Colorado State University-Pueblo Undergraduate & Graduate Program Assessment Report for AY 2013-2014 Due: June 1, 2015

Program: Professional Writing Minor

Date: June 1, 2015

Completed by: Scott Gage

Please complete this form for each undergraduate, minor, certificate, and graduate program (e.g., B.A., B.S., M.S.) in your department. Please copy any addenda (e.g., rubrics) and paste them in this document, and return it to Erin Frew, erin.frew@colostate-pueblo.edu as an email attachment before June 1, 2015. You'll also find the form at the assessment website at http://www.colostate-pueblo.edu/Assessment/ResultsAndReports/Pages/default.aspx.

Please describe the 2014-2015 assessment activities for the program in Part I. Use Column H to describe improvements planned for 2015-2016 based on the assessment process. In Part II, please describe activities engaged in during 2014-2015 designed to close-the-loop (improve the program) based on assessment activities and the information gathered in 2013-2014. Thank you.

I. Program student learning outcomes (SLOs) assessed in this cycle, processes, results, and recommendations.

A. Which of the program SLOs were assessed during this cycle? Please include the outcome(s) verbatim from the assessment plan.	B. When was this SLO last assessed? Please indicate the semester and year.	C. What method was used for assessing the SLO? Please include a copy of any rubrics used in the assessment process.	D. Who was assessed? Please fully describe the student group(s) and the number of students or artifacts involved.	E. What is the expected achievement level and how many or what proportion of students should be at it?	F. What were the results of the assessment?	G. What were the department's conclusions about student performance?	H. What changes/improvements to the <u>program</u> are planned based on this assessment?
Outcome #3:	The minor's	Two faculty	Nine students	The	ENG 204	The assignments	This year's assessment of
Apply rhetorical	third outcome	members who	enrolled in ENG	professional	aggregate score	evaluated from	the professional writing
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address the	and has not	evaluated nine	involved in the	assignments will	evaluated from	ENG 404 Writing	assessment in ENG 204

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scores.	improve scores.			

II. Follow-up (closing the loop) on results and activities from previous assessment cycles. In this section, please describe actions taken during this cycle that were based on, or implemented to address, the results of assessment from previous cycles.

A. What SLO(s) did you	B. When was this SLO last	C. What were the	D. Were the	E. What were the results of
address? Please include the	assessed?	recommendations for change	recommendations for change	the changes? If the changes
outcome(s) verbatim from		from the previous	acted upon? If not, why?	were not effective, what are
the assessment plan.		assessment?		the next steps for the new
				recommendations?
Outcome #1: Create	The minor's first outcome	In last year's report, I	The recommendations made	The recommended changes
rhetorically-effective	was last assessed in AY 2013-	recommended that the	in last year's assessment	were partly effective. While
documents that demonstrate	2014 (Fall 2013 specifically).	professional writing program	report were not acted upon	only 54% of assignments met
the standards and		revise the rubric keyed to	because Erin Frew indicated	performance expectations
expectations for documents		SLO #1. After receiving	they did not represent	for SLO #1 in AY 2013-2014,
employed in professional		feedback from Erin Frew	programmatic changes. As	73% of assignments met
settings		indicating that a more	such, non-recommended	expectations for SLO #1 in AY
		programmatic change should	changes were made to the	2014-2015, marking a 35%
		be made, I decided to	program. Specifically, (1) a	increase in the number of
		restructure the curriculum so	new course, ENG 204	assignments meeting
		that ENG 204 Introduction to	Introduction to Rhetoric, was	expectations for SLO #1.
		Rhetoric, a new class in AY	added and (2) ENG 204 was	Unfortunately, the
		2014-2015, would serve as a	made a prerequisite for ENG	percentage of assignments,
		prerequisite course for two	305, ENG 404, ENG 304, and	73%, still did not meet overall
		of the program's required	ENG 306.	expectations in AY 2014-
		classes (ENG 305 Technical		2015. In AY 2015-2016,
		and Scientific Report Writing		professional writing courses
		and ENG 404 Writing in the		will be redesigned as non-

Professions) and two of the	portfolio classes to provide
program's elective classes	students with more
(ENG 304 Advanced	opportunity for written
Rhetorical Study and ENG	feedback, which will provide
306 Visual Rhetoric).	students with more
	opportunity for guided
	improvement in writing and
	revision.

