

**Writing Plan Narrative (Executive Summary)** - For what reason(s) did this unit (department, school, college) become involved in this project? What key implementation activities are proposed in this edition of its Writing Plan and what, briefly, is the thinking behind these proposed activities?

Over the past several years, the faculty of the Undergraduate Program in Neuroscience (UPN) have made efforts to expand the breadth and depth of writing instruction in the program. In 2019, we made three major changes. Recognizing the importance of writing to all of our graduates, we revised our Program Learning Goals to include effective scientific writing. At the same time, we designed a new lab curriculum for a required Writing-Intensive core course (NE 203) centered around the development of an NIH-style grant proposal, a new genre for our students. This course now complements pre-existing Writing-Intensive courses in our curriculum, such as NE 102 and the ISE sequence, where students learn to write scientific manuscripts. Lastly, we began a partnership with the CAS Writing Program to offer peer tutoring in writing for our majors (the NE Writing Consultants Program).

While these changes highlighted the value of writing in our program and provided students with an expanded curriculum and new resources, they also illuminated opportunities for further improvements to the way we teach writing in the UPN (see Section #3). This Writing Plan, a joint product of faculty from the UPN and the Writing Program, is intended to capitalize on those opportunities and further enhance writing instruction in the UPN.

As explained in detail in other sections, this Writing Plan proposes many individual ideas (see Section #5), grouped into several common themes. These include plans to:

- add new opportunities for student writing in NE classes, including the development of a new 300-level course exposing students to diverse genres of scientific communication;
- standardize and clarify writing assignment materials such as assignment sheets, rubrics, and grading criteria across NE courses to improve student understanding of expectations;
- generate universal resources that can be used across NE courses, such as common rubrics, assignment sheet templates, and instructional materials such as videos and exemplar assignments;
- create centralized repositories such as Blackboard sites to house these universal resources and archive student assignments across semesters;
- improve communication and coordination within our instructional teams of UPN Faculty, graduate Teaching Fellows, UPN staff members, and undergraduate Learning Assistants, Writing Consultants, and graders; and
- foster continued collaboration and sharing of expertise between faculty in the UPN and the Writing Program.
- grow our Program's ability to offer Writing-Intensive and research-based courses through investment in more faculty and teaching lab resources.

Our ultimate goal is to offer our students more opportunities for writing, expand the genres students are exposed to across the entire UPN curriculum, and provide students with more consistent and straightforward expectations for their written work, both from course documents and our instructional teams. Given the value of writing to all of our graduates, both those that continue in neuroscience and those that pursue other careers, we see continued investment in our writing curriculum as a high priority for the UPN over the coming years. Many

of our proposed changes can be accomplished with existing UPN, CAS (e.g. collaboration with the Writing Program), and University resources (e.g. collaboration with the CTL). Our most ambitious proposals, including the development of research-based courses that could yield research publications co-authored by students, will require increased investment in the UPN faculty, lab space, and operating budget. Achieving these goals will allow the UPN to serve as an exemplar to other units within and beyond BU.