

**Faculty Senate Meeting**  
Thursday, March 25, 2010  
3:30-5:30 p.m. – Adelbert Hall, Toepfer Room

AGENDA

3:30pm	Approval of Minutes from the February 24, 2010 Faculty Senate meeting, <i>attachment</i>	C. Musil
	President's Announcements	B. Snyder
3:35pm	Provost's Announcements	B. Baeslack
	Chair's Announcements	C. Musil
3:40pm	Report from the Executive Committee	K. Loparo
	Report from Secretary of the Corporation	J. Arden-Ornt
3:45pm	Collecting Electronic Files for Lawsuits	J. Arden-Ornt P. Poulos T. Siu
4:05pm	Faculty Compensation Philosophy <i>attachment</i>	M. Smith
4:20pm	Report from the Provost/ Faculty Senate <i>ad hoc</i> on SAGES Review <i>attachment</i>	C. Covault
4:55pm	2010-2011 Committee Memberships <i>attachment</i>	K. Mercer
5:05pm	Report on Uptown Development Plans	J. Wheeler R. Berusch M. Carney
	New Business	



**Faculty Senate Meeting**  
Wednesday, March 25, 2010  
3:30-5:30 p.m. – Adelbert Hall, Toepfer Room

**Members Present**

Bruce Averbook	David Hutter	John Orlock
W. A. "Bud" Baeslack II	Elizabeth Kaufman	Daniel Ornt
Timothy Beal	Cheryl Killion	Roy Ritzmann
Cynthia Beall	Kenneth Ledford	Cassandra Robertson
Christine Cano	Alan Levine	Jonathan Sadowsky
Susan Case	Ken Loparo	Mark Smith
Martha Cathcart	Frank Merat	Barbara Snyder
Mary Davis	Kathryn Mercer	Susan Tullai-McGuinness
Mark DeGuire	David Miller	Michelle Walsh
Susan Hinze	Diana Morris	Liz Woyczynski
Christine Hudak	Carol Musil	Nicholas Ziats

**Members Absent**

Keith Armitage	Peter Haas	Benjamin Schechter
Jessica Berg	Jim Kazura	Scott Shane
Nabil Bissada	Leonard Lynn	Glenn Starkman
Robert Bonomo	Kalle Lyytinen	Sorin Teich
Daniela Calvetti	Shirley Moore	Betsy Tracy
Mark Chance	G. Regina Nixon	Shengbo Wang
Gary Chottiner	Joseph Prah	Georgia Wiesner
Faye Gary	Rodney Pratt	David Wilson
Julia Grant	Faisal Quereshy	Gary Wnek
Angela Graves	Samantha Schartman	Terry Wolpaw

**Others Present**

Dan Anker	Donald Feke	Timothy Robson
Jeanine Arden-Ornt	Lara Kalafatis	Chuck Rozek
Christine Ash	Laura McNally	Ginger Saha
Russell Berusch	Marilyn Mobley	Thomas Siu
Richard Bischoff	Kathy O'Linn	Donald Stewart
Margaret Carney	Dean Patterson	John Wheeler
Corbin Covault	Peter Poulos	Jeff Wolcowitz

**Call to Order**

Professor Carol Musil, chair, Faculty Senate, called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

**Approval of minutes**

Upon motion, duly seconded, the minutes of the Faculty Senate meeting of February 19, 2010 were approved as submitted.

### **President's announcements**

President Barbara Snyder noted the acquisition of the The Temple – Tifereth Israel for use as the university's performing arts center. The university also received a 12 million dollar grant to renovate the facility; the total renovations are expected to cost about \$25M. The university has launched a fundraising campaign to make up the difference. She noted the students' enthusiasm for the new facility; a few of them even set up a fundraising site on Facebook. The university is accepting nominations for the Wittke and Jackson teaching awards. The annual reception for the top nominees and winners at her house is among her favorite events to host. The president and the provost are making their spring round of visits to meet with faculty at each of the schools and the college. They will also attend the upcoming open house for admitted students. President Snyder thanked the faculty who help to recruit the entering freshman class.

### **Provost's announcements**

Provost Bud Baeslack spoke of his recent meeting with the Dean's Advisory Group on Recruiting (DAGOR). The application numbers are strong, and the academic quality of the applicant pool is strong too. The Budget System Review Committee is progressing nicely with its work. And the PhD report will be ready shortly.

### **Report from the Executive Committee**

Prof. Ken Loparo highlighted only the agenda items that would not be discussed at the Senate meeting. Prof. Gary Chottiner, chair, Faculty Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education (FSCUE), reminded the Executive Committee that the FSCUE chair will provide a regular written report to the chair of the Faculty Senate concerning the FSCUE's decisions. The chair will determine whether or not the FSCUE actions should be further considered by the Executive Committee or the Faculty Senate. Prof. Chottiner said that the FSCUE was informed that one of the strategic alliances may soon propose the creation of an undergraduate minor. There was some discussion about the approval process required.

Prof. Chottiner also presented CWRU's dual degree agreements with Asian universities. CWRU has about a half-dozen such signed agreements. However, the expectation of the Asian universities and the students they send to us was different. Instead of being treated as transfer students and having their courses from Asia matched one-by-one against our degree requirements, the expectation was that these students would be treated more like binary students. The FSCUE asked for a moratorium on the establishment of additional programs until the university can establish the preferred structures and guidelines for such programs.

Prof. Christine Cano, chair, Committee on By-laws, presented the proposed edits, approved by the faculty at the School of Medicine to the School of Medicine By-laws. Some of the proposed changes address the promotion and tenure process for faculty in the Biomedical Engineering Department who are more affiliated with the School of Medicine than the School of Engineering. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee requested a written acknowledgement and comment from the Case School of Engineering Executive Committee before the proposed changes to the School of Medicine By-laws can be voted on by the Faculty Senate.

### **Report on Uptown Development**

John Wheeler, senior vice president for administration; Margaret Carney, university architect and planner; and Russell Berusch, vice president for commercial development spoke about the culmination of the university's efforts over the last five years to bring new commercial and residential development to the corner of Mayfield and Euclid Avenue. Construction will likely start in fall 2010 and proceed for

the next 18 months. Apartments that can later be converted to condominiums will be constructed. The university's Barnes and Noble Bookstore will be among the new commercial properties. Mr. Wheeler spoke about the importance of supporting the university bookstore; current revenues are down by 30%. Professors need to request books for their classes in a timely fashion. A senator spoke to the importance of the bookstore establishing unique partnerships with each of the constituent faculties; different faculties have different needs. Barnes and Noble is considering the benefits of offering a new leased textbook program. The university will likely be renegotiating a new contract with the bookstore. Careful attention has been paid to the creation of open space in the Uptown development that will encourage foot traffic and a lively, safe area.

### **Report from the Secretary of the Corporation**

Jeanine Arden-Ornt, vice president and general counsel and secretary of the corporation, reported on the March 16 Board of Trustees meeting. The Board endorsed the creation of new endowment funds, faculty appointments and re-appointments, the updated 5-year academic calendar, the new LL.M in International Criminal Law, the updates to the Faculty Handbook concerning the faculty grievance process. The Board heard a report about the Uptown Development plan. And Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer John Sideras provided detailed financial reports which predict a balanced budget.

### **Collecting Electronic Files for Lawsuits**

Ms. Jeanine Arden-Ornt, vice president and general counsel and secretary of the corporation, explained that the obligation to preserve and produce evidence in court proceedings is no longer limited to "hard-copy" documents, such as written memoranda and reports. Instead, both the federal and state court rules require that "electronically stored information" (ESI) be produced during court proceedings. This includes all types of ESI ranging from the more typical e-mails to the more unusual forms of ESI, such as electronically stored calendars. The obligations under federal and state law require the university not only to produce relevant documents, but also to take affirmative steps to preserve those documents whenever a court proceeding is initiated. Under those circumstances, the university must disengage any processes, both manual and automated, that would delete or destroy any relevant information, including ESI. If the university fails to meet that obligation, both the university and the involved faculty or staff member may be subject to a penalty imposed by the court. For this reason, the Office of General Counsel takes a proactive approach in working with both ITS and the involved faculty or staff member in identifying all relevant documents and taking the necessary steps to preserve those documents for the court proceeding. In response to a question, Ms. Ornt said that faculty can purge documents from their computers, but never after being informed of a potential lawsuit. And she urged faculty not to purge documents that might be of use to the university in defending the proceedings of department or school affairs. Generally no measures are taken to collect documents until a lawsuit is filed or someone indicates that he or she will hire an attorney. There was a question about whether or not a private email account would be subject to review; Ms. Arden-Ornt said she couldn't promise that it wouldn't be. Ms Ornt said that the general suggestion was for department chair to keep official emails for at least 5 years; faculty should keep official emails for at least a year. Several faculty commented that it's impossible to erase old emails out of their Google accounts.

### **Faculty Compensation Philosophy**

Prof. Mark Smith, chair, Faculty Senate Committee on Faculty Compensation, presented a draft copy of the Faculty Compensation Philosophy. The Committee started work on this document under the leadership of the previous committee chair, Prof. Susan Case. The document has been reviewed by the deans and the provost. Prof. Smith said that he hoped the document would help faculty who had been affected by compression and inversion to get additional compensation. Provost Baeslack said that some

of the deans may feel the document is still a little too prescriptive, but the document has been revised to address the needs of all faculty members, not just those who may have been underserved or under compensated. Prof. Smith said that he hoped the document would help the schools to be more transparent about the guidelines for salaries increases. Prof. Susan Case commented that she shared the Faculty Compensation Philosophy with the WSOM dean as it was being drafted; this year the dean spoke to the WSOM faculty about compensation, providing information by department and by rank. The WSOM faculty was highly appreciative. Upon motion, duly seconded, the Faculty Senate voted to approve the Faculty Compensation Philosophy. The approved document will be posted to the Faculty Senate website.

### **Report from the *ad hoc* SAGES Review Committee**

Prof. Corbin Covault, chair, Provost/Faculty Senate *ad hoc* SAGES Review Committee, presented the nearly completed final report of the committee. The committee advocates that additional resources be allocated for the administration of SAGES, especially resources that will better fund the efforts of faculty, instructors and lecturers who teach SAGES classes. The committee supports the establishment of a permanent SAGES oversight committee. The committee supports having a uniform set of General Education Requirements (GER) for all undergraduates. The committee is opposed to any proposed alternative tracks to SAGES, but believes the proposed SAGES oversight committee would be the appropriate body to consider any such future proposals going forward. On April 8 the *ad hoc* committee will meet one last time to make any last edits to the final report. The minority report is appended; Prof. Corbin noted that the minority report does not disagree with the findings of the committee; in fact it endorses the committee's findings more fervently. Some discussion followed. A senator inquired about the committee's recommendation on advising; the committee could not reach a consensus about whether the faculty academic advising offered through SAGES was worthwhile or not. Prof. Musil, chair, Faculty Senate, thanked Prof. Corbin and his committee for their tremendous effort. She noted that the UUF voted not to accept the School of Engineering's alternate SAGES proposal, but that was before the creation of the Provost/Faculty Senate *ad hoc* SAGES Review Committee, and the UUF no longer exists. The Faculty Senate – and perhaps the FSCUE – will vote on matters in April.

### **Membership for 2010-2011 Faculty Senate Standing Committees**

Prof. Katy Mercer, chair, Faculty Senate Nominating Committee, presented the lists of faculty members who would serve as new members on the 2010-2011 Faculty Senate standing committees. Several senators left the room earlier in the meeting, and there was no longer a quorum of senators available to approve the new membership. The Faculty Senate will vote at the April meeting of the Faculty Senate on the new members.

Upon motion, duly seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30pm.

APPROVED  
by the  
FACULTY SENATE



ELIZABETH H. WOYCZYNSKI  
SECRETARY OF UNIVERSITY FACULTY

Revised February, 2010

## COMPENSATION PHILOSOPHY, OBJECTIVES, PRINCIPLES and STRATEGIES

Whereas, it is Case Western Reserve University's belief that competitive pay is a key element in the recruitment, retention, motivation, development, and reward for the productivity and commitment of our highly qualified, diverse faculty who play a key role in fulfilling the University's mission and programs, it is hereby proposed that the following Compensation Philosophy be instituted and enacted to achieve equitable and fair compensation for our faculty at Case Western Reserve University.

### **Compensation Philosophy**

Case Western Reserve University believes that competitive pay is a key element in the recruitment, retention, motivation, development, and reward for the productivity and commitment of our highly qualified, diverse faculty who play a key role in achieving the University's mission and programs. It is hereby proposed that the following Compensation Philosophy be instituted to achieve equitable and fair compensation for faculty at Case Western Reserve University.

Faculty salaries will be based on performance in relation to faculty obligations as described in the *Faculty Handbook*, and, as defined by the individual's School, external market comparisons by discipline at peer institutions, and internal equity within the capacity of the fiscal resources of the University, while maintaining compliance with all applicable rules and laws and taking into consideration the fiduciary accountability to the Case Western Reserve University Board of Trustees. The compensation evaluation process shall be equitable, fair, and transparent, recognizing a combination of scholarly and creative activities aligned with the Institutional vision, values, and goals, including scholarship, teaching, research, service and other contributions, including collaborative and interdisciplinary efforts.

### **Compensation Objectives**

To fulfill its mission, Case Western Reserve University must attract and retain outstanding faculty. To achieve this goal, faculty compensation must be competitive, and the processes and practices used to adjust compensation must be transparent, clearly communicated, and fairly administered. The following compensation objectives will enable the implementation of the compensation philosophy:

1. Compensation should be commensurate with a faculty member's rank within their discipline, their time in rank, and past and present performance and accomplishments.
2. A level of compensation should be achieved that is competitive with our peer institutions, with the goal of achieving at least the mean of AAU averages over a four-year period in all disciplines and ranks.

3. A performance-based compensation process shall be instituted by each School that is equitable, fair, and transparent, recognizing a combination of scholarly and creative activities aligned with institutional goals, including: teaching, research, service contributions, collaborative, and interdisciplinary efforts.
4. Salary compression, inversion, and internal and external inequity of traditional salary structures, not reflecting levels of documented faculty performance, shall be systematically adjusted.
5. Barring unusual University-wide fiscal circumstances, faculty, who have satisfactorily achieved defined performance metrics, will receive an annual compensation increase. A zero compensation increase for any faculty member will be an exception.
6. The University and its Schools will provide raise pools for annual merit-based and equity-based compensation increases that accommodate the achievement of competitive faculty salaries and thereby support the Institution's success in fulfilling its mission.

### **Compensation Principles**

1. Each school will have a compensation planning process that will incorporate faculty performance and impact, as well as internal and market equity information.
  - Performance metrics should be clearly defined, including criteria and the process used to measure performance, with input from the Dean, Department Chair, direct supervisors, and faculty. Faculty input on the metrics and process is expected with sufficient faculty consensus seen as a desirable outcome.
  - As required by the Faculty Handbook, performance evaluations and salary adjustments will be performed annually and inversion, compression, and equity issues addressed in a systematic manner.
  - Whenever possible, compensation increases will include above average increases for faculty with exceptional accomplishments over the year. The contributions of individuals who are strong and consistent performers will also be recognized through a compensation increase.
2. The compensation plan for each School should be driven by central principles and guidelines, the University Compensation Philosophy, unit governance, and focused on furthering academic excellence in scholarship, teaching and service, while creating an environment of opportunity and fairness.
3. The annual performance and compensation review must fairly assess performance and provide opportunity for performance improvement and faculty development. The factors determining rewards for performance must be clearly delineated.
4. Schools will communicate their written compensation guidelines and salary budget increases to faculty on an annual basis.

### **Compensation Strategies**

The University's compensation strategies will maximize recruitment, development, performance, and retention of quality faculty across their careers, while adhering to the letter and spirit of applicable regulations.

1. The Office of the Provost will assist the Schools by providing competitive market salary data regarding rank and discipline that will be used to determine appropriate compensation levels for these positions, and this will be distributed on an annual basis to all faculty by the Compensation Committee. This data will be drawn from our peer institutions that we use in our University comparisons. Base salary considerations are determined by composite survey information collected from such organizations as College and University Professional Association (CUPA), American Association of University Professors (AAUP), American Medical Council (AMC), American Association of Colleges of Nurses (AACN), (UUA), American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), and the dental professional organization scale.
2. Schools will examine equity patterns across protected groups identified in Civil Rights legislation, taking leadership to transcend any of the historical market-based patterns of inequality.
3. As part of the compensation process, Schools will develop an equity adjustment process, in addition to the annual merit-based salary increase process, to both support the requirement for compensating exceptional performance and to systematically address salary inversion, compression, and/or inequity of the salary of the more experienced faculty whose performance has been satisfactory over their years of employment.
4. To correct for unjustified salary distortions that do not accurately reflect the relative level of performance by faculty members, the Office of the Provost will conduct an annual review to assess faculty compensation and equity using salary and performance metrics consistent with the compensation philosophy described herein, along with appropriate statistical analysis. This review will identify potential inequities in compensation. Any flagged inequities will be communicated to the appropriate Dean and Chairperson for further review and a course of corrective action developed, as necessary.



## **Faculty Compensation Committee**

Members on the Faculty Senate Compensation Committees (2007-2010) involved in developing the University Compensation Philosophy, Principles and Strategies:

Susan Case, Chair, Organizational Behavior, (2007-2009, member 2009-2010)  
James Dennis, Orthopedics UH, (2008-2010)  
Donna Dowling, School of Nursing, (2007-2009)  
Kathleen Farkas, MSASS, (2007-2009)  
Stanley Hirsch, Dental Medicine, (2007-2008)  
Alex Jamieson, Macromolecular Science and Engineering, (2009-2010)  
Eva Kahana, Sociology, (2008-2009)  
Patrick Kennedy, Physical Education and Athletics, (2007-2010)  
Carol Liedtke, Pediatrics, (2009-2010)  
Charles Malemud, Rheumatology UH, (2007-2010)  
Sean McDonnell, Physical Education and Athletics, (2009-2010)  
Karen Potter, Theater and Dance, (2007-2008)  
Catherine Scallen, Art History (2007-2010)  
Mark Smith, Chair, Pathology, (2009-2010)

### *Ex officio*

Hossein Sadid, Chief Finance and Administration Officer (2007-2008)  
Jerold Goldberg, Interim Provost and Univ. Vice Pres. (2007-2008)  
John Sideras, Sr. VP for Finance and CFO, (2008-2010)  
Bud Baeslack, Provost, (2008-2009)  
Lynn Singer, Deputy Provost and VP for Academic Affairs, (2009-2010)

# **Ad Hoc SAGES Review Committee**

## **Final Report**

**DRAFT Version 0.46, March 26, 2010**

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# 1 Executive Summary

The Ad Hoc committee on SAGES has completed a review of the documentation of the planning, implementation, and oversight of the SAGES program. The Committee believes that SAGES as a whole is in alignment with the University's plans and aspirations as articulated in the University Strategic Plan (Forward Thinking). Specifically, SAGES represent an effective core of a central General Education Requirement (GER) for all CWRU students that addresses the University's values of Academic Excellence and Inclusiveness and Diversity through a distinctive experience of small, writing-intensive seminars designed to engage student learners. SAGES seminars represent students' first introduction to the University and to the practice of experiential education, where they are encouraged to develop their own questions, research strategies, and solutions to a wide range of problems.

The Committee does not endorse any specific plans for making significant modifications to the components of SAGES, although it does recognize that there are areas which can be improved. We are particularly concerned about improving both practical and cultural mechanisms to encourage the strongest and most effective teachers to serve as SAGES instructors. We also generally endorse the findings of the Committee on advising and urge those involved to work closely between faculty and SAGES program leaders to find an effective compromise to support both mentoring and academic advising needs of students.

