Prepared by: Greg Turner

What are the strengths of your area?: One of our strengths is being the largest academic “unit” in the COS District. We have 23 full-time and about 30 adjunct instructors in our area. This is a large group that represents a rich diversity of approaches to the teaching of writing with faculty holding degrees in British or American Literature, Composition Theory, Creative Writing, among other specialties. This diversity of background means that we collide with difference regularly, which helps sharpen intellectual rigor and ensures that we bring a healthy variety of teaching methods and cultural perspectives to the classes we offer. For example, we typically offer 45 or more sections of English 1 each semester, but these classes all have a distinct personality: while sharing a common course outline and course outcomes, the readings, writing assignments, and foci of class investigation vary greatly from class to class. We have several opportunities every semester to meet as a department to participate in group assessments, exchange ideas about teaching writing, and so on. We find a creative tension in our variety, even when we don’t always agree. We’re willing to learn from each other and we often find that we grow as instructors from our contact with our colleagues. Because of our size, we are able to offer a full spectrum of writing classes (from basic skills to college composition) on the three campuses of College of the Sequoias as well as in several area high schools.

Writing Center: The Writing Center is one of the strengths of our unit. Across the board, students enrolled in English composition classes who make use of the Writing Center succeed at higher rates than students who do not. For students, time spent in the Writing Center correlates with significantly stronger grades in English composition classes and better retention. Analysis of the data we have collected consistently shows statistically significant differences in both success and completion rates in English 360, 251, and 1 (see addenda: “Writing Center Effectiveness Data, Spring 2014” and “Writing Center Success Data Cumulative 2007 - 2014”).

Accelerated Pathway for Basic Skills students:
One of our unit’s strengths is how we have engaged with and adopted an Accelerated pedagogy, ultimately writing a new, Accelerated English course, English 261. To help accomplish District Objective #6, last November faculty in our English unit attended and helped organize a regional training on Accelerated pedagogy in Clovis, CA. There, alongside faculty from colleges throughout the Central Valley, we examined the completion rates of our students in our programs. Using data from the Basic Skills Cohort Tracker, we discovered that in 5.5 years (Fall 2008 – Spring 2014) only ~19% of Basic Skills students ever complete the full three semesters of English (English 360, 251, and 1) (see addendum: “Cohort Tracker 1”). This low completion, in part, translates to a lower completion at the college level: unprepared students (those placed below transfer level) are ~30% less likely to earn a degree, certificate, or to transfer (see addendum: “2014 COS Student Success Scorecard”). After that November training, and in response to our District Objective and this completion gap, our unit wrote English 261 to start an alternative pathway for Basic Skills students. In the near future, Basic Skills students who feel that they are ready will be able to enroll in English 261, and those who succeed will be able to enroll in English 1, accelerating their progress through the English sequence. This course will be reviewed by the District Curriculum Committee this fall, and the course should be available for students in Fall 2015.

COS / High School Pathway Program:
For the past 3 years, English has offered college classes (alternating English 251 and English 1) in the community of Corcoran for students of Corcoran High School. This year (2014/15) we have expanded this program to several other area high school districts and are partnering with high schools in Orosi, Woodlake, Hanford, and Tulare to offer COS English classes for their students. By taking both English 251 and 1 before they graduate from high school, students will be on an accelerated pathway to their college degree goals.

What improvements are needed?: Faculty. As large as our group of English faculty is, it is not large enough to meet the demands for more and more English classes across all three campuses of COS. We currently have 10 unstaffed English classes for the Spring 2015 semester that are in danger of being cancelled. Moreover, we are being asked to add additional sections of English to the spring schedule in order to increase the overall District FTES. We will not be able to accommodate this request. Over the past 2 years, we have had to cancel 6 fully-enrolled classes for lack of instructors. We need to increase the number of our full-time teaching faculty in order to meet the demands of the District.

A District Funded Writing Center:
To meet student need, to support parts two and three of the college’s Mission Statement, and to help accomplish District Objective 1, the improvement we seek is increased base funding to maintain Writing Center services at the Visalia campus, to cover the cost of student tutors and Writing Center coordination across three campuses, and to substantively expand to our sister campuses in Hanford and Tulare.

