomes specified by departments)

These goals were designed by the Writing Fellows:

• Students will articulate their progress on the habits of mind and writing practices, such as genre conventions and rhetorical moves, valued in their field of study.
• Students will use methods of posing questions, finding answers, and presenting their findings, that are appropriate to their field of study, and they will reflect on these methods.
• Students will use and reflect on a variety of methods for planning, pre-writing, composing and revising in order to find a writing process that works best for them.
• Students will articulate how the writing skills they learn in their WILC can be applied to other areas of their academic, professional and civic lives.
• Students will discuss the rhetorical nature of Standard Written American English (SWAE), recognize and revise departures from it in their own writing, and discuss the consequences and value of these departures in different rhetorical situations.

WILC Project Phases

Phase 1 (Spring 2012)

Dr. Kells, Special Assistant to the Dean, taught a 4-credit ENGL 640 graduate seminar, "Ideologies of Literacy," that served as a think tank for developing course content and learning outcomes for the proposed Fall 2012 WILCs (at this point called W-courses). Nearly every week, key stakeholders in the Core Curriculum attended class to consult with ENGL 640 class members, including

• Mark Peceny, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
• Amy Neel, President, Faculty Senate
• Daniel Sanford, Senior Program Manager, Center for Academic Program Support (CAPS)
• Kate Krause, Dean, University College
• Nancy Lopez, Associate Professor, Sociology
• Bruce Milne, Director, Sustainability Studies Program; Professor, Biology
• Glenabah Martinez, Associate Professor, Language, Literacy & Sociocultural Studies

The seminar paired graduate students with proposed faculty partners for WILC courses. Together they generated content and student learning outcomes for these courses with a special focus on literacy, as well as ethnic, linguistic and disciplinary diversity. In addition, Dr. Kells worked with Dean Peceny to secure a Senior Writing Fellow Graduate Assistantship.

Phase 2 (Summer & Fall 2012)

Over the Summer, the Senior Writing Fellow worked with University College, English department staff, and other Writing Fellows to make sure all WILC sections were sufficiently enrolled (see "Administration & Scheduling" below for more detail). Writing Fellows worked with their teaching partners to plan their Learning Community courses.

The pairing of the WILCs with University College and the FLC program proved to be one of the most consequential moves of the pilot project. The WILCs gained the FLC program's invaluable administrative know-how and promotional resources, without which the course pairings would have been unlikely to "make." But the pilot project had to break the teaching partnerships it had been cultivating over the course of the Spring semester and establish new ones. These new faculty had experience teaching paired courses but were unfamiliar with the principles and goals of the WILC project, and had widely different levels of willingness to participate.
In the Fall, the first WILCs were taught by the Writing Fellows and their new partners (see "Results of Fall 2012 WILCs" below). Because many of these pairs are also teaching WILCs in the Spring, as they taught Fall classes they were also planning for the next semester. Writing Fellows met regularly together with the Senior Writing Fellow to discuss their courses and to formulate a set of Student Learning Outcomes and Teaching Partnership Goals (listed above).

Also in Fall 2012, The Senior Writing Fellow maintained contact with University College and English department staff for scheduling and promotion of Spring 2013 WILCs. Along with the Special Assistant to the Dean, he was part of the Foundations of Excellence Learning Dimension committee engaged in a semester-long discussion of UNM's first-year curriculum. The Special Assistant to the Dean and the Senior Writing Fellow met weekly all semester to discuss pilot project progress.

Proposed Presentation to the Provost: Early in the semester the Senior Writing Fellow and Special Assistant to the Dean worked many hours preparing for a presentation to the Provost and a "dry run" presentation to the Dean of A&S, the Associate Dean of UC, and several others. The latter happened, but the former did not. However, the conversations stirred up by the proposed presentation were extremely productive, formulating many of the values reflected in this report. The Provost presentation was called off because the WILC project is housed in UC, and the decision to continue or discontinue it rests with UC's administration, not the Provost. For this reason, after the "dry run" presentation, the Senior Writing Fellow and the Special Assistant met with the Dean and Associate Dean of UC, Kate Krause and Sonia Gipson Rankin, laying out our rationale and vision for the WILCs as these two Deans consider their many Learning Community options for the future, particularly in light of the change in leadership of the FLC program as Joel Nossoff retires, and the priority President Frank and Provost Abdallah are putting on first-year education generally, and on the Learning Communities specifically.