In this report, we enumerate our key recommendations in Section 2. In Section 3 we enumerates the charges to the Ad Hoc SAGES Committee and summarizes the particular findings and recommendations related to each charge. Sections 4 through 9 describe specific topic areas that the Committee has addressed in more detail, including the goals of SAGES, consideration of alternative components to SAGES, the value-added of SAGES, student advising, staffing and resources. Section 10 describes several concerns related to SAGES that were raised in the discussions but which have not been addressed by the Committee. Also included are several appendices including data summary reports and a 'minority report' representing an alternative viewpoint on the primary recommendation for SAGES.

## 2 Key Recommendations:

1. The Committee believes that there should exist a single, strong, General Education Requirement (GER) program for all undergraduates. We believe that the SAGES program represents a particularly effective common core of such a GER at Case Western Reserve University, emphasizing the academic skills of written and oral communication, ethical decision making, and critical and logical thinking.
2. The Committee feels that SAGES represents an important advance over previous GER programs at CWRU, one that is distinctive and unique to CWRU and adds value to the overall education for every undergraduate student. We therefore feel that SAGES should be a high priority within the undergraduate curriculum and the overall strategic plan for the University
3. The Committee supports SAGES overall and would like to see it continued largely in its present form (i.e., a five-course sequence over all four years for every undergraduate's education that emphasizes the core-GER academic skills).
4. The Committee has distilled and clarified the student learning goals associated with SAGES. We find these goals to be in line and commensurate with overall University Strategic Plan. We recommend that these goals be clearly documented and endorsed by the appropriate bodies of the Faculty Senate and that they be widely promulgated as an integral part of any official description of SAGES at CWRU.
5. Available data suggest that SAGES is generally quite successful in meeting its student learning goals as measured by several important indicators. However, a number of logistical and pedagogical concerns remain, which are seen as a burden on certain segments of the faculty and student population of CWRU. Several committee members feel that SAGES has not yet reached its full potential as a transformative learning experience for the majority of CWRU undergraduates. Therefore, the committee urges those actions which will strengthen the best aspects of SAGES for all students while providing mechanisms for addressing ongoing and future concerns.
6. The Committee recommends no specific changes to the primary components of SAGES. Neither does the Committee recommend any particular alternative tracks. In particular, the Committee feels that the proposal offered by the Case School of Engineering (CSE), to make the two University Seminars optional for its students, is incongruent with the overall goal of providing a single strong core-GER for all CWRU students.
7. Although the Committee supports SAGES overall, we recognize several underlying difficulties - some of which we understood to be motivating factors in the CSE proposal - and we recommend establishing a mechanism for considering and implementing potential improvements to SAGES that would respond to student and faculty concerns in several areas. The primary criteria for weighing potential changes to SAGES components should be the impact of these changes on the student learning goals for SAGES and the extent to which these changes might provide value added and flexibility in meeting students' personal academic goals.

8. Given that SAGES is implemented across boundaries of students in four different Colleges serving undergraduates, and given that concerns of SAGES are quite specific and unique in comparison with other components of the undergraduate degree program, the Committee recommends that a standing committee (or sub-committee) on SAGES be established to monitor, support, advise, and recommend appropriate changes to SAGES with respect to any individual constituency's academic, programmatic, and/or curricular concerns. In addition, the standing committee should provide a regular reporting mechanism to the Faculty Senate, the SAGES leadership, and the office of the Provost. This standing committee should provide an unambiguous pathway for bringing concerns and proposals about SAGES to the governance structure of the university.
9. The Committee is generally content with mechanisms put in place to provide instructional staffing for First Seminars and University Seminars. Under the current system, both regular (tenure-track) faculty and full- and part-time teachers (non-tenure track) make significant and valuable contributions as SAGES faculty. Evidence suggests that all categories (tenure-track and non-tenure-track) of SAGES faculty provide appropriate and valuable learning experiences for SAGES students. However, there is concern in the committee about the ability of SAGES to attract the most well-suited and committed tenure-track faculty to teach First and University Seminars. This concern reflects a general sense that non-tenure-track faculty may provide a disproportional number of these seminars, and on anecdotal evidence from students and faculty that some seminars are conducted within an atmosphere of dissatisfaction.
10. The Committee recommends that university administration work closely with the deans of the participating schools, the SAGES office, and relevant Senate committees to develop a comprehensive set of cultural, intellectual, financial, and practical incentives for both departments and individuals to attract the best instructors into the program. This will require a commitment of additional resources by the University to SAGES. These incentives should be designed to reward both departments and instructors for excellence in SAGES instruction as assessed in a systematic way, both in terms of student satisfaction and in terms of measurable outcomes in line with SAGES goals.
11. The Committee generally supports the recommendations contained in the Undergraduate Advising Review Committee report (dated May 2009). We agree that the advising burden is high on many faculty teaching First Seminars, but we are divided on whether available data supports claims that the advising was poorly delivered via SAGES First Seminars. In addition, we feel that the practical implementation issues (including hiring appropriate advisors, and clarifying the parameters for requiring SAGES faculty to provide "mentoring" instead of "advising") should be carefully considered before changes are made to the program.
12. The Committee is concerned about anecdotal evidence (from student evaluations and other sources) that suggests SAGES may be at risk of failing to deliver an effective and distinctive core-GER program. The Committee recommends that the university

administration and the participating schools work in conjunction with SAGES coordinators and instructors to nurture a vibrant “culture of SAGES” that highlights the general successes of the program and that recognizes and rewards the achievement of student learning goals within SAGES. The Committee notes that resistance to such a culture of SAGES on campus appears to be based on implementation concerns such as faculty size, instructional and advising burden, and the uneven pedagogical experiences for students. We feel that much of the criticism of SAGES expressed by some students and faculty is not supported by either the reported level of student satisfaction in SAGES courses, or by other indicators of student performance and learning. The Committee is concerned that the the negative perception of SAGES feeds on itself, damping enthusiasm and appreciation for the successes of SAGES and reducing the value that SAGES is given relative to other components of the University undergraduate experience. We feel that an important component to revitalizing SAGES will be to address these concerns by actively highlighting the goals and success of the SAGES program to all segments of the University community.

### 3 Charges to the Ad Hoc Committee on SAGES

The Ad Hoc Committee on SAGES was established by a motion of the Faculty Senate to completed a review of the documentation of the planning, implementation, and oversight of the SAGES program (see Appendix A). Here we enumerate the specific charges to the Ad Hoc Committee and summarize our findings and conclusions with respect to each charge. We note that although these charges provided the basis for our work and discussions, several key recommendations of the Committee (as presented in Section 2) address concerns related to SAGES that go somewhat beyond the specific charges indicated here. We also note that several concerns about SAGES that were raised in discussions that remain unaddressed (see Section 10).

With respect to the specific charges to the Ad Hoc SAGES Committee has the following general recommendations:

1. *Review the goals for SAGES as defined in the Phase I and Phase II SAGES Task Force reports and discussions leading up to and following the adoption of both the SAGES pilot and full SAGES implementation. Clarify and suggest improvements to those goals if and as necessary.*

The committee members reviewed documents relating to the establishment and evolution of SAGES and identified and revised goals for both the program as a whole and for the individual courses. While some of these goals are named or listed in specific SAGES documents, others were inferred and, as a result of committee work clarified or improved.

The goals for SAGES fall into two primary categories: (1) Education Goals that provide a direct benefit to students; and (2) Institutional Goals that further the strategic aims of the University. In our view, the educational goals should be recognized as the central criteria by which the SAGES program should be judged to be successful or not at all levels. These goals are articulated in Section 4. We also feel that these goals should be the primary criteria by under which modification or alternatives might be considered for various SAGES components.

The Committee recommends that the goals articulate herein be considered for endorsement and adoption by both the appropriate Faculty Subcommittee and be included as prominent component of the SAGES program implementation.

2. *Assess the effectiveness of the current structure for SAGES (i.e., a First Seminar, two University seminars, a Department Seminar, and a SAGES Capstone) in meeting those goals. Determine if and how this effectiveness can be improved. Examine the relative merits pedagogical, logistical, financial and reputational of establishing alternative tracks within or outside SAGES for meeting the goals.*

We do not recommending major changes to the primary components of SAGES at this time. We have considered the extent to which some alternatives might be established to provide greater flexibility without substantially compromising on the core educational values of the SAGES. In particular, we do not support the proposal by the Case School of Engineering to make participation in two University Seminars

optional for undergraduates affiliated with CSE. However, we also feel that a structure and mechanism should be put into place to address concerns about SAGES and to consider possible alternatives. In particular we feel that some minor adjustments are worth considering to enhance perceived and actual student flexibility, especially with regards to options for students pursuing minor degree programs, students with dual majors, and students who in programs with few opportunities for electives, such as in engineering or nursing. These issues are described in more detail in Section 5.

3. *Assess the effectiveness of the current structure for SAGES (i.e., a First Seminar, two University seminars, a Department Seminar, and a SAGES Capstone) in meeting those goals. Determine if and how this effectiveness can be improved. Examine the relative merits pedagogical, logistical, financial and reputational of establishing alternative tracks within or outside SAGES for meeting the goals.*

Pedagogically, the Committee finds that the SAGES has and should continue to emphasize written and oral communication, ethical decision-making and critical/logical thinking. However, the program has not yet reached its full potential as a transformative learning experience for many CWRU students.

Logistically, the Committee finds that we need mechanisms for addressing ongoing and future concerns. We therefore recommend the establishment of a “standing committee” or subcommittee, specifically for SAGES, established by authority of the Faculty Senate. A SAGES standing committee should advise, monitor, and support SAGES faculty and staff in all manner for curricular concerns and provides a regular reporting mechanism to relevant bodies and administrators. Composition of the standing committee should include both undergraduate faculty who teach in SAGES and undergraduate faculty who do not teach in SAGES, along with relevant administrators.

The Committee feels that additional efforts and resources need to be directed toward attracting the most effective and enthusiastic instructors for SAGES seminars. We believe a number of

Reputationally, the Committee feels that a well-supported SAGES program will reflect well on the overall reputation of the University. In particular, we find that the goals and activities of SAGES are in alignment with CWRU strategic goals and implements a core-GER in a way that is distinctive and unique to CWRU. The program strives to add value to the overall education for every undergraduate who graduates from CWRU.

4. *Review the pedagogy and range of delivery modes used with the various SAGES components to ensure that students are being well-served.*

The Committee finds the pedagogy and delivery modes of SAGES to be generally sound and effective. The Committee finds that the seminar method does provide a unique and effective mechanism for active and engaged learning. SAGES represents a distinctive curricular program designed to build and strengthen student confidence



in skill for conducting original research and/or developing a creative endeavor and then being able to convey this work effectively in written and/or oral presentations. Available data suggest that SAGES is largely successful at meeting its goals as measured by several important indicators. Issues related to pedagogy are described in more detail in Section 6.

5. *Evaluate to the extent possible the value-added by the SAGES program to the student experience in comparison to traditional modes of meeting general education requirements. Determine if and how to increase this added value and students perception of it.*

The Committee has reviewed the report of the Writing Portfolio Committee and SAGES-specific results of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) survey, both of which provide evidence that SAGES is helping students to improve their writing abilities and their overall skills for evaluating and developing critical analysis and presenting a well-reasoned argument. These results are described in Section 7. We believe that there is evidence to support the contention that SAGES is an important advance over previous GER programs and should receive priority within the university's undergraduate curriculum.

6. *Determine whether the student advising expected of First Seminar instructors is effective, and how it could be improved.*

A sub-task group has prepared a report on the first-year advising component of SAGES and we have reviewed the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee on Advising. There is some mix of opinion within the SAGES Committee as to whether or not these recommendations also represent the best way to support the goals of SAGES. Our Committee generally endorses the process of finding a compromise solution to address these concerns, which are described in Section 8.

7. *Assess whether the logistical parameters, staffing and other resources (e.g., number of students per seminar, availability of writing instructors, utilization of tenured or tenure-track faculty) associated with SAGES are appropriate for sustaining the program and its pedagogy. Determine how they should be adjusted to optimize the program and its attractiveness to prospective students within realistic current and future resource constraints.*

We have considered a number of issues related to resource allocation, not only in terms of financial support but also contributions of faculty time and talent. In particular we have considered various issues related to SAGES course staffing, teaching loads on departments, and the overall need to attract and retain the most talented instructors for SAGES courses. These topics represent particularly thorny issues. A central concern is the attraction of the most talented and committed instructors. We feel that a set of comprehensive incentives both both instructors and departments should be developed to promote excellence in teaching withing SAGES. These are discussed in Section 9.

## 4 Goals of SAGES

The first charge to the Ad Hoc Committee on SAGES was to “Review the goals for SAGES as defined in the Phase I and Phase II SAGES Task Force reports and discussions leading up to and following the adoption of both the SAGES pilot and full SAGES implementation. Clarify and suggest improvements to those goals if and as necessary.”

In addressing this charge, the Committee found that the “goals of SAGES” had not been very clearly defined in a unified way in in any one document. The Ad Hoc Committee therefore set as a sub-task to prepare such a unified set of goals for SAGES and to include these in our report. In our view, having the goals of SAGES articulated in one place provides a valuable mechanism for assessing the impact and effectiveness of SAGES as designed and implemented and for consideration of modifications to any component or policy withing SAGES.

Goals for SAGES were mostly distilled from previous documentation. However, some goals, especially those related to the Departmental Seminars and the SAGES Capstone, were derived from supporting documentation for the implementation of these components within the SAGES program itself.

As a first step in articulating the goals of SAGES, the Ad Hoc Committee broadly divided the inferred goals into two broad categories:

1. **Educational Goals** are those that support the academic and intellectual goals of undergraduate students by effectively providing skills, including oral and written communication skills, critical thinking and analysis, that can be used to solve problems within a wide range of disciplines.
2. **Institutional Goals** are those that support the long-term academic health and stature of the University as a whole, strengthening our reputation for excellence, and providing a mechanism for attracting the best minds to CWRU.

Although both sets of goals are important in consideration of the effectiveness and impact of SAGES, the Committee concluded that one of the challenges for SAGES is the tension between educational and institutional goals and the tendency to conflate the two in discussions regarding the value of SAGES.

The following table (presented as part of our Interim Report) lists both the educational and institutional goals of SAGES representing consensus view of the Committee:

<u>Educational goals</u>	<u>Institutional goals (overall)</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Facilitate faculty/student interaction</li> <li>2. Improved student mentoring</li> <li>3. Provide a common educational experience</li> <li>4. <i>Provide a distinctive educational experience</i></li> <li>5. <i>Marketing of a distinctive product</i></li> </ol>
<u>First seminar goals</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enhance basic intellectual skills of academic inquiry: critical reading, quantitative and qualitative analysis, written and oral communication</li> <li>2. Introduce basic information literacy skills</li> <li>3. Provide a foundation for ethical decision making</li> </ol>	<u>First seminar goals</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage a global, multidisciplinary perspective on the learning process</li> <li>2. Provide a supportive intellectually-based common freshman experience</li> <li>3. Facilitate faculty/student interaction</li> </ol>
<u>University Seminars</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continued growth of academic inquiry skills introduced in the FS: critical reading, quantitative and qualitative analysis, written and oral communication with ample opportunity for revision</li> <li>2. Provide experience in integration and synthesis of theories, information, and methods of inquiry across subsets of disciplines</li> <li>3. Continued experiences addressing issues in the evaluation and use of information, in ethical decision making, and in appreciation of the importance of cultural diversity</li> </ol>	<u>University Seminars</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide additional close faculty/student interaction through small class sizes in a seminar format</li> </ol>
<u>Departmental Seminar Goals</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Refine skills related to communication <u>within the discipline</u> including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Reading critically</li> <li>o Writing clearly</li> <li>o Citing appropriately</li> <li>o And speaking effectively.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Apply discipline-based ethics.</li> </ol>	<u>Departmental Seminar Goals</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Engage students with department faculty</i></li> </ol>
<u>Capstone Goals</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Define a problem (or creative endeavor),</u> critically research background material and communicate an effective response to the problem or project for the endeavor.</li> <li>2. Publically present the response or project in an archival format subject to a <i>rigorous</i> evaluation within the discipline <b><i>and will typically include written and spoken components</i></b></li> </ol>	<u>Capstone Goals</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Promote an attitude of success in our students</i></li> <li>2. <i>Promote the value of writing and oral communications in professional success</i></li> <li>3. <i>Recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of our undergraduates</i></li> </ol>

Having articulated these goals as tabulated, the Committee made an effort to prioritize these goals, with the aim that such a prioritization could provide a mechanism for weighing potential modifications or alternative components to SAGES. However, our experience was that prioritizing the goals of SAGES at a detailed level is challenging because of the tightly-knit structure of SAGES where each component is built upon the skills developed in prior components, and the effort to develop a detailed prioritization of the SAGES goals was ultimately abandoned. However, there was strong consensus within the Committee that as a class, *the educational goals of SAGES should be prioritized over the institutional goals*, and in particular this prioritization should be central to any consideration of potential changes or modification to SAGES in the future.

In terms of the educational goals of SAGES, we find that the SAGES program should strive to assure that all of our graduates demonstrate their mastery of essential educational outcomes, including becoming strong oral and written communicators, skilled critical/logical thinkers, and adaptable members of a diverse and global society. We note that each component in turn provides the building blocks for this development and so the educational goals for each component are tuned to the achievements needed to progress to the final desired outcomes. *Here we articulate the Committee's consensus on what these goals are for each component, and we recommend these goals for endorsement and promulgation to the wider CWRU community:*

- By the end of the SAGES First Seminar, students will be able to:
  - Demonstrate the intellectual skills of academic inquiry, namely: critical reading, quantitative and qualitative analysis, and persuasive written and oral communication.
  - Identify problems within ongoing scholarship in a variety of academic disciplines.
  - Demonstrate basic information literacy skills.
  - Discuss ethical decision-making in the context of a complex, global society.
- By the end of two SAGES University Seminars, students will be able to:
  - Articulate persuasive claims in response to identified problems in a variety of disciplines.
  - Integrate various theories, information, perspectives, and methods of inquiry into their own written and oral responses.
  - Address issues in the evaluation and use of information from a variety of sources. Demonstrate an awareness of diverse audiences and perspectives.
- By the end of a SAGES Departmental Seminar, students will be able to:
  - Identify the primary genres and modes of communication used within their chosen academic discipline/profession.

- Apply discipline-specific research skills, information literacy practices, and professional/ethical responsibilities to problems within the discipline.
  - Produce written and oral responses that participate in ongoing disciplinary inquiries.
- By the end of a SAGES Capstone Experience, students will be able to:
  - Identify a specific and relevant problem within their chosen field of study.
  - Plan and undertake a research, critical, and/or creative response to address the problem.
  - Persuade their audience of the value of their final response through a written and/or oral presentation/performance.

## 5 Structure and Components of SAGES

The components of SAGES as implemented at CWRU consist of five courses, plus an advising component during the first year and a writing portfolio submission. The five-course sequence includes:

1. A First Seminar. This is usually take during the first semester of the first year.
2. A University Seminar, generally taken during the first year.
3. A second University Seminar, generally taken during the second year.
4. A Departmental Seminar, generally taken during the third year.
5. A Capstone Experience course, generally taken during the fourth year.

SAGES courses are each designed to support the central educational goals of the program. Each of the four Seminars is limited in size to 17 or fewer students, specifically to provide a environment wherein each student has an opportunity to directly contribute to the discussion in each class. Every SAGES course emphasizes the importance of student writing.

By design, the five-course SAGES sequence corresponds to the an increasing level of student writing and expression in the context of addressing real questions and finding real solutions. In the First Seminar, students are given the tools to construct a coherent and persuasive written argument, to examine and weigh evidence, and to draw effective conclusions as applied to a limited set of general intellectual topics. In The University Seminar these same skills are developed further while the students have the opportunity to explore a wider range of topics. In the Departmental Seminar, these same skills are now applied in a more discipline-specific context corresponding to the specialized approach within the student departmental concentration.

