

# 2017 - 2018 Academic Initiative



*Compiled together by the Student Government Association  
Executive Vice President and Senators.*

To the Academic Administration and Faculty of Emerson College:

We would like to begin by thanking you for partnering with our Student Government Association Senators throughout this past year to help address students' academic concerns. Since last year's Academic Initiative we have seen significant positive change in departments. We are hopeful that we can continue to improve Emerson's academic affairs through this year's initiative.

What you may notice in this initiative is that the Journalism and Marketing Department are not represented within the initiative. This is due to a lack of current senators in the Student Government Association. We did not feel comfortable writing those departments' sections without a student representative from those departments' input. This is a problem we addressed in last year's initiative, and one we are asking for your help with again. If Academic Affairs were able to publicize these positions, it would help not only the Senators in Student Government, but the department as well. Senators act as a resource for students to voice their concerns to, and if there is not a Senator for a department then it is the responsibility of that department to ensure student opinions and concerns are being heard and addressed.

Additionally this semester, the SGA Senate is introducing its first Proposed Initiatives. These initiatives include Accountability, Space Allocation, and Communication. Previously in the first section of the Academic Initiative, we felt these concerns students have deserved their own document for addressing. This year's initiative was created from constituent feedback, past personal experiences, and past initiatives as well. SGA looks forward to working this upcoming year with Vice President for Academic Affairs, Michael Whalen, and all academic department heads to foster a healthy discussion about the ideas and concerns found within this initiative and how we can improve the quality of learning at Emerson College.

As per last year's initiative, we ask that department chairs read their own sections pertaining to their department. We ask all departments to use this document as a resource when planning for the 2018-2019 academic year. Additionally, we request each department chair, in addition to meeting with their departmental senators, attend a Joint Session or Senate meeting during the 2018-2019 year to discuss the content of this initiative, as well as the separate Proposed Initiatives, and how they have been working to make these changes. For various

reasons this past year, these meetings did not occur, and we hope that in this upcoming year these meetings occur to provide ample opportunity for collaboration and open communication.

Sincerely,

**Greg Massimino-Garcia**  
Class of 2018 President and  
Acting Communication Sciences  
Disorders (CSD) Senator

**Madeline Ramaley**  
Executive Vice President  
Speaker of the Senate

**Megan Raible**  
Writing Literature and  
Publishing Senator

**Joseph Miranda**  
Individually Designed  
Interdisciplinary Program Senator

**Raz Moayed**  
Visual Media Arts Senator

**Melissa Close**  
Class of 2018 Senator

**Anne Noel**  
Class of 2021 Senator

**Rahul Thayil**  
Communications Senator

**Patricia De La Garza**  
Performing Arts Senator

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## Communication Sciences and Disorders

*This year's Academic Initiative for the Communication Sciences & Disorders Department focuses on some small additions that could be made to courses and events. We also focus on expanding the department's reach and course content while trying to better provide practical applications of the material we learn. Thank you for providing feedback about last year's initiative and providing reasoning about why some changes can/cannot be made, we look forward to hearing about what could be possible with this year's main points.*

### **Events:**

Holding events throughout the year for CSD students is quite hard and we know you are well aware of this issue. The department does a good job of making the events open to anyone and sending out emails about RSVP'ing to these events. The general talks with faculty members presenting what they have done in the field, like Jenna Castro-Casbon's talk earlier this year about working with TBI patients, is really great since it gives the undergraduates a chance to meet graduate students and connect with the faculty they might not know as well. Students were hoping that there could be an online calendar they could reference with all the events posted for the semester or could be updated every few weeks. It would be easier to view and not get lost in the multiple emails students get everyday.

Many students had thought it could be helpful to do an event in the fall or right before summer geared towards the process of how to apply to grad school and the process of applying. The National Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA) holds an event in the fall for current students to talk to grad students (held for the 2nd time this year), where they can hear advice and honest opinions; but having a more informational session where one can learn about what kind of letters of recommendation they should be seeking, how far in advance should they be thinking about taking the GRE or looking at schools, and get more information from a professional that has been on the admissions committee. The students wishing to pursue grad school would be better well-informed and equipped to handle the process.

### **Advising**

After asking students how they felt about their advising sessions, there was a split response between students feeling better off after meeting with their advisor and feeling clueless. Many students found it helpful when the advisors would sit down and help plan out the rest of their semesters while looking at Degreeworks. This includes the ASHA requirements that are needed if one wants to continue on to grad school. However, some students found their advisor to not know too much about the undergrad program since the faculty advisor was so involved in the grad program. This found the students feeling a bit insecure and clueless about what they should be doing in their future semesters and what courses to take. This related a lot to Sophomores who still had perspectives to fill and were not entirely sure about what to take to fill those perspectives or how to plan for the ASHA requirements. Having a refresher session with information about general undergraduate courses and times would be helpful since the students found the broader requirements were where the faculty member didn't have as good of a grasp of the knowledge and prerequisites.

### **Writing:**

Many students expressed they wish they had more experience writing a scientific academic paper. As a CSD student, one only really learns about writing a research paper in Survey of Language Disorders. Although the paper is a big portion of that class, it can also be very stressful learning to write something so complex and in a new style while also learning about various language disorders. It would be really helpful to try to get some basic skills prior and early on to help later on in the program and for those wishing to continue on into grad school. It is understandable that one only really learns about how to dissect a research paper in Survey of Speech Disorders and somewhat in Survey of Language Disorders, but if there was an introduction to these skills a bit earlier on or included generally more throughout the curriculum to get more practice it would help the students out a lot and feel more prepared.

**Provide Communication Sciences & Disorders classes in all external and domestic semester long programs that Emerson offers:**

*The following is the same from last year and the progress updates given to the CSD Senator throughout the year are greatly appreciated. It may be helpful to try to see what could qualify as a general education requirement since that way the science, math, or psychology course offered could apply to a larger pool of students needing to meet general education requirements. We look forward to hearing what the Curriculum Coordinator has to say in terms of updates and new information.*

Students attending the Kasteel Well program have the opportunity to take classes in communication, foreign language, history, writing, literature, marketing, ethics, theater, visual media, and art. All other majors besides Political Communications have the chance to take a course for their major. Currently, there are no classes offered that will fulfill the requirements for or are related to a Bachelor of Science in Communication Sciences & Disorders. This discourages many Communication Sciences & Disorders students from applying to the Kasteel Well program since they fear that they will fall too far behind and would be wasting a semester's worth of classes.

The current issue is that there aren't enough Communication Sciences & Disorders students applying and wanting to go so there is no class for them, but if there was a class offered there would be a larger amount of students wanting to go if they knew that they could stay on track with the major. There already is such a small amount of people within the major, so few go abroad.