As a final note, the Senior Writing Fellow began putting together the documents necessary for an IRB-approved survey of WILC students in the Spring.

PHASE 3 (SPRING 2013)
In the Spring, the following WILC course pairings are scheduled to be taught:

- FLC 614 Your Language Questions Answered, Dawn Nordquist & Genevieve Garcia de Mueller
- FLC 627 All the Stages Are Worlds, Dodie Montgomery & Lindsey Ives
- FLC 631 Law, Lawyers, and Social Change, Jennifer Bartlitt & Mellisa Huffman
- FLC 634 Classical American Literature & Film, Antonio Marquez & Anna Knutson
- FLC 640 International Politics, Mark Peceny & Dan Cryer

FLCs 614, 631, and 634 were all taught in Fall 2012 and these instructors will do their best to make improvements and build on their successes in the Spring (more on these below in "Results of Fall 2012 WILCs"). FLC 627 remains the same Learning Community but will have a different Writing Fellow, Lindsey Ives. We've known about this change for some time; on September 21st, Lindsey Ives and Dodie Montgomery met, along with Senior Writing Fellow Dan Cryer, Joel Nossoff, and Anna Knutson, the then-current WILC partner, to begin their conversation about teaching together in the Spring, allowing plenty of time for them to develop a rapport. FLC 640 will be taught for the first time; Dan Cryer and Dean Peceny began meeting to plan it in early November. It should also be noted that while FLC 610, The 21st Century Physician, will not be taught in the Spring, Professor Binder has put in a proposal to teach it in Fall 2013.
Background
The WILC project combines contributions of several individuals, initiatives and disciplines, but grows most directly out of Writing Across Communities, the 2009-10 Core Curriculum Task Force, the 2011-12 Provost's Diversity Committee, and the Freshman Learning Communities. This section provides thumbnail sketches of each of these and how they contribute to the WILC's structure and guiding philosophy.

Writing Across Communities
The Writing Across Communities initiative at UNM was started in January 2005. Dr. Michelle Hall Kells, Associate Professor of English, is the current and founding Faculty Program Chair. It serves as an intellectual update to the widely used concept of Writing Across the Curriculum, adding to that program of campus-wide curricular collaboration centered on student writing the knowledge that students' diverse fluencies in non-academic discourses can serve as a strength, rather than a hindrance, when they reflect on how they are already "transcultural citizens." The following statement drafted by Dr. Kells and the WAC Alliance defines the organization's mission and philosophy:

"The goal of the WAC Alliance is to engage and help University faculty, graduate teaching instructors, administrators, and staff understand the many contexts in which students need to read and write effectively, and to provide instruction to meet those needs. We provide opportunities for dialogue regarding writing-to-learn and writing-to-communicate while addressing the changing needs of the student body to ensure academic as well as professional and civic success at all levels. [...] UNM students come from many backgrounds with communication practices that express differences of language, ethnicity, culture, class, and generation. As a federally-designated Hispanic-serving institution with a diverse student body, the presence of diverse communities represents a source of strength in our classrooms as we educate students for global lives in the new century, lives in which the ability communicate fluently across boundaries is essential."10

Writing Across Communities lends the WILC project the knowledge that cross-disciplinary partnerships are essential to a successful university writing program, because no one department can teach students all they need to know about writing. In addition, WAC strongly emphasizes the importance of drawing upon students' diverse backgrounds and fluencies as a way of improving their ability to communicate within and among a variety of discourse communities, and as a way of preparing for participation in the global workforce.