Finally in the Senior Capstone, the student is given an opportunity to integrate every aspect of their course-work experience at CWRU but developing a discipline-specific problem and then solving that problem. All of the SAGES courses emphasis experiential learning, direct student engagement with the materials, critical thinking, and a high level of student-faculty interaction.

Although the Committee does not recommend any specific changes to the curricular components of SAGES, we do recognize that there is room for improvement and that a process for changing and modifying SAGES components and/or consideration of alternate tracks to SAGES should be established and regularized.

In particular, it is the view of the Committee that the primary criteria for weighing potential modifications or alternatives to SAGES components is the impact on the educational goals of SAGES. In our view, any modification or alternative SAGES component that does not significantly undermine the educational goals of SAGES as articulated in Section 4 is worth considering. Small compromises in the educational goals of SAGES might be worth making if the proposed changes provide substantial benefit in terms of flexibility

for students to meet their own personal educational goals and/or changes that support the institutional goals and aims of the University as a whole.

The Committee is in particular interested in modifications and adjustments to the SAGES program that would serve the needs of both students and departments to specialize in topics that would otherwise correspond to materials covered one or both University Seminars. Specifically, we would like further consideration of the extent to which courses offered by departments could serve both as SAGES seminars and courses that could be used by students pursuing minor degrees and/or additional studies in a concentrated topic outside their main academic major.

The Committee agrees with the UUF Curriculum Committees decision not to support the Case School of Engineering (CSE) motion to make University Seminars optional for its students.

1. First and foremost, the Committee feels that the optional removal of two of the five SAGES components constitutes a major modification to the SAGES program, effectively removing CSE students from a significant component of the common core-GER that we feel should serve for all CWRU undergraduates.
2. The Committee is concerned about a range of consequences that might result if a large segment of the undergraduate population was subject to a rather dynamically different core sets of requirements. In particular, if SAGES corresponds to a core requirement in some schools and not in others, this will hinder the lateral motion of undergraduates who would start with the intention to major in a department within the CSE might considerable academic burden in having to subsequently take required SAGES courses associated with majors in other schools or colleges.
3. In particular, the two University Seminars support the range of academic goals listed in Section 4 and the motion does not provide for coursework that would consistently meet these goals in other ways. In particular, courses are not provided that could replace the instruction in oral and written communication skills provided in University Seminars.
4. Although the motion originate from the CSE and relates to students associated with this program, the motion impacts faculty in other schools. Therefore, it is the view of the committee that the consideration of these impacts should be considered by and discussed within the larger University community.
5. In particular, the CSE motion as proposed obligates the CAS (and especially the department of English) to create an evaluation method for CSE students' writing portfolios that would occur outside of the current SAGES portfolio review process. The motion also potentially obligates departments in the CAS to create new courses to satisfy writing course and other particular requirement of CSE undergraduates who opt out of the two University seminars.
6. The motion also establishes separate "tracks" within SAGES, which would require additional administrative support.

## 6 Pedagogy and range of Delivery Modes

The Seminar Approach to General Education and Scholarship (SAGES) organizes the undergraduate curriculum at CWRU to assure that all of our graduates demonstrate their mastery of essential educational outcomes, including becoming strong oral and written communicators, skilled critical/logical thinkers, and adaptable members of a diverse and global society. In a series of small seminars and experiential learning projects, SAGES develops students academic skills as it deepens their curiosity about the world around them and prepares them for the complexity of the issues and audiences that they will encounter. SAGES guarantees small, faculty-led class experiences during a students first semester and also in most subsequent semesters, providing multiple opportunities for faculty mentoring and advising. In each of its components, SAGES promotes the academic values of inquiry, investigation, and articulation, and it provides opportunities for self-sponsored learning at CWRU and in the University Circle community.

As it is currently structured, SAGES comprises five interrelated seminars in which students refine their academic/professional responses to new and increasingly complex situations and experiences.

The Committee finds the case for supporting the seminar structure as an essential component of the SAGES program. In particular, we feel that limiting class size to a smaller number of students gives a unique opportunity for student participation in the discussions which we feel is an essential to the goal of student engagement with the material and active learning.

We also strongly support the central role that writing plays in in SAGES, and we feel that the development of skills for persuasive writing are essential to the academic success of every student who would graduate from CWRU.

We also support the ideal of the SAGES program that the First and University Seminars serve to introduce and then develop and strengthen skills of writing and developing a logical argument in a general context which can then be applied in a discipline-specific manner in the Departmental Seminar, which is then followed by the Capstone, ideally providing a mechanism for the student to bring all of the academic skills gained as an undergraduate to bear on the design, development and presentation of an original research or creative endeavor conducted by the individual student in close collaboration with a member of the CWRU faculty.



## 7 Value-Added of the SAGES experience

The Ad Hoc SAGES Committee was established to conduct an independent review of the SAGES program and to make recommendations. The background and experience with SAGES of Committee members was variable.

To address the charges, the Committee reviewed several different sources of information and data. These included:

- The original SAGES Task Force Reports, I and II
- The UUF SAGES Impact Study Reports of 2008 and 2009.
- Results from the SAGES Writing Portfolio Study, Summer 2009.
- Results from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).
- Information on SAGES student satisfaction and staffing prepared and presented to the Committee by Peter Whiting, Director of SAGES.
- Selected surveys collected by Committee members (e.g., senior surveys of students in the CSE.)
- Information collected informally and/or anecdotally by members of the Committee in various teaching and advising roles within the University.

Given the relatively large amount of data, and the relatively wide scope of the charges to the Committee, finding focus and drawing conclusions presented considerable challenges. Much of our effort was on the question of whether or not the data provided evidence that the SAGES program provides “value added” in terms of educational benefit to the students. Although implicit in such an evaluation is “value added in comparison to some alternative” where the alternative might presumably be the previous system of distributions in place before SAGES, in fact such a comparison explicitly is problematic for several reasons.

In assessing the value-added the results from data can be roughly divided into subjective or self-reported value, as reported directly by students, and objective or independent educational value as inferred by objective performance evaluation of students. Although in principle, an objective evaluation is preferable in terms of demonstrating real educational impact and value, the Committee also feels that student satisfaction with SAGES is intrinsically valuable in terms of countering cynicism and encouraging greater involvement and investment in SAGES by a wider segment of the University Community.

In the context of objective assessment, the Committee focused its attention on the issue of writing, especially since improved student writing is such a central objective of SAGES. Here we outline the results from the Writing Portfolio Reports and the NSSE, specifically with regards to value-added in the context of writing and how writing is used in the to prepare and present a reasoned argument:

1. April 2008 SAGES Impact Study Report (Writing Sub-Group, pp. 9-18)
  - (a) National Survey of Student Engagement
    - i. SAGES curriculum has “contributed to writing clearly and effectively” to a greater extent than the previous set of General Education Requirements. On a 4-point scale, students under the old GER responded with a mean score of 2.44; under the full implementation of SAGES GER, the score rose to 2.71 (in 2005-2006).

item English Faculty reading SAGES Portfolios in Summer 2007, “reported an overall improvement in student writing from the set of portfolios submitted during the Pilot Phase of SAGES.”
  - (b) Survey of SAGES Writing Liaisons in Spring 2008 suggests:
    - i. SAGES fosters knowledge about and practices of good writing at a slightly lower rate than the English 150 program (4.95 on 7-point scale, compared with 5.5 for English 150)
    - ii. SAGES seminars cultivate oral speaking and presentation skills at a much higher rate (4.12 compared with 2.25 in English 150)
    - iii. SAGES seminars foster intellectual conversation in and out of the classroom at a higher rate (4.29 compared with 3.75 in English 150)
    - iv. SAGES seminars introduce students to Case as a research university to a greater extent (3.71 compared with 3.25 in English 150)
2. Summer 2009 Writing Portfolio Reading Committee Report
  - (a) 95% of students attribute “significant writing gains” to SAGES coursework in their reflective essays.
  - (b) 25-30% of Summer 2009 portfolios were deemed to “exceed expectation” on six measures of effective writing.
  - (c) Over 50% of Summer 2009 portfolios were “at expectation”
3. November 2008 Benchmarking Study of National use of Writing Portfolios/Writing Competence Measurements (i.e., background that led to the Spring 2009 change in portfolio implementation)
  - (a) 7 of 8 of CWRUs aspirational peers (Johns Hopkins U, Brandeis U, Carnegie Mellon U, Emory U, New York U, U of Chicago, U of Rochester, Washington U) have an explicit writing requirement. (U of Chicago folds required individual writing tutorials into its humanities sequence requirement). None of the 8 has a writing competence requirement. (In other words: successful completion of courses designated as “writing intensive” satisfies the writing requirement. No other test, portfolio, or measurement is taken to determine students writing abilities.)

- (b) As of May 2004, a compilation of post-secondary institutions using portfolios to assess student writing from a national database suggests that no other private Research I (Doctoral extensive) institution uses a portfolio system to assess student writing university-wide.
- (c) Most institutions using portfolio-based assessments of writing (university-wide, as in a “writing competence” standard) are second- or third-tier state institutions with generous admissions policies and large writing programs.
- (d) Therefore, the Writing Programs & SAGES adjusted the collection, certification, and use of the SAGES Writing Portfolios as of Spring semester 2009. Students must still submit a portfolio that is complete, clear and shows a “good faith effort” to complete all pieces of writing. But, the portfolio is no longer evaluated individually (with detailed feedback given to each student, and a high-stakes judgment about the competence of the writer made). Instead, the portfolios are collected and used for a larger program review, which can be folded into the orientation and writing instruction preparation/support for SAGES courses.

#### 4. NSSE Consortium for the Study of Writing in College (Spring 2009) Survey

- (a) Case participated in this Consortium in Spring 2009, and was provided data on how Case students experience their writing assignments. Tom Geaghans office collected the data and found that Case is fairly consistently lower than other Consortium schools in many of the measures (e.g., only 45% of Case first-year students said that in most or all of their writing they brainstormed, compared to 55% of Consortium schools first-year students). There are a variety of confounding factors here including the lack of representation in the Consortium of Cases aspirational peer institutions but there are also some intriguing areas where Case shows improvement over Consortium schools.
- (b) 83% of Case first-year students said that in most or all of their writing assignment they “proofread your final draft for errors before turning it in,” compared with 81% of Consortium first-year students. (Unfortunately, only 78% of Case seniors reported the same, compared to 84% of Consortium students.)
- (c) 63% of Case first-year students said that in most or all of their writing assignment they “analyzed or evaluated something you read, researched, or observed” compared to only 58% of Consortium first-year students. (Unfortunately, only 56% of Case seniors reported the same, compared to 61% of Consortium students.)
- (d) 62% of Case first-year students reported that in most or all of their writing assignments, they “argued a position using evidence and reasoning” compared to 47% of Consortium students. 43% of Case seniors reported the same, compared to 40% of Consortium seniors.
- (e) 19% of Case first-year students said that in most or all of their writing assignments, they “explained in writing the meaning of numerical or statistical data” compared to 17% of Consortium students. 28% of Case seniors reported the same, compared to 21% of Consortium seniors.

- (f) 32% of Case first-year students said that in most or all of their writing assignments, they “wrote in the style and format of a specific field (engineering, history, psychology, etc.” compared to 29% of Consortium students. 57% of Case seniors reported the same, compared to 46% of Consortium seniors.
- (g) These data suggest that first-year courses (FSEM and, potentially the first USEM) have a strong positive effect on the skills Case most values argumentation, use of evidence, etc. The decline between first and senior year is something that the Writing Program should consider, but as the program is currently configured, these numbers should affect the implementation of Departmental Seminars and Capstones (i.e., at the department level) most especially.

5. Questions still to consider:

- (a) How is writing supported in Departmental Seminars & Capstone Projects?
- (b) What can SAGES & Institutional course evaluations tell us about writing in SAGES courses?
- (c) What other “benchmark” and/or statistical information can we gather to demonstrate the “value added” by/through SAGES?

## 8 Student Advising

*This is a draft version, conclusions subject to change.*

A sub-task group has prepared a report on the first-year advising component of SAGES and we have reviewed the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee on Advising. Although many on our committee would like to endorse these recommendations, There is some mix of opinion within our committee as to whether or not these recommendations also represent the best way to support the goals of SAGES.

In particular, the Committee recognizes that many students are dissatisfied with the quality of first-year advising in particular with regards to the ability of a general advisor to address issues and recommend classes for specific major and minor concentrations. However, the First Seminar instructor is in a unique position to directly interact with students in a mentoring capacity.

The environment provided by the First Seminar provides a foundation for a strong advising relationship between First Seminar instructors and their students. We believe CWRU should continue to nurture this opportunity, especially if this advising and mentoring encourages students to broaden their academic perspectives and take full advantage of the university experience. However, NSSE data and other student feedback indicate that the advising functions provided to first-year students can be improved. A frequent student criticism of the practice of relying on SAGES First Seminar Instructors as academic advisors is that the Instructors may not have adequate knowledge of the students intended field of study. One remedy for this shortcoming would be to make disciplinary advising available within the SAGES structure. This can be accomplished, for example, by scheduling meetings between disciplinary advisors and first-year students during some of the unutilized fourth-hour class meeting times throughout the first-year Fall semester.

We note that although the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee on Advising are generally endorsed by most members of the SAGES Committee, some feel quite strongly that first year advising ought to remain an essential component of the First Seminar. This viewpoint is described in the “minority report” including as Appendix F.

## 9 Logistical Parameters: Staffing and Resources

*This section written in “outline format” – need to convert to prose for final draft.*

The issue of the allocation of resources withing SAGES and the mechanisms for staffing First and University seminars represent some of the thorniest issues that the Committee has contended with. Finding high-quality enthusiastic and committed instructors for SAGES seminars represents a challenging problem. Intrinsicly, the requirement for staffing of dozens of seminar course for students in smaller classes as opposed to larger introductory courses is expensive, not only in terms of financial resources but also in term of opportunity costs by departmtns as individual instructors committed to SAGES course cannot be allocated to teach other courses to serve the academic goals of other students.

The Committee recognizes that the discussion of staffing and resources is colored by the mismatch between expectations of increased faculty hires that were planned with the onset of SAGES and the reality that undergraduate tenure-track faculty in the four undergraduate program colleges has generally remained flat or declined. For many in the University community who are unhappy with SAGES, the failure to hire a relatively large number of new faculty represents a critical flaw in the implementation of SAGES particular in the face of the coinciding large increase in the number of undergraduate students enrolled.

Although as envisioned, instructors for SAGES were primarily to be drawn from the regular tenured and tenure-track faculty, to meet the immediate demand, a number of non-tenure-track instructors have been recruited and/or hired by the SAGES program to serve as instructors for either First or University seminars. A detailed description of current staffing trends for SAGES is presented in Appendix E. Non-tenure-track instructors include those associated with various individual departments, those hired by SAGES and/or the English department to serve full- or part-time as seminar instructors and Presidential and SAGES Fellows who teach by virtue of their special background and training.

***Remainder of this section still in “outline” form, needs to be converted to prose.***

- *Concerns regarding the “Culture of SAGES” apply at this level as well.*
- *Resource model of obligatory contribution by member departments as coordinated within each school leads to SAGES teaching assignments seen as a burden.*
- *Assignment of less-than-enthusiastic instructors to SAGES courses poisons the experience for students.*
- *Recommend that resources be (re-)allocated to support incentives to attract the most well-suited instructors and to encourage the best outcomes. These would include incentives to both departments and individual instructors.*

*The basis for incentives would include evaluations of overall value-added impact on education withing a SAGES seminar class. Such value can be be inferred from a number of assessment tools. The Committee does not recommend any specific impact assessment tools, but possible tools for consideration include:*

- Standard course evaluation responses from students,
- A new supplementary course surveys designed to assess both student satisfaction and course impact with regards to the specific goals of SAGES,
- Evaluation of writing portfolio materials and/or written materials submitted by students in a given class,
- Student nominations and direct reporting by students to SAGES office,
- Assessments of performance or special efforts as reported by the Director of SAGES and/or other members of the SAGES team.

Possible incentives to consider include:

- Annual awards including cash prizes for excellence in teaching within the SAGES program (one prize for regular tenure-track faculty, one for non-tenure-track instructors),
- Awards for matching preset expectation levels for student satisfaction and/or student goal achievements (“bonuses”).
- As above but with awards to regular CWRU faculty taken in the form of flexible research support funds as opposed to additional compensation.
- Release from future and/or pending teaching obligations with a given department of school.
- Annual awards to students based on excellence in writing or other performance criteria which also results in award given to instructor for those particular students.
- Annual awards to students and/or instructors which also results in benefits to the participating departments.

*Does the Committee wish to say anything in particular about how the Director of SAGES is conducting the task and/or any concerns about how this work is supported?*

*Here is where we present “minority reports” for other ideas related to design and structure of SAGES, especially TM “Department of SAGES,” etc.*

## 10 Remaining Concerns

The charges to the Ad Hoc Committee to review the SAGES program which specific, are also quite open-ended. Discussions of the Committee ranged over a large number of topics related to SAGES. Although the Committee has made specific recommendations with regards to these charges and with respect to several other topics of central importance, other concerns remain unaddressed by the Committee in this report, either because these concerns lie outside the scope of the charges to the Committee and/or because the Committee could not find a mechanism for arriving at specific solutions or recommendations to address these concerns. Here we provide a summary of several of these remaining concerns which we pass on for future consideration by those involved with the implementation of SAGES.

1. The emphasis on strong written and oral communication is the common pedagogical concern of all SAGES seminars. Are the current seminars specifically the First and University seminars appropriately configured to provide the best instruction possible in these areas? Should alternative structures be considered (e.g., focusing one University Seminar on oral communication, one on written; providing different writing support to seminar leaders; recommending that writing faculty rather than research faculty should lead one or more seminars; etc.)?
2. The decision to implement SAGES represents a preference for breadth (and/or interdisciplinary experience) in the undergraduate curriculum (represented by University Seminar “worlds” as opposed to depth (represented by departmental/major courses in “sequences” in the old GER). Is this preference still appropriate and valued by the CWRU community? Are there ways to provide more opportunity for increased depth within the context of SAGES, particularly with regards to addressing the personal academic goals of students who wish to pursue minor degrees or otherwise increase their learning in specific disciplinary areas outside of their primary major?
3. The increased reliance on non-tenure-track faculty to lead and support SAGES seminars represents a significant modification to the original implementation plan. What balance should exist among regular CWRU tenure-track faculty and SAGES non-tenure-track teaching faculty in the program? What are appropriate incentives and rewards for each group of instructors? SAGES teaching faculty bring additional expertise to campus (most are Ph.Ds in various disciplines). How can that expertise be shared with the community? Is it possible to develop better mechanisms for the integration of non-tenure-track SAGES instructors into associated departments, including increased involvement with research and better career mentoring?
4. The “culture of SAGES” on campus has encountered significant resistance, based largely on implementation concerns (faculty size, instructional and advising burden, uneven pedagogical experiences for students, etc.). How should the university address this resistance? What resources are available for strengthening SAGES and perceptions of it?



5. What should be the structure and governance of SAGES in terms of management and faculty oversight? What exactly shall be the prescribed duties and responsibilities of a “standing committee” on SAGES and how would with committee work with the Director of SAGES, the Provost, and then other Faculty Senate committees?
6. What are the role and responsibilities of the four constituent schools (and their departments) in supporting and contributing to SAGES. How shall resources for SAGES and the burden for administering and staffing SAGES be borne withing each of these constituencies? Under the assumption that a new standing committee on SAGES is established to act as the starting point for any constituency for bringing concerns and alternative proposals for SAGES, what shall the mechanism be for having the membership of the standing committee address these concerns what power will this Committee have to implement any recommendations or conclusions it arrives at?

