

THE WRITING LAB

N E W S L E T T E R

Volume 26, Number 7

Promoting the exchange of voices and ideas in one-to-one teaching of writing

March, 2002

...FROM THE EDITOR...

For those engaged in proposing a tutor training course, Howard Tinberg offers his account of how to think politically and institutionally when moving his proposal forward. By contrast, Kate Stephenson describes her use of a corporate model to propose and institute workshops in her university. Offering yet another perspective, Kevin Davis asks us to consider what it will mean to writing centers as the authority of scientific fact decreases in importance. How will writing centers adapt to a new way of finding answers, a new model for thinking about the source of our truths?

In addition, Melissa Ianetta, Jonathan Bates, and Erin Karper review a new book on electronic writing centers, and Jill Duling asks fellow peer tutors to consider the importance of transitions in students' writing and their lives.

Duling's emphasis on transitions reminds us that this is a month of transition for many of us, from winter to spring and from spending long days and weeks in the writing lab to journeying to conferences and interacting face-to-face. We'll be learning from each other at presentations and in the hallways between conference sessions. Enjoy and travel safely!

• Muriel Harris, editor

...INSIDE...

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Becoming politic: What happens when writing center directors propose tutor training courses

Historically occupying the margins of the curriculum, writing centers are beginning to play a dynamic role in curricular and institutional affairs. As writing center directors move to craft curriculum of their own—in the usual form of tutor training courses—they are sending a clear and significant message: that the business of managing a writing center must now involve the intellectual work of helping to craft a curriculum. What is required of writing center directors in order to play such a role? I hope to answer that question by drawing upon my own experience in proposing a tutor practicum—from the perspective both of writing center director and a member of our college's curriculum committee.

For the longest time, I preferred to see the Writing Lab that I direct as nearly extracurricular and, indeed, al-

most as counter curricular—insurgents in the battle against outdated modes of instruction (the lecture) and unfair means of assessment (standardized tests). Influenced by the now familiar image of the writing center as misunderstood and misrepresented by English departments and administration (first brought to my attention in Steve North's essay "The Idea of a Writing Center"), I came to believe that writing centers pretty much accept what is given them: the often vague assignments that generate the writing of stu-

dents who come to the center, the commonly strained relations with faculty who think we're doing the writing for their students or who think our job is essentially grammar-focused, and the unwitting students who, following their teachers' leads, want us simply to "fix" their papers (North). I came to accept these facts as inevitably true, and I came to accept the idea that writing centers can do little to change curricular design and practice. In other words, no matter how fervently we promoted the idea of revision in our tutoring sessions and no matter how passionately (and furtively) we decried writing prompts that too often assumed, rather than explicitly stated, knowledge of disciplinary conventions, we knew that little could be done to change things.

Histories of writing centers, including Beth Boquet's recent work, have confirmed our extra-curricular role. Indeed, at times, writing centers are nearly invisible and even secretive, as they gingerly avoid mucking up the work done in the classroom and in the student's private space. "Too often," writes Boquet,

Our discomfort at working, secretly, on the margins of the curriculum, can render us passive, simply waiting for those student responses to assignments from those professors whose approach makes us uncomfortable—something of the attitude that I spoke of earlier. It can also force us into a combative stance, and produce an almost narcissistic turning inward. Why should we spend all our energies worrying about Professor X's lousy assignments? Let's do what we are supposed to do and do it well. "For too long," writes Nancy Grimm, "writing centers have worked to please others at the expense of defining a clear mission" (Grimm 527). If Grimm had stopped right there, we would be in familiar, adolescent terrain: let's do what we want to

do and damn the rest. But in fact, and this is the view of writing centers that I would like us to hold on to for a while, Grimm proposes that we see writing centers in relation with other elements of a campus: faculty, staff, students, and administration. "Identity at a personal and institutional level," she writes, "is inevitably relational: Politics is about learning to manage the inevitable tensions or hostilities in those relations" (Grimm 527). The question for writing centers then becomes, How can we work productively with these various constituencies? What if we go even further and ask, How can we play a vital role in the shaping of a curriculum and of an institution? How can we, in the end, become politic?

I want to describe my own attempts to become politic—and to do so by telling the story of my attempts to design and receive college-wide approval for a tutor training course at my college. The course—"English 62: Tutoring in a Writing Center: A Practicum"—is but one blip on curriculum committees' screens. And, of course, it is hardly a revolutionary idea, since many colleges, two- and four-year, have had such a course on the books for years. But as both personal and institutional history, my narrative may be able to say a whole lot about the larger view that writing centers need to adopt in order to exist in relationship with others. It may even, although I may be on thin ice here, give "becoming politic" a good name.

I should, first of all, come clean and say that I am a tenured member of the English department, and currently Chair of the department at Bristol Community College, a privately endowed, public two-year college in Massachusetts. As such, I am already situated in relatively privileged ways at my college—a case which would be far

The *Writing Lab Newsletter*, published in ten monthly issues from September to June by the Department of English, Purdue University, is a publication of the International Writing Centers Association, an NCTE Assembly, and is a member of the NCTE Information Exchange Agreement. ISSN 1040-3779. All Rights and Title reserved unless permission is granted by Purdue University. Material will not be reproduced in any form without express written permission.

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Subscriptions: The newsletter has no billing procedures. Yearly payments of \$15 (U.S. \$20 in Canada) are requested, and checks must be received four weeks prior to the month of expiration to ensure that subscribers do not miss an issue. Please make checks payable to Purdue University and send to the Managing Editor. Prepayment is requested for all subscriptions.

Manuscripts: Recommended length for articles is 10-15 double-spaced typed pages, 3-5 pages for reviews, and 4 pages for the Tutors' Column, though longer and shorter manuscripts are invited. If possible, please send as attached files or as cut-and-paste in an e-mail to mjturley@purdue.edu. Otherwise, send a 3 and 1/2 in. disk with the file, along with the paper copy. Please enclose a self-addressed envelope with return postage not pasted to the envelope. The deadline for announcements is 45 days prior to the month of issue (e.g. August 15 for October issue).

different were I not full-time faculty (and chair). After more than a decade of employment at my college, I came to the rather disturbing conclusion that I really didn't know how things worked at Bristol. How is institutional change really made (I'm still trying to figure that one out)? How are courses proposed and approved? To learn more, I requested to get on two committees: strategic action and curriculum. I won't say much here about the first, although I have learned much about strategic action and outcomes and measures. Rather, I want to concentrate on the work of curriculum approval, since it bears directly on the course that I worked on.

Prior to proposing the tutor course, I had been on the college-wide curriculum committee for a semester and had learned this much: at the two-year college, curriculum change is everyone's business. How will course x affect students' ability to transfer to a four-year institution? What are the implications for general education? Why are the prerequisites different from those in other department or program offerings?

