Voicing Our Words: The 2011 Celebration of Writing
Turns Up the Volume on Student Writing

By Peggy Woods, Assistant Director, Writing Program
Heidi Terault, Office Manager, Writing Program

Celebrating writing is nothing new in the Writing Program. For nearly thirty years, the writing done by our students has been at the center of our classes. Our annual Celebration of Writing moves student writing out of the classroom and into the center of campus.

Born out of the desire to share students’ work beyond the classroom, the Experimental Writing Festival was created to showcase the writing done by the students in the Experimental Writing Workshops. The Ex-Fest became so successful that six years ago we expanded it into a true celebration of all the writing done in all aspects of the Writing Program. Renamed the Celebration of Writing, the day includes displays and readings by students in Basic Writing, College Writing, Junior-Year Writing and the Experimental Writing Workshops. A theme is chosen each year to depict the different ways our words are expressed. This year’s theme, Voicing our Words, expresses how words are meaningful in ways not limited to the written word.

A keynote speaker who addresses the importance and impact writing has had on his/her life opens the day. Past speakers have included writers in fiction (adult and children), journalism, memoir, blogs, autobiography, and ghost writing. This year’s keynote will feature James Heflin, Arts Editor of The Advocate, musician, UMass alum, and fiction writer. An awards ceremony honoring the winners of the Writing Program’s Best Text Awards, students selected for the upcoming Student Writing Anthology, and students completing our year long tutoring course closes the day. Help honor the writing and work done by students across campus by joining us in the Celebration of Writing, Voicing our Words, on Wednesday, May 4, 2011.

2010 Best Text Winners Preston Davis and An-Chi Yao celebrate their writing with Teaching Associate Sarah Finn.
The Business Communication Program (BCP) in the Isenberg School of Management provides courses that satisfy the Junior Year Writing requirement for seven different majors. In Spring 2010, I developed a course designed for students in Resource Economics called Business Communication Goes Green.

My students and I share an interest in environmental issues (I have a Masters degree in biology and a keen interest in the environment and sustainability), and therefore I decided to create a course around green business practices. Because so many businesses now promote their efforts at “going green,” ISOM students were naturally interested in further exploring the topic. It is a field that continues to grow, and many students find it genuinely important and “cool.”

In the course, students wrote a business proposal for a way to make UMass more green. I received proposals for motion detector lights in dorm hallways, thermostats that can be turned down but not up, hot water timers in showers, and biogas converters to turn the waste oil from french fries into fuel for buses. They also proposed ways to waste less food and paper in the dining commons and to turn the grassy areas of Haigis Mall into a vegetable garden.

Students also wrote an international trend report in which they analyzed how other countries were going green. I have incorporated this assignment into my general course (SOM 310) this semester and currently have students writing about wind farms in Denmark, solar panels in China, smart grids in Stockholm, and bike rentals in Paris. Recently, after working with me on a draft, one student exclaimed, “I’m so glad we’re doing this.” Let’s hope that too is a growing trend.
Writing Butterfield Welcomes *Inked*

By Andrew Fox, MFA student and Writing Program Teaching Associate

Every writer remembers the first time their work appeared in print, and every reader remembers the first story or poem whose power and possibility forced them to sit up and take notice. Writing can often be a solitary process, and the prospect of finding an audience for an individual voice honed in solitude is an exciting one, but, despite its rewards, the long road to publication can at times feel daunting, and the writer’s journey is often beset by misunderstanding or difficulty. It was with great joy then that the Writing Program greeted the arrival of *Inked* this past December. A journal seeking to promote literature and visual art by freshmen students living and working in the Butterfield-Van Meter cluster at UMass, *Inked* is the product of the hard work and dedication of an editorial board comprised entirely of freshmen enrolled in the Commonwealth College Honors Program.

Over the course of the Fall semester, Shami Barooshi-an, Ashley Clayton, Christina Freitas, Ashley McCollor, Ashley Wilcox and Melissa Wong worked together to solicit submissions, select and edit work, design layout, and liaise with printers and UMass staff, in order, in their words, “to bring to our classmates a journal that represented the unique and intriguing minds of students who, like us, were just beginning the four year process of self discovery and true independence.” The results speak for themselves. An exciting mix of short fiction, experimental prose, poetry, and photography, *Inked* provides a nurturing and worthy home for young writers and artists at UMass, many of whom, with the inclusion of their writing in volume one, are seeing their work in print for the very first time. Already hard at work on a second volume, to be launched at the end of Spring semester, the editors of *Inked* invite submissions of new writing and artwork and can be contacted atinkedbutterfield@gmail.com.

Spring Symposium Highlights TO Expertise

By Deirdre Vinyard, Deputy Director

Classroom blogs? Debate as a teaching tool? These and other teaching strategies were presented and discussed on January 14, when over 100 Teaching Associates, lecturers and Writing Program staff met for an afternoon of intense conversation on innovations in *College* and *Basic Writing*. The Writing Program’s third annual *Spring into Teaching* symposium, already a fixture in the Writing Program Spring semester, helps ease TOs back into teaching with a series of teaching-oriented presentations.

Sessions this year sprang from Writing Program committees as well as from collaboration among individual TOs. Technology Fellows, a group of five TOs who spend an academic year learning and demonstrating technological innovations in the writing classroom, presented six creative uses of technology, including using Google Docs for on-line peer review and introducing blogs as an organizing tool in the classroom. The Diversity Action Group led TOs in raising questions about the neutrality of class materials, specifically the *Penguin Handbook*. Amanda Waugh and Christopher Hennessy facilitated a popular session discussing strategies for teaching two sections of composition. Sarah Magin and Miranda Dennis examined the use of debate for helping students interrogate classroom texts while Abha Phoobo and Morgan Lynn introduced two inventive discussion techniques.

The 2011 Spring Symposium showcased the Writing Program’s vibrant teaching community, due in large part to a dedicated team of Teaching Associates.
Voicing Our Words
Celebration of Writing

Celebrating the writing of students in basic, college, junior year and experimental writing courses.

Sponsored by the UMass Writing Program

Wednesday, May 4, 2011
11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Goodell 604