Core Curriculum Task Force
The CCTF was convened in August 2009 by HED Secretary Peter White, and chaired by Associate Professor of English Michelle Hall Kells, and charged with the task of recommending ways that UNM might improve its undergraduate core curriculum. The task force comprised more than two dozen faculty, staff, students and administrators who deliberated monthly for a full academic year on a variety of topics related to the core. Among their recommendations were the implementation of a university Writing Across the Curriculum program, and the articulation and assessment of Student Learning Outcomes for the core. The CCTF's final report can be found here.

The CCTF sets an influential precedent for the WILCs in the way both seek to improve undergraduate education at UNM beginning in students' first year, to insist upon clearly articulated learning goals and cross-disciplinary partnerships, and to focus on writing and communication key areas of instructional attention.
PROVOST'S DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Provost Chaouki Abdallah's Diversity Committee devoted six months to deliberation on and investigation into the state of diversity, equity, and inclusion on the UNM campus and in the UNM curriculum. In addition, its members brought years of experience in similar initiatives. Dr. Kells, the Special Assistant to the Dean for the WILCs pilot project, and Genevieve Garcia de Mueller, Writing Fellow, were among the Committee's members. They infused the WILC pilot project and the Spring "think tank" seminar with the work of the Diversity Committee so that the pilot could help to forward its goals. The working out of these goals in a concrete project that extends from the Dean's office to the classroom was a major reason that the WILCs have garnered the considerable support they have gotten. Among the Diversity Committee's ten recommendations, these five connect most clearly with the goals of the WILCs:

Goal 1: Foster common language regarding "diversity, equity, and inclusion"
Goal 5: Diversity and Inclusion in US society university-wide requirements
Goal 7: Support diversity, equity and inclusion research
Goal 8: Require campus-wide commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion
Goal 9: Commitment to student success initiatives

FRESHMAN LEARNING COMMUNITIES

For more than a decade the FLC program, housed in University College, has paired faculty teaching freshman seminars in disciplines including Fine Arts, Economics, Law, and Business with instructors of CJ 130, ENGL 101 and 102. Instructors teaching these paired courses combine their disciplinary expertise for their own and their students’ benefit.

Early in its development, and before it was so named, the WILC pilot project connected to the pedagogical philosophy and institutional structure of the FLC program, partly with the intention of offering more course pairings with English 102, the freshman writing course devoted to research and argumentation. This was motivated by a set of shared needs: Instructors of introductory seminars want students to have a certain familiarity with the research and writing methods of their discipline, but do not want to devote inordinate amounts of class time to these subjects. Instructors of freshman English want to teach students the research and writing skills they need to succeed in their non-English courses, but cannot possibly teach discipline-specific strategies to all their students (e.g., appropriate strategies for students of Biology, and History, and Business, and so on). These partnerships allow instructors to come up with shared strategies for introducing students to an academic discipline and its ways of thinking.

WILC Pilot Project 2012 Connections and Related Initiatives

This section describes in some detail some of the work that has been done, from late Spring 2012 to the present, to schedule, promote, fill, and maintain the Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 WILCs, as well as to develop a guiding philosophy, a set of outcomes, and a vision for the project's future, all of which is intensely collaborative, requiring input from several people.

ADMINISTRATION & SCHEDULING

Scheduling and filling paired courses is a labor-intensive, administratively complex process. The FLC program, run by Joel Nossoff out of University College (UC), provides the model. Joel worked extensively with the Senior Writing Fellow to make sure all WILCs were paired, promoted and filled, meeting with him more than a dozen times from June to November to keep Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 courses on track. The Senior Writing Fellow also attended a half-day scheduling workshop on August 9th, 2012, with Dee Dee Lopez and Dylan Gauntt of the English department, to learn more about the scheduling process and what is involved with pairing courses.
An admittedly simplified version of how paired courses are scheduled and filled is as follows: Once Learning Community instructors are paired, UC maintains contact with all involved departments and works with the scheduling office, particularly Carolyn Gutierrez, to make sure Learning Communities are offered back to back and, as often as possible, in the same room. UC also creates professional-quality promotional materials in print and on the web to promote Learning Community courses, and, for fall FLCs, sends representatives to Freshman orientations. UC tracks enrollment numbers during the enrollment period, comparing current with past rates and informing departments if it appears that a pairing will not "make." Joel Nossoff's success rate at ensuring these courses fill is excellent – well over 90%.

