13-184a
LSC: App-3/27/14
UWUCC: App-4/8/14
Senate: App-4/29/14

**REVISION APPROVAL COVER SHEET FOR CONTINUATION OF W-DESIGNATION**

# TYPE I PROFESSOR COMMITMENT


Professor Jonathan C. Lewis

Department Geoscience

Email jclewis@iup.edu


Please provide answers to these questions on the next page:

1. List up to three of the W courses that you have taught since your appointment as a Type I professor.
2. Using your most recent W course, discuss what the writing activities are intended to accomplish. You do not need to describe the amount of writing, frequency of assignments or fill out the summary chart for writing assignments.

| Approvals: | Signature | Date |
|---|---|---|
| Professor (s) | | 5 Mar 2014 |
| Department Chair | | 3/6/14 |
| College Dean | | 3/14/14 |
| Director of Liberal Studies | | 3/31/14 |
| UWUCC Co-chair(s) | Gail S Sedivist | 4/8/14 |

# TYPE I PROFESSOR COMMITMENT

PROFESSOR DEPARTMENT

List up to three of the W courses that you have taught since your appointment as a Type I professor.

GEOS 362 Plate Tectonics (most recently taught Fall 2012); also taught Fall 2010 and Spring 2008.

Using your most recent W course, discuss what the writing activities are intended to accomplish. You do not need to describe the amount of writing, frequency of assignments or fill out the summary chart for writing assignments.

Writing is used in my Plate Tectonics class as a means of interacting with scientific content at mulitple levels, with the ultimate goals of: (1) improving command over content; (2) fostering self-confidence through honest reflection on understanding; and (3) enhancing written communication skills. The centerpiece is a semester-long assignment that amounts to authoring a National Science Foundation style scientific proposal. The writing assignments are staged to allow increasing depth of interaction with content in a minimally threatening way. Many students find writing technical content daunting to the point of writing paralysis. This largely stems from the feeling that if they don't get the technical parts exactly correct they will fail or be harshly judged. To offset this I have developed a sequence of assignments that allow the students to write to progressively more demanding audiences. The steps and audiences are as follows:

1. Summarize as EndNote "research notes" entries, five technical articles of their choosing (vetted by me) about a specific topic they find interesting. The student is his/her own audience, making this task much less likely to suffer from inertia.
2. Provide a complete citation of the same five articles, each with a one-page typed summary that spells out the scientific problem at hand, the new results and interpretations, and how the work was carried out. The student is the primary audience but he/she knows that this second effort to summarize the material will be read by me for broad commentary.
3. Summarize additional articles through EndNote "research notes" to develop increasing confidence in his/her understanding. He/she is again the audience and I do not formally evaluate this writing.
4. Craft an annotated outline of the proposal for formal evaluation by me. This step allows the student to organize his/her thinking and allows me to evaluate the overall structure of the proposal. This is also shared with students orally to promote discussion and enhance depth of understanding.
5. Write a draft proposal for peer review and feedback. The audience here is a classmate which the students generally find less threatening than me. I evaluate the reviewers based on their attention mostly to writing mechanics rather than scientific details. This step allows the authors and reviewers to wrestle with how best to convey technical content.
6. Write a complete draft proposal that addresses peer reviewer comments. At this point I am the primary audience, mimicking the scientific peer review process.
7. Write a final version of the proposal addressing commments provided by me. The supplied rubric emphasizes how effectively the student responds to my comments on both scientific issues and writing mechanics.