



**ACADEMIC SENATE
Executive Committee
REFERRAL FORM
CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA**

Date:	1/24/2024
To:	Academic Affairs Committee
From:	Academic Senate Executive Committee
Subject:	Academic Senate Referral
Classification	AA-006-234
Title of Referral:	Elimination of Blanket Requirements for Mandatory Writing Assignments
Background:	See attached referral request form. Additional background provided by the Executive Committee:
Recommended resources:	See attached referral request form and supporting documentation. Additional resources recommended by the Executive Committee: None. For the Committee's Report on this referral, please list in separate sections, the resources recommended, and resources actually consulted. If a resource was not consulted, briefly state why.
Review and recommend:	Review and recommend as appropriate.
Date required for presenting committee report to the Executive Committee:	3/6/2024

1.Name

Aaron DeRosa

2.Email

amderosa@cpp.edu

3.Title of Referral

Elimination of Blanket Requirements for Mandatory Writing Assignments

4.Names and Titles of proponents

Keith Forward, Interim AVP of Academic Programs
Aaron DeRosa, Interim Faculty Director Undergraduate Programs and GE
Kristi Prins, First-Year Writing Program Coordinator
Karen Trujillo, Writing in the Disciplines Program Coordinator

5.Keywords

GWAR, Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement, Written Communication, GWT, Graduate Writing Test, Meaningful Writing, GE

6.Is there a deadline by when this referral needs to be considered by the Academic Senate?

Yes

7.Deadline Date

3/1/2024

8.Justification for deadline

Anticipating significant curricular changes for AY 25-26, we would like to implement this for the AY 24-25 curricular cycle so as to speed up the curricular review process. This means we will need to revise the curriculum management system (Curriculog), which opens for proposals in March.

9.Background**Recommendation:**

The Office of Academic Programs recommends that AS-621-867/EPC “Mandatory Writing Assignments in All Classes” be removed as a curricular requirement, and that the writing requirement in CPP’s GE program be removed (GE-008-134 and GE-016-056).

Background:

Improving CPP students’ written communication skills has long been a challenge. To date, three policies lay out the campus’s position on written communication: one policy mandates writing assignment in all classes (1987), the GE policy requires “meaningful” and “significant” writing assignments in all GE classes (2007, 2014), and the Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) policy addresses the Chancellor’s Office graduation requirement (2023).

The GE policy (GE-008-134) and the Mandatory Writing Assignment policy (AS-621-867/EPC) were passed with the intent of improving students’ writing proficiency. Assigning writing, however, does not necessarily teach students how to write. This was explicitly recognized when, in 2007, the Senate voted to strengthen the language for “meaningful” and “significant” writing assignments in GE coursework to require faculty feedback and writing pedagogy in these courses.

Unfortunately, these two policies are not often followed, and the university is unable to enforce them without significant implications for faculty workload or cost to the campus. Providing meaningful and timely feedback on writing assignments in courses whose enrollment caps soar to 200 and above is not possible. The blanket mandates also imply a one-size-fits-all model for writing that undermines programs’ intentionality in cultivating student writing.

In practice, faculty submitting new course proposals stretch, if not fabricate, assignments to showcase writing when it may or may not be viable or even pedagogically appropriate to do so. The immediate effect is that it takes time to produce this additional content for new course proposals. The more subtle effect is the hollowing out of meaning of written communication pedagogy that undermines efforts to improve students’ writing. Writing assignments can take many forms (e.g., resumes, reports, emails, essays) and are present in most classes, but teaching writing requires intentionality that these policies do not yield.

By removing the mandatory writing assignment policies, we are not diminishing the university's commitment to written communication. On September 20, 2023, the Academic Senate voted to approve AA-008-223, "Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement," which not only addresses the Chancellor's Office mandate for assessing student writing, it also lays out an alternate and intentional pathway to address student writing proficiency on campus. The "Writing in the Disciplines" program introduced in that policy creates an infrastructure in the form of a trained coordinator and a senate committee to collaborate with faculty to embed writing instruction pedagogy within curricula. It also establishes clear connections between first-year writing composition and the upper division GVAR requirement and assessment practices to strengthen written communication pedagogy on campus.

The writing requirement in GE should be removed and replaced with more intentional standards as well. This work is under way with the implementation of the new GE-SLOs, alongside the campus review of Cal-GETC standards. These discussions should yield more meaningful and intentional direction for the role of Written Communication within the GE program that a blanket mandate has not succeeded in producing.

10. Recommended Resources/Attachments

AS-621-867/EPC "Mandatory Writing Assignments in All Classes"

[AS-2464-145-GE \(GE-008-134\) – General Education Subject Area Distribution](#)

[AS-2230-067-GE \(GE-016-056\) – GE Meaningful Writing Component](#)

[AS-3046-234-AA \(AA-008-223\) – Graduation Requirement Writing Assessment Requirement](#)

- [AS-3046-234-AA, Attachment 1 – The Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement \(GVAR\) Policy Update](#)
- [AS-3046-234-AA, Attachment 2 – Policy 1436 with changes](#)