In exchange for the considerable structure, resources and know-how provided to the WILCs by University College, UC insisted that, as much as possible, WILCs be taught by intact teaching pairs – that is, instructors who have taught together in the FLC program before. This is largely because Learning Communities are in the process of trying out many innovations, and the intact pairs carry with them considerable stability in a time of change. This decision meant that nearly all of the course pairings defined in the Spring 2012 ENGL 640 "think tank" seminar had to be cancelled or deferred. Because UC is responsible for the direction of the Learning Communities, we cannot say whether these planned pairings will happen.

In addition to scheduling, the Senior Writing Fellow met with Joel Nossoff, along with other UC and English department administrators, including Kate Krause, Michelle Kells and Chuck Paine, for big-picture discussions about where the WILCs fit within the UC, FLC, and Core Writing structures, and with Daoine Bachran, the English department's FLC liaison.

**Writing Fellows**

For the first half of the semester, all Writing Fellows met every other week to discuss their courses and the program overall. These meetings yielded the list of teaching partnership goals and learning goals for students at the beginning of this document, as well as valuable insights about the qualities of successful and unsuccessful partnerships, and what WILC instructors can reasonably expect from their students. These insights are reflected in the WILC Introductory Packet posted on the WAC website (http://www.unm.edu/~wac/). This document details a set of recommendations for instructors considering a WILC partnership, based on the experiences of our Writing Fellows and recommendations already in place from the FLC program.

From Thanksgiving break until the end of the Fall semester, the Senior Writing Fellow met individually with the other Writing Fellows for a final debriefing about the strengths of their WILCs and areas for improvement. These are detailed below in "Results of Fall 2012 WILCs."

**First-Year Focus and the Foundations of Excellence**

This academic year marks the first in the tenure of UNM President Robert Frank, and the second for Provost Chaouki Abdallah, and both have made strong public commitments to studying and strengthening first-year education. This was evident to those of us planning the WILCs in the Summer, when UNM hosted the nationally renowned educational scholar George Kuh. The Deans of A&S and UC, as well as the Senior Writing Fellow, Special Assistant to the Dean, and several faculty and administrators from UC and English, attended the lecture.

Early in the Fall, the Provost and President announced their intention to bring representatives of the John Gardner Institute to UNM to help us initiate their widely used self-study program, the Foundations of Excellence (FOE). All of this intense focus on first-year curriculum matches up nicely with the WILC
pilot project and its guiding philosophy, and it is exciting to see the interests of so many people in the UNM community converging. The Dean of A&S, the Special Assistant to the Dean, and the Senior Writing Fellow, along with what must have been 200 others attended the Student Success Summit on September 19th, kicking off the FOE. The Special Assistant to the Dean and the Senior Writing Fellow joined the Learning Dimension (one of nine dimensions created for the purpose of performing the self-study), the first meeting of which was also held that day. The Senior Writing Fellow served as Secretary for the Learning Dimension for the semester.

The Learning Dimension met roughly every month, including once with George Kuh. Our primary focus was on identifying strengths and weaknesses in student learning in the first year. With this in mind, we discussed the presence or lack of learning outcomes in UNM's five highest-enrollment 100-level courses, as well as UNM's centralized efforts at maintaining and distributing learning outcomes or a mechanism for assessing student learning in these courses. Kate Krause, the leader of this dimension, gathered recommendations from committee members at the end of the semester; our work will continue into the Spring.

For those of us organizing the WILCs, FOE provided a clear reminder of why Learning Communities directed at Freshmen and Sophomores, and focused on writing, can be so valuable. As Associate Chair for Core Writing and Assistant Professor of English Chuck Paine pointed out in our meetings, it is often a single connection in a student's campus life that makes the difference between her staying in school or leaving. Learning Communities, in which students spend more time with each other in discussion-based courses, and where instructors who know them by name work together, are excellent environments for building connections, both with people and, through reading, writing, and discussion, with subject matter.

