Proposal to require completion of Writing 121 and 122/123
Within 90 Credit Hours

Rationale:

Since writing skill provides both cognitive and technical foundations for upper-level course work, it is most beneficial for students to complete the core University writing requirement at an early stage. Adding an early deadline to this requirement would make an important statement about the necessity of good writing for higher level University work, and would reduce the number of students who post-pone the challenge of learning to express their ideas clearly.

Background:

The Undergraduate Council first considered this proposal in the spring of 2001, but immediately discovered a logistical barrier to its implementation – namely the lack of sufficient writing classes to meet the student demand that would arise. The disparity between the supply and demand of writing classes had apparently been growing slowly, unnoticed at first, and had produced an accumulation of advanced students who still hadn’t completed their fundamental work in writing. The disparity came from two sources: 1) increases in the number of incoming freshman over a period of several years, and 2) increases in the number of upper level students who occupied spaces in writing classes, but were not taken into account in estimating the number of writing sections needed for incoming students. Of the students who were enrolled at UO the end of Spring 2001:

~700 had not taken either WR121 or WR122 (~300 of these were sophomores, juniors or seniors)

~1300 had taken WR121, but not WR122 (~250 of these were juniors or seniors)

Through effective joint work with others on campus, the English Department is now able to predict the need for writing sections more accurately, and offer enough sections to teach incoming students in a timely fashion. Thus, it is now feasible to consider putting an early deadline on the completion of WR121 and WR122.

Specific Proposal:

For New Freshmen: Beginning with the Freshman class entering in Fall 2003, all students must satisfy the University writing requirement within their first 90 credits of UO work. The requirement may be satisfied through credit for WR121 and WR122/3, transfer credit, satisfactory performance on the Writing Waiver Exam, or an Exemption based on standardized test scores. Students who have not satisfactorily completed the required writing courses by this stage will have a registration block placed on their records.
The Registrar’s Office will work with the Office of Academic Advising to develop methods for identifying students who are in danger of not meeting the deadline. Specifically, queries to Student Data Warehouse will be created that identify students in each of the following categories, every term:

1. students who have not completed WR 121 within their first 45 credits

2. students who have not completed both WR121 and WR 122/3 within their first 60 credits

3. students who have not completed both WR121 and WR122/3 within their first 90 credits

The Office of Academic Advising will send warning letters to students in the first 2 categories – indicating the urgency of completing the requirement and offering assistance in case of special problems. This office will also impose the block on registration (in the Banner system) for students in category 3, and will send notification letters to these students. The Registrar’s Office will create a new registration block, designated for this purpose.

**For Transfer Students:** Effective Fall 2005, students who wish to transfer 90 or more credits to the UO must have credit, or the equivalent, for both WR 121 and 122/123.