These questions seem far removed from the concerns we writing center directors and tutors have. And they were certainly not questions I was thinking about when, while on sabbatical, I decided upon the idea of proposing English 62. Rather, I was thinking about the advantages such a course would bring to the workings of our Writing Lab. Instead of having to rely on hurried staff meetings for tutor training, we would have regularly scheduled class meetings to reflect on what it means to work in a writing center. And instead of relying on word-of-mouth to recruit new peer tutors, a new course would serve as a magnet to attract potential tutors. Those things crossed my mind—and the fact that a range of textbooks was now available for student use.

From the dreamy haze of my sabbatical, I returned to campus and hard reality as I promptly drafted and submitted my course proposal. At our campus, it

became clear to me, I would need to pass through a number of hurdles: a division-based curriculum committee, our division's assistant dean, and the college-wide curriculum committee. In the past, the department committee, which had been comprised of one faculty member from the English department, seemed to rubber stamp proposals coming out of the department and passed them along to the college-wide committee. I quickly discovered that would not be the case with my proposal. A few days after I submitted my proposal, I received feedback from my assistant dean that the course would not proceed unless it were applicable to more than liberal arts students. I will explain shortly what the concept of applicability entails at a two-year college, but, for now, be assured that I didn't then have a clue as to how to proceed. I naively assumed that when a faculty member proposed a course all that he or she needed to do was provide a course description, a statement of objectives, and a course outline or syllabus. This was really quite a wake up call for me. So secure was I in the confines of my disciplinary home of composition and writing center studies, I naturally assumed that others would yield to my claims of expertise and would clear the way for the course. After all, didn't I know best what needed to be taught?

I was further shaken out of my comforting naiveté when a colleague from the English department, the chair and sole member of the divisional curriculum committee, took me aside and told me, bluntly, that he felt the course would go nowhere. Why, I asked? He had a list of problems. First, he thought the course might be inappropriate to be both the teacher and the employer of students—our peer tutors are paid for their work in the Lab through a tutoring center funded by our center for developmental education. In addition, he wondered whether the course, in assuming that students may serve as teacher/tutors, might be out of reach for most two-year college students.

Later, he would voice his concern that the prerequisites for the course must be stringent enough to prevent the less serious student from using the course simply to obtain college credit. Finally, he said that I needed to do my homework. I needed to research which colleges, especially two-year colleges, have similar courses on their books. In other words, if this proposal was to have a chance of progressing, a lot more legwork had to be done.

Although we had our disagreements about the appropriateness of this course for this college, I responded that I would take this feedback seriously and that I hoped he and I could work together to strengthen the course proposal, which he agreed to do. In fact, the players in this process—the department colleague, assistant dean, other faculty who would soon join the divisional curriculum committee, and the members of the college-wide curriculum committee—provided useful commentary throughout. I was not alone—a refreshing thought for a composition and writing center professional.

I received fresh confirmation that I was not alone when, after asking colleagues on the WCenter listserv about tutoring courses at two and four-year colleges, I received D'Ann George's well-researched list of institutions which had such courses already in place. I knew that it would be terribly important to find two-year colleges that offered a tutor course and so I queried the two-year college people on WCenter, and received helpful replies, off list, from several two-year college writing center directors.

This was just the beginning. I would need to talk to our transfer advisor to learn more about the chances that students could take the course at Bristol and transfer its credits to four-year colleges. I knew from our email correspondence that D'Ann was in the process of getting a course through her department curriculum committee, but I needed to hear about other institu-

tions in our area our students attend. Communicate with English department heads, I was advised, to see if they would accept in writing such course credits in the English major. Apparently, not only did I have to research the existence of tutoring courses, I was advised to get statements from department heads attesting to the view that my course would be comparable to their department's offering.

Knowing the wide chasms that divide two and four year colleges both within our area and nationally, I did not welcome the prospect of trying to instantly bridge a credibility gap that had taken decades to create. As it turns out, I communicated productively with the English department chair of one of our feeder institutions, but demurred on the rest. Much more groundwork would have to be done before a constructive dialogue between two and four-year colleges, here and elsewhere, could proceed.

The approved form or template which the college provides for the proposal of a new course or for revisions to an old course has seven parts: catalogue description of the course, a statement of course objectives, a course outline, a list of applicable programs and certificates, a rationale, the title of a potential text, and an indication as to whether the course would fulfill specific general education or cultural diversity requirements. I was being asked to explain how this course would fit into the existing curriculum. At a public two-year college, where resources (from the availability of classrooms to students' own ability to pay for their course load) are limited and where the comprehensive mission remains to provide a general education, any request to add to the curriculum must be carefully tailored to meet these conditions, even as faculty work to update course offerings. How did my proposed course apply to existing programs? How did it fit in with the college's overall mission?

Conversations that I had with a colleague on the divisional curriculum committee, which now boasted three mem-

bers by the way—two from English and one from the graphic arts area—convinced me that the course would serve nicely as an elective in the newly revamped education program, which included K- through-12 training. I knew as well that this course might attract students in our up-and-coming Honors program—very likely, given the caliber of students who typically sign up to work in the Writing Lab. Recently, a colleague has suggested that the course could be registered in our brand-new service learning program—students could be asked to take their tutoring skills into community-based literacy centers.

As part of the course rationale, I indicated the need for more formal instruction of peer tutors, but it took the comments of a colleague from the divisional curriculum committee to suggest that such a course might more broadly assist in improving student retention since it would allow for more effective training of peer tutors in the Writing Lab. Student retention or persistence, I have come to learn from my work on the strategic action committee, has become a flash point at the college—going to the heart of what it means to be an open access institution. Is it the college's responsibility merely to open the door to students, or does it have an obligation to see that students succeed once they've arrived?

As you can see, the story of how English 62 came to be has traversed quite a distance from my solitary sabbatical musings. Becoming politic requires that we ask the kinds of questions that I've just asked, rather than simply asking, What will be the content of this course? Becoming politic, at my own institution, means adopting a college-wide perspective. The pay off is rich indeed. In the most immediate sense, the adoption of English 62 has institutionalized or curricularized Bristol Community College's Writing Lab—a course focusing on the work of the Lab, taught by the Director of the Lab, will be in the college catalogue. More

profoundly, I have come to believe that writing center professionals can be players in college-wide discussions about matters that affect an entire institution, such as retention, developmental and honors courses, service learning, general education, and, closer to home, writing programs and writing-intensive courses. No longer needing to hunker down in basements or see themselves relegated to the role of insurgent, writing centers can look forward to being in the thick of things.