Professional Writing Minor Assessment Rubric Outcome #1

Please use the following rubric to assess the professional writing minor's first program outcome: to create rhetorically-effective documents that demonstrate the standards and expectations for documents employed in professional settings. To assess this outcome, score the text you have been given per each of the criteria below using a scale of 1-4 (1 = the text fulfills the criterion poorly; 4 = the text fulfills the criterion excellently). Please highlight in yellow the score you are awarding to each criterion. For a description of each criterion, please see the second page.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Seeks to resolve an identifiable exigence	1	2	3	4
Communicates to an identifiable rhetorical audience	1	2	3	4
Invites appropriate identification with the rhetorical audience	1	2	3	4
Fulfills the standards and expectations of genre	1	2	3	4

Total Score:

Description of Criteria

1) <u>Seeks to resolve an identifiable exigence</u>: According to Lloyd Bitzer (1968), an exigence is an urgent problem or need that may only be resolved through discourse. An exigence, Bitzer contends, arises as a result of some event or occurrence. From this perspective, rhetorical discourse is always a response to an exigence. According to Richard Vatz (1973), however, an exigence does not exist externally to discourse but is, instead, created by discourse. To that end, a rhetorically-effective text is one that signals to the audience the problem or need the text seeks to resolve; readers should have a clear understanding of what the text is trying to accomplish by having a clear understanding of its exigence.

- A score of 1 means the text leaves readers with no understanding of the need or problem it seeks to resolve
- A score of 2 means the text provides readers with only a confused understanding of the exigence, leaving readers to guess at possibilities
- A score of 3 means the text offers readers a clearer indication of the exigence but may still feature ambiguities, leaving readers to guess at a more limited range of possibilities
- A score of 4 means the text clearly and explicitly identifies the exigence for the audience (even if the text addresses multiple exigencies, it will indicate each one so that the reader understands what it seeks to accomplish)

<u>Communicates to an identifiable rhetorical audience</u>: While a text may address multiple audiences (Park 1982), it may only resolve a given exigence if it addresses what Bitzer termed a "rhetorical audience," individuals who have the means and capacity to resolve an exigence. According to Bitzer, a rhetorical audience may include one of the following types of individuals: (1) individuals with the ability to resolve an exigence directly or (2) individuals who may pressure those in the previous category to act. Rhetorically-effective texts, therefore, communicate directly to either category of individuals capable of resolving a given exigence.

- A score of 1 means the text leaves readers with no understanding of the audience to whom the text is directed
- A score of 2 means the text provides readers with some indication of the audience but also features significant ambiguity, leaving readers to guess at multiple possibilities
- A score of 3 means the text clearly identifies and communicates to an audience, but the audience may not be a rhetorical audience (i.e., may not be able to resolve the exigence)
- A score of 4 means the text identifies and communicates directly to a rhetorical audience as defined above

3) **Invites appropriate identification with the rhetorical audience**: To be rhetoricallyeffective, a text must not only communicate to a clearly identifiable rhetorical audience, it must also make appropriate appeals to the audience in order to induce the audience's "cooperation" (Burke 1969). These appeals are traditionally treated in terms of ethos (character/credibility), logos (reason), and pathos (emotion) (Aristotle); however, any instance of persuasion must be preceded by identification (Ratcliffe 2005). From that perspective, then, a rhetorically-effective text will first and foremost invite identification with the rhetorical audience. In general, a text will invite identification in any of the following ways: (1) by advancing attitudes and perspectives with which the audience may agree or toward which the audience may feel sympathy, (2) by using language and imagery (if applicable) that may be relatable to the audience, and/or (3) by fulfilling the expectations an audience may have toward a given genre.

- A score of 1 means the text makes no effort to invite identification with the rhetorical audience
- A score of 2 means the text makes an effort to invite identification with the audience but does so inappropriately (e.g., the text advances an attitude toward which the audience is likely to feel unsympathetic)
- A score of 3 means the text invites identification with the audience but fails to do so consistently or effectively (e.g., the language used in a given text shifts from an appropriate to an inappropriate degree of formality)
- A score of 4 means the text invites identification with the audience in a way that is appropriate, consistent, and effective

4) **Fulfills the standards and expectations of genre**: Because genres are "typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations" (Miller 1984), they create expectations for audience members both in terms of formal characteristics and in terms of rhetorical strategy (e.g., a genre will typically employ common methods of identification). While writers certainly possess the agency to defy the standards and expectations of a given genre, commonplace assumptions hold that texts are more effective rhetorically when they fulfill such standards and expectations. As such, a rhetorically-effective text should fulfill the standards and expectations of the genre it represents.

