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 program are planned based on this assessment?
Outcome #3: Apply rhetorical theory and history to analyze and address the	The minor's third outcome was newly-developed in Spring 2013 and has not	Two faculty members who do not teach in the professional writing minor evaluated nine	Nine students enrolled in ENG 204 Introduction to Rhetoric in Fall 2014 were involved in the	The professional writing minor's expectation is that 75% of assignments will	ENG 204 aggregate score (nine research application papers evaluated from	The assignments evaluated from ENG 204 Introduction to Rhetoric and ENG 404 Writing	This year's assessment of the professional writing minor reveals that changes must be made to classroom instruction and assessment in ENG 204

rhetorical situation for professional writing in multiple genres with diverse audiences and purposes. Outcome #1: Create rhetorically-effective documents that demonstrate the standards and expectations for documents employed in professional settings.	yet been assessed. The minor's first outcome was last assessed in AY 2013-2014 (Fall 2013 specifically)*. *Although the minor's assessment plan scheduled the program's third and fourth outcomes to be assessed AY 2014-2015, I chose to assess the first outcome instead of the fourth since the percentage of assignments scoring 2.5 or above on the first outcome in AY 2013-2014 was less than 75%. I wanted to determine whether the programmatic changes made in AY 2013-	research application papers created in ENG 204 and 15 professional documents created in ENG 404*. The faculty members used two rubrics keyed to each SLO assessed (please find both rubrics included below). *According to the minor's assessment plan, we should have assessed work this year from ENG 445, which was the highest-numbered professional writing course offered in Spring 2015. I chose to assess ENG 404 in order to assess whether the programmatic changes made	assessment of the minor's third SLO (three students did not submit research application papers). Fifteen students enrolled in ENG 404 Writing in the Professions in Spring 2015 were involved in the assessment of the minor's first SLO (one student did not submit a final project). Both classes were comprised mostly of junior- and senior-level students majoring in either English or mass comm. Both classes also included students majoring in psychology and education. Many of the students in both classes were enrolled as professional writing minors.	register an aggregate score 2.5 or above. Not meeting that benchmark will trigger a revision of the professional writing minor's curriculum to address the deficiency.	one course) = 2.55 Percentage of ENG 204 assignments registering an aggregate score of 2.5 or higher: 44% ENG 404 aggregate score (15 professional documents evaluated from one course) = 3.05 Percentage of ENG 404 assignments registering an aggregate score of 2.5 or higher: 73%	in the Professions Writing did not meet expectations for performance as outlined in the professional writing minor's assessment plan.	and ENG 404. First, ENG 204 must feature a greater amount of attention on the rhetorical analysis of texts, especially texts produced in professional contexts. The program will make this change in AY 2015-2016 by incorporating a section requiring students to rhetorically analyze a brief text on all three unit exams in ENG 204. The program will also incorporate a final exam in ENG 204 that will focus on rhetorical analysis. Second, the program will redesign ENG 404 as a non-portfolio course so that the students may receive more written feedback from instructors than what the portfolio structure currently provides.

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

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

<u>**Professional Writing Minor Assessment Rubric**</u>
<u>**Outcome #1**</u>

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) **Seeks to resolve an identifiable exigence**: 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)

2) **Communicates to an identifiable rhetorical audience**: 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 rhetorically-effective, 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

Professional Writing Minor Assessment Rubric
Outcome #3

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) **Situates key rhetorical terms in their historical contexts**: 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) **Applies key rhetorical terms analytically**: 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.