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Symposium on Second Language Writing

The Third Symposium on Second Language Writing will be held on Oct. 11-12, 2002 at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana. This year's Symposium, "Constructing Knowledge: Approaches to Inquiry in Second Language Writing," will feature scholars who will explore ways in which knowledge is constructed, transformed, disseminated and negotiated in the field of second language writing. For more information, please visit: <http://icdweb.cc.purdue.edu/~silvat/symposium/2002/>.

In conjunction with the Symposium, the Indiana Center for Intercultural Communication will sponsor a Contrastive Rhetoric Roundtable at Purdue on Sunday, Oct. 13, 2002. The Roundtable is free with Symposium registration.

Book Review

Coogan, David. *Electronic Writing Centers: Computing in the Field of Composition*. Stamford, CT: Ablex, 1999. (143+xxii pp. \$24.95)

In many ways, the writing of this review essay has, hopefully, achieved the sort of dialogism held as an ideal in *Electronic Writing Centers*, since none of the reviewers have ever met in person and instead conducted our discussion and responses solely through email, with each of us focusing on a single section of the book that related to our interests as scholars and teachers. Accordingly, we have divided our review into three sections: (1) the “re-tell[ing of] the story of Composition” (xv) that is the focus of chapter one, (2) the case studies that comprise chapters two and three and (3) the larger philosophy underlying Coogan’s view of an electronic writing center that is foundational to chapters four and five.

Introduction and Chapter One: Reviewed by Melissa Ianetta (Ohio State University, Columbus, OH)

David Coogan has an ambitious goal: “a call for the entire composition community to coordinate a new mandate for the electronic writing center; to imagine an alternative future for peer tutors and the students they serve; not by abandoning traditional centers but by enhancing them with electronic counterparts” (xvi). Furthermore, “[c]reating these counterparts means rethinking what Composition generally expects of writing centers and what writing centers generally expect from themselves. It also means rethinking the history of the process movement” (xvi). Coogan’s study concerns itself with email tutoring, but connects it to where composition is, where it has been in the past, and where it could go in the future.

In chapter one, Coogan argues that writing centers permitted the growing field of Composition in the classroom to focus on disciplinary concerns with process while remediation was handled elsewhere. Coogan terms this dynamic a Strategy of Containment: “To create

a writing lab, a group of people needed to make conscious decisions to contain problems *elsewhere*” (7). While writing classrooms may have focused on process pedagogy, writing centers assisted in the perpetuation of the functional literacy often associated with the current-traditional paradigm. Both functional literacy—and the students subject to this paradigm—were contained at the margins of Composition. Technology is also implicated in the Strategy of Containment; just as the writing center is an “elsewhere” to which writing problems can be sent, computers are also seen as an “elsewhere” that can instruct students in those grammatical rules of writing that comprise functional literacy’s knowledge base.

Not all writing centers supported this strategy, and some responded with what Coogan calls an Ethic of Intervention: “the main challenge in writing instruction is to intervene and eventually alter the student’s process of writing” (18). By focusing on the one-to-

one personal interaction between tutor and student, this approach to the agency in language creation is denied by functional literacy and so emphasizes the human element likewise abandoned in technocentrism. Nevertheless, the Ethic of Intervention is problematic because it presumes an unbiased tutor who can “grant” the student authority. If this is true, how do we deal with students with papers whose premises contradict our foundational beliefs? By intervening in the writing process, do we inappropriately interfere with the student’s personal choices?

Coogan’s re-view of Composition’s history is an engaging and thought-provoking read. Not only does he offer new insight into the interrelation of disciplinary subfields, but his remapping inspires the reader to rethink the implications of our histories for the present state of our discipline. I thus recommend Coogan’s text to individuals concerned with disciplinary history as well as writing center scholars.

Chapters Two and Three: Reviewed by Jonathan Bates (Motlow State Community College, Lynchburg, TN)

In “Email ‘Tutoring’ and Dialogic Literacy,” Coogan explains how email tutoring is in fact another challenge to functional literacy, outlines his own form of e-mail tutoring by analyzing several electronic sessions, and establishes why he feels electronic tutoring

is better than face-to-face (f2f) tutoring. Coogan believes that e-mail tutoring promotes dialogic literacy by creating “an alternative forum” for students to “appropriate the discourse that they confront in their education” (42). His students’ writing problems provide op-

portunities: “the loss of an expressive order actually creates a new space for dialogic interaction,” the chance to “produce an internally persuasive discourse” and to sort through “competing discourses” (40). The e-mail interchange makes both tutor and student

“answerable to each other’s opinions” and changes the relationship to one between writers, rather than between a student and tutor (52).

Dialogic literacy is based on centrifugal rather than centripetal tutorial goals. Centripetal instruction works towards conformity and preserving only “standard written English, academic literacy, disciplinary discourse” (42); centrifugal instruction “enable[s] tutors and students to think together in non-foundational ways; to pursue dissensus generatively, with a common understanding that disagreements can spur growth” (59). Coogan contrasts this dialogic literacy with face-to-face tutoring in order “to draw attention to the methodological limitations” (30) of f2f tutoring. In the third chapter, Coogan examines two other email sessions, explores “the limits of the expert/layer-

son divide” in the email ““tutorial”” (62), and considers the classic McLuhan dictum. For Coogan, either extreme—that the medium is completely the message (the “myth of all-powerful technology” [60]) or the medium is in no way the message (the “myth of transparent technology”[60])—is equally flawed. In either case, “computers do not create programs that sustain the idea of functional literacy. People do. So, while technology cannot change the meaning of literacy, people can” (28). While I endorse Coogan’s desire to bring human agency in to fight both myths, I find the argument simplistic; it ignores years of research that show that computers *do* have enormous effects on literacy.

Research does confirm much of what Coogan claims about email writing

(Sproull) and his claims for the benefits of collaborative writing pedagogy (for example Hawisher; Eldred). The key advantage of Coogan’s method seems to be that email tutoring makes those tutored see their tutors as writers rather than experts. It is gratifying to see a compositionist take email seriously, balance the concerns of theoreticians and practitioners, and investigate the ideological and pedagogical results of using email in the writing center. However, the argument against face-to-face tutoring is still not convincing. The first students in Coogan’s email case studies express a desire for f2f meetings, and one actually does meet Coogan f2f. Coogan says his email sessions offer answerability and sorting through competing discourses to find an internally persuasive dialogue, but that is also what a good f2f session offers and has been proven to offer.

Final section Reviewed by Erin Karper (Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN)

In the final section of the book, Coogan claims that “there is a life for student writing beyond the course and the semester” and that (Electronic) Writing Centers and Computers and Composition can become the “instruments of this alternative life” (91) via the creation of Electronic Writing Centers (EWCs). The EWC, as Coogan envisions it, is a simple website with collections of student writings from more than one university, which would give tutors and students access to different and distinct student voices and solutions to various problems in disciplinary discourse (93-97). The collection of student work made available in EWCs would offer rich intertextual experiences to students who need to hear other voices, but also “critical exile” for students who “have already established a rich interplay of voices and need to sort through the different sounds they hear” (99). This type of institutional cooperation would also contribute to giving student discourse a life beyond the classroom, albeit one limited to helping other students.