We propose that the Kasteel Well program add an additional course for students majoring in Communication Sciences & Disorders. Currently there are no math (statistics), biological and/or physical science [only one regular science course SC 212 spring only is offered], social and/or behavioral science, like psychology, courses at Kasteel Well and none that would meet the standards for ASHA. A possibility is to have an Introduction to Universal Sign Language course that could be incorporated to the major or a special class for a minor in Hearing & Deafness that would be related to CD and global culture. The students taking a class in Universal Sign Language would be able to see the differences and comparisons between that and American

Sign Language, a current required course for all Communication Disorders majors. This could also potentially fulfill part of the Language Requirement for students who did not get that waived coming into Emerson. Incorporating any kind of science, psychological, or language course of this nature into the Kasteel Well program will allow Communication Disorders students to take full advantage of all the academic and cultural opportunities Emerson offers. This would also allow other students from other majors to finish their general education requirements since the current science class is only offered in the Fall and is incorporated into the Honors required class therefore restricted to Honor Students.

One of the biggest accomplishments of Emerson College is the new Emerson Los Angeles campus (ELA). This program is designed for upperclassmen to be able to go Los Angeles, CA and study there. The basis of the LA program is internship based for students while still taking classes. Currently, there are no Communication Disorder (CD) classes offered at all at the Emerson College LA Campus, which is being publicized as open to all majors. CSD major students have every right to take advantage of this program and facility in order to broaden their academic knowledge. Demographically speaking, Los Angeles is one of the biggest areas where students come from that are in this department, yet they are not given the opportunities to study there. Students going back home for the summer to this area or looking to go to LA over the summer for internships don't have that exposure even though this field is becoming a blossoming, large presence on the west coast. There are a large presence of linguistic, medical, and psychological areas in LA at schools like USC and UCLA that even research labs here at Emerson collaborate with occasionally. The exposure to a different side of the field in these areas is something that is hardly ventured into here at the Boston campus, but could be an option at ELA. Another advantage that ELA could bring to this department is incorporating a bi/multilingual emphasis. Los Angeles is a city that is made up of so many diverse communities. The inclusion of foreign languages and how to go through clinical sessions in a bi or multilingual setting is very helpful since we learn so much about language acquisition, but are not exposed to how that entirely happens/works. Another suggestion is to include voice transition therapy. ELA is located in the heart of Hollywood which is also home to a large LGBTQIA+ community. The inclusion of transgender voice therapy into the curriculum is one option of what could be



included for students that have not had exposure to this topic and could be a type of path that students would want to go down. All of these things can go into an elective course offered at ELA or be included in either Speech Science, Clinical Foundations, or Field Experience, all of which are current classes only offered at the Boston campus.

**Clinic Hours (Continued from last year)**

*We know progress is being made on this and the creation of the new Canvas site this year has been great. We wanted to continue to show student support for updates on hours and the availability/accessibility for them.*

One thing that is new for observation hours would be if the sign-ups were made more visible/readily accessible to sign up for. Along with communicating in the first year how to obtain hours and constantly stating that there will be many chances to earn hours in upper level courses since many students have expressed anxiety from not knowing how to gather the 25 hours. An idea for this is to have the list of observations put online through a form via ECommon where a student can see the schedule for the semester since most clients repeat their session time/day. Certain classes require students to do a specific numbers of hours, like Survey of Speech Disorders and Survey of Language Disorders. However, it's hard to get hours when one isn't in those classes or if the form is already filled and you are trying to meet the class requirement or ASHA requirement. It isn't made known how one should go about completing the hours if they aren't part of a specific class. If this session schedule were to be put online then a student would need to log in with their Emerson credentials, therefore still keeping client confidentiality, and could sign up for that slot. Once the 2-3 slots get filled for that session another restriction could be put on it or a notification could be created to let users know that it's filled. Restrictions could also be made for specific sessions for certain classes, so those are blocked out for students in those classes or to have those classes have access to the schedule the day before.. Another idea is to have all the sessions that focus on one area such as language, speech, autism, etc... be grouped together so you don't sign up for something that you didn't mean to and would make reading the schedule a lot easier. When a client cancels their session, it could be updated on the site and those that signed up to do an observation during that time would be sent a notification about the change instead of having the student get to the session to find out

it's been canceled. We are supposed to leave our phone number in case a session does get cancelled, but we aren't notified immediately since it does take time to go find the schedule and call each individual that signed up for that session, and the supervisor doesn't always have time to do that since they have so many sessions to observe and give feedback on.

**Music and Arts Therapy (continued from last year):**

*We appreciate the fact the department has consistently been looking to seek partnerships with other institutions in the area.*

One of the biggest things Emerson's Undergraduate Communication Sciences & Disorders program lacks is a music and arts therapy section. A lot of students are interested in this specific realm of therapy/intervention and would love to find out more. If it would be possible to create a course here at Emerson, that could be a big draw to potential new students that interested in that field since they would see they are getting exposed to all aspects of the field in some degree. If this course was taught in part between the Performing Arts Department it would also draw appeal to theatre students as well. If the course was half taught with a PA professor and CD professor or if a whole new person was brought in to teach this as a part time faculty it would draw a large amount of students. There are a ton of music classes offered at Emerson currently for general education requirements, so getting a chance to speak with some of the professors of these courses to see if they can get involved is another option. Currently, there are other schools within the ProArts Consortium that offer courses in Music and Arts Therapy, such as Berklee College of Music, Boston. Currently, looking into this aspect of therapy and other AAC's for therapy are only looked into by the student when writing a paper for a class. We should be exposed to the fact that there are other types of therapy and learn more about them. This relates a lot especially to working on teams with OT's and PT's. This could potentially lead to the establishment of other health sciences and rehabilitation courses/programs.

**Forum/Department Meet and Greet (continued from last year):**

We appreciate all the efforts being made to gather CSD students into a room to talk. The forum held in the fall semester during one of the class meeting times worked out really great.

The “Talk about Communication” co-curricular has done a great job of gathering an array of students. We look forward to other events that the department will be putting on and hope to see many more!

**Experience/Internships (continued from last year):**

*We value the feedback given about how a course like Field Experience is designed to be for upper level students since the foundation and curriculum one learns at an upper level is crucial to the application to real life. We would like to see if there are ways to expand some of the experience to not be so knowledge heavy and could relate to doing summer camps with specific populations so those that have yet to reach the upper level courses can still feel like they are doing something beneficial.*

Students of all grade levels have expressed concern that they aren’t sure what internship opportunities are available to them or what other options are available if they don’t get into grad school. They wish they knew where to begin looking for specific SLP related internships or working with special populations. Making some open positions more readily accessible/promoted to all the students would be helpful in providing real experience in applying for positions as well as actually getting experience in the field. Although, Field Experience CD 499, is open to CSD students, it is only offered to Juniors/Seniors that at least have a 3.0 GPA and can find a placement that meets their interests. This doesn’t allow underclassmen that have an interest to try to get experience earlier nor does it help those that are not located in Boston, specifically over the summer. Likewise, more information about being a SLP-aid or doing some time abroad to help teach language to others would be useful knowledge since not everyone may want to go into grad school right away or isn’t accepted into their top school and would rather get some kind of experience and apply later on.

One other idea that came about from student feedback was getting help while applying to grad school. One student suggested if it would be possible to hold an event one night in the Fall semester and kind of walk through the process of choosing schools, how to start applications, fill them out, etc...along with some useful information about what to include in Personal Statements.

