Request for New Certificate Program

Campus: IUSB
Department: English
Proposed Title of Certificate Program: Certificate in Professional Writing
Projected Date of Implementation: Fall 2004

I. Why is the certificate needed?

Education-oriented and general-interest national publications and major employers in our community all suggest that writing is one of the most important life-long skills for the workplace. In traditional paper documents and on new electronic media, successful workers communicate in writing in a wide variety of fields. They use their analytical and organizational skills, honed by their experience as writers, to carry out complex tasks in the workplace, and as a result they advance their careers. Commonly a high percentage of our strongest students are also those who are ambitious to improve their writing skills because they are persuaded of the life-long practical value of such skills.

Students at IUSB can develop their writing skills in various required and elective courses, but there is currently no well-aimed program to guide and support the student who wishes to develop outstanding skills as a writer for the workplace, and there is no credential to certify that the student has done so. As in other programs and majors, students who carry out a thoughtful curriculum in writing deserve to have it recognized formally, and IUSB should aspire to be known in its region for preparing these students through a formal certificate program.

The Department of English has identified a very successful writing certificate program on a regional campus in the University of Missouri system to serve as a model, but we have shaped our proposed program to the traits of our university, our student body, and our regional workplaces.

The program would be closed to students who will not receive (or have not received) a bachelor’s degree. An undergraduate student who has completed the Certificate in Professional Writing could only receive the certificate concurrently with a B.A. or B.S. degree at IUSB. Any student who has already earned a bachelor’s degree, however, could pursue a “stand alone” certificate. This latter provision recognizes that jobs change, as careers do, and that the certificate may appeal to workers and managers who wish to improve their professional value in their current position or further enhance their marketability for new positions.

The Certificate in Professional Writing does not duplicate the course work for the English major with concentration in writing. It is designed primarily for students who are not majoring in English.
II. List the major topics or curriculum of the certificate.

The Certificate in Professional Writing aims to serve adults who aspire to be skilled writers in areas other than creative writing and literary criticism, two traditional subject areas for English Department programs.

Curriculum:
Completion of the certificate program requires 18 credit hours of approved course work. Students may take 18 credit hours from the following list of approved courses, or 15 credit hours from the list and the 3-hour practicum/internship. The courses below are offered on a regular basis. Additional courses may be developed for the program over time.

Students may count as many of these courses as they wish:

W231 Professional Writing Skills
A course designed to develop the research and writing skills requisite for most academic and professional activities. Emphasis on organizational skills and writing techniques useful in job-related writing situations.

W234 Technical Report Writing
Instruction in preparing technical proposals and reports, with an introduction to graphics.

W250 Writing in Context
A course designed to provide a subject-matter context for reading, writing, and research assignments of increasing complexity. Topics of general interest (e.g., autobiography, nature writing, science and society, teacher and child, American business, prison life) will vary from section to section.

W315 Writing for the Web
The course investigates best writing practices for the new types of software that have made it possible for individuals, groups, corporations, and others to prepare frequently and easily-updated, content-rich web sites that actively engage their audiences on topics of concern to them. Teaches use of the data-base driven writing software that make this new kind of Web site possible, as well as the research, composing, and revising strategies appropriate for using this software.

W350 Advanced Expository Writing
Intended for students who enjoy writing essays, the course focuses on developing style and voice through a range of increasingly sophisticated assignments. A significant goal of the course is for students to learn to write with facility, grace, and effectiveness, and (as editors and readers) to recognize those qualities in the writing of others.

W553 Theory and Practice of Exposition
A course primarily designed for secondary-school and junior-college teachers of English.

W495 Independent Study courses in writing offered by the English Department
Students may count **up to two** of the following courses:

**J200 Reporting, Writing, and Editing**
Working seminar stressing principles of writing for mass media. Emphasis on development of story ideas, information gathering, organization, and effective presentation of material for various news media, print and electronic.

**J341 Newspaper Reporting**
Techniques of gathering, analyzing, and writing news and features for newspapers. Practice in interviewing, observation, and use of documentary references that include computer information retrieval and analysis skills.

**T211 Writing for the Electronic Media**
Working seminar stressing principles of writing for the electronic media. Topics include writing television and radio commercials, corporate, educational and instructional projects, and the documentary. Emphasis on development of information gathering, organization, story ideas, and effective presentation for material for the various electronic media.

**J401 Depth Reporting and Editing**
Study and practice in using techniques of social science and traditional methods of investigative reporting. Class will plan, write, and edit news stories in depth.

Students may count **one** of the following courses:

**W203 Creative Writing**
Exploratory course in writing in which students may attempt effective expression in poetry, fiction, and drama.

**W260 Film Criticism**
This course surveys the major schools of film criticism and applies these theories to contemporary films. Students may write in the manner of the different critical approaches studied. Schools of film criticism considered may include formalism, auteur theory, genre studies, and feminist film theory.