## **A Appendix: Charges to the Committee**

## Exhibit A

The 2008-09 academic year marks the fourth year of full implementation of SAGES, and is the first year in which all seniors are required to complete SAGES capstones. Our current version of SAGES stems from the description contained in the report of the SAGES Phase II Task Force, which was issued on March 15, 2004. That report set out the structure for the SAGES program; analyzed staffing needed to deliver SAGES, assigned the administration of SAGES to the College of Arts and Sciences, and required the oversight of the impact of SAGES on the University by the UUF. In addition, that report also provided expectations for the evaluation of the writing portfolio, the content of the capstone experience, and the academic advising of first-year students.

In order to ensure that SAGES is meeting its envisioned goals, a University-level review of the SAGES program will be conducted starting in the Spring 2009 semester. Possible improvements or modifications to the program are to be identified through this process. In addition, an important component of this review will be an analysis of concerns (e.g., about resources and sustainability) that have been raised about SAGES. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee, on a motion by the Provost, has directed the creation of the Faculty Senate *ad hoc* SAGES Review Committee consisting of faculty and administrators to lead this review. External consultants selected by the committee in collaboration with the Provost may be appointed to assist in this review. The committee's charge and composition have been developed and agreed jointly by the Provost and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, and the committee will be expected to present a first report to both the Provost and the Faculty Senate by the end of the Spring 2009 semester with a final report due in September 2009.

Specific charges to the Faculty Senate *ad hoc* Sages Review Committee include the following:

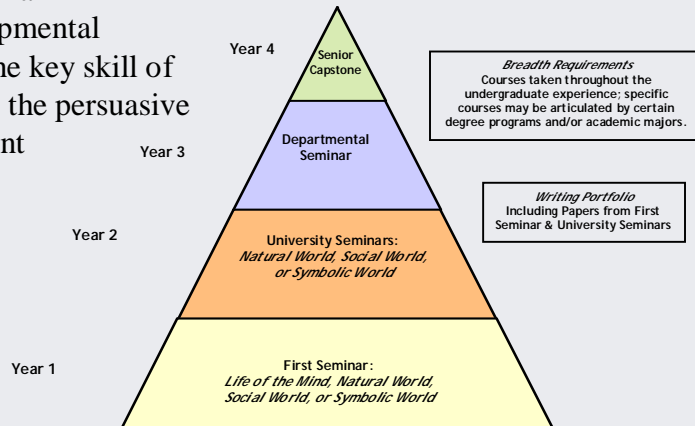
1. Review the goals for SAGES as defined in the Phase I and Phase II SAGES Task Force reports and discussions leading up to and following the adoption of both the SAGES pilot and full SAGES implementation. Clarify and suggest improvements to those goals if and as necessary.
2. Assess the effectiveness of the current structure for SAGES (i.e., a First Seminar, two University seminars, a Department Seminar, and a SAGES Capstone) in meeting those goals. Determine if and how this effectiveness can be improved. Examine the relative merits – pedagogical, logistical, financial and reputational -- of establishing alternative tracks within or outside SAGES for meeting the goals.
3. Review the pedagogy and range of delivery modes used with the various SAGES components to ensure that students are being well-served.
4. Evaluate to the extent possible the “value-added” by the SAGES program to the student experience in comparison to traditional modes of meeting general education requirements. Determine if and how to increase this added value and students’ perception of it.
5. Determine whether the student advising expected of First Seminar instructors is effective, and how it could be improved.
6. Assess whether the logistical parameters, staffing and other resources (e.g., number of students per seminar, availability of writing instructors, utilization of tenured or tenure-track faculty) associated with SAGES are appropriate for sustaining the program and its pedagogy. Determine how they should be adjusted to optimize the program and its attractiveness to prospective students within realistic current and future resource constraints.

## **B Appendix: Summary of SAGES program by Peter Whiting**

## SAGES: Seminar Approach to General Education and Scholarship

### Series of seminar experiences

- Intentional
- Developmental
- Hone the key skill of making the persuasive argument



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## SAGES - Why seminar?

SAGES harnesses the power of the small discussion format to create an exceptional learning experience. The small size of the seminar allows individual attention and practice at making persuasive arguments - both written and oral. The seminar also creates an atmosphere that fosters community and faculty-student and student-student connections.

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## Goals for sequence of seminars

- ✓ Refine the intellectual skills of academic inquiry: critical reading, quantitative and qualitative analysis, written and oral communication
- ✓ Provide a foundation for ethical decision making
- ✓ Encourage a global, multidisciplinary perspective

PROGRESSIVELY BUILD AND PRACTICE SKILLS IN  
A SERIES OF SEMINARS

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## SAGES: Collateral Goals

Imbibe the intellectual vitality of the greater Case campus from day one  
Exemplify a “New living environment - new learning environment - new Case”  
Provide a supportive intellectually-based common experience  
Facilitate faculty/student interaction  
Create a diverse learning experience

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## All aboard SAGES

SAGES is the common part of the General Education Requirements (GER) for all of our undergraduate students. While individual schools have differing breadth courses, all students take a First Seminar, University Seminars, Departmental Seminar and Capstone.

SAGES is an undergraduate program but faculty from all eight schools and colleges teach in the program.

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## First Seminar

### **Goals:**

- Enhance basic intellectual skills of academic inquiry: critical reading, quantitative and qualitative analysis, written and oral communication
- Introduce basic information literacy skills
- Provide a foundation for ethical decision making
- Encourage a global, multidisciplinary perspective on the learning process
- Provide a supportive intellectually-based common experience
- Facilitate faculty/student interaction

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## University Seminar

### Goals:

- Continued growth of academic inquiry skills introduced in the FS: critical reading, quantitative and qualitative analysis, written and oral communication with ample opportunity for revision
- Provide experience in integration and synthesis of theories, information, and methods of inquiry across subsets of disciplines
- Continued experiences addressing issues in the evaluation and use of information, in ethical decision making, and in appreciation of the importance of cultural diversity
- Provide additional close faculty/student interaction through small class sizes in a seminar format

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## Departmental Seminar

- be taken after the completion of the FS and the two USs.
- be seminar based, with an enrollment capped at 17 students
- involve the various kinds of discussion formats which take place in the FS and USs, although the topics would be more disciplinary.
- include a writing component which – unlike the FS and USs – would be disciplinary.

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## Capstone

The Capstone Experience or Senior Project is typically taken senior year and will consist of one or two semesters of work, 3-6 credit hours under the guidance of a faculty advisor. The student will be required to pull together the knowledge and skills obtained throughout their education to address the demands of a new and original project. Acceptable formats for the senior project are varied and flexible, but each must include the following requirements:

- critical thinking
- focus on methodology, with clear goals, an appropriate plan of action, and a good likelihood of success
- regular oversight by the project advisor
- reporting of progress
- writing throughout the project with a final thesis in prose format, although the project may also include different media especially for public presentation
- oral reports throughout the project and a final public presentation of the student's work in a campus-wide open house research day or conference

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## Writing Portfolio

After finishing First Seminar and two University Seminar, students must submit a writing portfolio showcasing examples of their best work from SAGES seminars:

- A paper from First Seminar
- A research paper (10-12 pp) written in a University Seminar
- A paper from the other University Seminar
- A reflective essay on their writing (2-3 pp)

Change made in January 2009 –

Portfolio is required but review is for completeness and good faith

Reflection remains a key

Evaluation is to improve writing instruction

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## SAGES – a history

- 1999 – College of Arts & Sciences (CAS) Outcome Assessment Committee begins evaluation of writing skills across the four-year undergraduate experience
- 2001 - CAS Committee on Educational Programs
  - evaluates the then-existing General Educational requirements,
  - reports significant dissatisfaction
  - recommends a program of curricular reform

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## History

- Fall 2001 – First SAGES Task Force Report
- Jan 2002 – SAGES Pilot approved by CAS faculty by vote of 101-7
  - Restricts size of pilot to 150 students
  - Provides for evaluation, including budgetary considerations, in the 2004-2005 academic year
- Pilot subsequently endorsed by Engineering, Nursing and Business schools

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## SAGES History

- Fall 2002 – Pilot of 150 students commences
- January 2003 – new President challenges faculty to increase size of pilot to 200 students and to adopt SAGES for all incoming students by Fall 2005
- September 2003 - Phase I SAGES Implementation Task Force outlines plan and discussion ensues
- March 2004 - Phase II SAGES Implementation Task Force recommends curriculum model with modest changes and a staffing model
- April 2004 - SAGES approved by University Undergraduate Faculty, constituent schools, and Board of Trustees

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## The reasons for changing the General Education Requirements circa 2000?

- ✓ Frustration with the smorgasbord of categories in the General Education Requirements
- ✓ Desire for a curriculum linked to our goals for a graduate of our university
- ✓ Desire for more attention to general skills of our graduates
- ✓ We assumed students were getting practice at key skills
- ✓ Shouldn't there be a culminating demonstration of scholarship? If so, how to prepare for this?
- ✓ Some students had little meaningful faculty contact and/or no small class experiences until very late in their student career

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## Why did we make this particular curricular change?

Faculty were thoughtful and felt that SAGES

- was the best way to educate our students
- was the best way for our students to learn
- matched our mission

First, faculty agreed on a BOLD vision. Then we asked if we could afford to do this (we imagined the cart and asked if the faculty could pull it). We were assured we could afford this more faculty-intensive and expensive curriculum.

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## SAGES: Successes

Attention focused on student learning

Faculty collaboration to decide what is important and what should be the hallmark of a CWRU grad

Superior student experiences and outcomes

Resonance with variety of audiences

Faculty

Prospective students and parents

National recognition

Financial successes

Commitment to continually enhance the experience

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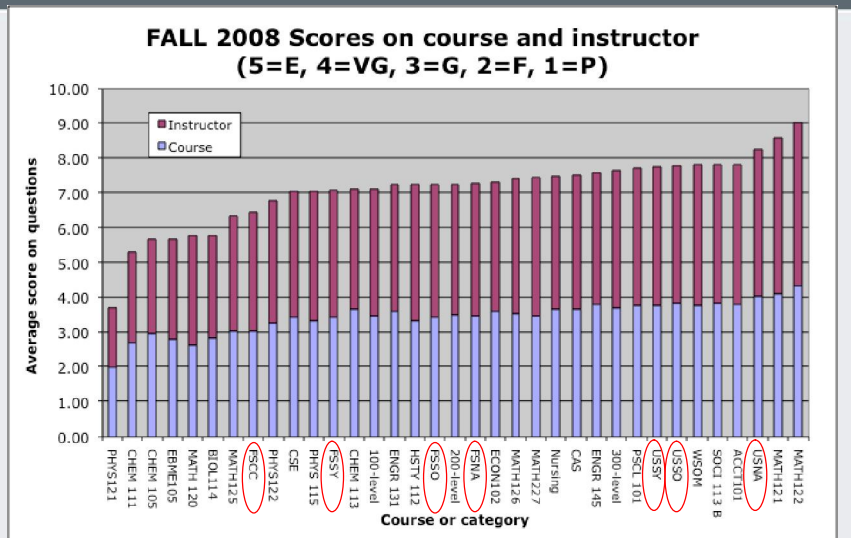
## SAGES: Successes

Faculty collaboration to decide what is important and what should be the hallmark of a CWRU grad

Review of department/major & minor/ degree curricula  
 Many dozens of faculty involved in committees on SAGES  
 Common requirements that map to these hallmarks

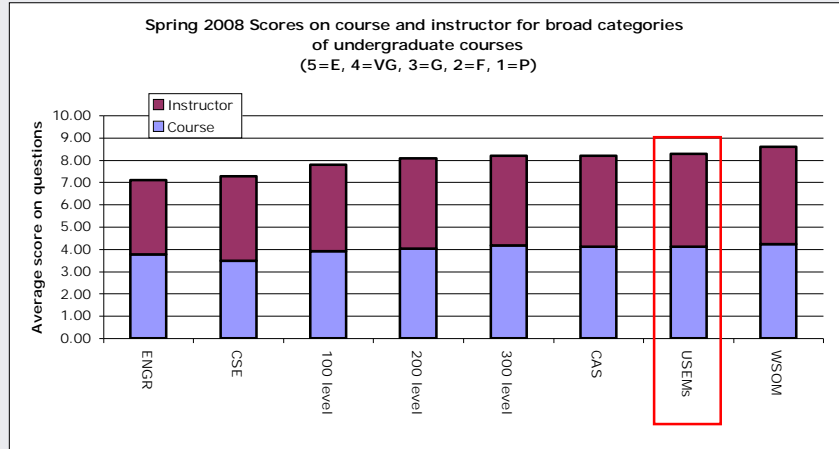
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## SAGES: Student evaluations



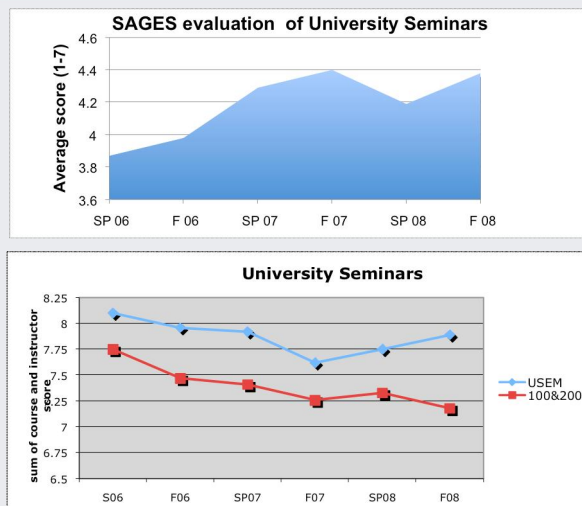
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## SAGES: Student evaluations



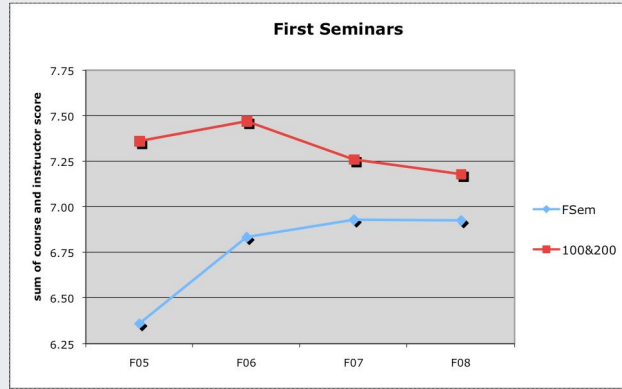
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## SAGES: Student evaluations



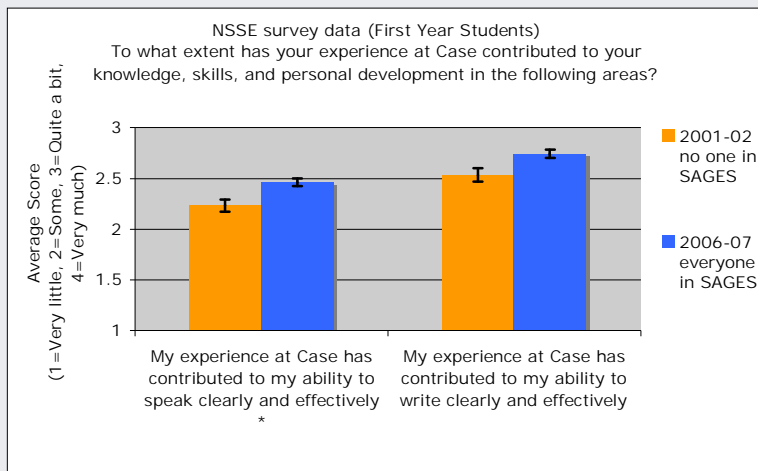
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## SAGES: Student evaluations



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## SAGES: Student outcomes



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## SAGES: Resonance with audiences

**Faculty** - "The vast majority of the portfolios I read were extremely heartening to a former Director of Composition and current chair of the English department. It seemed to me obvious that what we had all theorized is true: three semesters of writing practice and instruction help the students more than one highly concentrated course, however good and however concentrated." - Bill Siebenschuh

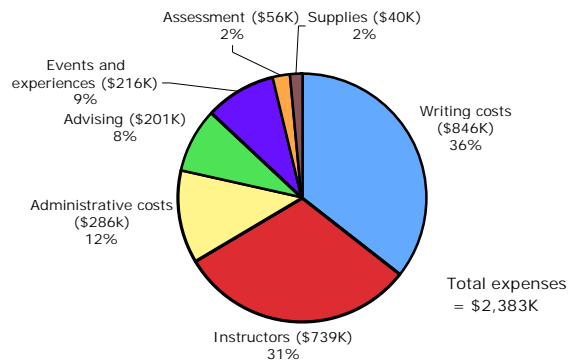
**Role in recruitment** - "Randy Deike sees the importance of SAGES in recruiting as demonstrating for students and parents our university's commitment to undergraduate education. Parents in particular find the First Seminar advising and mentoring as a real strength as students make the transition to college." -- summary of UUF SAGES Impact Committee

**National recognition** - "The teaching of oral communications skills to Case Western Reserve University's undergraduates through SAGES (Seminar Approach to General Education and Scholarship) was highlighted in the Association of American Colleges and Universities report, *Assessment in Cycles of Improvement: Faculty Designs for Essential Learning Outcome*" -- CWRU press release

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## Budget (2007-08)

Total = \$ 2.38 million



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## Budget (2007-08)

Total =\$2.38 million

But...

More or less covered by the tuition generated by  
SAGES teaching fellows + philanthropy

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## Successes

### Adaptive Management

We have evolved SAGES to accommodate the realities of  
implementation

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## SAGES: Challenges

Change is rarely easy

SAGES has a major curricular footprint necessitating departmental and faculty adjustment

SAGES implementation coincided with growth in class size

SAGES implementation coincided with financial and leadership turmoil

Faculty point out staffing promises have not been kept

Opportunity costs?

Should students be happier with SAGES?

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## Challenges: Change

Change is rarely easy



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## Challenges: Curricular footprint

Faculty intensive

classes of 17 (average class size is ~17)

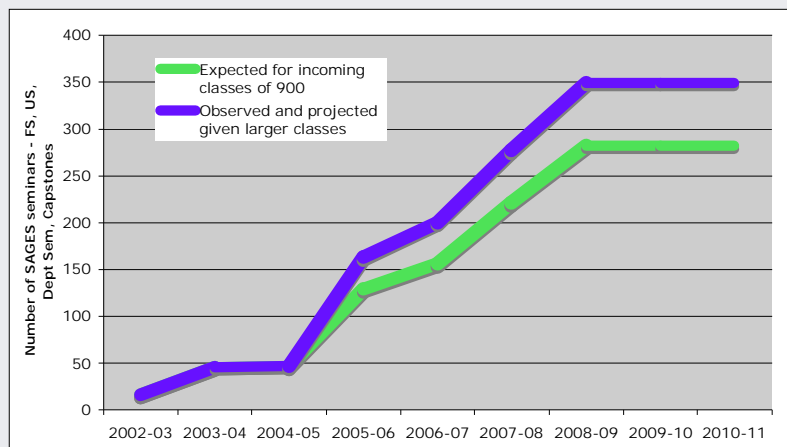
New courses and for some, new application of mode of teaching

Introduction of Capstones in some departments or making them mandatory in others

Generalist advising

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## Challenges: Curricular footprint + larger classes



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## Challenges: Curricular footprint + larger classes + faculty size contraction

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
CAS	220	221	219	222	229
CSE	112	116	115	110	108
WSOM	79	65	60	61	57
FPBSON	69	62	78	85	90

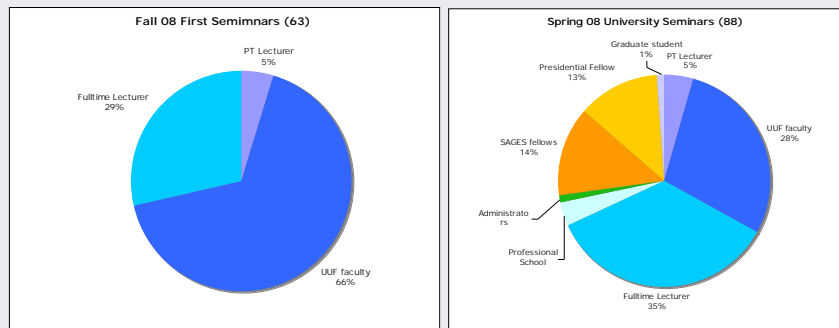
Reminder: SAGES Task Force envisioned, and faculty were promised, dozens of additional hires to accommodate greater demands of SAGES

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## Challenges: Who are the seminar leaders?