## Communication Studies

*The Department of Communication Studies has remained the foundation of Emerson College's academic legacy. In the last year, the students of the Communication Studies Department have pursued numerous outlets for their creativity, passion, and purpose. The Communication Studies Department have fostered students into sports, politics, advocacy, PR, and non-profit management. Beyond the basic necessity of growth as a department, we believe that the department needs to increase their ability to promote and advocate the soft skill foundations of the curriculum, to both navigate the changing career climate, and showcase the student effort and skillset for future employment opportunities. Furthermore, the Communication Studies department must plan succession and development of its underclassmen, so change may be encouraged quicker and allow for growth at a more nominal rate. Therefore, we offer the following suggestions:*

### **Continue to expand the technical aspect of oration, but move to include an understanding of intercultural communication, beyond the singular class:**

The CC100 program has become a fixture within Emerson's academic curriculum, particularly for freshmen. This program has provided practice and skill for all students, as a method to present oneself and one's work. In the last academic initiative, Professional Voice and Speech was recommended to advance the rudimentary skills provided from the CC100 course. After careful deliberation and discussion, in a deeply changing and expanding environment, the CC100 course should aim to involve some mention of intercultural communication and intercultural understanding. In the currently politically active environment, intercultural communication is now key to navigate an ethnically diverse world. Beyond the class teaching intercultural communication, it is necessary that every student has some base understanding of intercultural communication.

Other courses within the required curriculum for all three majors, such as Argument & Advocacy, could also be used as an alternative to promote intercultural communication.

**Speechwriting should become a fundamental requirement for all communication studies majors:**

In the 2017 Academic Initiative, a concern brought up was the lack of speech-writing in the communication studies department. CC471-04: Topics in Leadership, Politics, and Social Advocacy: Speechwriting and Thought Leadership was a newly implemented and long sought out course offered in the Fall of 2016 for Political Communication students to learn how to utilize speeches and speechwriting into their professional careers. However, as a topics course it was a temporary opportunity for students (only fulfilling an elective for Political Communication Students) and not a standard part of their curriculum. Despite the direct correlation with this course and the political communication major, these skills are a necessity for all communication studies majors. The ability to not only know how to be able to write a quality speech, but also understand the detailed mechanics, uses, and variances of speechwriting as a persuasive rhetorical tool is a requirement for many different professions within communications fields. Whether you are seeking to do PR for a non-profit, run a sportscast on ESPN, or become an actual speechwriter for political campaigns, developing a more than fundamental understanding of how speechwriting impacts communication distribution and persuasive rhetoric will be an essential component in most job descriptions. Students majoring in studying the diverse role communication plays within our society could only benefit in having these skills taught by the professional experts within our department and fully incorporated into our standard curriculum. In 2018, it is recommended again that speechwriting become a fundamental requirement for communication studies majors. As youth advocacy grows, the ability to write and fashion speeches is a necessity. Thus, this course, or a similar iteration of it, should be a requirement, or at the very least available for credit for all members of our department, and become a permanent part of our standard curriculum. While it has been acknowledged that this would be difficult, and would result in a shift of the courses, we acknowledge the efforts made with the Speech Lab from the Communication Studies department. However, what is necessary is to look at speech-writing akin to a WLP course, in a workshop session, and pitch it to students.

**Base communications in skills-based classes. Provide more practical learning opportunities within the coursework:**

Courses such as CC263 Argument & Advocacy and CC266 Conflict and Negotiation are a requirement for all majors in the department. They offer necessary information on the theory of these important communication techniques, but do not offer any outlets for practical application outside of the classroom. This leaves many students with the knowledge of buzzwords like BATNA or Distributive Bargaining are, but not with the skills of how to implement them. The Department brands itself as one of the only programs equipping students with the tools necessary to become “changemakers” in their career paths, but these two cornerstones of the curriculum offer little skills that can be useful outside of the classroom. With every single communication studies student being required to take both of these courses, students should come out of the experience with not only the necessary knowledge, but also the suitable and effective experience in actually developing arguments or conducting negotiations with the feedback from our talented professional faculty. These courses should strive to maintain more of a balance between the fundamental theories and the practical skill needed for our students to progress further.

Additionally, the teachers who teach these courses offer vastly different experiences to their students. Some classes hold mock debates, others invite renowned qualified speakers for counsel, and others focus on the usage of social media in relation to these topics in the evolving career market. All of these function under the same course description and title despite their separate focuses. Since these are courses normally taken during the freshman and sophomore year, students have little information to go off of when selecting their professor and have no idea what to expect with the non-specific descriptions provided. However, each course offers a unique perspective from the professor’s chosen specialty and field of study which should not be undervalued when considering reform. Understandably, a “one size fits all” course for each professor may not do our esteemed faculty justice and not be applicable in these specific situations from the faculty’s perspective, but students should know what they are signing up for in advance and we should help communicate this to them as articulately as possible. While individualizing the class to maximize on the teacher’s professional speciality is important as well, the same course shouldn’t produce such vastly polarizing curriculum or opportunities. The

course's different sections should be advertised to reflect their focus, such as "CC263-02 Argument and Advocacy: The Online Age," with each section being labeled respectively, or the description of each section further expanded upon, or the courses be standardized so students receive relatively similar academic experiences.

**Communicate the details of costly opportunities such as campaign trips and conferences in a timelier manner to the student body at the beginning of the year/semester:**

Provide apt notice at the beginning of each semester to students of at least an estimate of the costs of the more expensive and costly trips, conferences, and events available for students.

In the past, the department has held many amazing opportunities throughout the last few years, such as political trips to the Iowa Caucus, New Hampshire Primary, and the Wisconsin Primary during the election, and more recently, trips to the IABD in San Francisco, trips to Barcelona, Rosarito, and many others. Even in the future, the department has plans to hold more trips to Rosarito for further integration with non-profit classes, segmenting the relationship.

There has also been discussion for a trip to India for the Fashion Festival in Global Communication. However, the general student population in our department were informed of these costly trips with little to no notice in advance, especially concerning the large cost of international trips. Many students require more than a month's planning to make sure that these trips are feasible. If more time is present, students may be able to take advantage of financial services offered such as the Emerson Enhancement Fund or sought more extensive independent fundraising.

In this manner, we recommend that the department attempts to ensure all students receive the information regarding these opportunities and are eligible to participate no matter their proximity to the faculty involved, much earlier than required. If the amount of money is flexible, highball and provide an approximate price to the students in advance. This may all be done in the Orientation week, specifically for Communication Studies and provide the students with a guide/handbook discussing the opportunities of the school. This may also include courses offered, tips, tricks, guides to professors, and much more.

