A New Academic Year with WAC!

The WAC program continues to grow and build. AUM is now entering its fourth year of WAC program implementation. During the 2013-14 year, the fifth year of the program, we will be preparing and submitting our QEP evaluation for SACSCOC.

In addition to more than 100 plus faculty members who have completed WFDI and 100 plus content-area courses that have been converted for writing-intensive instruction, we have continued to develop our Writing in the Discipline (WID) internship program.

This fall, nine WID interns joined the AUM WAC staff. These interns, all undergraduates representing different majors, work with students and faculty in designated content-area courses, providing support and feedback to enhance writing instruction.

The WID interns can be contacted by visiting Education 200 or by calling 334-244-3109.

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

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Spring Training: Renewing the Commitment to Instruction

AUM faculty who have engaged in Writing-Intensive Faculty Development (WFDI) have described it as helping them to rediscover some of the aspects of teaching they liked but may have abandoned during their professional careers.

Be a part of the WFDI experience. Register for the following four introductory sessions of WFDI this upcoming spring:

**Monday/Wednesday Option**
- Monday, February 18; 9 AM to 4 PM: Sessions I & II
- Wednesday, February 20; 9 AM to 4 PM : Sessions III & IV

**Tuesday/Thursday Option**
- Tuesday, February 26; 9 AM to 4 PM: Sessions I & II
- Thursday, February 28; 9 AM to 4 PM : Sessions III & IV

Come join other faculty members in renewing your commitment to effective instruction through WFDI.

Participants who complete all four sessions receive a $400 stipend that is entered into their departmental accounts.

Send an email to Jenny Good (jgood@aum.edu) to register for the WFDI sessions of your choice.

The AUM Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program seeks to improve the quality of student writing campus-wide by incorporating writing-intensive instruction into all undergraduate students’ required programs of study.

The WAC program provides focused instruction to improve students’ writing skills throughout their academic careers, culminating in writing proficiency specific to their selected future careers.
Writing with Confidence: The Power of Professor Praise

Jason Moody

The worlds of athletics and theatre regularly extol confidence, but oftentimes the importance of fostering and maintaining a healthy level of poise goes forgotten in the academic realm.

Writing for an audience can be a nerve-wracking experience, particularly when that audience is a professor with years of experience and a brand new red pen. While some self-doubt encourages revision and editing, too much can become an obstacle for young writers. Students might find themselves in a constant state of anxiety, which can cause guarded, wooden writing.

Instilling confidence can often be a difficult and time-consuming task, especially in students with lower than normal self-esteem, but few things can improve one’s writing more than a healthy level of confidence.

The best way to impart confidence is not to avoid criticism, but to remember to praise. No educator should return an assignment to a student without at least one or two comments pointing out what he or she did right. A simple comment about a particularly well written sentence might be all it takes for a student not to get lost in the red sea of confidence crushing errors.

Praising effort is also a magnificent method of inspiring self-assurance. If a student turns in a poorly constructed paper, but he or she has several drafts, multiple peer reviews, and shows a clear dedication to the process of writing, then simply pointing that out might push them to continue in their effort and to not become despondent.

We Don’t Edit. We Enhance!

Quintella Bibb

Upon becoming a WID Intern, there were a few fundamental rules that we were asked to abide by. We were asked to attend monthly meetings, send out weekly emails to our assigned classes, and support the faculty by aiding them in several ways. Yet, the most essential rule to obey as WID Interns is to help students become more efficient as writers.

Thankfully, the students are receptive to having someone help them with their writing assignments. Who wouldn’t take advantage of free help? However, students are not so receptive when they realize that we are in the revision business and not the editing business.

John C. Bean, author of Engaging Ideas, discusses the issue of editing papers instead of revising them. He explains that editing is when students receive an “inked-up” paper with remarks—or no remarks—about the various mistakes found in the paper. This sort of feedback is not helpful in building the students into better writers. It merely results in students correcting what they are told to correct. They are not learning from their mistakes.