Accelerated Pathway for Basic Skills Students:
In order to address our District Objectives, we will need District support to offer a section of English 261 in Fall 2015. As part of the English 261 course, students will also enroll in its corequisite, a linked English 405 section, and, in order to support Basic Skills students in this accelerated pathway, English 261 utilizes the practices of embedded tutors, following the Augmented Instruction model employed by the FYE program. Thus, the improvement we seek are the necessary funds for an AI tutor, 1 section of English 261, and 1 section of English 405 so that we may open up our accelerated pathway for students. As well, while faculty support student success, we also need greater access to professional learning funds to support the faculty engaged in this endeavor.

**Describe any external opportunities or challenges:**

A. External challenge and opportunity to Add Additional Sections of English:

A push to increase our class offerings in order to generate more FTES for the District is currently coming from Academic Services. Yet we do not have sufficient staff to cover the classes that are currently scheduled for the spring 2015 semester.

B. External challenge and opportunity to increase student success and provide equitable Writing Center services:

1. **External Mandate:** The District is mandated by accreditation to provide equitable services to all campuses (and online support) under the show cause report II.B.3.a., Recommendation 5. The District's Action plans for this recommendation are, in part, found in action plan nine, which states, "Using the program review and resource allocation processes, the superintendent/president will ensure that resource allocation decisions about student support services are based on data, and that special attention is given to ensuring that students have equitable access to services at all District locations and means of delivery.” This external mandate on the District, and the resulting action plan, results in a mandate on the English department to provide equitable Writing Center (including online) services to all three campuses. The English Department will need additional resources in order to comply with this mandate.

2. **District Objective:** District Objective 1 sets out that our campuses will "provide effective academic support services as measured by an increase in the rate at which students successfully complete courses.” While success rates of Writing Center users have been substantially higher in English classes than those of their non-user peers over the past six years, success rates on our Visalia campus now are at risk due to lack of funding. While Essential Learning Initiative funds have provided nearly half of the Writing Center’s budget heretofore, starting in the academic year 2015-16, the district-funded Visalia Writing Center budget (without any ELI monies) is 44% lower than current operating costs necessitate. If we run the Visalia Writing Center at only 56% efficiency, can we expect the same kinds of strong success that the district has lauded for the past six years? No; in fact, our students at the Visalia campus will see a precipitous drop in services due to the district budget reduction, so even maintenance of past success rates seems dubious, not to mention the Writing Center’s inability to assist in increasing student success while trying to juggle fewer tutors, no coordination, less staffing, and many fewer open hours. The ability to provide equitable services is simply not possible without an adequate budget. In fact, it is unclear how the Visalia Writing Center will operate without full funding for tutors and faculty coordination. And without faculty coordination (among other critical components), is it unclear that the fledgling Hanford and Tulare campuses can move forward with any meaningful student writing assistance. Full funding and thoughtful expansion can provide an opportunity to bring equity of services to the three campuses and to increase student success and retention rates across the district. A budget increase is necessary to do the important work of helping students learn what they need to successfully write across all their courses.

3. **Budget Shortfall:** Since 2009-2010 the budget to operate the Visalia Writing Center has been approximately $157,000. Heretofore, the District has funded approximately $83,000 of this cost and ELI has funded the remaining approximately $75,000. Beginning in 2015, ELI is no longer able to continue its support of the Writing Center, and so, if this student service is to continue, the District has the responsibility to fund it. Scheduled to start in 2015, the District has increased its contribution to fund the Visalia Writing Center from approximately $83,000 to $89,000—producing an unfunded liability of approximately $69,000. Not only is the shortfall substantial, but the areas ELI has traditionally funded are critical to the Center’s success: Tutorial coverage, faculty coordination, and staffing. While the increase of the District’s contribution from $83,000 to $89,000 for the Visalia Writing Center will offset 8% of what ELI partnered with the District to offer students, without the other 92% of that ELI contribution, the Visalia Writing Center will obviously suffer. The District has made available approximately $13,000 to offer limited services to the Hanford and Tulare campuses. However, another way to see this overall budget shortfall the District will incur in the three-campus Writing Centers is this: Currently it costs $156,296 to run the Visalia Writing Center alone; the District has funded $101,865 with the requirement that three campuses be served using only 2/3 of what it costs to run one campus center.