**Prioritize a more balanced focus on the promotion and development of all programs within the department, not just a focus on the Political Communication activities:**

As a similar concern to the 2017 Academic Initiative, these past few semesters have had an increasing focus on the advancement of the Political Communications program and its students' activities, to the benefit of the entire public image of the college. Within the past semesters, students have appeared on national and international publications as representatives of not only our department, but also the entire collegiate institution. Due to the presidential elections, coming midterm elections and the abundant political rhetoric, this prioritization makes sense as there are a plethora of opportunities for these students to take advantage of, but this has also lead to a devaluation of the other programs within the department and the student's activities, or has resulted in a focus of those courses in relation to politics. As a concern of myriad students, the Sports, Health, and general Communication Studies degrees are angled to focus on the political dynamics of them, including events hosted by the School. This is the same as the PR classes, heavily based upon political candidates. While cross-pollination of courses is natural, it is recommended to the department to attempt to segment Political Communication classes and interests to those in that focus. Since growth has become a cornerstone of the department, we should promote all of the various entities within our department.

**Hold a curriculum evaluation in/following Orientation Week to display new classes and cover old classes. Similarly, create and utilize a guidebook for the year for students of the department:**

In the last year, the department has made efforts to bridge the gap between the students and the department. Whether it is utilizing a new hire for Communication in the department, or having myriad emails from MailChimp to keep the students informed, much of the information skips over the students due to the high influx of these emails. Furthermore, attempts to begin new programs are difficult to market to new students, as students generally ask advice from peers over faculty members for their new semester of classes. In a similar manner, most opportunities and trips are only acted on or discussed through word of mouth rather than individual action or interest. In this manner, the department has attempted to have seminars after trips to include



students, but due to class/work/org conflicts, many students have been unable to attend. Therefore, we suggest that, specifically for attempting to involve new students and new classes, the department of Communication Studies create a guidebook for the new students to utilize when picking/choosing/deciding classes or courses throughout the year. In the beginning of the year, freshman should understand the classes offered to them, rather than sticking necessarily to the ones forced upon them, and be able to have and act upon questions or inquiries about these classes. Similarly, sophomores and upperclassmen should be able to hear about new classes offered the next semesters, so this guide should pre-empt for the following term. In a similar way, information about all department trips and major events should be included in this program, along with a general calendar, to provide focus and autonomy to the students to choose and create their own plan and semesters as part of the department. If students from other departments wish to have access to this, they should also necessarily keep a batch on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of Walker, and have reply-ready emails to address concerns from students.

## Individually Designed Interdisciplinary Program

*This year we were fortunate to have an IDIP Senator, and have problems within the department addressed in this Academic Initiative. However, due to a lack of a Senator last year, there are still many of the same issues which need to be addressed.*

### **Raise awareness of the IDIP program to all students:**

Incoming students will not be able to create their IDIP in advance as they don't hold the knowledge of our curriculum; however, the program is a valuable asset for students who might be lost when it comes to their college careers. We hope to make new students more aware of the program and the process to enter the program while applying to Emerson through promotional materials for students who are looking at Emerson as a prospective college.

Current students at the College are also extremely unaware of IDIP. Students can apply to be a part of IDIP through late in their second or early in their third year at the College; students should be more aware of this. Too often, IDIP students introduce themselves in a class by major and explain what IDIP is only to be met with a chorus of confusion from their peers, often among comments of "I wish I'd known about that." This can be accomplished by also making advisors in Academic Advising aware of the program. We'd also like to work further with the IDIP department to create more outreach programs, like paneled workshops on creating your own IDIP for current students interested.

### **Do not discourage students from participating in IDIP:**

Students should be met with encouragement when deciding to pursue an IDIP. Board members should look at each application objectively, in terms of whether or not it is sound, academically challenging, and holds the potential to bring a student future success. Reservations or biases to certain exclusive, gateway departments—or any desires to limit the amount or kind of students in each department, for reasons outside of logic— should not play any role in the deliberation process.

The board who reviews IDIP applications themselves should be constantly updated and reviewed to ensure they have the right outlook on the students looking to apply; They should be keeping a keen eye out for those students who can accomplish their academic goals by other means, but also realize the value of this program for students wishing to participate in it.

**Provide more resources for new IDIP majors seeking advisors across all departments:**

Students choosing to apply for an IDIP are inherently studying something not offered at Emerson, as such it can be difficult for these individuals to find faculty advisors suited to their fields of study. A list of available advisors, with their background/work experience listed, should be made available to IDIP students. Providing this resource would help students choose an Advisor that works for them and can offer them valuable guidance that IDIP students may not get from an advisor who is in one of their departments, but not as focused on the particular area of each IDIP student.

**Create more collaboration between the institute and other departments:**

With the new changes made to the department, IDIP Students are still housed within the Institute, even though it isn't exactly their home. Collaborative events should be held with the IDIP Department and other departments about fields and topics that IDIP students specifically study. This will create a relationship not only between the Institute and other departments, but with IDIP students and the departments which their major classes are housed under.

Each department head should also ensure that all IDIP students taking classes in their department are added to that department's ListServ so that they can receive emails relevant to them and their academic interests.

**IDIP Students major classes needs should be taken into account when deciding class offerings for future semesters:**

The course needs for IDIP students should be taken into when creating the course listings for future semesters. Often times, IDIP students must take very specific class in a specific order. Unfortunately, even though the College knows the course needs of all students, there are frequent occurrences of IDIP students' necessary classes not being offered, or offered in a way that is conducive to completing their major. It is unfair to IDIP students that key courses in their major are not offered when they need them, forcing them to change the design of their major. The premise of an IDIP is that a student has an individualized plan of study, which the college knowingly approves. It is understood that not every course can always be offered, but it is more frequently that IDIP students are faced with having to change their major, rather than being accommodated.

When courses are offered the timing of classes must also be taken into consideration. Classes necessary for IDIPs majors, in a specific semester, should be taken into account. This will ensure

that class conflicts are limited for students whose major classes lie between more than one department.

## Journalism

As we addressed in our opening letter, we did not have a Journalism senator this semester. We are going to share some of the items from last year's initiative, and understand that some of these will be outdated. These requests will be the same from the initiative from 2015-2016 year as well, since there was not a senator at this time in the 2016-2017 year as well. Having a Departmental Senator is a great way to reflect and provide input on ways this department can improve.

*The Journalism program at Emerson College is one that is extremely advanced and attracts many prospective students. In order to benefit those incoming students and those already a part of the program, students should be encouraged to explore all tracks of journalism—television, radio, print, and magazine—while receiving the resources and flexibility to pursue those interests at campuses in Boston, Los Angeles and the Netherlands. The department needs to create a sustainable version of this program to make students feel secure in their professional future, regardless of the medium that they choose to pursue. In order to accomplish this, we propose the following:*

*Assign a Journalism Advisor in addition to an advisor from the registrar to Journalism students as they come in to Emerson.*

When students come in to Emerson, they're automatically assigned an advisor from the registrar. These advisors are aware of the classes we must take in order to complete our General Education Requirements as well as the foundation classes that are needed in our first years of college. We believe that a professor from the Journalism Department should also be a part of the student's advising process. This would be an extremely important asset for the student, because Journalism professor can better assess the path that the student should take based off of what they'd like to focus on in their career.