Coogan’s proposal for an EWC is an admirable project, attempting to satisfy his challenges to current writing center studies, computers and writing, and the larger field of composition. However, I am left with some unanswered questions. How will EWC tutors know whether multiplicity of voices or critical exile is necessary, particularly if they are new to electronic tutoring and its different kinds of paralinguistic cueing? While Coogan does demonstrate how the tutoring sessions he used as examples might have been transformed by the presence of an EWC, it was difficult for me to understand how others might go about adapting his methods to their practices.

As someone who studies and works in computers and composition generally and with online writing centers and computer classrooms more specifically, I find Coogan’s linkage of the disciplines of computers and composition and writing centers throughout the book rather troubling. In the final chapters, he claims that writing centers

and computers and composition have critiqued the traditional college writing process by legitimizing and foregrounding the role of collaboration in the writing process. However, I would argue that they have largely done so in different ways, in different contexts, and within very different collaborative relationships. Coogan’s citations of research into the more egalitarian/more collaborative nature of networked classrooms as support for his claims has also been seriously undermined in current computers and composition scholarship; more recent scholars are not quite as glibly dismissing problems arising out of the networked classroom as mere “deep ambivalence toward dissensus” (115). (See Takayoshi, Webb, Wolfe, and Belcher for examples of some of this kind of scholarship.)

Furthermore, if tutor/student relationships are fundamentally different from teacher/student relationships, as much writing center scholarship would

seem to suggest, is it really accurate to use scholarship on student/teacher relationships to discuss possible student/tutor based interactions? However, since Coogan's scholarship attempts to "jeopardize the boundaries" (112) between computers and composition and writing centers, perhaps this is just one example of such a possible disruption. While writing centers and computers and composition are "tangible sites in

which the Subject of Composition is produced" (109), I question whether they are being produced in the same ways and would appreciate a more clear articulation of their common features and the ways in which they dissent from each other.

Coogan argues for a "dissensual 'community' where we can practice a form of writing that strengthens, rather

than weakens, our connections with each other" (119) and claims the EWC provides this alternative. While I admire his call to action, and share his desire to find ways of transcending existing models of tutoring, OWLing, and composition-as-a-whole, I find it difficult to imagine translating his ideas into the actual realities of writing centers, computers and composition, and the university contexts in which they reside.

Conclusion

While our different perspectives have led us to pursue a variety of concerns in Coogan's text, one conclusion has been reached by all reviewers:

Electronic Writing Centers is engaging and thought-provoking even when it is not entirely convincing. Indeed, a text as provocative as Coogan's is

often at its best when we find ourselves disagreeing with it and thus are forced to re-examine our own beliefs.

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Southern California WPA and the Southern California Writing Centers Association

April 27, 2002
Northridge, CA
*"The Contexts of Composition: Considering
Issues, Defining Goals"*
Keynote Speakers: Charles Bazerman and
Andrea Lunsford

Contact: Irene L. Clark, English Department, California State University, Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA, 91330-9248. Phone: 818 677-3414; e-mail: irene.clark@csun.edu; fax: 818-677-3872. Conference Web site: <<http://www.csun.edu/~nlw9004/index.html>>.

TUTORS' COLUMN

Communicating through transitional periods and phrases

Awhile back, a friend approached me with a paper he was working on and asked if I would look it over and offer some suggestions. As I was reading through his work, which was quite good, I noticed his lack of transitional phrases, connecting words that would make his paper flow more smoothly. I mentioned this to him, laughed at the disgusted look he gave me, and then thought nothing more of it. However, as the semester progressed, and he allowed me to read more of his writing, I noticed that it appeared as if using a transition once in awhile in his writing would kill him. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that he wasn't the only habitual non-transition user whose paper I had read. In fact, many of the students who came to the Writing Center had written papers without more than three transitional phrases throughout—a travesty for someone like me, who uses them regularly and with much joy. Though they are not the most important part of writing, they can actually make a bad paper sound good. Transitions connect a writer's ideas and allow a reader to understand and better comprehend the writer's work. How could anyone not want to use transitions?

As I thought about it some more, I was struck by how not only does our writing process benefit from the addition of transitions, but how through working as a tutor I've noticed the transitions students have to make to improve their lives from that of a lowly high school student to a learned college student who excels. All those who enroll in colleges and universities throughout the country and world do

not easily make this transition. College is a definite step up in all aspects—education level, professionalism, commitment, etc. In fact, a step up does not sound high enough, it's more like a “biggie” size up, if I may use local restaurant “speak.” I've tutored enough to make an educated guess as to which students who approach me are freshmen and which are returning students. What gives it away is the amount of communication they express. I would be willing to bet money that the majority of students who come in and talk openly with the tutors are upperclassmen and not freshmen. Similar to how transitions add comprehension and order to a paper, communication provides understanding and coherence, which enable individuals to hold in-depth, meaningful conversations.

When transitioning from high school to college, students need to learn to communicate openly and often with their instructors as well as their peers. High school was a time of force-feedings and required learning. College is for those who want to learn more. Call me crazy, but most of us are here to further our education, not because our parents require us to come. If one wants to succeed, one must put forth the effort to get to know those in charge. It's not as if one has to speak to his or her instructor each day about their grades and how they are a bad judge of one's ability; a simple stop by a professor's office just to say hello often means much more than saying nothing at all. This is how the lines of communication open up. The more often one is able to establish him or herself on the same wavelength as the pro-

fessor, the more enjoyable and comfortable class time and conversation becomes. Open communication also results in less confusion for both parties. If a student doesn't understand an assignment and doesn't say anything, the student will have to live with the grade he or she gets because they were afraid to ask. Professors look for students who will talk to them and ask questions. The phrase “There are no stupid questions” is quite true at college. Students are not made fun of and reprimanded for asking questions and learning; in fact, it is quite the opposite. Those who don't talk to their professors on a regular basis and ask questions are usually placed in neutral zones by their professors, and that can be worse than being in a state of like or dislike, as the instructor has no opinion about you whatsoever.

Just like talking to one's instructors, communicating with one's peers calls for an ability to be able to talk to another individual professionally and assertively whilst remaining calm and understanding. Don't think one can be off the hook just by being able to speak to one's professors in a coherent manner. Peers are valuable resources also. These are the people you learn, grow, and, ultimately, live with, so it is best to make the most of the situations that one is presented with, and that involves a higher degree of communication at times. The more comfortable one becomes talking to other individuals, the more prepared that same person will be once they reach the real world.