- A score of 1 means the text defies or neglects the standards and expectations of the genre it represents
- A score of 2 means the text fulfills some of the standards and expectations of the genre it represents while defying or neglecting others (e.g., a formal letter has included an inside address but has neglected to include a salutation and has been written in informal language)
- A score of 3 means the text fulfills all of the standards and expectations of the genre it represents but has not always done so effectively (e.g., a web site features some pages lacking effective contrast)
- A score of 4 means the text fulfills all of the standards and expectations of the genre it represents consistently and effectively

<u>Professional Writing Minor Assessment Rubric</u> <u>Outcome #3</u>

Please use the following rubric to assess the professional writing minor's third program outcome: to apply rhetorical theory and history to analyze and address the rhetorical situation for professional writing in multiple genres with diverse audiences and purposes. To assess this outcome, score the text you have been given per each of the criteria below using a scale of 1-4 (1 = the text fulfills the criterion poorly; 4 = the text fulfills the criterion excellently). Please highlight in yellow the score you are awarding to each criterion. For a description of each criterion, please see the second page.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Defines key rhetorical terms	1	2	3	4
Situates key rhetorical terms in their historical contexts	1	2	3	4
Applies key rhetorical terms analytically	1	2	3	4
Identifies genres, audiences, and purposes	1	2	3	4

Total Score:

Description of Criteria

1) **Defines key rhetorical terms**: Applying rhetorical theory requires the ability to define key terminology. As such, any rhetorical analysis should include clear definitions for all key terms used to perform the analysis. A text analyzing professional writing should, therefore, identify all key terms and should provide clear definitions of those terms.

- A score of 1 means the text neither identifies nor defines key terms.
- A score of 2 means the text either identifies all key terms or provides adequate definitions of key terms but does not do both.
- A score of 3 means the text identifies all key terms but provides definitions that may not be entirely clear.
- A score of 4 means the text identifies all key terms and provides clearly understandable definitions of those terms.

2) <u>Situates key rhetorical terms in their historical contexts</u>: Applying rhetorical history requires the ability to describe the history of a key rhetorical term. As such, rhetorical analyses should not only define key terms, but should also situate key terms in their historical contexts, meaning that texts should include information both on the origination of the term and on its development over time. A text analyzing professional writing should, therefore, describe the history of its key terminology.

- A score of 1 means the text provides no historical information about its key terminology.
- A score of 2 means the text provides information on either the origination or the historical development of its key terminology but does not do both.
- A score of 3 means the text provides information on the origination and historical development of its key terminology but may not do so clearly.
- A score of 4 means the text provides clear information on the origination and historical development of its key terminology.

3) <u>Applies key rhetorical terms analytically</u>: Applying key rhetorical terms analytically entails the ability to use key terminology to interpret a data set—whether the data set be a text or a series of texts, a rhetorical situation or context, and/or a career involving writing and communication. The key terms should be used as a framework to examine and to make arguments about the data set. As such, a text applying rhetorical terms analytically needs not only to define key terms and to situate those terms historically, but also to use key terms to make and/or defend claims.

- A score of 1 means that the text neither makes nor defends claims about the data set.
- A score of 2 means that the text makes and/or defends claims about the data set but does not use key rhetorical terms to do so.
- A score of 3 means the text makes and defends claims about the data set that may not be clearly generated or informed by a key rhetorical concept.
- A score of 4 means that the text makes and defends claims about the data set that are clearly generated or informed by a key rhetorical concept.

4) **Identifies genres, audiences, and purposes**: Analyzing the rhetorical situation for professional writing involves the ability to clearly identify specific genres, audiences, and purposes typical of workplace writing and communication. As such, a text examining the

rhetorical situation for professional writing should clearly identify the genres (i.e., kinds of writing), the audience, and the purposes it will analyze. That is, a text examining the rhetorical situation for professional writing should clearly identify its data set.

- A score of 1 means the text does not identify the genre(s) it will examine, including the audiences and purposes associated with those genres.
- A score of 2 means the text clearly identifies the genre(s) it will examine but does not identify or discuss audience or purpose.
- A score of 3 means the text clearly identifies the genre(s) it will examine but does not clearly identify or discuss audience or purpose.
- A score of 4 means the text clearly identifies the genre(s) it will examine, including the audiences and purposes associated with those genres.