*Offer workshops and equipment training from the Equipment Distribution Center only when needed.*

Students are required to do workshops in Audacity, Final Cut Pro and the various cameras that are offered by the EDC during their first years of college. It has come to our attention that these same workshops are also required in our later years. (During our Freshman year, we take these workshops in our foundations classes and these same workshops are repeated 3 years in a row). We believe that once these workshops are taken and the student is officially trained on the software and equipment, they shouldn't have to take it again and there is no need for the material to be continuously repeated in every level. This will advance the student's learning process and allow them to be as hands-on as possible in higher level classes.

*Open certain VMA classes to journalism students. (Provide more sections so that Journalism students can join)*

This would benefit both departments for creative and professional collaboration. Classes such as Intro to Studio TV Production and Introduction to Interactive Media both have elements useful to journalism students who plan on working in television. In an industry where having multiple skills is vital, the more production experience we can get the better.

*Cross-list magazine writing and publication courses between the WLP and Journalism departments.*

Publishing and journalism go hand in hand, so it would make a lot of sense for journalism students who plan on pursuing print to be allowed into WLP classes without difficulty. Some classes that can be examined are: Introduction to Magazine Writing, Intermediate Magazine Writing, Magazine Publishing Overview, Copyediting and Traveling Writing (specifically at our program in the Netherlands).

One student commented, *“As for my journalism major, I don't think Emerson does a good enough job addressing magazine journalism. I know magazines may fall under WLP's publishing area, but I think magazine writing should also be addressed as part of the journalism major. Right now, journalism professors only really address newspapers and television as legitimate news sources and disregard magazines.”*

Require broadcast journalism students to take a voice class. A voice workshop can be offered for journalism majors who wish to explore this component of broadcast journalism, but it isn't required.

Currently in the entry level class Foundations of Journalism, there is no voice instruction for broadcast students. While students are learning how to construct a package, they are not taught diction or rhythm for script writing/speaking. This skill is essential for students looking to work in radio or television and should be emphasized. Currently, CC-265 Professional Voice and Speech and CC350 Media Broadcast Vocal Presentation are offered, but are not required for broadcast students. These classes can be required to fit into their curriculum.

Workshops for learning Final Cut Pro and other programs are offered, but not thoroughly advertised. Although there is a list of upcoming workshops listed on eCommon, few students know they are available. Many students look to bulletin boards or hallways for upcoming events, so better advertising about upcoming workshops would be helpful. A targeted email reminder about program workshops would also be helpful.

Require a cultural competency class for ALL journalism students during their first year at Emerson.

It is imperative that all Journalism majors learn how to cover topics that have to do with race, especially since issues such as the “Black Lives Matter” movement, the refugee crisis and immigration have been in the news recently while a heated presidential election is among us. By having these classes during the first year of the student’s career at Emerson, we’ll ensure that journalism majors know how to effectively cover issues of this nature, which is a skill that will be needed and duly noted by future employers.

Offer multiple sections per semester of courses that fulfill degree requirements.

Currently the class selection process is anxiety-inducing for many students who are worried that they will not get into the classes they need to graduate. It is difficult to choose classes that will fulfill student’s degree audit for their track when so few classes are offered.

Classes such as Law and Ethics for Journalists, Women in the Media and Road to the White House should have multiple class time offerings considering how many students need to take them.

One student commented, *“I would like to see more sections of classes opened. For example, this in-coming semester I have to fulfill the Cultural Pod for the journalism major, and yet there is only one class, Women in the Media, that will fulfill that requirement. At the same time, there are about 40 students who need to fulfill that exact same requirement and the course only accepts 20. But if there was another section available, students would not have this problem.”*

*Offer more entertainment journalism options at our campus in Los Angeles.*

Only one entertainment journalism course is currently being offered at our campus in LA. Entertainment and Pop Culture is one of the two classes that is available for Journalism students that choose to go ‘abroad’ and it isn’t offered every semester. With the interest in entertainment journalism increasing, especially for those students that apply to go to LA, more classes like this one should be offered to tailor to the amount of journalism students that are attending the program every semester.



## Marketing

As we addressed in our opening letter, we did not have a Marketing senator this year. Having a Departmental Senator is a great way to reflect and provide input on ways this department can improve. We are going to share some of the items from last year's initiative, and understand that some of these will be outdated.

*The Student Government Association recognizes that the marketing department is taking initiatives to improve the facilities and programs offered to marketing students. We ask that we be included in that ongoing discussion, and additionally we would like to offer the following suggestions for implementation:*

### Diversity and Inclusion in the Classroom and Cultural Competency Training

Students at Emerson College continue to strive for an inclusive and comfortable environment for self expression and creativity. Members of the Marketing communications community have expressed the lack of emphasis of multiple and diverse perspectives within the classroom. A student expressed "students are treated fairly, but there is a specific student in my marketing class who overtalks everyone and the professor doesn't do anything about it much". We want to continue to reflect our commitment to academic excellence; civic engagement; globalization; and innovation; by our students and professors.

Students have stated that classes should be taught with more emphasis on diversity in backgrounds, cultures, and minority communities. As the marketing world pushes toward more multicultural perspectives, students recognize the need to develop a more well-rounded curriculum. Full-time and part-time faculty have a responsibility to teach Emerson students that audiences are increasingly more diverse, and that the prominent narrative, including that of most of Emersonian deliverables, tends to erase these emerging voices, both in our classrooms, and our markets.

Incorporating multiple aspects of diversity and inclusion within the classroom is what the marketing communications department is striving to achieve. From the recent change in departmental leadership, the director of intercultural student affairs, Tamia Jordan, has incorporated a campus wide change in attitude for professors to engage in a Diversity and

Inclusion workshop. Brenda Wrigley has confirmed that the Marketing Communications department have collectively voted at the general assembly to engage in the Diversity and Inclusion workshop as a mandatory aspect of full-time faculty training.

*Networking Opportunities within the Marketing department*

Emerson College has had a strong reputation in the past for building strong networking connections both within the department and externally. Students have stated they “want access to professors in giving advice about employment opportunities” which is something that is currently available to students, but is not explicitly promoted unless stated by individual professors. Office hours are highly recommended and encouraged for students speak with their professors to explore different elements of the curriculum, ask for assistance and to collaborate with outside of the classroom. Even though this opportunity is readily available students have suggested to “have a monthly platform to ask professors questions about internships, updating resumes and professional social media platform profiles.” This could possibly entail having a monthly panel with professors from different course sections to talk about feedback, curriculum questions, any opportunities outside of the classroom, etc., that should then be advertised throughout the department, including the classroom and perhaps also working in cooperation with pertinent student organizations like EmComm or PRSSA.

*Specific Concentration on Core Curriculum*

Students have stated the importance of specificity throughout the foundational Marketing Communications courses and want to see a more obvious path within each of the 200 level courses. The way the curriculum is currently structured, students have reported redundancy across 200-level courses. Understanding Consumers, Messages Media and Channels, and Brands Organizations and Strategies sound from their descriptions like courses with different content and focus, but often are the same. We understand that a strong understanding of marketing concepts provides a foundation for future classes, and reinforcement of concepts is necessary, but the repetition in the way the curriculum is currently taught across MK220, MK221, and MK222 is excessive. We suggest professors review the deliverables/assignments for the

respective classes to differentiate their point of view. The redundancy can be partially due to the similarity in the assignments given, and the explanation of principles in the class.