Being as how I've completed almost one and a half years of college as well

as half a year of tutoring, I've been in a position to see how this transitioning triangle of communication works. This comes into play quite often while tutoring. A student must be able to talk to his or her professor as well as the tutor. The tutor must be able to relate to both the professor and the student, and lastly, the professor must be able to convey his ideas to both the student and the tutor. This triangle is what makes tutoring flow smoothly, just as transitions help a paper to flow smoothly. Transitions and this triangle produce better understanding and comprehension. It's amazing how many students come to a tutoring session not fully understanding an instructor's assignment. Those students are frustrated and about ready to give up on their blossoming writing career because they aren't sure how to begin writing. When asked if he or she has spoken to the professor, the student almost grimaces and says no very quietly. How is one supposed to know what a professor wants if that person is unwilling to go speak to the professor? I haven't quite figured that one out yet. Simply

asking the instructor what exactly he or she means would solve quite a few of the frustrated student's uncertainties. I honestly don't think that is too much to ask or even too hard to do.

At the same time, the professor should have a description of assignments ready for the tutors so that we can automatically take a look at the instructions and help clarify them with the young writer. If a tutor and a writer are not getting along well, and both are frustrated to kingdom come, the tutor should be able to go to the instructor and talk about what's going on during his or her tutoring sessions. By the same token, the instructor should be willing to go to the student and the student should be willing to work with the tutor. It's an unending process that keeps recycling itself again and again allowing for many happy writers, instructors, and tutors.

For the most part, it isn't difficult to see why so many students have a problem transitioning from high school to college. The amount of communication

that is needed to further one's education can seem phenomenal at times, but it doesn't have to be overwhelming. Transitions affect all of us in different ways. Some of us breeze through them while others of us trip and fall over them. For those of us who trip and fall, we can always pick ourselves up and keep going. One way we can do that is through communication. Remembering to keep lines of communication open is extremely important whether they be between the student and professor, professor and tutor, or tutor and student. The more communication, the more room there is for understanding one's writing. As for my transition-impaired friend, he is making quite an improvement in coming up with his own connecting creations. Perhaps by the time he's graduated from this University he'll not only be able to help people with transitions in their lives, but also those lacking in their English papers.

Jill Duling
University of Findlay
Findlay, OH

Calendar for Writing Centers Associations

March 1, 2002: Northern California Writing Centers Association, in Hayward, CA

Contact: Cindy Hicks: phone: 510-723-7151; e-mail: chicks@clpccd.cc.ca.us. Conference Web site: <<http://chabotde.clpccd.cc.ca.us/users/ydominguez/NCWCA/index.html>>.

April 4-6, 2002: East Central Writing Centers Association, in Canton, Ohio

Contact: Jay D. Sloan, Kent State University-Stark Campus, 6000 Frank Ave. N.W., Canton, OH 44720-7599. E-mail: jsloan@stark.kent.edu; phone: 330-244-3458; fax: 330-494-1621.

April 11-13, 2002: International Writing Centers Association, in Savannah, GA

Contact: Donna Sewell, Dept. of English, Valdosta State University, Valdosta, GA 31698. Phone: 229-333-5946; fax: 229-259-5529; e-mail: dsewell@valdosta.edu. Web site: <<http://iwca.syr.edu/conference>>.

April 19-20, 2002: Northeast Writing Centers Association, in Smithfield, RI

Contact: J.P. Nadeau (jnadeau@bryant.edu) or Sue

Dinitz (<sdinitz@zoo.uvm.edu>). Conference Web site: <<http://web.bryant.edu/~ace/WrtCtr/NEWCA.htm>>.

April 27, 2002: Mid-Atlantic Writing Centers Association, in Wye Mills, MD

Contact: Cathy Sewell, The Writing Center, PO Box 8, Wye Mills, MD 21673. Phone: 410-822-5400, ext. 1-368; fax: 410-827-5235; e-mail: csewell@Chesapeake.edu

April 27, 2002: Southern California Writing Centers Association, in Northridge, CA

Contact: Irene L. Clark, English Department, California State University, Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA, 91330-9248. Phone: 818 677-3414; e-mail: irene.clark@csun.edu; fax: 818-677-3872. Conference Web site: <<http://www.csun.edu/~nlw9004/index.html>>.

October 25-27: Midwest Writing Centers Association, in Lawrence, KS

Contact: Michele Eodice (michele@ku.edu) or Cinda Coggins (CCoggins66@aol.com). Conference Web site: <<http://www.writing.ku.edu/ncptw-mwca>>.

Beyond our borders: Using a corporate model for writing center outreach programs

Regardless of the personality and appearance of the actual writing center, most centers are experiencing an inability to fulfill the increasing demand for their services. As writing center administrators, we see it as our mission to support instructors teaching writing in their classrooms and students learning those skills. But without sufficient funding, this mission has been compromised as we turn away students by the dozens. Our clientele becomes increasingly limited to students in first-year writing courses and other English classes. As a result, we are becoming a support system for the English Department, rather than for the whole university. In answer to budgetary constraints and increased demand, we decided to implement a series of outreach programs designed to fulfill targeted student needs in focused and efficient settings. We hoped to convince other, perhaps wealthier, departments or schools to finance the programs. We also hoped that we could reduce demand in the Center through our outreach efforts.

Choosing the corporate model

As the funding prospects continued to look bleak, we considered looking beyond our usual sources. We needed to convince others to support our efforts, which meant widening our niche in the campus community. But first, we had to change our own mindset. We began thinking of ourselves not just as a support system for the English Department, but as a small company of writing experts with a product to sell. I wanted to consider how we as a writing center might appropriate the idea of the “corporate model” into our mission.

To many in the humanities, a corporate model is little more than a buzzword that pertains to other parts of the university where research is routinely funded, but the concept doesn’t have to be confined to business and engineering schools. While companies have invested in research at universities and colleges for decades, now they are looking to these same institutions to train their employees, both present and future, in an array of subjects from technical skills to finance to policy-making. In return for their academic expertise, these universities generate substantial funds from corporate partnerships. In addition, these high-profile relationships boost recruitment for both the companies and the universities, lend both business and institution prestige, build confidence and skills in employees and potential employees, and offer students a better chance at landing a corporate job.¹

The growth of these corporate models signals a change in the mindset and perception of universities. No longer perceived primarily as hallowed places of erudite learning, universities are now seen as institutions that teach their students practical thinking, reasoning, technical, and writing skills. For those of us in writing centers, studying the corporate model encourages us to think of our work not just as a means of support for teachers and students, but also as a necessary product for which companies will provide funding.

