

# MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

September 27, 2012

To: University Committee on Undergraduate Education

From: Douglas W. Estry  
Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and  
Dean of Undergraduate Studies

RE: Requirements for Tier 1 Writing

## Request:

We are requesting that the current policy regarding current enrollment in AL 201 be changed to read:

**A student who completes the Tier I writing course with a grade of 0.0 must repeat the course.**

**~~A student who completes the Tier I writing course with a grade of 1.0 or 1.5 must enroll in the 2 credit writing tutorial (AL 201) concurrently with any IAH course below 211.~~ (see attached)**



## OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

Michigan State University  
East Lansing, MI 48824-1046

## Rationale:

- Pedagogical changes in the teaching of Tier I writing following the faculties' development and adoption of grading rubrics have significantly enhanced student success in Tier I writing. This is reflected in the declining number of students enrolling in the course.
- There is no evidence that concurrent enrollment in AL 201 played a significant role in enhancing students' writing ability.
- It is not cost effective to staff a course that consistently demonstrates low enrollment and serves less than 1% of the total number of students enrolled in Tier 1 writing each year.
- Grades of 1.0 or 1.5 are considered passing. However, should they choose, students with these grades have the option of repeating the course.

## History:

With the conversion from quarters to semesters in 1992, the Tier I writing component of the undergraduate general education was limited to one semester of a four (4)

credit course in what was then American Thought and Language (ATL) and is now Writing, Rhetoric and American Culture (WRA). In addition, in order to assure a two-semester first-year writing experience, the first course in Integrative Studies in the Arts and Humanities (IAH 201)—required of all students—was designed to be writing intensive and students were expected to take IAH 201 immediately following the completion of their Tier I writing. At that time, there was concern that students who did not do well in their Tier I writing course—as defined by receiving a grade of less than a 2.0—would not do well in IAH 201 and should be required to either retake or remediate their writing. Therefore, the following policy was implemented:

A student who completes the Tier I writing course with a grade of 0.0 must repeat the course. A student who completes the Tier I writing course with a grade of 1.0 or 1.5 must enroll in the 2 credit writing tutorial (AL 201) concurrently with IAH 201.

Therefore, consistent with the original Integrative Studies policy, AL 201 was designed to augment the specific learning that was occurring in IAH 201. In 2002, the University moved away from requiring all students to take IAH 201 and a range of writing intensive options (IAH 201-210) were designed and the policy was modified to read:

A student who completes the Tier I writing course with a grade of 0.0 must repeat the course. A student who completes the Tier I writing course with a grade of 1.0 or 1.5 must enroll in the 2 credit writing tutorial (AL 201) concurrently with any IAH course below 211.

In reality, not all students took AL 201 as required, some chose to repeat their Tier I writing course while others found ways to enroll in their first semester IAH without taking AL 201 currently. Since the inception of this policy (1992 to present) 932 students have enrolled in AL 201 averaging  $54.2 \pm 8.2$  students/academic year or  $27.1 \pm 7.2$ /Fall or Spring semester. The trend line demonstrates decreasing enrollments during this period.