It could be beneficial for Marketing Communications faculty and staff members to evaluate the specific theories and topics within each of the foundational classes (up to the 300 level classes) and discuss a specific path and track they want to focus on for that semester. Naturally, there will be overlap within the course topics but this could provide opportunity for a more straightforward and structured course. A student stated “Is there any way each of the classes could specifically focus on a different aspect of marketing and differentiate that from the other courses? Because if so, I would feel a lot more comfortable with course concepts.” This has been a concern for many Marketing Communications students who are looking to define their chosen paths within the Marketing Communications industry.

#### *Support for Creative Services*

A number of students have expressed wanting to become proficient with creative design programs and methods to bring innovation to the creative field. As of Spring, 2016, there are only a handful of classes geared toward these student needs (Visual Literacy, Marketing Communication Topics: Design & Layout, Breakthrough Thinking). While these classes create a basic understanding of creative output in the marketing industry, a portion of the Emerson marketing population requests more support in training so that we can inspire innovation to creative marketing. A student expressed “Although, Design and Layout provides a foundational platform for creative expression, there is no opportunity to learn the basics of programs such as Adobe pro- which is something that I believe should be one of the very first things that a Marketing Communications student learns at a foundational level.” Currently, Emerson does offer classes and resources for these creative platforms but only at a higher level. This could be an opportunity for the Marketing Communications department to help foster creativity outside of the classroom, as many Emerson Students involved with Emerson recognised organisations will often be the Marketing director or social media director and these skills and tools could be very useful to apply to these hands on experiences.

*Peer to Peer mentoring*

Peer to peer mentoring is not new to Emerson College but currently not implemented into the Marketing Communications program. Due to the broad nature of the program many students have expressed interest in connecting with students who have had more experience with the program to guide them through their specific career path. Incoming Marketing Communications students have had a plethora of questions regarding the ways in which they can network with students who may have established their concentration. This will not only foster a community within the department but it could also lead to professional networking opportunities. Thus, I would like to propose the idea of connecting an upper classman marketing communications student to 2 or 3 incoming freshman to offer this support. The goal of this role should be to guide the incoming students, it should be to foster thinking for future opportunities. It should not be to pressure incoming students to make decisions about their career or to finalise what they want to concentrate on.

*Opportunities for more higher level classes*

In terms of the marketing communications curriculum there is a variety of courses and concentration that both incoming students and upper class man have the opportunity to take. Upon asking students what emphasis they would like the department to focus their course listing on; it was mainly based on creative content concentrations. In discussion with Brenda Wrigley regarding higher level class offerings and the shift in class focus, there is discussion on adding an analytics course; a course that is imperative to the industry as well as a service marketing course that will be implemented into the curriculum. The department will also include an entrepreneurship class as a higher level class which is also an alternative to E3 or Emerson's Entrepreneurial Experience.

## Performing Arts

*The Performing Arts Department has successfully selected a new chair during this academic year with input from students, faculty and staff. It has also settled in to the changes made to the curriculum and to basic structure of the multiple programs offering their students a better training to succeed by adapting to the constant changes of this highly competitive field. The department now offers all its students the opportunity to major with a BFA, has added courses that collaborate with the Visual and Media Arts Department, along with other changes.*

*While these changes have improved the students experience in the department and are greatly appreciated, there are still many issues to address to bring the department to its fullest potential. After a lengthy research into the student's needs and wants we have been able to articulate four major areas that can be improved upon. We offer the following insight and suggestions:*

### Cultural Competency Training

In recent conversations and open dialogues students have voiced their displeasure with some of the faculty's lack of consciousness when touching upon issues of race and culture. Because this work demands a deep and nuanced understanding of social/cultural relations it is imperative that this perspective is collectively understood and embraced by faculty in order to create the safe/brave space that is necessary to produce this work. The director of intercultural student affairs, Tamia Jordan, has launched a campus wide initiative to do workshops for cultural competency training. We urge mandatory attendance to these workshops for full time faculty and encourage part time and adjunct faculty to attend as well. Besides these workshops, we suggest workshops, for faculty and students, that address the role of actors, directors, educators within the performing arts, and designers in the conversation of diversity and inclusion.

### Equivalent Speech class for PA Majors

Though we are a Liberal Arts Program, Performing Arts majors are highly tuned to conservatory programs. The amount of credits that are entailed to fulfill our major requirements is put almost at odds with the amount of credits we have to fulfill for our Liberal Arts perspective. A lot of PA students don't have time on their schedules or the credits to take this

class until their sophomore, junior and sometimes even senior year. CC100 provides the needed practice and fundamental speech skills for students in all departments, but PA students already receive these skills in courses required for the major.. We suggest creating an equivalent speech class for majors within the Performing Arts that will integrate the skills acquired in CC100 with the skills acquired in PA courses like Voice and Text.

### *Emerson Stage*

### *Student Engagement*

Emerson College has a huge amount of student run theater. While these productions are an amazing asset to get our student body on stage and put into practice the tools they receive in their studio classes, we believe that a more involved dialogue with faculty advisor, beyond the normal faculty advisor expectations for the student organizations would be a huge step forward to making these productions more efficient and a better educational platform for our student body.

## Visual & Media Arts

*Visual Media Arts represents roughly half of the student body here at Emerson. We recognize the changes and developments that are in progress within the department, and appreciate the transparency shown by VMA in regard to issues we've raised in past initiatives. We also realize that change cannot be instantaneous. That being said, there are some areas we would like to focus on in this year's academic initiative to address student concerns. Our hope is that by communicating these concerns, we can enhance the quality and consistency of each student's education. The Visual Media Arts department has an opportunity to help develop the next wave of media makers and media analyzers as informed, critical, and balanced individuals.*

### Foundations in Production

There has been feedback from students within the VMA department that the foundations production classes lack uniformity. Some sections will focus on a multitude of areas of production, while others may never cover certain topics such as audio. By creating a general formula for each section to follow, we could avoid discrepancies between students introduction to media production, and ensure that all introductory areas are covered.

Another concern that students have expressed in their consideration of VM120 is the lack of content serving all VMA students. Many are going into areas of Visual Media Arts outside of video production, so finding a way to incorporate sections of VM120 that better reflect other facets of production would help to sooner advance the education of students across the department. An example that was brought up in one discussion of this was the course offerings for sound design majors.

The inevitable conversation that also manages to sneak in every semester, is this notion that some students are more experienced than others. In every forum, or talkback, the comment that there are biases of professional and technical experience in these foundational courses always gets mentioned. Whether it is someone who feels intimidated, or it is someone who feels unchallenged. Therefore, the VM 120 classes should be capable of utilizing its students into

distributing talents to better enhance everyone's experience. This includes setting up foundation for group dynamics to enhance a collaborative mindset then a domineering one.