C. **Challenges and an Opportunity to implementing Accelerated Pathway for Basic Skills Students:**

1. **External Mandate:** Because this particular course addresses District Objective #6 to “Accelerate the schedule for offering the basic skills sequence in English or mathematics,” there is external pressure to have this course available soon so that the District can meet its goals. This pressure has helped accelerate the timetable for this course, and this pressure has created an imminent need for support in expanded course offerings, more English faculty, more AI tutors, and greater access to professional learning so that the Accelerated English course can effectively meet the needs of our students.

2. **Advisories and Prerequisites:** Over the past few years, English 251 has become the preparation advisory or prerequisite for hundreds of other courses outside the English offerings (see Catalog). As we have been developing English 261, we have encountered resistance in articulating English 261 as an equivalent prerequisite for those other courses. In the English unit, the change is a simple adjustment of the Course Outline for English 1. However, this presents a huge external challenge because changing hundreds of those courses and sharing the justification with all the necessary units and divisions is daunting. Students who complete English 261 will have met the same outcomes as a 251 student, but as of right now, they will not have met the prerequisite for those other courses—many of which are necessary for degrees, certificates, and/or transfer.

3. **Deficit-model Thinking:** As we have pursued this new pathway for Basic Skills students, often the first objection is that Basic Skills students are not capable of performing rigorous tasks and succeeding, at least not without losing rigor. However, relatively recent composition theory and research demonstrate the opposite. Unfortunately, the deficit line of thought—that students need to have knowledge planted in them through extensive remediation—persists throughout the institution. This hegemonic mindset has made it challenging to implement this alternative pathway for Basic Skills students.
Overall Outcome Achievement: Program assessments: We completed our initial assessment of the 2 programs housed within this academic unit, the English Transfer Model Curriculum (TMC) AA degree and the Writing Consultancy Certificate in English. We were able to assess the internal consistency of both programs by mapping the course outcomes to the program outcomes. We were satisfied by the results of this mapping—and the process called our attention to a few aspects of these programs that we would have otherwise missed.

Course assessments: The results of course outcome assessment from all English courses is fairly consistent with our expectations. As any discipline, we would like to increase the rate at which students meet outcomes in all courses. We do see higher rates of outcome achievement in the specialty lit and creative writing courses, which we attribute to the high levels of motivation that English majors and potential English majors bring to these classes. One bright spot in our course assessments is the continuing success of our English 400 course, English Supplemental Learning Assistance (in other words, tutorial help in the Writing Center). As you see elsewhere in our Program Review (and as you see in our TracDat course assessment results), assistance of the Writing Center consistently results in success rates in English classes that are substantially higher.

Changes based on outcome Programs:

For the English AA degree, we articulated several “improvements” to be carried out in 2014/15: explore ramifications of using English 4 as either an advisory or a pre-requisite for other literature courses, identify and track English majors so that we can devise mentoring relationships, track their progress after transfer, and solicit their input via questionnaires to help us assess the program in the future. For the Writing Consultancy Certificate in English, we discovered through the mapping assessment that a few of the courses that had been included in our program did not map well, so we deleted them from the program.

Courses:

While we have been assessing outcomes department-wide since the 1990’s, we have just begun the process of incorporating changes based on our assessments. In the past, it was purely left up to individual instructors to make changes—or not—as a result of our assessments and discussions of results. In the past year that we have been identifying larger changes, we have primarily focused on the outcomes themselves. In almost all courses that were assessed, we realized that the biggest issue with our assessments lay within the very large and detailed outcomes we had created years before. As a result, we have been revising course outcomes to be more universally understood and easier to assess. So far, we have revised and adopted new course outcomes for English 4 and all specialty lit courses, and we have an ad hoc work group that is working on revising outcomes for our sequence of composition courses (English 360, 251, 1, & 2). Once we have outcomes that work well for assessment, we will focus more on using the assessment results to incorporate specific changes to instruction that will meet deficiencies indicated by the assessment results.

