R401 Information Calendar Item
Proposal: Name Change of the University Writing Program to the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies

Section I: Request
This document proposes a change in name and status to the existing University Writing Program, an academic unit in the College of Humanities at the University of Utah. The Program requests that the name be changed to the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies. In the 2002 internal/external review report, reviewers recommended the University Writing Program be granted departmental status.

Section II: Need
There are three primary reasons for this change. The name change to the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies better represents the mission and scope of the academic unit, as well as its long term goals. Finally, the discipline has become more established in the last thirty years and has its own body of knowledge and corpus of research, which calls for a more focused curriculum at the undergraduate and graduate level. The discipline reached a level of disciplinary status by 2004, as stipulated by the National Research Council (NRC), and was officially acknowledged by the Council in 2010.

When it was established in 1983, the University Writing Program offered four courses: Preparatory Writing I and II; Introduction to College Writing; and College Writing and Rhetoric. At the time, the faculty was comprised of a director and an associate director, and associate instructors who taught the courses. Approximately 3500 students were enrolled in the courses. Today, the University Writing Program has five full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty as well as two adjunct professors, 8 lecturer faculty, and numerous associate instructors who teach as course offerings demand. Instruction is also provided by graduate TAs.

The unit currently offers various courses at the lower division to meet student needs (e.g., University Writing and Thinking, and Intermediate Writing) as well as many upper-division courses in the disciplines (e.g., Writing in the Social Sciences, Writing in the Sciences, and Business Writing). It has developed a minor consisting of 40 courses from which students can design their own emphases to complement their major. Graduate courses in the disciplines have also been developed (e.g., Writing the Dissertation, Writing for Publication, Grant-Writing). In the last three years approximately 23 students have declared a minor in the field, with many more expressing interest; in addition, approximately eight students have graduated. Finally, an interdisciplinary graduate program was established with students enrolling through the Departments of Communication, Education Culture and Society and English. Our graduate program has steadily grown and enrolls 18 students—primarily at the PhD level across the three departments. In order to keep current with theoretical changes in the discipline a more focused curriculum on Rhetoric and Writing Studies is needed in order continue to successfully place them.

Numerous programs have been established in conjunction with the University Writing Program that provide outreach across campus and in the community: 1) CLEAR, an interdisciplinary program that integrates writing and speaking into the engineering curriculum; LEAP, an Undergraduate Studies program designed to retain first year students through cohort experiences; summer bridge
programs in writing for Athletics and TRIO; and AMES, the Academy for Math, Education and Science, where UWP instructors teach college bound students university writing. Recently, a literacy center was established at Glendale Middle School, where students are taught both traditional and digital literacy skills. A Writing Center has also been established that supports undergraduate, graduate and faculty writing across campus. The Writing Program collaborates with the Department of Languages and Literature in its Study Abroad to Greece. Today, the University Writing Program annually offers courses and writing support to approximately 8,500 undergraduate and graduate students, various faculty from across campus, and students in the high school and middle school community.

Our curriculum has transformed over the time, reflecting the research and direction of the discipline. Whereas in 1983, the discipline was becoming established, it now has a stronger scope, as does the UWP.

Mission
The University Writing Program was established in 1983 to create undergraduate writing courses and to provide teacher training for them, to develop and support writing-across-the-curriculum initiatives, and to develop and enhance graduate work in rhetoric and writing studies. Our goal is to help students better understand and improve their writing in academic and professional contexts, as well as to help them examine and better understand writing as a rhetorical, social practice. We are committed to teaching students not just about the literacy of higher education, but also of national and global citizenship. Rhetoric, associated with early democracy, combined with writing, supports life-long learning through both traditional and digital literacy.

The University Writing Program conjoins the history, theory, and practices of rhetoric with those of writing to create a curriculum that teaches students practices of inquiry, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and strategies for rhetorically successful writing. In today’s world, the ability to seek out information, evaluate it, and use it appropriately to communicate across various technologies is crucial in order to participate in higher education and in society. Our goal is to increase the academic opportunities students currently have on campus to enhance their ability to participate more successfully in literate practices.

Section III: Institutional Impact
Changing the name to the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies will more accurately reflect the current size of the UWP and the scope of our work—on campus, in the community, and nationally. A name change will offer additional prestige to not only the College of Humanities, but to the University of Utah as well. Students from multiple colleges have found a home in our curriculum, where they can learn about rhetoric and writing, while at the same time, learn how to improve their own ability to produce texts. They have expressed great satisfaction and enjoyment with the minor. At the same time, there is confusion about how we are situated in the institution. Many have found it difficult to locate us. Students have explained they did not know that such a curriculum existed because of our status. Others have overlooked us in providing information that would allow greater participation in the University or for extramural funding. Departmental status would change perceptions about the responsibilities we have already undertaken, and would also improve our ability to participate more fully in the institutional mission.
Section IV: Finances
There are no expected additional costs associated with the proposed name change and status. The current structure functions much as a department with its own resources and fulfills many of the expectations of a department, including RPT in an advisory function. We anticipate that a change in name and status would allow us to compete for extramural funding with other departments across campus and across the nation.

Section V: Degree Name
Effective at the time of the name change from the University Writing Program to the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies, the minor will read Rhetoric and Writing Studies. A BA/BS will also read Rhetoric and Writing Studies. Eventually, the PhD and MA/MS will read as Rhetoric and Writing Studies.

List of Institutions with Departments of Rhetoric and Writing Studies
University of Arkansas, Little Rock
University of Central Florida
DePaul University
University of Iowa
University of Kentucky
Michigan State University
University of Minnesota
Oakland University
University of Rhode Island
San Diego State University
University of San Francisco
Syracuse University
University of Texas, Austin