

Name of Department: English Composition Program

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Name of Preparer: Rachel N. Spear

Program Mission Statement

Francis Marion University’s Composition Program mission, through a required sequence of composition courses, is to instill first-year composition students with college-level composition skills that will prepare students for both academic and public contexts, enhancing critical thinking and rhetorical awareness to foster students’ ability to compose and communicate effectively in the twenty-first century and in various writing situations. Our current composition sequence consists of three courses, English 111 “Composition I,” English 112 “Composition II,” and English 200 “Writing for Disciplines”; however, former data collected through program assessment revealed that students’ argumentative, analysis, and writing transfer skills were low. As part of our program’s planned improvements, we interrogated our current composition program, closely examining the current sequence and performing a comparative analysis of other similar institutions’ composition programs. That examination revealed that the current sequence delayed instruction on analysis and argumentation, held repetition of course objectives, and resulted in transfer issues. Thus, in efforts to prepare students better for college-level writing and to align our program with the norm in composition studies while keeping our student demographic in mind, we developed and proposed a new composition sequence, aimed at increasing student success and strengthening the outcome of our program goals. The new sequence proposal was approved by the university on February 16, 2016, and will be implemented fall 2016. This new sequence shifts from the current three-course sequence to the below two-course sequence:

- 1) ENG 101 or ENG 101E + ENG 101L
- 2) ENG 102

The new course sequence supports various levels of student preparation by offering two options for the first course: students will self-select into either English 101 “Analysis and Argument,” a three-credit course, or English 101E (plus English 101L), the “extended” version of English 101 that includes a corequisite studio (lab) component. This self-selected lab, ENG 101L, is a one-credit elective hour that will meet twice a week, provide supplemental individualized attention from professors and undergraduate tutors, and be assessed with the designation of satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Upon successful completion of that first semester, students move into English 102 “Rhetoric, Genre, and Research.” This new two-semester sequence focuses on the idea that students would benefit with more instruction on analysis and argument in their earlier course and with an emphasis on transferring and applying their skills in that second course.

The new sequence takes our students’ needs into account not only by implementing the self-selected studio counterpart for additional invention and instruction as an option with that first course but also by capping all composition courses at fifteen students per class. With smaller class sizes, the new sequence will foster more opportunities for instructor feedback, individualized attention, and cooperative learning.