Outcome cycle evaluation: Programs:

We established a three-year cycle for assessing Program Outcomes. Both programs have been assessed, and will be next assessed in 2015/16.

Courses:

Every course is scheduled for assessment on an established 3-year cycle. We have created a web page to help track all stages of our cycles for every course and program in the division (http://cosenglish.org/assessment.html). Because student-demand for our specialty literature courses (English 10, 15, 16, 18, 19, 30, 31, 44, 45, and 46) is limited, we offer them on a staggered rotation of once every three years. Therefore, each time these courses are offered, they are assessed by the instructor of record. These instructors design their own plan to assess each outcome, or they follow a department-created rubric for assessment. All other courses have a three-year cycle for a comprehensive assessment, where the department meets once at midterm (during the dialogue day) and once at the end-of-term to assess and discuss. The department as a whole reviews these assessments during the following semester’s convocation meeting. These comprehensive assessments begin with a task force of instructors who create a plan for the assessment. This plan is then carried out by the task force, with the participation of the rest of the department. The department has yet to figure out a way to create universal—or at least widely shared—changes that lead to improvement. Our future goal is that the task-forces will use the analysis provided by the department to develop at least one instructional strategy per cycle that will be tested by a group of instructors to see if it increases student success on one or more outcomes that prove to be troublesome for students. The results of these tests (and the strategies) would then be reported to the department to inform the instruction of other faculty in the department.

Action: Adding Course Sections

Provide as many sections of English classes as will meet the demands of students, counselors, and administration across three campuses and in several area high schools.

Implementation Timeline: 2015 - 2016
Start Date: 08/10/2015
Status: New Action
**Course/Program Outcomes:** Writing and Reading:

Write coherently and effectively, adjusting to a variety of audiences and purposes, while taking into account others' writings and ideas.

**Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position):**

The Language Arts Division Chair, working with the Dean will schedule English classes to meet District needs.

**Rationale (With supporting data):**

English 251, 1, and 2 fulfill key prerequisite, graduation, and transfer requirements for students throughout the District. All of our core composition courses (along with the Wait Lists) typically fill early during registration. When we submit our schedules a year in advance of the courses being taught, we have instructors assigned. But often adjunct instructors’ plans change over the course of a year, and every semester, several instructors give up their class assignments prior to the start of the semester. We currently have 8 sections of English (representing potentially 200 students) on the Spring 2015 schedule that are at risk of being cancelled due to not having enough faculty members to staff them. Over the past 2 years, we have had to cancel a total of 6 fully-enrolled sections of English 251 the week before the semester began due to not having instructors to staff them. We rely on a high number of adjunct faculty to meet the needs of the District (we usually have between 30-35 adjunct English instructors). Over this past summer, Academic Services added an additional 6 sections of English to the Fall schedule and 8 sections to the spring schedule. Our action plan is to supply faculty to staff all of the English classes that the District needs.

**Priority:** High  
**Safety Issue:** No  
**External Mandate:** Yes  
**Mandate Explanation:** Partly an external mandate—the late-add classes put into the Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 schedules were added by Academic Services to expand a high school pathway program (a form of acceleration) in area high schools. The English Department supports this program, but the additional classes put an additional stress upon our available faculty resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Add Resource Request for Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hire one Full-time, tenure track English Professor in Spring 2015 to start in Fall 2015.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Resource Type:** Faculty - New/Replacement

**Why is this resource required for this action?**

We do not currently have sufficient numbers of FT and PT English faculty members to staff the number of sections of English needed by the District. Even though, on paper, English’s 23 FT instructors looks like it should be enough, this is deceiving. Three English instructors split their loads between English and other areas (History, PE, and ESL). Three of our FT instructors are on Willie Brown partial retirements and teach reduced loads. Our FT/PT ratio of FTEF has improved over the past 3 years (from 52/48 to 64/36) but we’re still under the 75/25 ratio that we were at several years ago before we experienced a host of retirements. We hire a large number of new adjunct English faculty every year (we hired 8 over the summer), but we also typically lose as many as we can hire. English generates over 800 FTES every year—but we are being asked to generate more. English classes have high fill rates (103-105% over the 3 years for which we have data), and sections tend to fill within days of registration opening.

