**Writing Rubric – Roanoke College, inspired by AAC&U VALUE rubric August 2010**

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| **TRAITS** | **Below Basic, Rating = 1** | **Basic, Rating = 2** | **Proficient, Rating = 3** | **Advanced, Rating = 4** |
| *Focus and Thesis* | Paper lacks focus and/or a discernible thesis.  | Thesis is weak, simplistic, unclear, or too broad. | Focused thesis represents clear understanding of the topic. | Focused thesis reflects complexity and a nuanced understanding of the topic. |
| *Reasoning* | Reasoning is uncritical, illogical, superficial, or simplistic. | Reasoning is logical in some places but faulty or simplistic in others.  | Reasoning is logical and consistent throughout.  | Reasoning demonstrates sophistication of thought, recognizing multiple dimensions and/or perspectives as appropriate. |
| *Evidence* |  Little to no evidence, or evidence is inappropriate for the purpose of the essay. | Some evidence but not enough to develop argument in unified way. Some evidence may be inaccurate, irrelevant, or poorly documented. | Evidence is accurate, well documented, and relevant, providing adequate support for the purpose of the essay | Evidence is relevant, accurate, well integrated, and well documented, providing ample support for the purpose of the essay. |
| *Organization* | Lacks a sense of overall structure; no sense of beginning, middle, or end. No paragraphs or division into paragraphs lacks logic. Lacks transitional words, phrases, and sentences between or within paragraphs.  | Contains an overall sense of beginning, middle, and end, but paragraph sequence may be confusing. The order or balance of ideas within paragraphs is inconsistent. Little or inappropriate use of transitions. | Effective structure and arrangement of ideas. Order of paragraphs may, occasionally, appear mechanical or awkward. Order or balance of ideas within paragraphs is generally consistent and cohesive. Transitions present but may be cumbersome or repetitive. | Rational, sensible, and deliberate structure that enhances and clarifies meaning. Transitions show relationships among ideas. |
| *Style and Mechanics* | Multiple and serious errors of sentence structure, grammar, spelling and capitalization, or punctuation such that communication is hindered. | Sentences show some errors of structure, grammar, punctuation, spelling and/or capitalization. Sentences exhibit little or no variety. | Effective and varied sentences; only occasional errors in sentence construction, punctuation, spelling and/or capitalization.  | Sentences structured effectively; rich, well-chosen variety of sentence styles and length; virtually free of punctuation, spelling, capitalization errors. |