Revising the corporate model for writing centers

While it may be possible for some writing centers to adopt a “true” corporate model in which they embark on

partnerships with businesses, we needed a revised version that we could implement within a short period of time. Since the corporate model is based on the idea that partnerships between seemingly different entities can be mutually beneficial (the interdisciplinary approach for the “real” world), we decided to target university departments, schools, or offices that not only desperately needed our skills, but had the funds to pay for them. At the same time, these partnerships needed to be more than just monetarily beneficial for the Writing Center; we wanted to create outreach programs that would help student writing, relieve our overcrowding in the Center, offer tutors an opportunity to gain a different kind of teaching experience, raise our campus profile, and foster working relationships with other offices across the university. While we couldn’t forge partnerships with actual companies or investment firms, we could revise the corporate model by replacing those businesses with other offices or schools in the university that were willing and able to buy our expertise for businesses in the traditional corporate model. What follows is an analysis of the two outreach programs we developed and “sold” (easily) to “corporations” in the university.

Writing application essays

The first program, entitled “Writing Application Essays for Graduate and Professional Schools,” was designed for third and fourth year students applying to law, business, medical, and graduate school. A two-part program, the series began with a panel discussion, organized by the Writing Center. We invited the Dean of University Ca-

reer Services and admissions officers from the Law, Medical, Business, and Engineering Schools, as well as from the departments of Anthropology and History. The panelists gave presentations on their expectations as readers and evaluators of applications, offering advice ranging from organization and content to the misuse of humor and hackneyed anecdotes. While many universities offer substantial guidance to medical and law school applicants, most schools do not have the same kinds of tools available to students applying to graduate school in other disciplines. These panels generated lively and helpful discussion about the differences between application essays for professional schools and graduate academic programs.

After attending the panel, students were given a week to draft their application essays and submit them electronically to Writing Center tutors. The program culminated in writing workshops, led by experienced tutors, who offered feedback on their writing. We expected that students would benefit not only from the responses of the Writing Center tutors, but also from critiquing the work of their peers. We hoped that reading other students' essays would provide valuable models for a discussion of writing.

We conducted the Application Essay Writing Workshop twice, in collaboration with the Office of African American Affairs and the School of Engineering, respectively.

We approached the Office of African American Affairs because we believed that our program would fulfill one of their primary missions: to interest and recruit minority students into graduate and professional schools. Thus, the workshop, which was advertised and tailored to minority students, promoted a larger mission of the Office of African American Affairs and the university as a whole. Our second series was tailored for the Engineering School (and in the future, we would also include the sciences), not only because

they have more funds available, but also because these disciplines are notoriously anxious about teaching writing to their students. The primary concern among both engineering faculty and companies who hire engineers is the inability of graduates to write clearly. We hoped that these writing programs would offer some of the instruction they desperately want.

We had little trouble raising the funds for these programs because they were designed to be cost-effective, and we carefully outlined our budget in the proposal. Each program cost \$740 to run. We hired five experienced tutors and paid them \$15 per hour for eight hours of work (\$120 per tutor): two hours for attending the panel, two hours for running the workshop, and four hours for reading the submissions. The program was designed and implemented by the Director of the Writing Center and her assistant. We charged the sponsoring organization \$140 for administrative fees, though we should have raised that. As part of the administrative component, we also created an information packet for students with sample essays, tips about essay writing, and rules for revision. In addition, we advertised the programs, organized all the logistics, and most importantly, raised the monetary funds.

While the programs were extremely popular and many students attended the panel discussions, in both cases many students didn't participate in the writing workshops. Despite our best efforts to sell the program as a two-part series, we simply couldn't get students to meet the deadlines for the workshops. In hindsight, it seems obvious that we should have held the workshops immediately following the panels, and students agreed this would have been a more effective model. In addition, the program was held in the beginning of October, which was, unfortunately, just too early in the semester; next time we will run the series just after Thanksgiving break. Polled students agreed that this would be a more useful time to hold the program. We found that distributing evaluations

and conducting exit polls at these programs was not only beneficial for us, but was also helpful in securing future funding because we were able to report back to our sponsors with useful and carefully collected information about future improvements for the program.² In every case, we have had follow-up meetings with the department liaisons who helped fund the programs. While this project did not work perfectly this time, all the administrators agreed that with some small changes, these programs should be offered again during the fall.

Our main goal for this program was to reduce demand in the Center, which we have done successfully. We also feel that this outreach program will give us leverage with the university as we ask for an increased budget next year because it shows that our services are in demand across campus. Running these programs also established relationships with several schools on campus, including Engineering, which has since supported other Writing Center programs.

Dissertation workshops

Last fall the Writing Center offered three dissertation workshops that were so successful that we expanded the program in the spring to include four workshops, all of them serving even more students. This program is designed to offer graduate students from all disciplines the opportunity to discuss the writing process and to receive feedback on their work. These workshops fulfill the urgent need for advanced writing instruction at the graduate level. The groups also provide dissertators with the rare opportunity to work in an interdisciplinary scholarly community. In addition to receiving extensive feedback on their own writing from an experienced writing instructor, participants also polish their own critiquing and editing skills by offering constructive criticism to their colleagues. These workshops have become forums in which students can discuss the problems that arise during the dissertation process, as well. The

program was so successful that we've been forced to keep long waiting lists both semesters.

Although the dissertation groups consisted of five or six students in the fall, in the spring we increased the groups to eight or ten in the hopes that we could reach more people. The Curry School of Education is by far the most highly represented group, but we also have participants from biochemistry, religious studies, chemistry, physics, history, psychology, and engineering. For most students, the interdisciplinary aspect has proven helpful because it forces them to explain clearly their ideas and to recognize where their organization or reasoning runs amok. Readers outside the discipline can often spot structural problems more easily than experts, whose sophisticated knowledge of the subject matter often allows them unknowingly to fill in the gaps or missing logical steps. We've also found that dissertators from varied disciplines can offer each other helpful suggestions for more practical matters, such as gathering research and organizing data.

Led by a Writing Center tutor, each group meets five or six times over the course of the semester. Writing, totaling no more than ten pages per meeting, is submitted electronically to the entire group the Friday before the workshop. Each tutor arranges a slightly different submission schedule with his or her group, but we allow students to submit multiple times during the semester. Each workshop is then spent discussing student work. While critiquing content is encouraged, the tutor focuses primarily on issues of argument, organization, and style.

Like the application essay writing workshops, the dissertation groups are relatively inexpensive to run, though we should have included more money in the budget for administrative duties. Each workshop costs only \$300 to implement, all of which is used to pay the tutor for approximately twenty

hours of work. The program was designed during the fall, and we included administrative costs (approximately \$140) in that first round of fundraising. As with the first outreach program, the Writing Center generated funds from outside sources. Our largest contributors have been the Engineering School, the Curry School of Education, the Dean of Graduate Studies for Arts and Sciences, and the Graduate Student Council. Other departments have contributed small sums as well.

