The WAC-ky Times

The Official Newsletter of Auburn University at Montgomery’s Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Program

WID Intern Nominations

Calling all talented writers from across the curriculum!

It’s time to nominate the best and brightest of writers from all content areas to serve as Writing in the Discipline (WID) interns during the Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 semesters.

Nominations from faculty will be due on Monday, April 30th. Any faculty member who has completed the first four sessions of WFDI may nominate a student.

WID Intern Qualifications

The following qualifications apply to nominees:

- Interns should be undergraduates of junior standing or above during the year of the WID internship. In other words, second-semester sophomores can be nominated in Spring 2012 as an intern in next year’s program.
- WID interns must have an overall GPA and GPA within their major of at least 3.0, although 3.5 is recommended.
- WID interns should have completed a WI content-area course to give them a clear understanding of WAC program expectations and writing in a given field or area.

Call for Nominations

All WFDI-trained instructors will be contacted in early April, requesting nominations for the WID Intern program. Simply reply to the email with the name, email address, and major of your nominee and a statement providing your reasoning for the nomination.

During the month of May, nominees will be requested to apply for the program. After a review of applications, candidates will be asked to interview with Susan Barganier, Director of the Learning Center, and WAC staffers Jenny Good and Jennifer Dyess.

Those selected will complete WID Intern training in August. Ongoing training will continue throughout the academic year.

These are paid internships to compensate the students for their hard work and effort throughout the year.

WFDI: Summer Training Schedule

Come join us for the Summer 2012 Writing-Intensive Faculty Development Institute.

Like last summer, the schedule will return to two full days of training offered in the same week. With this format, faculty can have flexibility for summer travel and research. The full WFDI series of sessions will be available in June and again in July.

The first four sessions of WFDI, covered in two days during the summer, are open to all tenure-track faculty who would like to learn about the WAC program, regardless of whether or not a faculty member plans to teach a writing-intensive course in the future.

The Summer 2012 sessions of WFDI have been planned for the following dates and times:

- Monday, June 18 and Wednesday, June 20, 2012 (9 AM to 4 PM)
- Tuesday, July 17 and Thursday, July 19, 2012 (9 AM to 4 PM)

Send an email to Jenny Good (jgood@aum.edu) to register for the two-day summer session of your choice.

Spring 2013 WAC Course Proposals Are Due to the WAC Committee by August 1, 2012
An objective of WFDI is bringing together faculty and providing opportunities to share instructional practices and strategies among colleagues.

The following listing offers advice and ideas that were generated in the fifth session of WFDI—when faculty members are actively involved in their first semester of WI instruction:

- When correcting or checking for conventions I don't make specific corrections (i.e., re-spelling in correct words or re-punctuating for them); I circle the problem and tell them that this may be the wrong word (WW) or the punctuation is wrong (P?). This way they have to fix it and often learn the correct way more than if I did it for them. (Jesse Broussard, Foundations and Secondary Education)

- I feel strongly that initially I should work one-on-one with the students. I have found this is very effective in engaging students in writing improvement. After working with them, my next step is to refer them to my WAC intern. For me, this is the next step as he has a copy of all assignments and is very familiar with the course. (Belinda Marable, Psychology)

- I remind them of the **bigger goals in writing** like being organized, answering the question, and making your point(s). (Zack Jourdan, Information Systems and Decision Sciences)

- We must have a clear target audience when writing. (Enoch Lee, Mathematics)

- Individual conferences and other forms of feedback on drafts will make a difference in students’ grammar. The stakes are just so much higher if you explain how their awkward use of grammar or other Language Conventions muddles their argument or makes them sound less clear than they want to be (as Bean explains). If they can see the error in the context of their own work, and have it explained to them there, they’re more likely to understand it and make changes. (Robert Klevay, English)

- Marketing the past-tense, passive voice style that I am looking for in their scientific report writing. (Steve Arnold, Physical Sciences)

- I assign a lot of scholarly articles. I know this is difficult, but I think reading examples of published scholarship helps students model good writing. (Keri Watson, Fine Arts)

- Based on my experience in my field, the two most fundamental properties of good scientific writing are clarity and conciseness. Analogies or metaphors are rare and should be chosen carefully. For example, I use the phrase “short circuit” to describe a biological phenomenon which is currently the focus of my research. (Pete Haddix, Biological Sciences)

- Perhaps the thing I tell them most often is that they need to stop trying to write papers like they’re writing English papers, and that they should throw away their thesaurus, if they have one. (Michel Aaij, English and Philosophy)
Sharing Ideas: The International WAC Conference

This June, Susan Barganier, Jennifer Dyess, and Jenny Good will travel to Savannah, South Carolina to attend and present at the International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference.

Specifically, the three will present a paper on the collaboration between Learning Center tutors and WID interns that has evolved here at AUM.

