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

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Recommended Citation  
Davis, Alexis Poe and Marfield, Randy, "‘Why Can’t Our Majors Write?’: Cross-Disciplinary Collaborations with the Writing Center" (2016). *Student Success in Writing Conference*. 49.

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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.
Number Three: Listen for the Complainers

- 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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