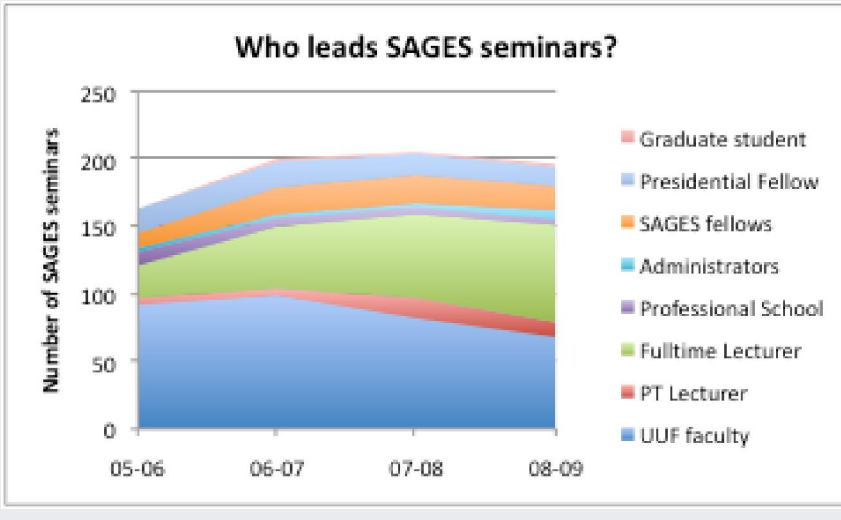
All First Seminar were to be led by our stalwart faculty

A fraction of University Seminars were to be led by non-traditional faculty (20%)



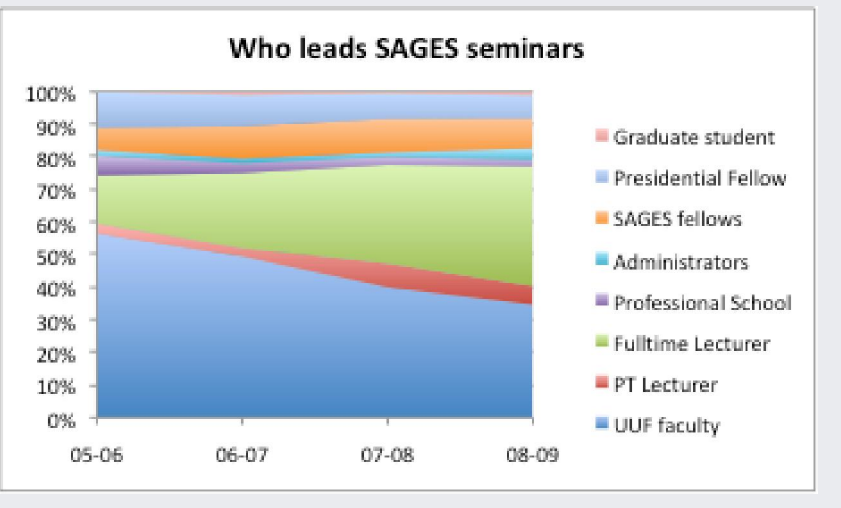
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## Challenges: History of seminar leaders



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## Challenges: History of seminar leaders



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## Challenges: Opportunity costs

### Opportunity costs?

- for students - other courses
- for faculty – other priorities
- for the institution

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## Challenges: Should students be happier with SAGES?

- Some students say: “I don’t want to find out what my fellow students think, I want the professor to teach me.”
- Some students say: “I don’t need to spend this much time on writing, I am a \_\_\_\_\_ major”
- Learning skills is hard - 1) it is difficult to become accomplished, 2) progress can be frustratingly slow, and 3) progress is often hard to see (especially for the learner)

CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

## SAGES: Challenges

Change is rarely easy

SAGES has a major curricular footprint necessitating departmental and faculty adjustment

SAGES implementation coincided with growth in class size

SAGES implementation coincided with financial and leadership turmoil

Faculty point out staffing promises have not been kept

Opportunity costs?

Should students be happier with SAGES?

## **C Appendix: NSSE Report results on SAGES**



## Using the National Survey of Student Engagement to Examine the Impact of the SAGES Program

The present report utilizes a number of individual items from the National Survey of Student Engagement to assess the impact of SAGES participation. Rather than examine every item of the survey individually, we have chosen to group the survey items based on their similarity to SAGES' stated goals (<http://www.case.edu/sages/rationale.htm>).

### **First-Year Sample**

A total of 2503 first-year students responded to the NSSE survey between 2001 and 2009. Of these, 1164 matriculated between 2000 and 2004 and were not in the SAGES pilot. These students are henceforth referred to as non-SAGES students. A total of 1339 matriculated at Case between 2005 and 2008, after the full implementation of SAGES. These students are henceforth referred to as SAGES students.

Non-SAGES students and SAGES students did not differ significantly from each other in terms of board scores (ACT composite, SAT math, SAT verbal), high school class rank, or high school class size. SAGES students were significantly more likely to be women, were significantly less likely to identify as Caucasian, and were significantly more likely to have an unidentified or unknown ethnicity. These differences, however, mirror changes that have taken place on campus (increased recruitment of women, more Caucasian students choosing not to disclose their ethnicity) and are not likely due to systematic sampling error.

### **Senior Year Sample**

A total of 2085 seniors responded to the NSSE survey between 2001 and 2009. Of these, 1705 matriculated prior to 2004 and were not in the SAGES pilot. These students are henceforth referred to as non-SAGES students. A total of 380 matriculated at Case after 2005, after the full implementation of SAGES. These students are henceforth referred to as SAGES students.

Non-SAGES students and SAGES students did not differ significantly from each other in terms of board scores (ACT composite, SAT math, SAT verbal), high school class rank, or high school class size. SAGES students were no more likely to be women; however, SAGES students were significantly more likely to have an unidentified or unknown ethnicity.

### **Method**

In order to determine if SAGES students differed from non-SAGES students, we conducted a series of t-tests comparing group means on each NSSE item. We indicate below where mean values for SAGES students significantly differ from mean values for non-SAGES students ( $p < .05$ ).

### **Disclaimer**

The only way we can examine the effects of SAGES implementation is to use time

as a proxy (i.e., responses prior to 2005 are "pre-SAGES" results and responses post-2005 are "SAGES" results). As such, reported group differences may very well be the result of changes to the undergraduate curriculum, but they may also be due to other changes on campus that occurred during the same time period.

### **SAGES stated goal #1:**

SAGES students develop essential communications skills over several semesters by participating in seminar discussions, giving presentations, and writing intensively. In the SAGES program, writing is not an isolated activity. Instead, it partakes of the intellectual vitality of the seminar (and, ultimately, the capstone) experience.

#### **Related results - First-Years:**

##### **Positive:**

- As first-years, those in SAGES were significantly more likely than non-SAGES students to report that they asked questions in class; first-years in SAGES were also more likely to give a class presentation and were more likely to have prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in.
- First-years in SAGES were significantly more likely than their non-SAGES counterparts to say that Case contributed to their ability to speak clearly and effectively or to their ability to write clearly and effectively.
- First-years in SAGES report writing more short papers (< 5 pages) than their non-SAGES peers. There were no group differences on the number of medium-length (5-19 pages) or long (>20 page) papers assigned.

##### **No Difference:**

- First-years in SAGES report having no more assigned readings than non-SAGES classmates.
- SAGES and non-SAGES students reported equal gains in their ability to work effectively with others.

##### **Negative:**

- First-year SAGES students were significantly less likely than their non-SAGES peers to say that Case had contributed to their ability to learn on their own.
- First-year SAGES students were significantly less likely than their non-SAGES peers to say that Case had contributed to their ability to think critically and analytically
- SAGES students were less likely to than non-SAGES students to say that Case had contributed to their understanding of themselves.

#### **Related results - Seniors:**

##### **Positive:**

- As seniors, those in SAGES were significantly more likely than non-SAGES students to report that they asked questions in class; seniors in SAGES were also more likely to give a class presentation and were more likely to have prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in.

- Seniors in SAGES were significantly more likely than their non-SAGES counterparts to say that Case contributed to their ability to write clearly and effectively.

**No difference:**

- Senior SAGES students were no more likely than their non-SAGES peers to say that Case had contributed to their ability to think critically and analytically or to their understanding of themselves.
- SAGES and non-SAGES students reported equal gains in their ability to work effectively with others.
- Seniors in SAGES report having no more assigned readings than non-SAGES classmates.
- Seniors in SAGES wrote the same number of short papers (< 5 pages) as did their non-SAGES peers. Similarly, there were no group differences on the number of medium-length (5-19 pages) or long (>20 page) papers assigned.
- Senior SAGES students were no more likely than their non-SAGES peers to say that Case had contributed to their ability to learn on their own.

**SAGES stated goal #2:**

Under SAGES, every undergraduate has a faculty mentor from the moment he or she arrives on campus. The First Seminar leaders double as advisors to the students they teach, introducing them to the culture and resources of the research university and establishing close relationships with them from the very first semester.

**Related results - First-Years:**

**No Difference:**

- Among first-years, there were no differences between SAGES and non-SAGES students on ratings of the quality of academic advising at Case.

**Negative:**

- Compared to non-SAGES students, first-year students in the SAGES program were significantly less satisfied with the quality of their relationships with faculty members.

**Related results - Seniors:**

**No Difference:**

- Among seniors, there were no differences between SAGES and non-SAGES students on ratings of the quality of relationships with faculty members or the quality of academic advising at Case.

**SAGES stated goal #3:**

SAGES students explore the vast cultural and scientific resources of University Circle. They attend special lectures and presentations, and pursue research opportunities, arranged through SAGES' partnerships with major institutions such as

the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Cleveland Botanical Garden, the Cleveland Institute of Music, and the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

### **Related results - First-years:**

#### **Positive:**

- As first-years, those in SAGES were significantly more likely than their non-SAGES peers to attend an art exhibit, gallery, play, dance or other theater performance. Similarly, SAGES students are more likely to say that Case emphasizes the importance of attending campus events and activities.

### **Related results - Seniors:**

#### **Positive:**

- As seniors, SAGES students are more likely to say that Case emphasizes the importance of attending campus events and activities than are their non-SAGES counterparts.

#### **No Difference:**

- As seniors, those in SAGES were no more likely than their non-SAGES peers to attend an art exhibit, gallery, play, dance or other theater performance.

### **SAGES stated goal #4:**

Case faculty members teach all First Seminars and most subsequent seminars. In addition, students have opportunities to learn from guest scholars, and from professionals in diverse fields, who have been drawn to Case by the Presidential Fellows and Dean's Seminar Leaders programs.

### **Related results - First-years:**

#### **Positive:**

- As first-years, SAGES students were significantly more likely than their non-SAGES peers to work with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.) and were more likely to communicate with an instructor via email.

#### **No Difference:**

- Compared to their non-SAGES peers, first-year students in SAGES were no more likely to discuss ideas with faculty outside of the classroom. Similarly, first-years in SAGES were no more likely to discuss grades with faculty members.
- There were no group differences on the frequency with which students discussed career plans with a faculty member.
- First-years in SAGES were no more likely than their non-SAGES peers to say that they had examined the strengths and weaknesses of their own views on a topic or issue, tried to better understand someone else's views by

imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective, or learned something that changed the way they understand an issue or concept.

- First-years in SAGES were no more likely than their non-SAGES peers to say that Case had contributed to their acquisition of a broad general education.

**Negative:**

- First-years in SAGES were significantly less satisfied in their relationships with faculty than were their non-SAGES peers.

**Related results - Seniors:**

**No Difference:**

- As seniors, SAGES students were no more likely than their non-SAGES peers to work with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.) and were no more likely to communicate with an instructor via email.
- Seniors in SAGES were no more satisfied in their relationships with faculty than were their non-SAGES peers.
- Compared to their non-SAGES peers, seniors students in SAGES were no more likely to discuss ideas with faculty outside of the classroom. Similarly, seniors in SAGES were no more likely to discuss grades with faculty members.
- There were no group differences on the frequency with which students discussed career plans with a faculty member.
- Seniors in SAGES were no more likely than their non-SAGES peers to say that they had examined the strengths and weaknesses of their own views on a topic or issue, tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective, or learned something that changed the way they understand an issue or concept.
- Seniors in SAGES were no more likely than their non-SAGES peers to say that Case had contributed to their acquisition of a broad general education.

**SAGES stated goal #5:**

The ultimate goal is for all Case students to gain experience in defining a problem and then developing a response to that problem, whether this involves research or artistic creation. SAGES accomplishes this goal by having *all* undergraduate students complete a capstone project- individually or in small groups- under the guidance of faculty mentors.

**Related results - First-years:**

**Positive:**

- First-years in SAGES are significantly more likely to say that they had coursework that required them to make judgments about the value of information, arguments or methods.

- Students in SAGES say that their coursework is less likely to emphasize the memorization of facts, ideas, or methods.
- First-years in SAGES were more likely to say they have written a paper integrating ideas from various sources.

**Negative:**

- SAGES students were less likely to say that their coursework focuses on applying theories or concepts to practical problems in new situations.

**Related results - Seniors:**

**Positive:**

- Seniors in SAGES are significantly more likely to say that they had coursework that requires them to make judgments about the value of information, arguments or methods and analyze the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory.
- Seniors in SAGES were more likely to say they have written a paper integrating ideas from various sources.

**No Difference:**

- Students in SAGES were no more likely to say that their coursework emphasizes the memorization of facts, ideas, or methods.
- SAGES students are no more likely to say that their coursework focuses on applying theories or concepts to practical problems in new situations than are non-SAGES students.

**Student satisfaction**

Though not a specifically stated goal of the SAGES program, we felt it was worth examining whether the SAGES program affected students' reported satisfaction with their experiences at Case.

**Student Satisfaction - First-years:**

**No Difference:**

- As first-years, students in the SAGES program were no more likely than were non-SAGES students to be satisfied with the quality of their relationships with peers, administrative personnel and offices, the quality of academic advising, or the entire educational experience at Case.
- SAGES students were no more likely, as first-years, to say that they would still choose to attend Case if they could start over again.

**Negative:**

- As first-years, students in the SAGES program were significantly less likely than their non-SAGES peers to say they were satisfied with their relationships with faculty members at Case.

**Student satisfaction - Seniors:**

**Positive:**

- As seniors, students in the SAGES program were significantly more likely than their non-SAGES peers to say they were satisfied with the entire educational experience at Case.

**No Difference:**

- SAGES students were no more likely than were non-SAGES students to be satisfied with the quality of their relationships with peers, faculty members, administrative personnel and offices, or the quality of academic advising.
- SAGES students were no more likely, as seniors, to say that they would still choose to attend Case if they could start over again.

**Conclusion:****First-year students:**

Results indicate that the SAGES program has achieved some gains among first-year students in areas specifically related to its stated goals. First-year students report greater classroom engagement (asking questions in class, giving class presentations), are more likely to feel that they have learned to write clearly and effectively, and are more likely to say they have written papers integrating ideas from various sources.

Though many items related to SAGES goals showed positive gains among SAGES first-year students, that is not the case for all items. Specifically, first-year students in the SAGES program were less likely than non-SAGES students to say that Case had contributed to their understanding of themselves, their ability to learn on their own, and their ability to think critically and analytically. First year students in SAGES were also significantly less satisfied in their relationships with faculty members than were their non-SAGES peers.

In general, there was no difference between first-years in SAGES and those not in SAGES on most items related to SAGES goals. For example, first-year students in SAGES were no more satisfied than their non-SAGES peers with academic advising or with their educational experience at Case. Similarly, compared to non-SAGES first-year students, those in SAGES were no more likely to say that they would still choose to attend Case if they could start over again.

**Senior students:**

Compared to non-SAGES seniors, those in the SAGES program were significantly more engaged in the classroom. Specifically, SAGES students said they more frequently asked questions in class, gave class presentations, and prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in. Seniors in the SAGES program were also more likely than non-SAGES students to say that Case had contributed to their ability to write clearly and effectively. Finally, SAGES students were significantly more satisfied with their entire educational experience at the university than were non-SAGES students.

Though there were no negative findings in our examination of the SAGES program among seniors, there were many items for which no difference was found. Seniors in SAGES were no more likely than their non-SAGES peers to say that Case

contributed to their acquisition of a broad general education. As with first-year students, seniors in the SAGES program were no more satisfied than their non-SAGES peers with academic advising and were no more likely to say that they would still choose to attend Case if they could start over again.



## **D Appendix: Writing Portfolio Evaluation 2009 Summary Report**

**TO:** Peter Whiting, Director of SAGES

**CC:** Kimberly Emmons, Director of Composition, English

**FROM:** Timothy Fogarty (Accounting), Ashley Seitz Kramer (SAGES), Megan Jewell (English), Daniel Lacks (Chemical Engineering), and Alan Rocke (History)

**SUBJECT:** SAGES Portfolio Faculty Evaluation Committee Report

**DATE:** 26 June 2009

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## **Introduction**

The SAGES Portfolio Faculty Evaluation Committee, consisting of university faculty from Chemical Engineering, History, English, SAGES, and Accounting, read and evaluated 423 student writing portfolios submitted to the SAGES office between May 2008 and May 2009. The following report outlines the methodologies used during the evaluation process, provides the results of the committee's assessment of student writing, and offers suggestions for SAGES and English department writing program administration regarding the SAGES portfolio requirement.

Our chief finding is that students are producing an overall good quality of writing in the SAGES program, but would benefit from more instruction in argumentation. We also recommend revising the portfolio submission guidelines and procedures to eliminate, as much as possible, the presence of vague and/or contradictory expectations.

## **Background**

As part of a new system of evaluating portfolios, the committee met for two weeks in mid-June 2009 to assess students' writing progress during the first three writing-intensive SAGES courses, and to provide programmatic feedback to SAGES and English Department writing program administrators. Previous faculty evaluation procedures during the SAGES pilot and first years of implementation (2002-2008) focused solely on assessing individual portfolios in order to provide feedback to students submitting them as a graduation requirement. These evaluation procedures were revised in January 2009 due to issues with inconsistent evaluation, lack of systematic program assessment, and cost (appendix 1). The 2008-2009 portfolios submitted in order to meet the composition requirement were instead certified as complete, representing students' "good faith" efforts in content, length, and mechanics.<sup>1</sup>

## **Methodology**

### *A. Overview*

The committee met as a group over the course of two weeks, in order to establish a reading and evaluation program that would meet the goals of SAGES writing program assessment. Committee members followed a schedule drafted by coordinators (appendix 2). The first two

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<sup>1</sup>Approximately 1/3 of these portfolios were submitted before the implementation of the new SAGES portfolio guidelines in January, 2009, and were retroactively certified as complete.

days were spent developing and testing a rubric for accurate and efficient evaluation. Readers designed a rubric to meet the following objectives: identify strengths and weaknesses in writing instruction; establish measurable benchmarks for future reading sessions; and contribute to ongoing research in portfolio-centered writing pedagogy in use at other colleges and universities.