While the evaluations from last semester were extremely positive, we did have trouble retaining people towards the end of the fall semester. We remedied this problem in the spring by encouraging students to submit several times across the semester rather than just once. The dissertation workshops continue to be popular, and we have already received inquiries about future workshops.

Conclusion

Using a revised version of the corporate model has not only changed the way we perceive ourselves as a writing center, but has also proved beneficial in ways we didn't imagine. While our primary commitment is still to support the English Department, particularly the first-year writing courses, through the use of individual tutorials, we realize that our expertise is a valuable product in high demand across the university. Although the funds we generated by conducting these outreach programs proved useful, the teaching and administrative opportunities they provided for our staff and the publicity we gained for the Writing Center cannot be underestimated. In addition, both the application essay workshops and the dissertation groups have allowed us to decrease demand in the Center while offering valuable services to a wider clientele. We have forged mutually beneficial relationships with other departments, schools, and administrators, and we now understand that writing centers cannot afford to be excluded from the trends changing universities,

where collaboration and interdisciplinary work is steadily gaining recognition and support.

Kate Stephenson
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA

Notes

¹ For a detailed discussion of the corporate model, please see Jeffrey A. Cantor's *Higher Education Outside the Academy*.

² James H. Bell's recent article "When Hard Questions Are Asked: Evaluating Writing Centers," in *The Writing Center Journal*, emphasizes the importance of self-evaluation in Writing Centers. This cannot be stressed too much, especially when using a "corporate model" such as this one. Quantifiable results are much more a part of the business, engineering, and science culture, a fact of which those of us in the writing field need to be mindful. These assessment tools are important not only for the useful information they generate, but also because their mere presence (never mind the results) strengthens others' perception of writing centers as serious, well-run organizations.

Works Cited

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Evolution, inoculation, and acupuncture: How the new distrust of science will affect the writing center

I've learned a lot from my students: how to take chances; how to start things I don't know how to finish; how to procrastinate.

And recently, I learned from Lisa, one of my comp students, that creationism is a theory in the same way that evolution is a theory. This unusual appropriation surprised me, not because someone would believe in creationism in Oklahoma but because someone could see science and religion as equally theoretical, because someone could assert that science (concept derived from observable fact) and religion (belief derived from faith) are somehow the same.

Growing up in a strongly scientific and strongly Christian home, I had always seen the two as distinct, not necessarily intersecting, that lack of intersection not necessarily a problem. My father, a medical practitioner, valued the answers science provided him. My mother, a Methodist practitioner, valued the purity of belief. And growing up between them, I was allowed, encouraged to explore the two as equally necessary and equally honored parts of a well-rounded life. As a result, I had always seen *theory* as something totally different from *belief*; not necessarily better or more honorable, but certainly as different. So, when Lisa wrote, blending the two into comparable entities, I was amazed.

What Lisa introduced me to, this metamorphic reconfiguration of the concepts of science into the concepts of faith, is becoming common. As science and time march forward, many are reaching in different directions to find the answers we seek. Why is this happening? I suspect that there are several reasons, and I want to explore some of the possible reasons for this convolution. I also want to explore

what this collapsing and intertwining of ideas might mean for writing centers.

The collapsing of boundaries

Lisa, of course, was collapsing the distinction between science and religion. Moreover, she was appropriating the vocabulary of one group for use by another, a common method of the fundamental religions: creation *science*, the *theory* of creation. (Imagine if this language appropriation were reversed: the Gospel According to Darwin).

Or consider this example, in the state of Kansas, as most everyone has heard, questions about evolution have been removed from the state-mandated science tests. Also in Kansas, as not everyone knows, test questions have also been removed about the origins of the universe. It's not that these changes push evolution as replacing science; it's just that science itself is being questioned. In Kansas, at least, science's answers are no longer accepted as somehow better than other answers.

For writing centers, then, this aspect of convolution, the collapsing of boundaries, could have great impact. For starters, we will have to be aware of this vocabulary shift and will have to address it in student writing. We will have to be prepared to explain, in non-judgmental ways, the different ways science and religion employ words like "theory." We will have to be prepared to explain to our clients how faculty members might react to this appropriation of terms. And, in the process of explaining vocabulary, we may find ourselves explaining the difference between religion and science, between faith and observation.

In short, then, the writing center may become a central location in the battle

between science and religion, and we may eventually play a major role in mediating the differences, whether we want to or not.

Decertification of the authority of scientific fact

Relating to, perhaps extending from, collapsing boundaries comes a general questioning of scientific certainty. Throughout my life, the answers given to us by science have been considered to be the ultimate answers to earthly questions, reasonable and solid. The reasoned, evidenced answers of science have supported many of our social norms—from sexual practices to dietary choices to environmental regulations—for the last thirty years. But the authority long extended to science is also being questioned.

The questioning of scientific answers has, in turn, led to skepticism about any policy based on scientific answers. Perhaps the earliest example of this is the rejection of regulations based on global warming. The carefully gathered, triangulated data which shows, with near certainty, that the earth is warming alarmingly quickly, has been discounted by a wide array of opponents, few with any data to support their resistance. The battle in this instance has become a battle over science, not one over global warming.

Or here's another example, in the state of Kentucky, among others, parents who no longer remember, as I do, suffering with measles and childhood friends crippled from polio, are suing to reverse state laws requiring inoculation against diseases for children entering public school. Even though history shows the decimating effects of these diseases and science has proven the relatively low risk of vaccination, parents are rejecting the authority of the state and of science.

As schools and governments acquiesce, management by the uninformed becomes the order of the day. And those uninformed managers, springing from their overall disappointment with science, will be working from positions fed largely by cynicism and gullibility.

This deteriorating faith in authority could affect the very operational structures upon which writing centers are constructed. From the writing process studies of Flower and Hays, to the education theories of Vygotsky and Piaget, to the tutoring concepts of Harris and Bruffee, our writing center work itself comes from science. We could, if trends continue, find those less informed than we are telling us how to run our centers. We think it's bad now justifying our centers' operations to administrators, just wait until we have to justify our procedures to state legislators and our students' parents.

A return to myth

If science no longer maintains authority, what does? In some aspects, we're stepping backwards in time, returning to an era when decisions were made on the basis of social myth, folklore. For example, sales of traditional

and herbal medicines are on the rise as people turn to aroma therapy, acupuncture, and other folk healing systems. Even though many of these folk therapies have never been scientifically shown to have much, if any effect on the body, Americans are turning to them in increasing numbers.