**Notes (optional):**

Yes

**Active:** Yes

**Action: Writing Center Equitable Services**

Provide equitable Writing Center Services on all three District campuses.

**Implementation Timeline:** 2015 - 2016  
**Start Date:** 08/10/2015
Our two primary objectives are improving our retention and success rates in English 360, 251, and 1, and the Writing Center serves both goals directly. In Spring 2014, success rates in those classes for Writing Center students were higher than their peers by 20%, 11%, and 18%, respectively, with retention rates higher by 14%, 12%, and 11%. In English 360, 100% of Writing Center students completed the course, with 2 out of 3 progressing to the next level. (*See addendum: “Writing Center Effectiveness Data, Spring 2014”) The Writing Center has been shown to have a significant impact on those areas in which we most hope to improve.

District Objective 1 sets out that our campuses will "provide effective academic support services as measured by an increase in the rate at which students successfully complete courses."

While success rates of Writing Center users have been substantially higher in English classes than those of their non-user peers over the past six years, success rates on our Visalia campus now are at risk due to lack of funding. While Essential Learning Initiative funds have provided nearly half of the Writing Center’s budget heretofore, starting in the academic year 2015-16, the district-funded Visalia Writing Center budget (without any ELI monies) is 44% lower than current operating costs necessitate. If we run the Visalia Writing Center at only 56% efficiency, can we expect the same kinds of strong success that the district has lauded for the past six years? No; in fact, our students at the Visalia campus will see a precipitous drop in services due to the district budget reduction, so even maintenance of past success rates seems dubious, not to mention the Writing Center’s inability to assist in increasing student success while trying to juggle fewer tutors, no coordination, less staffing, and many fewer open hours. The ability to provide equitable services is simply not possible without an adequate budget. In fact, it is unclear how the Visalia Writing Center will operate without full funding for tutors and faculty coordination. And without faculty coordination (among other critical components), is it unclear that the fledgling Hanford and Tulare campuses can move forward with any meaningful student writing assistance. Full funding and thoughtful expansion can provide an opportunity to bring equity of services to the three campuses and to increase student success and retention rates across the district. A budget increase is necessary to do the important work of helping students learn what they need to successfully write across all their courses.

The Writing Center has been shown to have a significant impact on those areas in which we most hope to improve.