### *Departmental Communication*

A topic that frequently comes up in discussions with the department is finding ways to increase reciprocal communication between the faculty and students, of any and all majors. A great thing about Emerson College is there is a giant cassam of opportunity to get involved with an array of things. There are institutional departments in need of marketing campaigns, or video promotions; and there are Emerson students willing to work on these projects. There are a number of different ways to get the information across to all students, so that there can be more of a wholistic school community, and to diversify experiences of students, staff, and faculty from different departments.

The VMA Department is the largest at Emerson, and the most versatile, in both the students who take their classes, and participate in their co-curriculars. From standing committees that are some of the most progressive on campus, this department can lead the way to creating a database where there is information about all the amazing programs offered here at Emerson; Bright Lights Screenings,

### *Student Learning Outcomes*

Including student learning outcomes in course syllabi and the course catalogue would provide students a clear way to see the route that individual classes will take. Laying out these objectives will also provide the class and professor with the opportunity for reflection throughout the course.

Students have shared experiences of taking classes with content overlap because it wasn't outlined in the course descriptions. Other classes have been found to not fully address all areas indicated in the course title or description. One example that was mentioned is Sound Design. This course approaches many areas of sound, including editing, but doesn't necessarily go into designing soundscapes as the title might suggest.



### *Diversifying Content*

As the educators of future media makers, we have an opportunity, early in the education of our students, to diversify the content that we are teaching by broadening the stories and creators we recognize, and to expand and reinforce their critical thinking skills when approaching media production and analysis.

Within our VM100 and VM101 course content, there is room to diversify the artistic content being taught. While we realize that much of the work in the film canon that is taught lacks diversity, this could be a chance to bring that, as a critical discussion, into the classroom. To supplement these changes, we recommend making Media Criticism and Theory an offering available, if not required, in the first year, coinciding with or preceding History of Media Arts. Through these changes, we would be providing students a critical lens through which to examine the history and culture surrounding media production.

### *Census of Production Courses and Needs*

A concern one always hears in the VMA department especially during registration is, “There wasn’t enough room in the [ insert any 300 or 400 Production Course here ] and that’s all I want!!!”. While there are very valid hoops in place, there is no reason to not put an end to the conversation by just trying to make more. Within our department there are a number of remarkable faculty members capable of mentorship for students, so why not add more opportunities for them to interact.

### *Teaching Inclusivity to Co-Curriculars/ Department Organizations*

Something that should be ensured in the VMA department is that the Co-Curriculars and Department Organizations should be promoting and teaching inclusivity and equity to the student leaders. There have been a number of cases where students of color do not feel as if they can prosper in these type of environments because of a multitude of reasons; whether it is not literally seeing anyone who look similarly to them in a role with caliber, or if it is experiencing uncomfortable situations while already working on these projects. This should include teaching

students how to recruit as well as retain students of color, while also doing crew calls for BFA and BA productions.

### Syllabus

Many VMA courses, especially in production, come with an additional, unspecified cost to students. In Film I and II this can be seen in the cost of film and film processing. While student films fall in a wide spectrum of budgets depending on the type of production, including anticipated and/or estimated material costs to the syllabus would help students to better financially plan for their semester, and give notice to those with less flexible budgets.

It would also be of benefit to create a need based fund which students may apply to, to assist with the extra costs of courses, such as text books and film.

### Canvas

Along with this syllabus request, we suggest that all syllabi are made available on Canvas to increase accessibility for students throughout the semester. Many courses in VMA, especially production classes, will not have pages on Canvas. Making these available will increase accountability for students because there is a space where they can reference what is expected of them in all of their classes.

### Interactive Media

One development in the VMA department that feels very positive is our approach to developing new programs and classes.

We have begun to offer and advertise more opportunities in the areas of Interactive Media, including video game design, virtual reality, and projection design. These are important areas of VMA, especially as our world is moving in the direction of new media, but an issue that students are experiencing is a lack of resources within these programs.

If we are going to be offering these courses and advertising them as credible programs, then it's crucial that we are putting the resources into developing them and making them accessible to the involved students.

Additionally, something worth considering is how Interactive Media provides the opportunity for collaboration between VMA and other programs; i.e. the Engagement Lab, and the eSports program in Comm Studies.

*BA Capstone – Media Studies*

While many areas of the VMA department focus on the BA/BFA programs in Production, a discipline that is often overlooked is the BA in Media Studies. Our production majors have the opportunity during their final semesters at Emerson to take a capstone course in which the skills they've developed culminate in creating a final production. Capstones of this nature also exist within other departments at Emerson.

We would like to see a capstone of similar merit available to Media Studies students in order to provide equal opportunity for them to create a final product that exhibits their skills and interest within the media field. Providing a BA Media Studies capstone would also allow for students to develop content (i.e. writing samples), under guidance, that could be used to further their prospects post-graduation.

## Writing, Literature, & Literature

*The Writing, Literature, and Publishing department has continued to make forward strides. We at SGA appreciate the willingness of the department to work not only with student representatives but with individual students to continue to meet the changing needs of the student body and the department as a whole. This year's initiative is focused around specific areas that are of concern to students. Some of these areas are new while others have been previously addressed. We hope that the Writing, Literature, and Publishing Department will continue working to address these concerns in order to create a cohesive and inclusive experience for all students within the department.*

### **Continued Cultural Competency Training For Faculty:**

The push made by the WLP Department for cultural competency training in response to student movements in the past few years has been greatly appreciated and this has been a largely successful effort. However, cultural competency training needs to be continued with a particular focus on gender and pronouns as well as race, sexuality, class, and other forms of identity. Students in the WLP department frequently report being misgendered by professors, especially the Publishing faculty. Some professors have even argued with students about the validity of gender neutral “they/them” pronouns or outright refused to use them. Not only is this isolating and dysphoric for non-cisgendered students, it directly contradicts the Chicago Manual of Style which recognizes they/them as the official English language gender neutral pronouns. Professors should be trained on how to properly address trans and nonbinary students and it should be mandatory for all professors across the department to include pronouns during introductions in the first few days of class. If students make name tags for the class, pronouns should also be included here. Continuing this training for faculty will not only reduce the incidents between faculty members and students but will also properly equip professors for recognizing and dealing with situations where students make insensitive or offensive comments.

**Regular Review of the Updated Curriculum:**

In response to past initiatives, the WLP department has overhauled the curriculum from the Undergraduate to the Graduate level. The efforts to expand beyond white western cultures are an excellent step in the right direction. Some students did still report feeling that there were not enough diverse texts taught in some of their classes. In order to address this, we feel it is necessary to mention that the new curriculum should be regularly reviewed and updated even further when necessary. In order for students to have a consistent and inclusive education the department must continue to focus on ensuring that the curriculum is the best it can be.