This return to myth might signify a shift in the emphasis society places on different values. For example, it might indicate that the importance of story is reemerging as a persuasive tool while the value of mathematics—the language of science—is declining.

The return to myth will also affect what we do in writing center. For one, we will probably have to spend a lot more time showing students how to assess the credibility of sources and the value of evidence. We may have to teach logic. We will have to demonstrate the appropriate use of myth in an academic world, and show the inappropriate uses without insulting the writer.

In writing centers, we will also have to be prepared to explain the difference between story and mathematics, and explain why members of some sub-cultures give greater value to one than the

other. And we will have to be prepared to justify the academy's preference for specific, material artifacts to general, anecdotal ones.

Conclusion

Taken alone, these events—the appropriation of scientific terms by religion, the depowering of trust in authority, the return of authority to myth—could be seen to represent a variety of things, from the rise of the religious right to a skepticism about education to a yearning for simpler times.

Seen on a large scale, however, these events represent a turning away from the truth of science. For the last fifty years, we have been taught that science has all the answers, the truths that we need to understand the world around us.

But now, it appears, society may be about to reverse this trend. As this wave of anti-science hits our campuses and writing centers, we have to be prepared to adapt to the change.

*Kevin Davis
East Central University
Ada, OK*

The slate of open positions for the Southeastern Writing Center Association Executive Board

Due by April 1. Nominations for the following positions are open:

- President (Term: 1 year)
- Vice President (Term: 2 years)
- Treasurer (Term: 2 years)
- Secretary (Term: 2 years)
- At-Large Members: Four (Term: 2 years)

Nominations are to be sent via e-mail or snail mail to Sonja S. Bagby, State U. of West GA:

Sonja S. Bagby
Writing Center
Parkman Room, TLC 1201
State University of West Georgia
Carrollton, GA 30118
sbagby@westga.edu

All nominations must include a brief biography. Deadline for nominations is April 1, 2002, for all e-mail and snail mail nominations. Voting will take place at the annual SWCA meeting to be held at the 2002 IWCA/SWCA Conference in Savannah, Georgia, on April 11-13, 2001. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor at that time.

Ballots will be distributed with nominations made previously; those accepted from the floor at the executive meeting may be written in. At the business meeting, changes in the bylaws affecting elections will be proposed to lengthen the president's term to two years and to stagger the at-large terms.

Writing Center Director Texas Christian University

The Writing Center will be housed in a new, high-tech facility beginning with the fall semester, 2002. For more information about the Center, visit our website at <www.wrt.tcu.edu>.

Responsibilities: Responsible to the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs for directing, facilitating, and promoting a very dynamic Writing Center. Duties include supervising a staff of nine professional and ten undergraduate tutors, managing computer and online writing labs, developing and managing the budget, and actively promoting writing across the disciplines. Appointment: Full-time, twelve months in the Center, beginning July 1, 2002.

Qualifications: a master's degree is required; a doctorate and administrative experience is strongly preferred. Professionally active leadership in writing center work is expected.

Salary: Negotiable and commensurate with qualifications and experience. **Application:** A letter expressing interest in the position and a curriculum vitae should be sent to: Dr. Larry D. Adams, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, TCU Box 297024, Fort Worth, TX 76129. Electronic submissions welcomed at s.mcateer@tcu.edu
TCU is an AA/EOE Employer

Writing Center Asst. Director University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

<<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb>>

The University seeks a Writing Center Assistant Director. Full-time, non-tenure track position in an innovative, busy center providing onsite and online services. The assistant director will collaborate with the director and graduate student consultants to design and deliver services. Minimum qualifications: Master's degree in English or a related field (Ph.D. preferred), 2-4 years writing center experience, and relevant teaching experience. Demonstrated administrative experience an advantage. Skill with instructional technology, non-native language learning, or learning disabilities a plus. UNC-CH is an equal opportunity employer.

Application review begins March 13th. Applications accepted until position is filled. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, and three references. Teaching portfolios, Web work, or other materials that demonstrate ability are welcomed.

Kimberly Town Abels, Director
Writing Center
CB#5137 Phillips Annex
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27599-5137
Or e-mail applications to: kabels@email.unc.edu

Director of Writing Center The University of the Sciences in Philadelphia (USP)

In addition to providing instruction in the Center, the Director is responsible for the administration of the Center, which includes the hiring and evaluation of professional and peer tutors, and planning and promotion of the Center's activities throughout the University. The Director will hold a non-tenure track faculty appointment and occasionally teach an introductory writing course. Date of appointment is August 15, 2002.

All undergraduate students are required to pass a Writing Proficiency Examination as a graduation requirement. The Director of the Writing Center will be expected to serve on the committee which administers and grades the examination and to develop and organize remedial programs for students who fail the proficiency essay.

Applicants must hold an M.A. in English and have experience in a college writing center; a Ph.D. in Rhetoric/Compo-

sition is preferred. The successful candidate will possess strong administrative and interpersonal skills including demonstrated ability to relate to a diverse population. The Director reports to the Chair of the Department of Humanities. The review of applications will begin immediately and continue until March 18, 2002. Candidates for the position should forward a curriculum vitae, the names and addresses of three references, and a statement describing their views on the function of the writing center in an academic institution, including their philosophy on the role of the tutoring process, to:

Dr. Robert Boughner, Chair, Department of
Humanities
University of the Sciences in Philadelphia
600 S. 43rd Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-4495

USP is an AA/EOE employer.

IWCA at CCCC

The International Writing Centers Association invites you to join them at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, in Chicago. On Thursday evening, March 21, there will be a Special Interest Group (SIG) for those interested in writing centers. The session will be held in Parlor E, on the 7th floor of the Palmer House Hotel, at 6:45 p.m.

The session is entitled "Separation, Initiation, Return: Bringing Institutional Perspectives Back to the Writing Center." Three writing center pioneers will share experiences of having left writing centers for other university positions and having returned with refreshed perspectives:

- Jeanne Simpson: "Writing Center Redux: What I Don't Know Now

is Different from What I Didn't Know Then"

- Jeanette Harris: "You Can Go Home Again and Why You Should"
- Harvey Kail: "Right Back Where I Started? Making a Career in Writing Centers"

Immediately following the SIG there will be an IWCA board meeting in the same room, and you are invited to attend.

Midwest Writing Centers Association and National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing

Call for Proposals
October 25-27, 2002
Lawrence, KS
"Learning with Writing Tutors"
Keynote speaker: Beth Boquet

Call for proposals and other info: < <http://www.writing.ku.edu/ncptw-mwca> >. Proposals due April 1, 2002.
Contact: Michele Eodice (michele@ku.edu) or Cinda Coggins (CCoggins66@aol.com).

THE WRITING LAB
N E W S L E T T E R

Muriel Harris, editor
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