Prior to 2015, the District funded at least 50% of the Writing Center’s budget with approximately $83,000 of this cost and ELI has funded the remaining approximately $75,000. Beginning in 2015, ELI is no longer able to continue its support of the Writing Center, and so, if this student service is to continue, the District has the responsibility to fund it. Scheduled to start in 2015, the District has increased its contribution to fund the Visalia Writing Center from approximately $83,000 to $89,000—producing an unfunded liability of approximately $69,000. Not only is the shortfall substantial, but the areas ELI has traditionally funded are critical to the Center’s success: Tutorial coverage, faculty coordination, and staffing. While the increase of the District’s contribution from $83,000 to $89,000 for the Visalia Writing Center will offset 8% of what ELI partnered with the District to offer students, without the other 92% of that ELI contribution, the Visalia Writing Center will obviously suffer. The District has made available approximately $13,000 to offer limited services to the Hanford and Tulare campuses. However, another way to see this overall budget shortfall the District will incur in the three-campus Writing Centers is this: Currently it costs $156,296 to run the Visalia Writing Center alone; the District has funded $101,865 with the requirement that three campuses be served using only 2/3 of what it costs to run one campus center.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Add Resource Request for Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base funding to support adequate student tutor coverage during operational hours at all three district campuses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Add Resource Request for Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Description</th>
<th>Why is this resource required for this action?</th>
<th>Notes (optional)</th>
<th>Active</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Base funding to support 40% reassigned time for faculty coordination of Writing Center services across a three-campus district.</td>
<td>Faculty coordination is required to operate pedagogically sound Writing Centers across the District that will continue to produce the solid student success to which the Visalia campus has become accustomed. Reassigned time begins to allow a faculty coordinator the resources to guide faculty, staff, and tutors as best practices are implemented; work with faculty across the disciplines and campuses to better address student need; monitor, coordinate, and adjust Writing Center practices to suit continuing and emerging needs; and create and implement online tutoring services, among numerous other responsibilities (see addendum—“WCC Job Description”). Beginning in 2015-16, ELI will no longer pay this crucial cost, and district allocations are currently inadequate to cover this expense across even one, let alone three campuses. According to the International Writing Center Association’s position statement on two-year college Writing Centers, coordinators should be tenure-stream faculty “with a minimum of 50% release time from their teaching responsibilities.” Faculty expertise grounded in composition pedagogy and theory is essential for the position. Examining comparable Writing Centers in our area, Fresno City College has a faculty Writing Center Coordinator at 100% reassigned; Reedley College at 50%. A coordinator must have the resources to maintain student success and facilitate equitable academic services. Forty percent reassigned time at COS will move us in this critical di</td>
<td>1. &quot;Resource Type&quot; was not selected because none of the categories was appropriate for this request. 2. &quot;Cost Estimate&quot; is figured at approximately $44,000 of full-time replacement cost. However, the actual replacement cost to the District is the cost of adjunct coverage of classes which is approximately $12,000.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Action: Accelerated Learning**

Begin to offer sections of English 261, linked to sections of English 405, and participate in more professional learning, particularly focused around Acceleration.

**Implementation Timeline:** 2015 - 2016  
**Start Date:** 08/10/2015  
**Status:** New Action

**Identify related course/program outcomes:**  
District Objective #6 for 2013 - 2015: Accelerate the schedule for offering the basic skills sequence in English or mathematics.

**Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position):**  
Erik Armstrong: Language Arts curriculum chair

**Rationale (With supporting data):** Students who complete accelerated courses have been shown to be much more successful at the transfer level course. In “high-accelerated” courses, students had an 18% increase completion rate. Accelerated courses also offered more equitable success for students across demographics and placement levels (see RP Executive
Summary. Our offering of more accelerated courses and funding the tutoring support can help The District address the achievement gap between prepared and unprepared college students, improving both the English completion rates and the college completion rate. Furthermore, by utilizing the many networks of faculty who teach accelerated classes, faculty who engage in professional learning about acceleration can help maximize the effect of English 261. By learning, practicing, discussing, and refining accelerated pedagogical principles, faculty can improve the success of students in each class, which will then improve the success of students through the English sequence. As well, when more and more faculty engage with accelerated pedagogy, whether or not they eventually teach an accelerated course, faculty will begin to witness the potential that students have to succeed, thereby witling away deficit-model thinking (see http://cap.3csn.org/2013/05/09/strong-performance-low-placed-students/).

**Priority:** High  
**Safety Issue:** No  
**External Mandate:** Yes

**Mandate Explanation:** The department has a mandate from the District’s Strategic Plan. This mandate is District Objective 6, which calls for English to accelerate the schedule for our basic skills sequence. This mandate falls under Focus Area III. Students’ Mastery of Basic Skills: Goal IIIC: Ensure that students who place into a basic skills level class successfully complete the highest level math and English courses established by their Student Educational Plan.

### Add Resource Request for Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Description</th>
<th>Why is this resource required for this action?</th>
<th>Notes (optional)</th>
<th>Active</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Base funding to pay for the cost of a tutor for 8 hours/week.</td>
<td>One of the tenets of Acceleration is to provide timely remediation and support. It would be extremely helpful for students to have that support in the classroom as they struggle with an accelerated experience. Offering this in-class support can improve the success rates of the course, offering even more success at the English sequence.</td>
<td>&quot;Resource Type&quot; was not selected because none of the categories is appropriate for this request.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>