

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
UNIVERSITY WRITING COMMITTEE
AY 2006-2007

Presented at the
667th Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
November 15, 2007

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Ryan Brundage, *undergraduate student representative*
Genevieve Chandler, *ex officio*
David Fleming
Stephen Olbrys Gencarella
Haivan Hoang, Chair
Ingrid Holm
Brian Houle, *graduate student representative*
Elizabeth Jakob
Michael Kreisler
Holly Lawrence
Donna LeCourt, *ex officio*
Matt Ouellett
Patricia Paugh
Elizabeth Porto

The University Writing Committee, in the 2006-2007 academic year, focused primarily on preparations for the 2007-2008 Junior-Year Writing Program review. The committee held seven meetings, experiencing a change in membership with two members leaving (Holly Lawrence and Pat Paugh, both at the end of the fall semester) and five members joining to replace those had left the previous year (Ingrid Holm, Michael Kreisler, Matt Ouellett, Elizabeth Porto, and undergraduate representative Ryan Brundrage). The following returning committee members continued to serve on the UWC: Genevieve Chandler, Stephen Gencarella, Haivan Hoang, Brian Houle, Elizabeth Jakob, and Donna LeCourt. David Fleming, who would step into the Writing Program Directorship the next year, also served on the committee.

The following are highlights from this year's Writing Program activities:

- **Writing Center Opens in Library Learning Commons:** On account of the Writing Program Director and past UWC efforts to extend the tutoring services to student writers, the Writing Center officially moved from Bartlett Hall to the university library's Learning Commons. The Writing Center has already has already experienced an increase in tutorial sessions in the new location.
- **Writing Program Directorship:** The committee recognized Donna LeCourt's invaluable contributions to the Writing Program; Professor LeCourt, who had served as Writing Program Director since 2003, returned to her faculty position in the Department of English at the end of the spring semester. In June, David Fleming, also a faculty member in English, became the new Writing Program Director.
- **Workshops for Junior-Year Writing Faculty.** The UWC sought to provide other forms of support to junior-year writing faculty. Matt Ouellett with the help of Donna LeCourt and Ginny Chandler organized two workshops that were sponsored through the Center for Teaching: "Getting the Student Writing You Want" and "Teaching Writing without Lecturing."
- **2nd Annual "Celebration of Writing."** In May 2007, the Writing Program hosted the second annual Celebration of Writing. The day-long event included a keynote speaker, showcased student writing through posters and presentations, recognized new undergraduate peer tutors, and announced Best Essay awards for first-year and junior-year writing courses.
- **New Diversity Grant:** The Writing Program received a Diversity Grant from the Gen Ed Council to develop diversity materials for Writing Program teachers.
- **Textbook Developments in the First-Year Writing Program:** The Writing Program adopted a new handbook for EnglWrit 112: *The Penguin Handbook: UMass Custom Edition*, which gives students online access to citation resources. Moreover, the Deputy Director and a committee of TOs are revising the required EnglWrit 111 textbook.

The main business for the UWC meetings was to plan out the next year's Junior-Year Writing Program review. In an effort to learn about existing teaching models and to review the Junior-Year Writing Program's effectiveness, we decided that the review, in the fall, would request the following information about each department's junior-year writing courses:

1. Basic Facts
 - a. 2006-2007 statistics on majors and, more specifically, juniors in the major;
 - b. prerequisites for the department's junior-year writing course;
 - c. maximum class size for junior-year writing;
 - d. number of sections of junior-year writing courses offered; and
 - e. sources of funding
2. Course Curriculum
 - a. how the course fits into the curriculum for majors;
 - b. what the required writing assignments require;
 - c. how the writing process is taught and how peer revision plays a role;
 - d. what texts are required; and
 - e. what the department sees as their students' most pressing writing needs and how the curriculum attempts to address these needs
3. Teaching Structure
 - a. who teaches the course;
 - b. how many instructors teach the course and how often staffing changes;
 - c. how instructors are informed of junior-year writing course goals and teaching methods; and
 - d. if TOs teach the course, what kinds of training they receive
4. Support from the Writing Program and UWC
 - a. what resources would be most helpful to faculty; and
 - b. which writing issues would be productive topics for pedagogical discussion

Then, the spring semester would be spent interviewing representatives from a cross-section of the university, possibly two representative departments from each college and school; the purpose here is to get a richer understanding of different departments' strengths and concerns.

The review would moreover offer the Junior-Year Writing Program Director an opportunity to communicate more effectively with departments about teaching models and additional concerns that have arisen. In part, this improved communication responds to funding concerns that arose at the end of 2005-2006; although funding per junior had increased significantly in recent years, a change in the system for counting juniors occasioned unease from several departments about being able to fund junior-year writing courses for large numbers of undergraduate majors. Following the Junior-Year Writing Program Review, the UWC plans to have a more informed discussion about this matter.

The UWC's charge for the next academic year is to conduct the Junior-Year Writing Program review and to explore new support mechanisms for the junior-year writing faculty. Michael Kreisler, Brian Houle, and Donna LeCourt will have completed their service on the committee. David Fleming, Emily Alling, Judith Holmes, and Steve Brewer will join the committee in the fall, and for full membership, the UWC will require a new graduate student representative.