**Results of Fall 2012 WILCs**

Because this pilot project defined itself as it moved forward, Writing Fellows and their faculty partners had the fortunate ability and space to be creative, but were in an unfortunate position of ambiguity. All four Writing Fellows who taught in the Fall had come out of Spring's think-tank seminar with defined pedagogical plans and optimism about teaching partnerships and learning goals for their students. This semester's assessment by the Senior Writing Fellow, in partnership with all other Writing Fellows, looked most closely at teaching partnerships and teaching practices. In hindsight, the five WILCs offer a full spectrum of success, indifference, and failure, in relation to these two factors. For the sake of anonymity and the success of the program moving forward, this report will not attach any events or practices to specific WILCs or instructors. All information was gathered by the Senior Writing Fellow in semester-long conversations with Writing Fellows, particularly the early semester group meetings and the end-of-semester one-on-one meetings.

The most successful partnerships were those in which WILC partners communicated regularly, at least once a week, about course content and about student performance and learning. In these conversations, partners talk as equals about what they've done in their classes, how it has gone, what their goals are, what they value, and what they plan to do next. Both partners have structured lesson plans worked out and shared with each other well ahead of each class, but are flexible enough about these plans to be open to a reasonable amount of change. As often as possible, these instructors sit in on one another's classes – and each recognizes that this level of commitment is quite high. Partners in these courses recognize developing problems, such as a failure to link the subject matter of the courses, or of student behavior or performance, and discuss these issues openly with the understanding that solving them may be difficult and, in the case of curricular problems, may not be solved until the next time the course is taught. Each is genuinely interested in the subject matter and teaching practices of the other. As the semester progresses, they keep a running tally of what's working and what is not, for the next iteration of the Learning Community.
In less successful partnerships there was generally a fairly good rapport between instructors, but also a rigidity on the part of one partner relating to her teaching practices. This might include an unwillingness to consider changes to well-worn lessons, presentations, and methods of delivery, or a failure to complete planning in enough time for a partner to consider it in his own planning. Both practices have the effect of stifling the possibility of connection between courses: When one partner insists on teaching the same way she always has, students have a much harder time seeing how her class relates to her partner's. And when one partner prepares his lessons or assignments at the last minute, the other is forced to either also wait until the last minute, or to proceed without knowing how to link their materials. Both practices can (but don't always) have the added effect of straining the personal relationship between the instructors.

The least successful collaborations were those in which one instructor clearly saw his own subject matter, status, or teaching methods as above that/those of his partner, and consequently was completely uninterested in a meaningful partnership or linking of classes. But there are also less extreme ways in which potentially good partnerships were sabotaged. For example, a lack of responsiveness to the needs of one's partner and/or students; maintaining pedagogical practices, such as long, uninterrupted lectures and student evaluation based solely on tests, that alienate students and/or do not contribute to learning; lack of discussion in class about complex topics; unwillingness to confront problems (related to teaching, student performance or conduct, the partnership) with one's partner. There also may be an unwillingness to change in response to direct student complaints, even if they are numerous.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The current moment at UNM is an exciting one. The Foundations of Excellence initiative has made the first-year curriculum and all that is associated with it a central topic of conversation on campus. In the College of Arts & Sciences, Dean Peceny's focused leadership, placing a priority on curricular innovation and student success, has brought multiple hires and several new projects (including this one). In University College, a mandate from the President and Provost that Learning Communities be expanded has led Dean Kate Krause and Associate Dean Sonia Gipson Rankin to design several new and creative ideas for their use. And the continued broadening of the Writing Across Communities initiative, including the Albuquerque Community Writing Center, has strengthened connections beyond campus into the Albuquerque community.

The Writing Intensive Learning Communities, if properly administered, can be a vital piece of these positive developments. Like all Learning Communities, they encourage students to collaborate and connect with each other and with their instructors; they encourage instructors to share ideas about teaching and their scholarship and other interests; they put students in contact with two disciplines at once and ask students to reflect on their overlaps and differences. In addition, they place the language and communication styles of these disciplines beside one another, facilitating transfer of knowledge and skills from one setting to another – a highly desirable and elusive goal in higher education.