### *B. Rubric Generation*

In order to accomplish our goals, the committee developed a rubric for evaluation of particular essays as well as for a holistic reading of the portfolios (appendix 3). The committee decided to focus specifically on two components: the reflective essay, composed to introduce readers to portfolio contents and to provide an assessment of perceived gains in writing; and the 10-12 page research paper assignment, which is designed to demonstrate students' abilities in sustained argumentation. The first part of the rubric (addressing the reflective essay) focuses on students' perceived gains in SAGES and their process of assembly; the second part of the rubric (addressing the research paper) measures ability in argumentative writing and use of sources; and the last part of the rubric allows for a holistic evaluation of students' writing skills. Skills were identified by the committee as those in which students should be proficient by the end of their second University Seminar. The criteria were generated from both a group discussion of disciplinary writing standards and the recommended writing outcomes for SAGES seminars developed by the English Department. We spent a significant portion of the first day establishing a consistent ranking system and clarifying definitions of writing criteria for the purposes of evaluation (appendix 4).

The committee discussed whether to attempt to assess changes in each student's writing ability over time – i.e., from an essay in the First Seminar to an essay in the final University Seminar. The advantage of performing such an assessment is that it would determine the “value-added” effectiveness of the SAGES program in regard to writing ability. However, the committee concluded that it would be very difficult to accurately determine these changes, as there would likely be a substantial variation inherent in the written products due to other factors (e.g., level of interest in a topic, time constraints on the student, personal issues, unavailable materials), as well as potential problems involved in comparing different types of written products (e.g., research papers vs. personal narratives). For these reasons, the committee decided not to attempt to evaluate progress across courses at this time.

## **Results**

The committee evaluated 423 portfolios. Approximately 80% of these portfolios were “standard,” in that they included the requested materials without substitution. The evaluation of the portfolios focuses on the reflective essay, the research paper, and a holistic evaluation of the writing throughout the portfolio.

### *1. Reflective Essay*

The committee examined the reflective essay in regard to several criteria. Most importantly, the committee tallied the number of students who attributed gains in their writing ability to their SAGES courses. Also, the committee looked in these essays for substantial reflection by the student on their writing abilities, whether these reflections referred to the essays in the portfolio, and whether the students discussed why they chose their essays in assembling their portfolio. The results of the committee's examination are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of portfolio evaluation: Reflective Essay<sup>†</sup>

Criterion	% Yes	% No	% Not Present
Expressed Gains	95 (90-100)	2 (0-4)	3 (0-7)
Substantial Reflection	79 (43-96)	21	
References Essays (Extensively)	62 (31-83)	31 (11-58)	7 (1-11)
Discusses Process of Assembly	57 (16-86)	6 (1-9)	38 (6-78)

<sup>†</sup>Values in parentheses represent the range of averages obtained by each of the five evaluators.

**Expressed Gains.** It is gratifying that 95% of students indicated that they experienced gains in their writing ability, and only 2% of students reported that such gains did not occur. Gains mentioned by students were diverse. Examples include an increase in the following skills: organizing papers; citing detailed and meaningful evidence; crafting more focused arguments; writing more clearly and concisely; engaging in more frequent revision; thinking critically; writing in various styles and genres; establishing his/her own voice; critically reading other texts and his/her own work; portraying professionalism and sophistication; and utilizing other effective writing strategies. Students wrote that many of these areas were long-standing problematic concerns that they were able to improve. A few students noted success in superficial writing skills, providing statements such as: “I learned how to introduce quotations” and “I now know when to use commas.” The committee found that such comments could be interpreted in both positive and negative ways: whereas the student expressing such gains may have intended to be very concrete and to provide a very tangible example, one might also wonder why he or she did not mention something more substantive and broad about writing, or the extent to which such students equated “good writing” with mechanical correctness.

Reported gains in writing ability appeared to be related to how students characterized their pre-SAGES relationship to writing. Gains were reported by students who found themselves coming into college at all levels of writing ability. Larger gains were more likely to be mentioned by those who saw themselves as weak or reluctant writers. The reflective essays contained many accounts of students who were skeptical about the need for such a prolonged and intense writing program as SAGES, but were ultimately persuaded of its value.

Of course, such comments cannot always be taken at face value. Some students seemed to be just “going through the motions” in their reflective essays, no doubt providing only vague comments about gains in order to please the readers or engaging in what a noted portfolio scholar refers to as the “schmooze factor.” Some committee members felt that students tended to spend too much time engaged in self-promotion and this, in turn, made interpretation of gains more difficult. The 2% of students that did not report any gains often attributed this deficiency to one of two reasons: 1) the course(s) felt “remedial,” or similar to high school writing instruction, or 2) the course(s) were compromised by either poor quality of instruction or individual conflicts.

In general, the committee would have liked to have seen more detail in the reflective essays that specifically attested to gains made in writing attributable to SAGES, with one committee member desiring more detail specifically regarding gains in argumentative writing. In some cases students expressed growth only in vague rhetorical terms, such as catching the reader’s attention immediately, or finding his or her own unique “voice,” or becoming more “impassioned.” Still, one could view these gains—however vague—as an important first step in his or her development as a writer.

Students often mentioned varying expectations of their SAGES instructors. For the most part, students reported benefiting from the selective attention to different aspects of their work. Other students, however, were disconcerted by the variations in instructional style. Students

often reported that their writing difficulties were attributable partly or wholly to their lack of interest in the subject of the course.

**Reflection.** The reflective essays also demonstrated variations in students' interpretation of the prompt. Students quite often addressed areas other than writing. Many students were unable to clearly differentiate a discussion of writing from general reactions to their classes. Often, too much of these essays was devoted to discussing the subject matter of the themes written upon, or the background story of why the essay was written. In these instances, the committee speculated that part of the reason for students' failure to provide a more substantial discussion about writing gains may indicate problems in classroom instruction (learning to stay on topic and engaging in frequent self-reflection), or failure to comprehend the function of the portfolio requirement.

**Process of Assembly.** As Table 1 exhibits, the committee members interpreted this evaluation criterion in widely disparate ways; whereas one member concluded that very few students (16%) were addressing their process of assembly, another member concluded that most students were addressing it (86%). The committee's sense is that most students picked their best three essays, distributed, per the instructions, over their SAGES coursework. However, some students suggested other rationales for their choices, such as: selecting a set of essays most indicative of their development as writers; selecting essays that demonstrate both strengths and weaknesses; selecting essays that "stand out" to them for particular reasons; and selecting essays that demanded the most time and energy to produce. The committee feels that students' development occurred across the semesters, and that this objective did not bear upon which essays were selected from each course. Of the 24% of students who chose essays due to external circumstances, such as lack of appropriate assignments in the classes or missing papers, several noted that they had only one research paper that met the page and research process requirements. Many other students (38%) simply did not mention choice.

## 2. *Research Paper*

For the research paper, the committee focused mostly on the argumentative nature of the paper, and the presence and strength of the thesis. The committee also addressed the adequacy of the referencing sources for the paper, both within the text and in terms of the completeness of the citation. The results of this examination are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of Portfolio Evaluation: Research Essay<sup>†</sup>

<b>Research Essay</b>	<b>% Yes</b>	<b>% No</b>	<b>% Not Present</b>
Argument Present	66 (39-89)	34	
Strong Thesis Present	39 (24-68)	45 (28-65)	3 (0-7)
In text citations correct	75 (37-94)	25	
Works Cited - Correct	81 (46-95)	19	

<sup>†</sup>Values in parentheses represent the range of averages obtained by each of the five evaluators.

The committee judged that most of the research papers were strongly written in terms of clarity of expression, attention to secondary source material, and organization. The most prevalent weakness had to do with students' failure in these papers to demonstrate skills in argumentation. This section will focus primarily on observations dealing with this particular concern.

As shown in Table 2, only two thirds of the research papers presented an explicit argument. Note, however, that there is a very broad range in this result between the individual readers (39-89%). The fact that readers interpreted this criterion differently, which has a potentially

significant implication: if evaluators gauge this criterion differently, it can only be assumed that students, too, have been taught many different—and perhaps dissimilar—ideas about argumentation.

The committee observed that the papers lacking argument were instead exercises in narration, description, or reporting. In these papers, students demonstrated that they had learned about a subject from several sources and then restated this information in their own words, occasionally demonstrating synthesis. The committee concludes that this deficiency may be a result of lack of consistent classroom instruction in argumentative writing skills, so that many students may not fully comprehend this mode. An additional problem may be that for some instructors and students the definition of a strong thesis and argument is unclear and open to interpretation (e.g., is “Gandhi played an important role in history” a strong thesis, descriptions of his accomplishments being an argument in favor of this thesis?).

Ancillary problems often associated with the lack of argument or strong thesis are that many papers contained “fluff” or failed to demonstrate proper use of sources. Often, the fluff was filler material that was apparently included for the sole purpose of extending the report to the required page length, rather than to argue in support of a thesis. A less common problem is that some research papers were not really based on research. For example, some papers consisted of a narrative observation of a painting or a critical reading of a book. While these papers were analytical and insightful, the information comes from a very limited set of sources, and is not a product of the independent research that should be required for this assignment.

Finally, while students for the most part demonstrated a familiarity with the conventions of proper citation, their in-text source citation often appeared to be overly lax in about one quarter of the portfolios. Paraphrased material was not cited as frequently as is expected and, in these cases, students failed to differentiate their own writing from those of their sources. Additionally, one committee member remarked on the prevalence of errors in Works Cited pages when citing electronic sources and noted that often not enough information was provided.

### 3. *Holistic Evaluation*

The committee evaluated the overall portfolio quality in regard to six elements that underlie effective writing:

- (a) Style, Grace, Fluidity -- Includes facility with the sentence structures and rhetorical moves most common to academic writing; displays sophisticated prose.
- (b) Persuasive Abilities -- Includes ability to convince readers of a position by use of rhetorical appeals, structure, presentation, and, to some extent, use of appropriate evidence.
- (c) Grammar -- encompasses mechanics, spelling, and typos; consistency and clarity, included.
- (d) Organization -- Includes the "connectedness" or "trajectory" of a paper as conveyed through paragraphs and transitions.
- (e) Tone/Audience Awareness -- Includes ability to use tone appropriate to audience and assignment type and/or discipline, if applicable.
- (f) Use of Appropriate Evidence -- Includes ability to situate a debate in context and to follow up claims with appropriate evidence.

The committee also evaluated the effectiveness of the writing overall. Each of these elements,

and the overall effectiveness, were classified as:

- (a) "Above Expectation" -- equivalent to an "A," but not necessarily in the top 10%; excellent overall; very few higher order or lower order flaws.
- (b) "At Expectation" -- a broad "B"; may be in need of significant work in one area, not others; Average to slightly above-average presentation.
- (c) "Below Expectation" -- in need of significant further work in more than two or three areas; not necessarily bottom 10%.

In addition, the committee identified the top and bottom 10% of the portfolios, as well as the top and bottom 10 portfolios, based on the overall writing effectiveness.

The results of this evaluation are shown in Table 3. In regard to the overall writing effectiveness, the committee judged that about one fourth of the portfolios were "above expectation", and about one fifth were "below expectation". This result appears rigorous, as it was consistent within the committee – i.e., the results obtained by each of the five readers were within 10% of the average.

In all of the writing skills categories except style, grace, and fluidity, more than 50% of students were judged to be "at expectation," or above-average to average. Yet, 49% did achieve "at expectation" in that category. Categories indicating the largest percentage (23-24) of students coming in at "below expectation" were "persuasive abilities" and "style, grace, and fluidity," arguably the most difficult skills for students to attain and for readers to evaluate.

As mentioned, about one fifth of the portfolios were judged to be below expectation. In all of the particular skills, the range of portfolios ranking below expectation was between 12-24% and were concentrated in "higher order" critical thinking skills and style rather than in clarity/grammar and organization. Those that were particularly deficient could be characterized as sloppy, confused, immature, or colloquial. A small subset of the portfolios failed to display even basic elements of writing literacy, and was singled out for follow up letters. Only a small (but undetermined) proportion of these were non-native speakers of English.

The result that only one fifth of the portfolios were below expectation suggests that the SAGES writing curriculum meets at least a minimal standard of success. Writing instruction is usually quite effective at improving writing ability and skill. The SAGES program is convincing students across the university that writing is important and should be worked upon continuously during the college years and beyond.

The committee feels that overall there is a good quality of writing here. Some portfolios are truly superior, a real joy to read, and worthy of high praise by any standard. Students took their need to submit a portfolio very seriously, and in general, committee members were pleased with the overall care students put into their writing. Students took the opportunity to write in-depth on many interesting subjects that the SAGES seminars, in particular, permitted them to explore. It was clear to the committee that students, sometimes surprising themselves, actually delighted in the process.

Table 3. Overall Portfolio: Comparison to Expectations<sup>†</sup>

Criterion	% Above	% At	% Below
Clarity, Consistency, Grammar	33 (21-46)	50 (41-59)	17(15-22)
Persuasive Abilities	24 (21-30)	52 (29-67)	24 (2-50)
Style, Grace, Fluidity	28 (18-38)	49 (34-65)	23 (15-26)
Appropriate Evidence	26 (21-33)	56 (34-70)	18 (1-39)
Tone/Awareness of Audience	26 (11-37)	63 (51-81)	12 (6-24)
Organization, Connections, Transitions	31 (25-40)	54 (46-62)	15 (9-29)
<b>Overall Writing Effectiveness</b>	<b>26 (19-33)</b>	<b>57 (48-67)</b>	<b>17 (9-29)</b>

<sup>†</sup>Values in parentheses represent the range of averages obtained by each of the five evaluators.

## Recommendations

### A. Recommendations for Classroom Instruction

#### 1. Writing Instruction Recommendations

Based on our interpretation of the numerical data and observations during reading, the committee recommends that more attention should be paid to writing instruction addressing persuasive abilities and argumentation.

**Teaching Argument.** The committee's most significant observation with regard to the research papers concerns the prevalence of report-style rather than argumentative papers. Our conclusions regarding this issue are as follows:

First, we suggest that instructors in both First and University seminars receive additional support in terms of teaching argumentative research writing. Many of our instructors come from non-humanities disciplines, so we feel they should be offered more guidance in developing assignments and classroom exercises or in productively using Booth, Colomb, and Williams's *The Craft of Research*, the recommended writing text for University Seminars. Along these lines, we might also suggest incorporating additional instructional texts and materials (such as handouts) that differentiate modes of, and encourage more practice in, academic argumentation. Such support could take the form of additional pedagogy seminars for English/SAGES writing faculty and Writing Resource Center workshops for all instructors. More ambitious plans might involve the University Center for Innovation in Teaching and Education (UCITE) or the Center for the Study of Writing (CSW).

Second, the committee feels that some fraction of SAGES topical seminar leaders may be teaching their seminars in the same way as they teach disciplinary courses – emphasizing mastery of subject matter over a focus on more general speaking and writing skills. In other words, in topical First and University Seminars, there may be too much disciplinary and methodological instruction for its own sake, especially in science, engineering, and nursing subjects. The better approach, given the goals of SAGES, is for instructors to use their disciplinary material as a vehicle primarily to teach fungible analytical/critical skills, especially practice in presenting evidence to support an argumentative thesis. The paramount writing goal – clear, concise, persuasive argumentation – needs to be emphasized more than it currently is. In addition to providing topical seminar leaders more writing support in teaching argument, we would suggest that the instructions and policy statements given to both new and returning topical seminar leaders be reexamined to make sure that this message is communicated clearly.

**Uniformity of Expectations.** In their reflective essays, students often mentioned being disconcerted by varying expectations of their SAGES instructors. This was not such a strong



pattern, however, that it calls for alarm. For the most part, students reported benefiting from the selective attention to different aspects of their work. While continued quality control oversight by SAGES administration is recommended, more emphasis on argumentation as the primary aim might also help to align the expectations of all SAGES instructors.

## 2. Curriculum Change Recommendation

**Offering Enhanced Courses.** An additional observation made by committee members concerns remarks made by students in their reflective essays regarding the first seminar course requirement. Some students felt strongly that the course was redundant with high school, and that they were not sufficiently challenged. The committee briefly discussed options for creating an “honors” or “enhanced” section or sections of First seminar offered to students who desire additional challenge and would suggest that administrators consider this as a future possibility.

### A. Recommended Changes to Portfolio Guidelines, Procedures, and Contents

**Changing Timing of Submission.** The committee observed that a surprising number of the portfolios seem to have been submitted very late; we advocate the need for a stronger incentive to get them submitted in a timely manner. The educational value of the portfolio is seriously compromised if students are allowed to graduate prior to the opportunity to read their portfolio. In such cases the evaluation exercise is merely bureaucratic. However, a few students commented that the very lateness of their submissions (just before graduation) was actually of great benefit, since the distance of time gave them better perspective on the whole process. We suggest that the timing of the portfolios be rethought. For example, portfolios might be due by the end of the student’s third year, and we might make submission a precondition for registration for the fall semester of senior year.

**Submitting Revised or Unrevised Papers.** According to current policy, students are to assemble their portfolios by choosing three *unrevised* essays from their SAGES seminars. This instruction was not clear to a few students, who carefully revised their old essays before assembling them into the portfolio. We see advantages and disadvantages to both models, but prefer the current policy as it allows for more accurate program assessment, particularly in terms of instructional practices. (We realize, however, that this could render problematic the evaluation of the top and bottom 10% unless future evaluation committees employed more specific criteria.) Whichever policy is adopted for the future, greater clarity in student instructions would be advisable.

**Rethinking Prescribed Lengths of Research Papers.** Though most papers/portfolios use standard fonts, some do not. When this happens, prescribed page lengths are not meaningful. We suggest requiring a standard format for all SAGES courses (e.g., double-spaced 12-point Times New Roman with 1-inch margins all around). It may be preferable to adopt word guidelines as preferable to page guidelines—for then there is no motive for a student to fiddle with non-standard or large fonts to arbitrarily increase page lengths. Some committee members even advocated abolishing all word or page guidelines for the research paper submission—only stressing that the paper must treat the research topic in substantial depth. Moreover, students who are shy of the 10-page minimum often submit longer non-SAGES papers, and this somewhat weakens our ability to assess the writing program; eliminating the page minimum might resolve this difficulty.

**Identifying Exemplary Portfolios.** The committee discussed the possibility of creating a

recognition program for particularly exemplary portfolios. This could take the form of a letter of congratulations, a certificate, a keepsake, a dinner, a monetary award, or a notice in a campus publication. No one advocated returning to the impractical policy of detailed assessment of individual portfolios, in which each student receives an evaluative letter.

**Modifying Selection of Papers.** If we are not to attempt to assess the increment in a student's writing ability—and the committee is doubtful that this is a practical goal, then the sole criterion for paper selection should be writing quality across different types of papers. In other words, students should not be required to submit an essay from First Seminar. Students should be instructed simply to submit what they consider to be their three best papers from SAGES classes, including at least one longer research paper. One committee member advocated having students submit two SAGES papers and one written for a class representing their intended major in order to allow students to truly showcase what they feel is their best work; this would also encourage them to see connections between SAGES and disciplinary writing.

**Revising Submission Guidelines.** It was clear that some students did not understand the purpose of the reflective essay. We suggest that the submission guidelines be revised so as to prevent encouraging students to wax autobiographical without sufficiently discussing their writing gains and development; the guidelines could go so far as to provide a list of topics for students to avoid their essays. Though the page requirements for this essay were recently changed from 1-2 pages to 2-3 pages, we suggest being even more explicit about our expectations and reminding students that “two pages” means two full pages of prose.

## B. Recommended Procedures for Future Evaluation

The committee felt that the efforts to assemble the committee from different schools was successful, with one member remarking that “we need both experienced hands and those that have not “drunk the SAGES Kool-Aide.” As a group, we rapidly hit upon effective ways to divide the work and to discern what the information told us. We were not hampered by divergent pedagogical beliefs or disciplinary-based politics. Only a small amount of time was spent in clerical tasks, primarily due to the preliminary efforts of the SAGES staff. Our recommendations for future reading sessions are as follows:

**Continuing the Practice of Isolating Issues of Concern for Program Evaluation and Research.** Our examination of “process of assembly” may not have been an immediately obvious criteria in portfolio assessment, but will be useful as submission guidelines evolve with the new process; comments provided insight into many of our recommendations for revised procedures, and, despite some variations in readers' interpretations, are useful in terms of preliminary research into portfolio-centered writing pedagogy. Our interest in the “process of assembly” is connected to our interest in students taking “ownership” of their writing. Encouraging students to make conscious choices when presenting their work, to identify and examine their strengths and weaknesses as writers, and to engage in authentic reflection increases the chances that they will desire—and work—to improve their writing. In addition to increasing their success in other courses, mindful portfolio assembly also increases their chances of success after college as both communication and self-presentation are important skills. We would urge next year's committee to continue the practice of singling out an issue for particular examination.

