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“Why Can’t Our Majors Write?”: Cross-Disciplinary Collaborations with the Writing Center

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“Why Can’t Our Majors Write?”
Cross-Disciplinary Collaborations with the Writing Center

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Top 5 Ideas for Collaborating with Colleagues from Across Disciplines
Number One: Workshops Fix Everything

- Provide faculty development workshops – hosted by the Writing Center – to help your colleagues learn best practices for integrating writing into their classes.
- Be sure to give them handouts they can take with them.
- Follow up with colleagues who seem interested and/or confused.
- Give them snacks! And swag!
- Print up a certificate or provide a badge.
- (Extra sneaky tip: Limit participation and tell everyone it’s first-come, first-served.)
Number Two: Serve on Lots of Committees

- Warning! Not for the faint of heart!
- Strategically pick a couple of committees where you can meet and work with colleagues from diverse backgrounds.
- Sit next to different people when you can.
- Get there a little early and strike up conversations.
Complements #2

Identify the most vocal “complainers” about student writing. (“These kids can’t string together two sentences!” “They took Composition; why can’t they write?” Etc.)

At a strategic moment, tell The Complainer that you might be able to help them with Their Problem Students.

Make sure The Complainer understands that “English” is not limited to “Literature” and that YOU understand the difference between writing for literature and writing for various disciplines.
Number Four: Invade Their Space

- Let faculty know that your Writing Center can provide in-class workshops.
- Develop a library of resources for faculty and students: videos, handouts, links, texts, etc.
- Make it widely known that you will personally consult with any instructor to help them design effective assignment descriptions and rubrics – ANYTHING to help counteract “it takes too long to grade” and “I don’t teach writing, I teach X” arguments.
Number Five: Social Media Blitz!

- Everyone likes to read about themselves (when it’s good).
- Whenever you collaborate with a colleague, put it on your Writing Center’s social media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc.).
- If possible, include a photo.
- If the colleague is willing, ask for a few sentences describing their experience and post their comments on social media.
- Make sure their boss(es) see the post(s).
And now...

What are your ideas?
THANK YOU!

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