At many universities, as is true here at AUM, WAC programs organizationally fall within Academic Affairs whereas Learning Centers often fall within Student Services. At times, this can cause political and practical difficulties in collaboration that impede the creation of effective support in writing throughout students’ academic careers.

However, at AUM, WAC and Learning Center staff collaborated to bridge the divide between the student and professional tutors funded through each program.

For instance, in contrast to the WID intern program that is philosophically aligned with theories of supplemental instruction, the LC tutors have extensive experience and training in tutoring pedagogy. Capitalizing on the strengths of each philosophical tenet and encouraging collaboration between tutors and interns became imperative to each program’s health and growth.

In addition to presenting a paper on the collaborations between Learning Center tutors and WID interns, Jenny Good will also preside at a session that includes a paper presentation from Auburn University’s Director of Writing, Margaret Marshall.

This sharing of information among professionals revitalizes our own WAC program.

Sharing Research: American Educational Research Association

On Saturday, April 14, Jenny Good will present a paper at a roundtable discussion in Vancouver, BC during the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) conference.

Jenny Good will discuss the importance of establishing inter-rater reliability when using a university-wide writing rubric template. In addition, she will demonstrate what can be learned through a careful analysis of the ratings and how the results of a multilayered inter-rater reliability study can reform and improve faculty development offerings.

Using data collected during inter-rater reliability exercises in the last session of WFDI, the overall intra-correlation coefficients per writing dimension on the WAC rubric appear sufficient ([Focus]=.83; [Content]=.71; [Organization]=.81; [Style]=.80; [Language Conventions]=.70).

A closer analysis that considered inter-item correlations from one rater to the next and from the WAC program administrator to each rater revealed inconsistencies among raters for certain writing dimensions.

Certainly, checking the psychometric properties of a writing rubric, such as validity and reliability, is valuable for any program that uses a rubric to measure growth in student outcomes. Yet, on a practical level, many administrators and trainers stop at the first broad sweep of the data when they feel it has produced sufficient results.

Few bother to look at the data at a deeper level and consider the story it tells about the various components of the writing program.

In order to make this information available to other educational researchers, AERA has started publishing the meeting proceedings through their online repository. Feel free to contact Jenny Good (jgood@aum.edu) for the full report.
The accurate labeling of WI courses in the Banner system is essential to the success of the WAC program.

How do you know if a course section should be labeled as writing-intensive (WI)?

- **Check to be sure it is taught by a WFDI-trained faculty member:** A course must be taught by a member of your faculty who has participated in WFDI. Please contact me if you would like a current listing of faculty.
- **Check to be sure it is a WAC-Approved Course:** A course must be approved by both the WAC Committee and the Curriculum Committee. The current listing of approved courses is available by clicking on this link: [http://www.aum.edu/academics/writing-across-the-curriculum/forstudents/Eligible-WI-Courses-per-Department](http://www.aum.edu/academics/writing-across-the-curriculum/forstudents/Eligible-WI-Courses-per-Department)
- **Talk to your Department Head:** All department heads have the final decision on which course sections will be scheduled as WI for any given semester. Department heads often have long-term planning, faculty loads, and course releases in mind when determining WI instruction.

When I have checked to be certain that a section of a course qualifies as writing-intensive (WI), what do I need to do in Banner for that section?

- **WI Label in the Section Field:** A course must have a WI at the beginning of the section field in Banner (i.e., WI1, WI2, WI3). A “W” alone does not signify a writing-intensive (WI) course.
- **WI Label in Front of the Course Title:** The course title should be checked to be certain that the WI appears in the front of the title. The WI in front of the course title will appear on student transcripts. This will be the method used to check transcripts beginning in Spring 2013.
- **WI Credit Hours:** WI sections pick up an additional credit hour when compared to non-WI sections of the same course. Please check to be certain that the additional credit hour is accurately displayed in Banner.
- **WI Course Caps:** Per the original Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) submitted to SACS, WI courses must be capped at enrollment of 20 undergraduate students.

Why is accurate labeling of WI sections of courses so important?

- **Tuition:** WI sections of content-area courses carry an additional credit hour, which means students must pay an additional hour of tuition. Money matters!
- **Faculty Program Involvement:** It is the WI in the section field of a course that triggers the second portion of WFDI. In addition, faculty earn a course release after they teach three WI sections. Without the WI in the section field, these important programmatic requirements cannot be tracked.
- **Student Graduation Requirements:** The WI in front of the course title will appear on student transcripts. This WI in the title will be used to audit transcripts with graduating seniors from Spring 2013 and forward. Without the WI in course titles, a student would have to remain an additional semester to meet graduation requirements.

How to Build a Writing-Intensive (WI) Course in Banner

Meet the WAC Committee:

- Kimberly Johnson, Business
- Lynne Mills, Education
- Lee Farrow, Liberal Arts
- Ramona Lazenby, Nursing
- Sue Thomson, Sciences
- Barbara Hightower, Library

Contact the WAC Director:

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