**Clarify Program Assessment.** Committee members felt that the effort was somewhat

conceptually hampered by dual purpose of student evaluation and program review, and members from other disciplines than English/SAGES felt that if the relationship were better clarified – that we are assessing the program through the evaluation of student writing – then the rubric could have been made more useful.

## Report

## Portfolio Reading Schedule

*Portfolio Reading Schedule*Monday, June 15 – Workshop Day 1**10-10:30** Introductions**10:30-11: 00** Introduction to the reading process and portfolio components.**11 to noon** (and potentially through some of lunch) - Discussion of (disciplinary & SAGES) writing standards - led by Ashley & Megan.**1 - 2:30** Rubric Building**2:30 - 4:30** Rubric Testing and Reading.Tuesday, June 16 – Workshop Day 2**10 - 12:00** Debriefing from Day 1, evaluate how the rubric worksWednesday, June 17 through Monday, June 22

Reading at home – each committee member will read 80-85 portfolios during these six days

Tuesday, June 23 – Workshop Day 3**9 – 3** Group (i.e., second) reading of singled-out portfolios (those in top & bottom 10%)**3 – 4** Preliminary discussion about singled-out portfoliosWednesday, June 24 – Workshop Day 4**10 –1** Continue discussion/decisions about singled-out portfolios –**1–4** Begin group discussion/generation of report for campus community (assign certain sections to individual readers)Thursday, June 25 – Workshop Day 5**10 – 4** Continue to work on the report as a groupFriday, June 26

Co-coordinators meet to finalize report

Report

Portfolio Evaluation Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Standard Portfolio \_\_\_\_

Contains Substitutions/Variations \_\_\_\_

**Reflective Essay**

**Gains & Intertextuality**

- 1. Gains in writing skills      Y (indicates gains)      N (no gain was made)      0 (does not address gains)
- 2. Contains substantial reflection (vs. summary)      Y      N
- 3. References other essays      Y (strong discussion)      N (weak discussion)      0 (absent)
- 4. Other (please explain):

**Process of Assembly**

- 1. Indicates thoughtful choice was made:  
Y (thoughtful choice made)      N (chose given external circumstances)      0 (no mention of assembly)
- 2. Additional comments regarding assembly:

**Research Essay**

- Argument present?      Y      N
- Is there a strong thesis?      Y      N      (present, but weak)      0 (no thesis present)
- Is the Works Cited formatted correctly?      Y      N
- Is the in-text citation appropriate?      Y      N

**Holistic Evaluation**

Element	Exceeds Expectation	At Expectation	Below Expectation
Consistent, Clear, Grammatical			
Persuasive Abilities			
Style, Grace, Fluidity			
Appropriate Evidence			
Tone/Awareness of Audience			
Organization/Connections/Transitions			
<b>Overall Ranking</b>			

Is this portfolio in the top or bottom 10%?

Top \_\_\_\_

Bottom \_\_\_\_

## Report

### Ranking System and Writing Skills Criteria Definitions

#### Ranking

**Above Expectation** -- equivalent to an "A," but not necessarily in the top 10%; excellent overall; very few higher order or lower order flaws.

**At Expectation** -- a broad "B"; may be in need of significant work in one area, not others; Average to slightly above-average presentation.

**Below Expectation** -- in need of significant further work in more than two or three areas; not necessarily bottom 10%

#### Descriptions for Writing Elements

**Style, Grace, Fluidity** -- Includes facility with the sentence structures and rhetorical moves most common to academic writing; displays sophisticated prose.

**Persuasive Abilities** -- Includes ability to convince readers of a position by use of rhetorical appeals, structure, presentation, and, to some extent, use of appropriate evidence.

**Grammar** -- encompasses mechanics, spelling, and typos; consistency and clarity, included.

**Organization** -- Includes the "connectedness" or "trajectory" of a paper as conveyed through paragraphs and transitions.

**Tone/Audience Awareness** -- Includes ability to use tone appropriate to audience and assignment type and/or discipline, if applicable.

**Use of Appropriate Evidence** -- Includes ability to situate a debate in context and to follow up claims with appropriate evidence.

## Report

## Portfolio Statistics

**Portfolio Statistics**

Total Portfolios: 423  
 Standard Portfolios: 338 (80%)  
 Non-standard Portfolios: 86 (20%)

**Reflective Essay**

Noted Gains: 402 (95%)  
 Noted No Gains: 9 (2%)  
 Didn't Address Gains: 14 (3%)  
 Substantial Reflection: 334 (79%)  
 No Substantial Reflection: 88 (21%)  
 References Essays - Strong: 262 (62%)  
 References Essays - Weak: 131 (31%)  
 References Essays - Absent: 29 (7%)

**Process of Assembly**

Thoughtful Choices: 242 (57%)  
 Chose Under Circumstances: 24 (6%)  
 Didn't Mention: 161 (38%)

**Research Paper**

Argument Present: 276 (65%)  
 Argument Absent: 143 (34%)  
 Strong Thesis: 163 (39%)  
 Weak Thesis: 191 (45%)  
 No Thesis: 69 (16%)  
 Works Cited – Correct: 338 (80%)  
 Works Cited – Incorrect: 80 (19%)  
 In-text Citations - Correct: 313 (74%)  
 In-text Citations - Incorrect: 104 (25%)

**Overall**

Clarity, Consistency, Grammar  
 Exceeds Expectation: 138 (33%)  
 At Expectation: 212 (50%)  
 Below Expectation: 73 (17%)

**Persuasive Abilities**

Exceeds Expectation: 102 (24%)  
 At Expectation: 220 (52%)  
 Below Expectation: 99 (24%)

**Style, Grace, Fluidity**

Exceeds Expectation: 118 (28%)  
 At Expectation: 209 (49%)  
 Below Expectation: 96 (23%)

**Appropriate Evidence**

Exceeds Expectation: 110 (26%)  
 At Expectation: 239 (56%)  
 Below Expectation: 77 (18%)

**Tone/Awareness of Audience**

Exceeds Expectation: 109 (26%)  
 At Expectation: 265 (63%)  
 Below Expectation: 49 (12%)

**Organization, Connections, Transitions**

Exceeds Expectation: 130 (31%)  
 At Expectation: 229 (54%)  
 Below Expectation: 64 (15%)

**Overall - Portfolio**

Exceeds Expectation: 109 (26%)  
 At Expectation: 243 (57%)  
 Below Expectation: 71 (17%)

## Report

Assessment averages with reader variations (in parenthesis)

	Yes	No	Not present
Standard portfolio?	80 (76-86)	20	
Noted gains	95 (90-100)	2 (0-4)	3 (0-7)
Substantial reflection	79 (43-96)	21	
References essays	62 (31-83)	31 (11-58)	7 (1-11)
Process of assembly	57 (16-86)	6 (1-9)	38 (6-78)
Argument present	65 (39-89)	34	
Strong thesis present	39 (24-68)	45 (28-65)	16 (5-30)
Work cited correctly	81 (46-95)	19	
In text citations correct	75 (37-94)	25	
Overall Portfolio : comparison to expectations			
	Above	At	Below
Clarity, consistency, grammar	33 (21-46)	50 (41-59)	17 (15-22)
Persuasive abilities	24 (21-30)	52 (29-67)	24 (2-50)
Style, grace, fluidity	28 (18-38)	49 (34-65)	23 (15-26)
Appropriate evidence	26 (21-33)	56 (34-70)	18 (1-39)
Tone/Awareness of audience	26 (11-37)	63 (51-81)	12 (6-24)
Organization, connections, transitions	31 (25-40)	54 (46-62)	15 (9-29)
Overall Portfolio	26 (19-33)	57 (48-67)	17 (9-29)



## Report

## Individual Reader's Assessments

*Note: numbers to the right of readers' names indicate portfolios singled out in the top or bottom percentiles*

**Results for Dan Lacks (8)**

Total Portfolios: 85  
 Standard Portfolios: 63 (76%)  
 Non-standard Portfolios: 22 (27%)

**Reflective Essay**

Noted Gains: 79 (93%)  
 Noted No Gains: 3 (4%)  
 Didn't Address Gains: 2 (0.2%)  
 Substantial Reflection: 79 (93%)  
 No Substantial Reflection: 4 (5%)  
 References Essays - Strong: 66 (78%)  
 References Essays - Weak: 12 (14%)  
 References Essays - Absent: 5 (1%)

**Process of Assembly**

Thoughtful Choices: 57 (68%)  
 Chose Under Circumstances: 4 (5%)  
 Didn't Mention: 23 (27%)

**Research Paper**

Argument Present: 76 (89%)  
 Argument Absent: 8 (9%)  
 Strong Thesis: 58 (68%)  
 Weak Thesis: 24 (28%)  
 No Thesis: 4 (5%)  
 Works Cited – Correct: 39 (46%)  
 Works Cited – Incorrect: 44 (52%)  
 In-text Citations - Correct: 57 (68%)  
 In-text Citations - Incorrect: 27 (32%)

**Overall**

Clarity, Consistency, Grammar  
 Exceeds Expectation: 24 (28%)  
 At Expectation: 42 (49%)  
 Below Expectation: 19 (22%)

## Persuasive Abilities

Exceeds Expectation: 25 (%)  
 At Expectation: 56 (%)  
 Below Expectation: 2 (%)

## Style, Grace, Fluidity

Exceeds Expectation: 32 (38%)  
 At Expectation: 29 (34%)  
 Below Expectation: 13 (15%)

## Appropriate Evidence

Exceeds Expectation: 25 (29%)  
 At Expectation: 59 (70%)  
 Below Expectation: 1 (1%)

## Tone/Awareness of Audience

Exceeds Expectation: 24 (28%)  
 At Expectation: 54 (64%)  
 Below Expectation: 7 (8%)

## Organization, Connections, Transitions

Exceeds Expectation: 29 (34%)  
 At Expectation: 47 (55%)  
 Below Expectation: 8 (9%)

**Overall - Portfolio**

Exceeds Expectation: 27 (%)  
 At Expectation: 48 (%)  
 Below Expectation: 9 (%)

## Results for Ashley Seitz Kramer (7)

Total Portfolios: 79  
Standard Portfolios: 68 (86%)  
Non-standard Portfolios: 11 (13%)

### Reflective Essay

Noted Gains: 79 (100%)  
Noted No Gains: 0 (0%)  
Didn't Address Gains: 0 (0%)  
Substantial Reflection: 76 (96%)  
No Substantial Reflection: 3 (4%)  
References Essays - Strong: 65 (83%)  
References Essays - Weak: 9 (11%)  
References Essays - Absent: 4 (5%)

### Process of Assembly

Thoughtful Choices: 66 (84%)  
Chose Under Circumstances: 1 (1%)  
Didn't Mention: 13 (16%)

### Research Paper

Argument Present: 56 (71%)  
Argument Absent: 22 (28%)  
Strong Thesis: 29 (37%)  
Weak Thesis: 35 (44%)  
No Thesis: 15 (19%)  
Works Cited – Correct: 75 (95%)  
Works Cited – Incorrect: 4 (5%)  
In-text Citations - Correct: 74 (94%)  
In-text Citations - Incorrect: 4 (5%)

### Overall

Clarity, Consistency, Grammar  
Exceeds Expectation: 36 (46%)  
At Expectation: 32 (41%)  
Below Expectation: 14 (22%)

Persuasive Abilities  
Exceeds Expectation: 20 (25%)  
At Expectation: 47 (59%)  
Below Expectation: 12 (15%)

Style, Grace, Fluidity  
Exceeds Expectation: 29 (37%)  
At Expectation: 38 (48%)  
Below Expectation: 13 (17%)

Appropriate Evidence  
Exceeds Expectation: 19 (24%)  
At Expectation: 58 (73%)  
Below Expectation: 2 (3%)

Tone/Awareness of Audience  
Exceeds Expectation: 9 (11%)  
At Expectation: 65 (81%)  
Below Expectation: 5 (6%)

Organization, Connections, Transitions  
Exceeds Expectation: 22 (28%)  
At Expectation: 49 (62%)  
Below Expectation: 8 (10%)

**Overall - Portfolio**  
Exceeds Expectation: 19 (24%)  
At Expectation: 53 (67%)  
Below Expectation: 8 (10%)

## Results for Megan Jewell (7)

Total Portfolios: 89  
Standard Portfolios: 70 (79%)  
Non-standard Portfolios: 19 (21%)

### Reflective Essay

Noted Gains: 88 (99%)  
Noted No Gains: 1 (1%)  
Didn't Address Gains: 0 (0%)  
Substantial Reflection: 74 (83%)  
No Substantial Reflection: 15 (17%)  
References Essays - Strong: 42 (47%)  
References Essays - Weak: 38 (43%)  
References Essays - Absent: 9 (10%)

### Process of Assembly

Thoughtful Choices: 27 (30%)  
Chose Under Circumstances: 7 (8%)  
Didn't Mention: 57 (64%)

### Research Paper

Argument Present: 50 (56%)  
Argument Absent: 37 (46%)  
Strong Thesis: 23 (26%)  
Weak Thesis: 39 (44%)  
No Thesis: 27 (30%)  
Works Cited – Correct: 82 (92%)  
Works Cited – Incorrect: 6 (7%)  
In-text Citations - Correct: 73 (82%)  
In-text Citations - Incorrect: 15 (17%)

## Overall

Clarity, Consistency, Grammar  
Exceeds Expectation: 32 (36%)  
At Expectation: 44 (50%)  
Below Expectation: 13 (15%)

### Persuasive Abilities

Exceeds Expectation: 19 (21%)  
At Expectation: 53 (60%)  
Below Expectation: 17 (19%)

### Style, Grace, Fluidity

Exceeds Expectation: 16 (18%)  
At Expectation: 52 (58%)  
Below Expectation: 21 (24%)

### Appropriate Evidence

Exceeds Expectation: 29 (33%)  
At Expectation: 48 (54%)  
Below Expectation: 12 (13%)

### Tone/Awareness of Audience

Exceeds Expectation: 33 (37%)  
At Expectation: 45 (51%)  
Below Expectation: 11 (12%)

### Organization, Connections, Transitions

Exceeds Expectation: 36 (40%)  
At Expectation: 41 (46%)  
Below Expectation: 12 (13%)

## Overall - Portfolio

Exceeds Expectation: 29 (33%)  
At Expectation: 47 (53%)  
Below Expectation: 13 (15%)

## Results for Alan Rocke (10)

Total Portfolios: 90  
Standard Portfolios: 71 (79%)  
Non-standard Portfolios: 19 (21%)

### Reflective Essay

Noted Gains: 81 (90%)  
Noted No Gains: 3 (3%)  
Didn't Address Gains: 6 (7%)  
Substantial Reflection: 70 (78%)  
No Substantial Reflection: 20 (22%)  
References Essays - Strong: 64 (71%)  
References Essays - Weak: 26 (29%)  
References Essays - Absent: 2 (2%)

### Process of Assembly

Thoughtful Choices: 77 (86%)  
Chose Under Circumstances: 8 (9%)  
Didn't Mention: 5 (6%)

### Research Paper

Argument Present: 63 (70%)  
Argument Absent: 27 (30%)  
Strong Thesis: 34 (38%)  
Weak Thesis: 41 (46%)  
No Thesis: 14 (16%)  
Works Cited – Correct: 80 (89%)  
Works Cited – Incorrect: 10 (11%)  
In-text Citations - Correct: 33 (37%)  
In-text Citations - Incorrect: 27 (30%)

## Overall

Clarity, Consistency, Grammar  
Exceeds Expectation: 29 (32%)  
At Expectation: 47 (52%)  
Below Expectation: 14 (16%)

### Persuasive Abilities

Exceeds Expectation: 21 (23%)  
At Expectation: 41 (46%)  
Below Expectation: 28 (31%)

### Style, Grace, Fluidity

Exceeds Expectation: 27 (30%)  
At Expectation: 43 (48%)  
Below Expectation: 20 (22%)

### Appropriate Evidence

Exceeds Expectation: 20 (22%)  
At Expectation: 40 (34%)  
Below Expectation: 31 (34%)

### Tone/Awareness of Audience

Exceeds Expectation: 24 (27%)  
At Expectation: 59 (66%)  
Below Expectation: 7 (8%)

### Organization, Connections, Transitions

Exceeds Expectation: 23 (26%)  
At Expectation: 55 (61%)  
Below Expectation: 13 (14%)

## Overall - Portfolio

Exceeds Expectation: 19 (21%)  
At Expectation: 53 (59%)  
Below Expectation: 18 (20%)

## Results for Tim Fogarty (15)

Total Portfolios: 80  
Standard Portfolios: 68 (85%)  
Non-standard Portfolios: 12 (15%)

### Reflective Essay

Noted Gains: 75 (94%)  
Noted No Gains: 2 (3%)  
Didn't Address Gains: 3 (4%)  
Substantial Reflection: 34 (43%)  
No Substantial Reflection: 46 (58%)  
References Essays - Strong: 25 (31%)  
References Essays - Weak: 46 (58%)  
References Essays - Absent: 9 (11%)

### Process of Assembly

Thoughtful Choices: 13 (16%)  
Chose Under Circumstances: 4 (1%)  
Didn't Mention: 63 (78%)

### Research Paper

Argument Present: 31 (39%)  
Argument Absent: 49 (61%)  
Strong Thesis: 19 (24%)  
Weak Thesis: 52 (65%)  
No Thesis: 9 (11%)  
Works Cited – Correct: 62 (78%)  
Works Cited – Incorrect: 18 (23%)  
In-text Citations - Correct: 46 (58%)  
In-text Citations - Incorrect: 32 (40%)

### Overall

Clarity, Consistency, Grammar  
Exceeds Expectation: 17 (21%)  
At Expectation: 47 (59%)  
Below Expectation: 16 (20%)

Persuasive Abilities  
Exceeds Expectation: 17 (21%)  
At Expectation: 23 (29%)  
Below Expectation: 40 (50%)

Style, Grace, Fluidity  
Exceeds Expectation: 14 (18%)  
At Expectation: 52 (65%)  
Below Expectation: 21 (26%)

Appropriate Evidence  
Exceeds Expectation: 17 (21%)  
At Expectation: 34 (43%)  
Below Expectation: 31 (39%)

Tone/Awareness of Audience  
Exceeds Expectation: 19 (24%)  
At Expectation: 42 (53%)  
Below Expectation: 19 (24%)

Organization, Connections, Transitions  
Exceeds Expectation: 20 (25%)  
At Expectation: 37 (46%)  
Below Expectation: 23 (29%)

**Overall - Portfolio**  
Exceeds Expectation: 15 (19%)  
At Expectation: 42 (53%)  
Below Expectation: 23 (2%)

**E Appendix: SAGES Staffing Summary (by Peter Whiting)**

## STAFFING OF SAGES

The seminar leaders of First and University include:

- University Undergraduate Faculty (UUF)

- Part-time and full time lecturers (appointed by schools and departments/not SAGES)

