Ready to Jump On Board? WFDI Part I for Faculty

Many faculty members have participated in WFDI since it was first offered in Spring 2010, and the faculty feedback about the program has been positive. Sample comments from evaluations include the following:

- The entire program is awesome. Should be a part of every faculty’s professional development.

Why wait around and let other faculty members in your department get the benefits of the WAC program? Participate in training, open to all faculty, and you too can receive the advantages of WFDI, including an opportunity to mingle with colleagues from other departments, a chance to share instructional ideas, and possibilities for faculty incentives and course releases. Become a WI instructor!

Spring 2013 WAC sessions will be offered on the following dates:

**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

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 and join the growing community of WI instructors on campus.

Let’s Get Writing: Durr Lectures Essay Contest

AUM’s Durr Lectures Essay Contest is calling for submissions!

Because AUM has committed to a university-wide Writing Across the Curriculum program, it is important that faculty encourage students to write often, for multiple purposes, and for varied audiences.

This essay contest, which awards $500 to the winning student, would be an excellent opportunity to show that AUM has, indeed, developed into a community of skilled and motivated writers.

Please encourage students to submit essays by March 4, 2013. The essays must be typed, double-spaced, and approximately 3 to 6 pages in length with appropriate documentation of sources.

The essays should address the following question:

Are there injustices in contemporary society that call for a renewed commitment to the moral witness of conscience and to what length should our society protect this witness?

For specific information and a more detailed prompt regarding the contest, please contact any one of the following WI instructors:

- Matt Jordan at x3634 (mjordan5@aum.edu)
- Aaron Cobb at x3403 (acobb@aum.edu)
- Eric Sterling at x3760 (esterlin@aum.edu)

This is a great way to recognize student achievement in writing at AUM.
April 2013 Coming Attractions: 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 2013 and Spring 2014 semesters.

Nominations from faculty will be due on Tuesday, 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 staff members Jenny Good and Jennifer Dyess.

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

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**CAAP Testing in April: The Critical Thinking Connection**

During the first two weeks of April, students in WI-labeled content-area courses will be taking ACT’s Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) subtest in critical thinking.

During WFDI, WI instructors share their thoughts regarding the emphasis and development of students’ critical thinking skills through the use of problem-based writing instruction and active learning.

The CAAP critical thinking subtest is a 50-minute, reading-based test that asks students to analyze, evaluate, and extend arguments. WI instructors can make connections between argumentative writing in their content-area courses and evaluation of content-based reading material when researching topics. Students can find sample questions regarding CAAP by visiting the following ACT webpage: http://www.act.org/caap/sample/q.html

Students at AUM are first tested with CAAP during their freshman year—typically in fall semester sections of ENGL 1010. This second testing opportunity with upper division students this April will allow for a demonstration of growth in critical thinking skills as a result of instruction, both writing-intensive and traditional, they have received at AUM.

According to full reports that are available on the website of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE), students at AUM have tested slightly below the national average on the first take of the critical thinking subtest until the 2012 year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>AUM Mean Score</th>
<th>National Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010 (N=690)</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 (N=511)</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>61.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 (N=524)</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>59.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The improvement of incoming freshman scores relative to the national mean over the past three years has been impressive. Now, AUM students can demonstrate the improvement of their own critical thinking skills from pre- to post-test in a “value-added” testing environment this April through their WI content-area courses.
Sharing Critical Thinking Successes: Field Notes on Student Achievement

At the end of the first semester of WI instruction, faculty members have shared what they perceive to be the successes of writing-intensive courses, particularly the impact on students’ critical thinking skills.

The following responses capture the collective thoughts of many of the WI faculty:

- **Liberal Arts:** I have seen the writing process work wonderfully. I also see a growing sense of pride within my students in regard to their writing. In turn, I am proud of them as well. It has been a lot of work, but in the end, it was 100% worth it.

- **Nursing:** By allowing my students to write, I have gained a better understanding of (a) Are they thinking?; and (b) How well are they thinking? Based on this insight, I will be requiring more writing in all of my courses.

- **Sciences:** I am very pleased to see every student in the class has improved dramatically in writing a short proof and/or a mathematical paper throughout the semester. I also see students’ increasing interest in the subject and better understanding of the concepts through writing.

- **Education:** By integrating writing and critical thinking tasks into my course, each student is challenged to a deeper level than earlier classes. I’ve enjoyed witnessing the students rise to the challenge, especially during peer review sessions and open discussions. They have been more engaged in the classroom and more interested.

- **Liberal Arts:** What I am satisfied with is the amount of work and effort professors expect of students on major assignments. I can see that, if they internalize the process and work ethic, they will be prepared for upper level courses across disciplines.

- **Business:** Students almost all agreed that they not only learned the material but also how to apply it in becoming a better leader. This definitely increased my satisfaction since my role as a professor is to make them better leaders. I would not have conceived that this much writing would enhance understanding the way it did in this WI class, but it made the learning experience better for all of us.

Evaluation for All: A Look at the WID Internship Program

From student learning outcomes to WFDI training to members of the WAC staff, all components of the WAC program are evaluated annually. The WID interns are no exception.

Each fall, WI instructors are asked to rate five items (On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest) regarding the effectiveness of their assigned WID intern. The following table provides an overview of the development and improvement of the WID intern program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Fall 2011 (66% response rate)</th>
<th>Fall 2012 (52% response rate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intern’s Content Knowledge</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Communication with WI Instructor</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Communication with Students</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Feedback during Drafting and Revision</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>4.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Students’ Writing Abilities</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Transcript Audit Process

The WAC program began in the Fall of 2009 with the incoming freshman class and all of their counterparts (determined by transfer credit hours) who joined them.

Many of the initial cohort of students who fall under WAC requirements are now graduating this spring. In order to determine their growth in writing skills, learning outcomes for these students will be tracked across the three WI courses they were required to take here at AUM.

Identifying this cohort and auditing transcripts to ensure that all eligible students have met WAC requirements has become a priority of the WAC staff and committee this semester.

Using the listing of students who have applied for Spring 2013 graduation, the chart to the right depicts current compliance among undergraduate program completers with the WAC program.

The students who fall in the section entitled Continuing Audit/Appeal Process will undergo a detailed look at their specific transcripts. If they are required to meet WAC requirements, they will be contacted immediately and asked to submit a WAC Graduation Appeal Form for presentation to the members of the WAC Committee. The form can be found on the WAC website (www.aum.edu/writing) under the Faculty link or on AUMnet.

Please encourage students to check their compliance with the WAC program requirements. The audit process will continue for all future graduating cohorts; however, appeals will only be considered by the WAC Committee for students with 2013 graduations. Students graduating any semester of 2014 or later will have ample opportunity to meet the three WI-labeled course requirement here at AUM.

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Spring 2013 Graduating Class

Exempt: Started or Transferred into AUM before First Cohort
Met Requirements
Continuing Audit/Appeal Process

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