**W301 Writing Fiction**
A workshop course focusing on short fiction.

**W302 Screenwriting**
A practical course in the basic techniques of writing for film. Examine film screenplay structure and analyze the dramatic strategies of films. Learn to use the correct script format, and to creatively engage in the various stages of original dramatic scriptwriting. Covers the essentials of dramatic structure, story development, characterization and theme, scene construction, and dialogue.

**W303 Writing Poetry**
A workshop course focusing on contemporary modes of poetry.

**T331 Scriptwriting**
Covers format, structure, and writing of dramatic and non-dramatic scripts.

**W401 Advanced Fiction Writing**
Short fiction and the novel.
Students must complete the following course:
W490 Writing Seminar
This capstone seminar must be taken after the successful completion of at least 12 hours in the program. The seminar includes one major research writing project and culminates in the compilation and revision of a portfolio of writing that represents the student’s best work in the program. The portfolio will be designed to serve as a supplement to the student’s resume.

Practicum/Internship option: Students may, with permission of the Writing Certificate Committee, enroll in one supervised writing internship (W398) or practicum after they have completed at least 12 of their 18 hours of course work in the program. Approval of an internship or practicum will be based on the strength of the proposal and the value of the proposed work experience. Initially at least, the certificate program will rely on the Office of Career Services for administrative assistance in placing students in internships.

Technology:
Many courses in the certificate program will make use of new technologies, including word processing programs, computer projection techniques, Internet research capabilities, email, and online conferencing.

Approval of Substitute Courses:
Certificate students may petition (only once, and in advance) to have an unlisted second-level writing course from another department counted toward their certificate.

Academic Standards:
The student must earn a grade of B or higher in any course for which he or she seeks credit within the certificate program. The program must maintain and project high standards, because its purpose is not simply to offer a series of writing courses but to produce highly skilled professional writers who will be valued for their skills throughout their professional lives. These high standards recognize the difficulty of good writing and the necessity of advancing beyond mere competence in order to perform well in professional settings, where the ability to plan and execute work independently is sometimes crucial.

Advising:
The Department of English will assign an advisor for each student enrolled in the program. Each student will consult with the advisor to direct course selections toward his or her individual aims and career plans as a writer or as a professional person practicing in a writing-intensive field.

Means of Enrollment in the Program:
At the time of enrollment in the certificate program, each candidate for the certificate program must submit to the Writing Certificate Committee a brief formal declaration of intention, including a statement of professional goals and an explanation of how the certificate program will aid in the achievement of those goals.
Enrollment Eligibility for Current IUSB Undergraduate Students:
A grade of B or higher in W131 or in any IUSB course approved for the certificate is the prerequisite for enrolling in the program. Because the Certificate in Professional Writing is a directed program and not merely a collection of writing courses, candidates for the program must officially enroll and be assigned an advisor prior to receiving credit for any course beyond the first 6 credit hours that are eligible to be counted toward completion of the certificate. A student may initiate an appeal of this rule by submitting a portfolio of writing from the previous courses he or she wishes to have counted toward the certificate, along with a cover letter in which the student makes a persuasive case for the coherence of his or her previous course work in the context of specific career or educational goals.

Enrollment Eligibility for Returning IUSB Graduates:
Returning IUSB graduates seeking to enroll in the certificate program must submit to the Writing Certificate Committee a brief formal declaration of intention, including a statement of professional goals and an explanation of how the certificate program will aid in the achievement of those goals, no later than the end of the second week of classes in the semester or session in which the student is taking his or her first class in the program.

Returning IUSB graduates may petition to have up to 6 credit hours of prior eligible course work (for which they received a grade of B or higher) counted toward the certificate if the course work in question was completed no more than two (calendar) years prior to the date of enrollment in the certificate program. Enrollment may be granted to such students when the declaration of intention is accompanied by a successful petition. Any returning IUSB graduate may count 3 credit hours of prior eligible course work at IUSB (at a grade of B or higher) toward completion of the certificate, but enrollment will be considered probationary until the student has successfully completed 6 credit hours within the program.

Enrollment Eligibility for Graduate Students Seeking Stand-Alone Certificates:
Students who have at least a bachelor’s degree from another university may enroll in the certificate program on a probationary basis. At the time of probationary enrollment, and no later than the end of the second week of classes in the semester or session in which the student is taking his or her first class in the program, the candidate must submit to the Writing Certificate Committee a brief formal declaration of intention, including a statement of professional goals and an explanation of how the certificate program will aid in the achievement of those goals. Enrollment will be considered probationary until the student has successfully completed 6 credit hours within the program. *(Note: MATH M014 is a prerequisite for all certificate programs in Liberal Arts and Sciences at IUSB.)*

Probationary Status and Advising:
All probationary students will be assigned advisors.

Transfer Credits:
Students may, with committee approval, transfer one course of no more than four hours credit from another university. They will need to present the committee with copies of the
course syllabus and their papers written for the course. Such course credit may not serve as the prerequisite for enrollment in the program.