- Full-time lecturers selected by SAGES or English to teach SAGES seminars

- Professional School Faculty

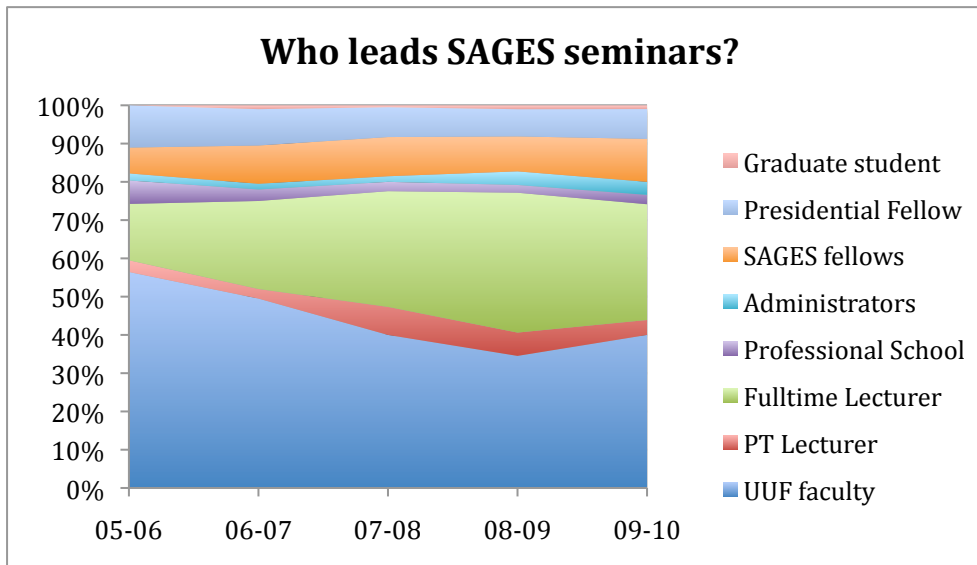
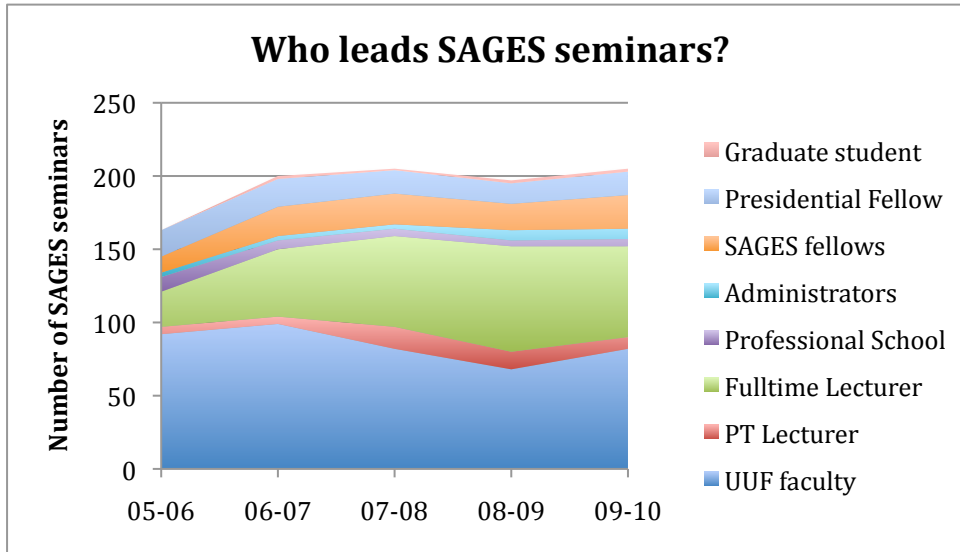
- Administrators

- SAGES Fellows (part-time positions for individuals with an academic background)

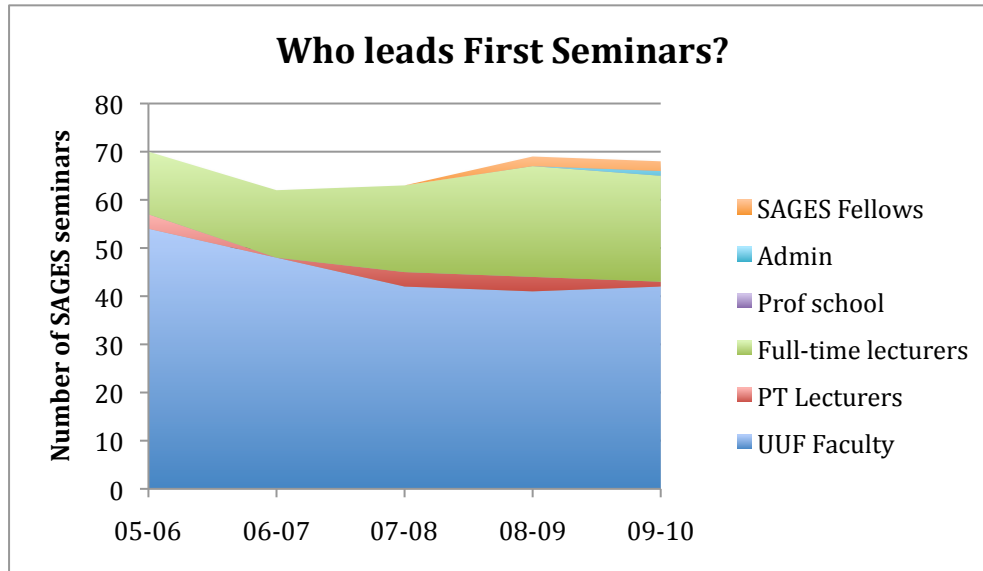
- Presidential Fellows (part-time positions for distinguished and accomplished individuals)

- Graduate students from English

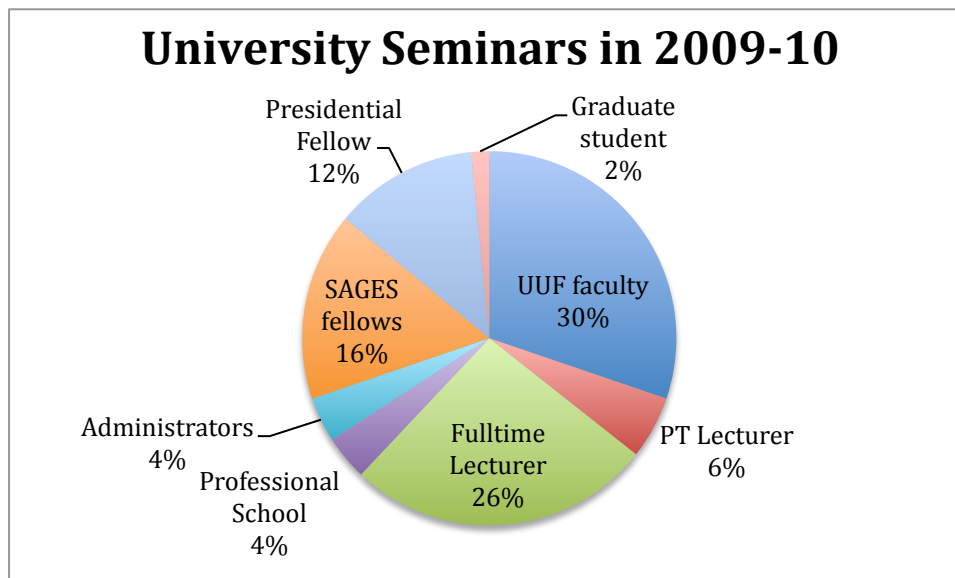
The two figures below give the number and percentage of each type of seminar leader (First and University Seminar) since the beginning of full implementation of SAGES.



For First Seminar, almost all (>95%) seminar leaders are either UUF faculty or full-time SAGES Fellows selected by SAGES or the English Department. Because of the advising role associated with First Seminar, I strive to make sure that almost all First Seminar leaders are tenure-track faculty, instructors, or if a lecturer, are full-time and have been at CWRU for a year and are familiar with SAGES and the institution.



The staffing of University Seminars is more varied and a smaller percentage are UUF faculty than First Seminar. Roughly 66% of First Seminars are led by UUF faculty and 30% of University Seminars are led by UUF faculty.



The history of University Seminar staffing is given below.



## Evaluation of different categories of University Seminar leaders.

Faculty Type	Number	Average 1-13	1 Read	2 Write	3 Oral	4 Discuss	5 Comm w faculty	6 Locate resources	7 Evaluate resources	8 Research Univ	9 Ethical	10 Cultural	11 Connected	12 Recommend SAGES	13 Recommend class
Grad Student	3	4.8	5.53	5.69	3.82	5.65	5.19	5.16	4.7	3.76	3.99	4.55	4.61	4.07	5.71
Fellows FT	70	4.33	4.32	4.59	4.2	4.87	4.71	4.49	4.35	3.74	3.81	4.23	4.29	3.54	5.21
<i>SAGES</i>	50	4.36	4.35	4.61	4.16	4.92	4.73	4.53	4.39	3.72	3.78	4.36	4.30	3.59	5.24
<i>ENGLISH</i>	20	4.27	4.23	4.51	4.28	4.77	4.66	4.40	4.27	3.80	3.89	3.89	4.27	3.42	5.14
Pres Fellows	30	4.32	4.19	4.45	4.19	4.8	4.59	4.45	4.26	3.65	3.9	4.34	4.37	3.64	5.31
UUF	40	4.26	4.19	4.4	4.35	4.7	4.58	4.34	4.26	3.96	3.79	3.91	4.36	3.46	5.11
SAGES Fellows PT	30	4.24	3.91	4.29	4.02	4.83	4.49	4.40	4.23	3.76	3.85	4.42	4.48	3.47	5.01
Prof School	9	4.21	3.89	4.47	4.27	4.79	4.48	3.74	3.68	3.63	4.35	3.94	4.43	3.55	5.47
Admin	8	4.13	3.82	4.27	4.47	4.54	4.5	3.63	3.56	3.81	3.99	3.76	4.34	3.56	5.41
Lecturers*	20	4.01	3.8	4.28	4.44	4.31	4.2	4.38	4.1	3.67	3.45	3.78	4.1	3.12	4.46

The data are from the SAGES evaluation handed out in class. Return rates are very high – 70-80 percent of students respond. Students respond to questions 1-13 on a Likert scale with 1 being “Not at all” and 7 being “A lot”. The questions are listed below:

- 1) My participation improved my ability to read critically
- 2) My participation improved my ability to write.
- 3) My participation improved my ability to produce and deliver oral presentations.
- 4) My participation improved my ability to engage in critical discussion with my peers.
- 5) My participation improved my ability to communicate with faculty.
- 6) My participation improved my ability to identify and locate library and internet resources.
- 7) My participation improved my ability to critically evaluate library and internet resources.
- 8) My participation improved my understanding of a research university.
- 9) My participation improved my understanding of ethical decision making.
- 10) My participation improved my appreciation of cultural diversity.
- 11) I feel connected to my University Seminar classmates
- 12) I would recommend SAGES to prospective students.
- 13) I would recommend this course to other students.

The University Seminars led by full-time SAGES Fellows are the most highly evaluated by students with the exception of the small number of seminars led by graduate students. I attribute part of the SAGES Fellows strong showing to teaching being their primary responsibility and to their preparation. Most of the Fellows have a background in writing and this probably translates to strong writing instruction. At the bottom of the evaluations are the lecturers hired into departments and schools and assigned SAGES teaching. SAGES has no say in the assignment of these instructors. The seminars offered by part-time SAGES Fellows and Presidential Fellows are relatively well evaluated by students.

## **F Appendix: Minority Report**

# **Ad Hoc SAGES Review Committee Final Report (Minority Position) DRAFT (Amdended 16 March, 2010)**

SAGES is the GRANDEST adventure this university has embarked on since Federation. As with all grand adventures, discoveries are made and speed-bumps encountered. What we do with our discoveries and how we respond when we encounter disappointment becomes the tests of our metal. Both the majority and minority contingents of the *ad hoc* Review Committee agree that the trip should be continued.

Where the majority and minority positions diverge is on what pathway to take NOW. The **majority** holds that the current unrest/disappointment with SAGES may not be as sever as many perceive it to be, problems can be managed by tinkering with the existing structure. The **minority** position is that SAGES is in a crisis situation (opening and an opportunity not to be wasted); SAGES could become a very powerful learning experience for CWRU students. The **minority** position also holds that major changes need to be made to the SAGES program OR phase out strategies need to be developed before the University becomes damaged by negative perceptions of SAGES.

## **Speed-Bumps:**

- Too many faculty from the tenured/tenure-track ranks feel that teaching a SAGES course is an impediment to their professional practice of teaching and research and some feel that they have lost the lottery when they are required to take on a SAGES course: and they don't seem to mind telling their students just that. If we are going to call ourselves A Research Engine of the Nation, we must seriously think about the consequences of forcing activities on our current tenured/tenured-track faculty that would take them away from furthering their professional development.
- SAGES courses are very different from lecture courses. Most tenured/tenure-track faculty have extensive experience with lecturing, but SAGES requires listening and steering skills rather than entertainment skills and a seminar environment challenges the control tolerance of the instructor. It is not to say that folks accustomed to lectures cannot learn to be sound seminar leaders, but it may not be the best use of their time when it takes them they away from activities they were hired to perform, also forcing them into SAGES is not considered wise in this time of intense research competition; it is too easy to lose a competitive position.
- Too many students view their SAGES experience in a negative light. In other words, it would be dangerous for the University to allow a journalist, or parent of a prospective student, to ask a random student their impression of SAGES.

## **Discoveries:**

- The SAGES workers, instructors drawn from outside the tenured/tenured-track

- ranks, project an air of enthusiasm about their role in SAGES and, from most accounts; their students view them in a positive light.
- In many ways the SAGES workers are like intenerate workers, they are on time limited contract, draw a salary for teaching six courses per academic year for which they are paid roughly half of the salary of the entry level tenure-track faculty, they are looking for another job and have their résumés in circulation.
  - SAGES workers hardly know one another.
  - There is little or no effort, put forth by the University, into the professional development of the SAGES workers.
  - There is no organized forum for SAGES instructors to communicate student progress, from one course to another, nor course experiences at the end of or during the semester.
  - There is no forum for SAGES workers to shape the destiny of the SAGES program or their own professional development within the University.
  - There is no effort to develop a thread of continuity between successive SAGES courses.
  - The staffing side of SAGES is basically a czar and the workers, which was necessary to get SAGES off the ground and running. However, is that the administrative structure that will propel SAGES into a world-class experience for our students?
  - Oversight of the SAGES program, if you follow the money, does not follow the usual academic pathway, through a Dean or School. The money comes from Central Administration. This organization presents problems for conflict management.
  - There is a perception that TOO many faculty, across the whole campus are resisting responsibilities for student advising; this attitude must not be tolerated by the Provost or President ---- period. First semester student advising and SAGES instructors should be tightly coupled because no one is in a better position to be on the lookout for issues, that left unresolved, could lead to a student dropping out. Student retention is important to all parties at CWRU and waiting until mid-semester to address issues, related to inflated sense of academic capability and subsurface personal issues brought from home, is too late.

### **Recommendations:**

- Constitute the administration of the SAGES program into one that is consistent with other educational entities where oversight responsibilities clearly fall under an academic school and dean.
- Involve the SAGES workers in the design, implementation, and administration of the SAGES curriculum. These people are a tremendous resource, they are only partially utilized, to *pick grapes*. Also, they now have acquired a lot of

- knowledge about picking grapes that can be passed on to others.
- Create an atmosphere where the SAGES workers feel they have a future through this experience rather than an experience that is merely a holding station in their professional journey. Down the line, they may chose to go elsewhere but they should leave with a positive feeling for their experience at CWRU.
  - Create a professional ladder for the SAGES workers to aspire to and work to climb.
  - Create an atmosphere where the SAGES workers can feel they belong and are an important part of the Case Western Reserve University community.
  - Develop a staffing plan for the course offerings that depends on the SAGES workers and relieves the current tenure/tenured-track faculty of forced inscription. The plan should be developed by the SAGES workers to maximize the likelihood of their buy-in.
  - Develop a clearly defined set of goals for the entire SAGES program. The SAGES workers should carry this out and their proposed set of goals must be approved by an authorized academic body or bodies, e.g. school, .. Faculty Senate.
  - Develop SAGES with the intent of making the five-course sequence an **unprecedented educational experience**: an experience that the entire university community can be proud of.
  - Find a new word for the SAGES worker, one that bestows respect and an accurate portrayal of the importance of their role in the CWRU community. After all, these people see ALL our undergraduates in five courses over four years, a claim that few of our current departments can come close to making.
  - First semester advising and SAGES should remain strongly coupled. Further, if a student perceives they are receiving poor advising they should be encouraged to meet with the Dean of their school and that Dean must meet with the advisor to determine if there is just cause of the student's perception; the Dean should report back to the student on his or her findings. All individuals holding academic appointments, including SAGES workers, must understand that they have a responsibility to advise students in a responsible manner, this is part of the job.

### **SAGES Goals:**

SAGES, Seminar Approach to General Education and Scholarship, is a five-course sequence required of all CWRU undergraduates. This proposal was designed to address the following internal considerations:

- The weak buy-in by tenured/tenure-track faculty and students and nurture a culture of SAGES among constituents of the University.
- Allow SAGES courses to count as major/minor courses. This can promote the penetration of the SAGES concept into traditional departmental listings.
- Provide an unprecedented opportunity to improve the students' *process* skills,

which are not acquired in a single exposure but require practice, practice, practice. These skills are:

- 1) Critical thinking (using writing to explore their thinking),
- 2) Persuasive communication (written and oral), and
- 3) Improve the cultural integration skills of the student (how do I live and work with someone whose beliefs are different from mine). Peer review is an active component in each of these elements.

The following external considerations were influential in the proposed formulation:

- Students with **WELL DEVELOPED** critical thinking, persuasive communication and cultural integration skills, along with teamwork skills, will have a competitive edge in the market place upon graduation.
- A classroom experience that leaves the student with the sense they had a unique and valuable experience will be a defining feature of the educational institution that thrives in the next decades.

All SAGES courses are presented in a seminar format and have a *process* component and a *content* component. Generally speaking, the *content* component will focus on the acquisition of new knowledge and is the responsibility of qualified parties outside of SAGES. The primary focus of the *process* component is on skill development in communication and logical thinking and is the responsibility of the SAGES instructor.

Course ONE:

- Assimilation of skills required for active participation in a seminar (SAGES Instructor).
- *Process* skills applied to the *content* (SAGES Instructor).
- *Content*: New knowledge with emphasis on THINKING (“you don’t know what you think until you write it”), includes exploration of CWRU environment (SAGES Instructor).

Courses TWO and THREE: Note, if the *content* meets the departmental requirements these SAGES format courses may be counted toward the student’s major/minor sequence.

- *Process* skills used and extended while being applied to the *content* (SAGES Instructor).
- *Content*: New knowledge (Instructor outside of SAGES).

Course FOUR:

- *Process* skills used and extended while being applied to the *content* (SAGES Instructor).
- *Content*: Ethical decision-making in the profession (Instructors drawn from the faculty in the student’s major.)

Course FIVE: Capstone Experience. Note, the previous four courses are expected to have prepared the student to undertake this fifth course.

- *Process* skills used and extended while being applied to the *content* (Working as a team, the students demonstrate their assimilation of SAGES *process* skills by

- creating their Capstone experience, with oversight by SAGES Instructor).
- *Content* (Working as a team, the students demonstrate their mastery of knowledge in their major by realizing a Capstone experience that is consistent with the expectations of the faculty in the student's major, with oversight by faculty from the student's major.)

**Considerations:**

- Implementation of the recommendations and goals should be done in a way to insure that the SAGES program is self-supporting, e.g. the program brings in the amount of money that is required to run it.
- Staffing SAGES must have flexibility to accommodate changing enrollments.
- Implementation of the recommendations and goals will have financial implications on existing departments; most likely the hardest hit will be English. Changes must be buffered by direct involvement of the Administration. This should be seen as the only place new monies are needed and they are temporary.
- SAGES, an **unprecedented educational experience**, should be sellable by the Administration to a donor who wants to be involved in the GRANDEST adventure this university has embarked on since Federation.