For these reasons and several others enumerated in this report it seems like an excellent investment of resources to make the WILCs a formal addition to the current roster of Learning Community offerings. This recommendation comes with full knowledge that the WILCs can improve, and that assessments like this one are a step in that direction. A few things can be done to ensure the WILCs achieve their full potential:

• Prioritize the selection and pairing of capable teachers who are willing and eager to engage in a partnership of equals, and who are aware of and support the WILC learning and teaching partnership goals.

• Codify and disseminate these partnership goals, along with a set of partnership recommendations, such as the ones set forth in the WILC Introductory Packet.
• Gather feedback from students about their experiences in WILCs and incorporate it into the planning of future WILCs.
• Further align WILC goals and practices with recommendations from Foundations of Excellence initiative, once they are made public.

**Timeline – Summer & Fall 2012**

Listed here are the more significant events and meetings relating to the WILC Pilot Project:

• June 18, Meeting between Joel Nossoff, Michelle Kells, Kate Krause, Chuck Paine & Dan Cryer to define scope of "W-courses"
• June 26, Meeting between Mark Peceny, Dan Cryer & Karen Gardner to finalize Senior Writing Fellow job description
• June 27, George Kuh lecture at UNM
• July 10, Meeting with Joel Nossoff and Dan Cryer about low WILC enrollments
• July 24, Joel Nossoff brings Writing Fellows Genevieve Garcia de Mueller, Mellisa Huffman & Anna Knutson to Freshman Orientation to share information about their WILCs – enrollment rises quickly.
• August 6, Enrollment meeting with Gail Houston, Dee Dee Lopez, Linda Livingston, Chuck Paine & Dan Cryer – most WILCs are at or near appropriate enrollment levels.
• August 7, Orientation again with Joel Nossoff: Anna Knutson & Mellisa Huffman
• August 9, Dan Cryer attends UNM Scheduling Workshop with Dee Dee Lopez and Dylan Gauntt
• August 22, Special Assistant to the Dean Michelle Kells and Senior Writing Fellow Dan Cryer begin weekly WILC meetings
• August 24, "Dry run" meeting in advance of planned WILC presentation to Provost. In attendance are Mark Peceny, Michelle Kells, Sonia Gipson Rankin, Dan Cryer, and Diane Marshall
• August 31, Dan Cryer begins bi-weekly meetings with Writing Fellows
• September 19, Student Success Summit: Foundations of Excellence kickoff and first meeting of all FOE Dimensions
• September 21, Spring WILC meeting with Dodie Montgomery, Lindsey Ives, Anna Knutson, Joel Nossoff & Dan Cryer
• October 10, FOE Learning Dimension meeting with George Kuh
• October 16, Learning Dimension meeting
• November 12, "Introduction to WILCs" packet completed & posted to WAC website; Michelle Kells presents packet to Rhetoric & Writing faculty at faculty meeting
• November 13, Meeting with Dan Cryer and Daoine Bachran (English department FLC liaison) to share notes on WILCs and FLCs
• November 14, Learning Dimension meeting
• December 14, WILC Fall 2012 Report completed and shared

**NOTES**

1 As of Fall 2012, WILCs always include an ENGL 102 course. 102 has been chosen over 101 because the former focuses more heavily on performing research and crafting arguments from research. In addition, 102 students have learned the basic college writing skills taught in 101.


8 Ibid, pg 11-12.


11 It should be noted that Carolyn Gutierrez is the only person on campus with the expertise and considerable patience necessary to link courses in Banner, and that any increase in the number of course pairings should include an increase in staff who can do this difficult work.

12 Success is defined here as teaching partners working together in a way that communicates linkage of the two courses, and the collaboration of instructors, to students. These were judged by a combination of conversations between the Senior Writing Fellow and other Writing Fellows, and Writing Fellows' reporting of their FLC SGID results.