On the contrary, revision is when the professor encourages the student to modify (add, delete, reorder, and reword) aspects of the paper such as focus, content, and organization.

The distinction between editing and revision is crucial to our jobs. Sometimes it is difficult to not edit. It is somewhat second nature and a bad habit that is hard to break. Nevertheless, we must keep in mind our main objective. Therefore, I remind myself and the students that we don’t edit; we enhance!
**Overcoming Hurdles: The Benefits of Experience and Faculty Support**

*Duncan Galbreath*

“What have I gotten myself into? I have no idea what I am doing.” This thought dominated my mind early in my internship. It was present during my first meetings with my assigned faculty, introductions to my classes, my first mass emails, and in my first several tutoring sessions.

Most of the professors and students met me with enthusiasm. The thoughts of doubt faded, allowing me to focus better and provide improved support for the students and faculty.

Another factor that helped me overcome this initial mental hurdle was meeting with my assigned faculty. Several of my professors did a great job in clearly outlining their expectations for the students in the course as well as their expectations for me. They went over the writing assignments with me in detail, informing me of what they were looking for, what they would focus on, and what pet peeves they had in writing.

One professor also had norming sessions with me in which we discussed what was good about the students’ submissions and what needed improvement. This detailed instruction gave me a much better idea of what to watch for in my student tutoring sessions.

My second hurdle to cross was a tendency to edit rather than revise. Our training sessions, the Bean book, and veteran tutors had warned me of this trap. The biggest factor which helped me overcome this hurdle was simple experience. The more assignments I looked over, the easier it became to focus on the higher-order concerns. The combination of experience and instructor norming sessions enabled me to become a much more valuable resource to the students.

**Building Relationships: Adding Talk Time to the Writing Process**

*Jenna Polakof*

Our role in the Writing Across the Curriculum Program provides a unique opportunity for us to build relationships with fellow students while we guide them through the writing process.

Many students are intimidated by courses that are writing intensive. As WID interns, we provide an extra layer of support to assist students in making that transition. Moreover, each course is assigned to a particular intern, so students will work with one intern throughout the semester, which creates a more personal experience by allowing the writer and the intern to grow and improve as a team.

In his book, *Engaging Ideas*, John C. Bean emphasizes the importance of building “adequate talk time into the writing process. As a WID intern, that is exactly what we provide. Whether students schedule a session to brainstorm ideas or to discuss a final draft, we are there every step of the way to mentor and encourage them.

Students recognize that writing is indeed a process and that developing particular skills and strategies improves the quality of everyone’s writing. Writing intensive courses become less intimidating as students develop their own writing process and discover which strategies are most beneficial to them. Sharing this journey with a more experienced peer creates a safe place for students to experiment and grow as writers, which is our goal as WID interns.
In the summer issue of The WAC-ky Times, WAC program staff shared current data regarding student learning outcomes and WAC program implementation and progress based on the 2011-12 WAC annual report.

Like other administrative units on the AUM campus, WAC is also evaluated each spring through OIE’s annual Administrative Services.

The bar chart below demonstrates the most recently shared results from the survey distributed in spring 2012.

In an effort to improve WAC program offerings, the members of our staff and WAC Committee take all available data seriously. To evaluate the program, we believe it is essential to measure our progress through multiple data sources, surveys, and student outcomes.

More importantly, we believe that we should be transparent with the data and share it with our stakeholders—AUM faculty, administrators, and students.

Considering the scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being favorable, the WAC program earned positive responses from AUM faculty and staff. Additionally, ratings increased in all but one area, Customer Service, from 2011 to 2012. In spite of the slight decrease, it continues to be a strength of the WAC program.

The separation of OIE and WAC as well as the relocation of WAC back to the AUM campus this summer are two ways that administrators have responded to the data.

The WAC Committee and staff are committed to continuous improvement.