**Continuing to Improve Communication: Emails:**

*This year SGA will be addressing college-wide communication issues in the Proposed Initiatives, however we felt that it was vital to address some department related issues here as well.*

The main method of communication in the department is emails. After speaking with several students, we have compiled some suggestions on how to improve the emails sent to students. First, keep the emails short and sweet with subject lines that tell students exactly what the email contains. Bullet Points can also help summarize the emails in an easy to digest way. For events that the department is hosting, Angela should continue to send an email with the event flier in the body. This helps students get the details they need quickly about the event without having to read a lengthy email. Many students do in fact read their emails, but get up to 20-25 emails from @emerson.edu emails per day. Between classes, work, and all of the other commitments it can be hard to thoroughly read long emails so the communication should be as simplified as possible. The department should also better filter which publications are being sent out to students for submissions. Frequently undergraduate students receive emails for publications which are only open to graduate students. These could easily be filtered to be sent only to the graduate student email list, thus decreasing the amount of unnecessary emails sent to undergrads. Similarly, emails from faculty addressed only to Graduate Student related issues such as applying to work for the First Year Writing Program are occasionally sent to the

Undergraduate Student list as well. We found that this frustrates students and makes them less likely to engage with the department communications.

**Disbursement of Department Town Hall Information:**

The department should live stream and record all town halls that are held. Important information about new programs and changes in the department are discussed at these town halls but many students are unable to attend because of class, extracurriculars, or work commitments. Other departments have had success with students tuning in via Facebook Live or another live stream and the Student Forum of Finance, which was recorded, was re-watched 779 times on SGA's Facebook page in the first week alone. By having the video accessible after the event, the department can easily share it to answer student questions about new programs such as the BA Publishing and Literature tracks. The video should also be posted on the WLP section of the Emerson website so that it will appear in google searches for students and prospective students.

**Adjustments to the Department Facebook Page & Google Calendar:**

Make better use of the Facebook page and better advertise the Google Calendar created specifically for WLP Students. Many students use Google calendars for themselves but are not aware that the WLP calendar exists. There should also be a link to it on Emerson's website and the WLP Facebook page so that students have other ways to find it besides through Gmail. The Facebook page mainly posts when there are events and when alumni, professors, or students have work published. The page should continue to do all of these things, but also have posts about changes in the department or semi-frequent posts that explain a specific area of the department, such as the BA tracks where students could ask questions. More students need to also be made aware of the WLP Town Crier Facebook Profile that they can friend request. This account is updated much more regularly than the WLP Facebook Page, but few Undergrad students know to friend request it.

**Better Advertising for new BA Tracks:**

The addition of the two new tracks to the BA program is exciting and fills a need that many students have had for years. Since it is a program that was only launched in the Fall of this year, few students know about it and the advertising of it could be improved. We recommend encouraging faculty advisors and professors to mention the new tracks when meeting with students. Most Juniors could still be eligible for switching to one of the tracks, but do not know that they exist and few faculty advisors inform them. Professors, especially in Intro to Literature or Intro Publishing classes should also inform students about the option. Perhaps faculty could be given a handout to distribute to students who seem interested. Most students don't know about the new program unless they meet with their academic advisor and that only includes sophomores and first years. The department should also make sure that all of the academic advisors are mentioning the new program to students during their mandatory sophomore and first year meetings and not waiting to see if a student asks about it or brings it up as an option.

The difference in requirements for credits and which classes are switched out for each track should also be clearly stated on the WLP website. If it was in a format similar to the DegreeAudit where students could compare and contrast the different degree options it would be easier for them to see which program is best. Ideally, a section on the sidebar of the Emerson website where there are pages for the new Fifth Year BA/MA Program, the MFA Programs, and the First Year Writing Program should be created for the BA Tracks as well. I understand that first years are not able to apply to the college under one of these tracks, which should be mentioned on the page, but having the information readily available so that students know all of their degree options is important.

### **Green Initiative & Printing for Classes:**

While most non-workshop classes no longer require students to print out PDF readings and other files, many professors still require that students print readings. We understand that students having laptops or other devices in class to read PDFs can be distracting and that some professors would rather avoid this. The department should discuss with professors the best way to ensure that students do not have to print out large PDF readings, which can sometimes be

anywhere from 15-25 pages or more, but laptops and other devices are still not a distraction in the classroom.

### **Print Credits:**

The topic of Print Credits is still brought up by students. Even those that do realize that WLP students were granted 5 extra print credits per semester still request that more print credits be added. In SGA meetings we have recently heard concerns for students in several departments who feel that the cost of printing at the college far exceeds what it should be. This is something that we are working on as a whole, but felt that it was important to include again here. In workshop classes when printing stories is required it is still easy to run out of print credits. Many students run out of credits when they have only printed one workshop story. Since most classes involve printing either two or three of one's own stories for the semester this can be personally costly for the students and even more difficult for students with a low socioeconomic status and off-campus students dealing with rent and other bills. Printing up to fifteen copies of a ten page story is very expensive and not something that students should be asked to pay for out of pocket. Unfortunately, as long as the print credits allotted are not proportionate to the needs of students this will continue to happen. The WLP Department was successful in advocating for more print credits in the Fall of 2016 and we hope that by bringing this issue attention again we can continue to work together to solve the printing issue.

### **Funding for Conference Attendance:**

There are tons of excellent writing conferences every year, one of the largest being the Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference or AWP. Right now, the WLP department sends out emails detailing the AWP events where Emerson Alumni will be participating, but the department does not send any current students to the conference. Conferences like AWP are unmatched in terms of the networking opportunity that they would provide to students both through interactions with alumni and published writers. The department should create a contest or application based process for a handful of students to be able to attend the conference. The winners or chosen applicants should be at least partially funded by the



department or by Emerson to attend the conference. This would be an amazing opportunity for students, especially seniors who are nearing graduation and other liberal arts colleges do have similar programs already established. While students can currently apply to request funding for conferences like AWP through the Emerson Enhancement Fund (EEF), or receive small bits of funding through the department itself, there is often not enough money distributed amongst the students through this fund to cover more than the cost of an admission ticket. Compared to plane tickets, a hotel room, and the other expenses that could be involved in attending the conference, the \$50 admission ticket is minimal. While having the department be able to fund admission for several students is a great start, we would love to see this grow into a program that has more available funding so that students can learn as much as possible about the literary community. The department could also reach out to alumni that are attending to create a sponsorship program where alumni sponsor students to attend the conference.

**Communicate with professors about opportunities being emailed out and department events, etc.:**

Much like the discussion of the new BA tracks, professors should be more aware of department opportunities and events so they can discuss them with students. Many professors often do not know about department events geared toward students and thus cannot connect them to classes, bring classes to them, or offer extra credit for attending them. Professors should be encouraged by the department to tie these events into their courses and should also be able to add events to the WLP calendar. Some professors in the department do not even know that WLP students were approved for more print credits in Fall 2016. It is vital that professors be up to date on all of the changes and information from the department so that they can answer student questions. Professors are the faculty members who interact with students on a daily basis and if this channel is used properly, communication between the entire department could improve drastically. This is especially important for first year or sophomore classes. By the time students are Juniors or Seniors they many know enough about navigating the school to know about the events themselves or the professors who teach the upper level classes mention the events because they are often the ones in charge of coordinating them. If first year and sophomore professors

mentioned these events as well, it would foster an environment in which students are involved in the department and its events from the beginning.