III. List the major student outcomes (or set of performance based standards) for the certificate.

In a program of 18 credit hours, students will write in a variety of related genres that are common to their field of interest, developing a wide range of rhetorical strategies appropriate to their field. They will achieve a high level of formal correctness, organizational skill, and syntactical variety and know how to choose among their skills those that are most important to the task at hand. Due to the variety of writing assignments with which they will become familiar through their course work, students will be better able to adapt their writing to accepted conventions and to shape their texts to the expectations of many kinds of audience.

Students who complete the analytical and interpretative work of the certificate will be skilled editors and revisers of their own work. They will be capable of independent interpretation, rhetorical analysis, and problem-solving. In an increasingly complex workplace that demands proficiency in computer applications, certificate holders will be confident users of communication technologies.

IV. Explain how student outcomes will be assessed.

Students will maintain a folder of their writing in the office of their committee advisor, contributing one paper for each course taken. The advisor and one other committee member will review the folder of each student annually and assess the student’s progress against a list of program goals. The committee will also survey employers and agencies involved in internships or practicum courses, as well as survey the teachers of the most commonly taken courses for their perspective on the students’ developing writing skills.

V. Describe the student population to be served.

The Certificate in Professional Writing is designed to serve current IUSB undergraduate students (primarily non-English majors), IUSB graduates, and professional people in the region who are already college graduates.

IUSB has many career-oriented students in applied fields of study who usually plan to seek employment in the region or who wish to complete a program that will contribute to their skills and credentials at their current job. The Certificate in Professional Writing will add significant skills to those already provided within their major academic programs. The certificate will enhance the career prospects of such students.

Most students know that writing can be a powerful life and career tool, but many do not know how to shape a program of improvement for themselves. The certificate program enables them to broaden their training with career goals in mind. The Certificate in Professional Writing will be especially valuable to students in professional and pre-
professional programs. Students in the fields of education, business, pre-law, and public and environmental affairs will be able to shape a program in writing that suits their professional training and serves their career aspirations. Research conducted recently by the W231 Professional Writing Skills Committee of the Department of English shows that local employers as well as educators in several professional fields desire from our students a higher level of writing proficiency than the usual course work of IUSB undergraduate programs normally provides. The writing certificate will help students to meet these higher demands and excel professionally.

The program will also serve the needs of college graduates by allowing them to pursue the certificate independently of a degree program. Workers and managers who already hold the bachelor’s degree are even more likely to perceive the need for improved writing skills in the context of career goals.

VI. How does this certificate complement the campus or departmental mission?

Traditionally, English departments have used their specialized knowledge to teach students the power of precise and skillful use of language through the study of literature, creative writing, and expository writing and argumentation. The Certificate in Professional Writing program applies those language skills to a practical contemporary context. The program fits well with IUSB’s campus priorities, especially the goals of focusing on students, expanding community partnerships, and enhancing IUSB’s image.

VII. Describe any relationship to existing programs within Indiana University.

The program has been shaped to avoid any overlap in purpose or students served with the B.A. and A.A. degrees in English, no matter whether they are focused on literature, creative writing, the essay as a literary form, or other traditional areas of study. There is no competition, as far as we can tell, with other programs at IUSB or in the IU system. The nearest program of this kind that we know of is located at the University of Missouri–St. Louis.

VIII. List and indicate the resources required to implement the proposed program. (Indicate sources, e.g., reallocations or any new resources such as personnel, library holdings, equipment, etc.)

There should be no budgetary cost to the Department of English, as almost all of the courses are already in place (besides the capstone seminar, W315 Writing for the Web is the only new course, and it will be offered for the first time in the fall of 2004). In the short run, we may see a shift of students out of W231 into other writing courses, which would give us a chance to offer a small number of new sections in other areas of professional writing by reducing somewhat the number of W231 sections being offered. Current English Department faculty members have the breadth of experience to begin to extend the range of courses offered as soon as the program grows large enough to
The certificate program may eventually benefit from the Informatics hiring plan associated with Phase Two of the implementation of the Informatics Program. Phase Two includes expansion in the area of technical writing and Web-based writing. For now, however, we anticipate that the program will help us more completely fill courses already being offered. The committee work, advising, and assessment of the program will have to stand in place of other campus service currently being performed by this faculty, however.

The only administrative costs we foresee are for the development and printing of program brochures and for advertisement of the certificate to businesses and professionals in the community.

IX. Describe any innovative features of the program.

The most traditional use of a doctorally-trained professor of English is to teach literature or writing to undergraduate students for academic or literary purposes. The skills being taught, however—precise use of language, for example—are just as powerful when they are applied to the career and life goals of students who are not English majors or literary scholars. It has not been traditional for English department faculty members to develop this aspect of their training and skill, but in this certificate program we seek to develop and share this side of our field with a wider group of students, for their own practical benefit.

In addition, students often benefit very much from programs such as this, which are aimed at the students’ own sense of life and career goals. Practica and internships, in addition to preparing the students for career choices, help show the community the excellence of IUSB’s students and its programs. By training a range of students in areas of professional writing, the Department of English will be contributing in a direct way to the productivity of the regional workforce. The Certificate in Professional Writing program provides a new educational opportunity that no other English department in our region or state currently offers.