

Department of Writing, Linguistics and Creative Process

2009 Annual Report

Overview

In its second year as an independent department, the Department of Writing, Linguistics and Creative Process continues to show steady growth. On the undergraduate level, students are enthused by each of our specialty areas – Creative Writing, Journalism, Professional Writing: Business, Professional Writing: Public Relations, General Writing, Teaching of Writing: Elementary, and Teaching of Writing: Secondary. On the graduate level, our MFA continues to attract students who are interested in creative, public relations-related and technical genres (see Appendix 4, “Annual Report: MFA in Professional Writing”). And our MA Writing Option – part of the MA in English – continues to attract its share of students.

Most of our Senior 2009 undergraduates concentrated on Creative Writing and Journalism. Several are returning to Western in the fall to continue their studies in the MFA in Professional Writing. This is a retention trend that is increasing and that we welcome.

Our undergraduates infuse their creativity into dynamic projects. The third issue of *Black & White* – the undergraduate student Writing journal – is currently at press. Additionally, a new feminist writing journal is in production. The Writing Club continues to thrive. Several members attended The Writing Department’s final meeting of the semester (May 2009) and proposed regular speaking forums and seminars between students and faculty. The plan is to launch these gatherings in Fall 2009. They will supplement the MFA in Writing’s ongoing workshops and author readings.

The Echo is thriving. Writing majors edit the university’s student newspaper and many other Writing students contribute stories to it.

Two of our one-year appointments (Elizabeth Cohen and Lynne Paris-Purtle) spearheaded a “Veterans Voices” conference in Spring 2009. The conference featured writings and films by student writers, war veterans and professional writers. Its focus was on recent American wars and those who have either fought or been involved or touched by war. The conference was featured – twice – in the *New York Times*.

The Writing Department will remain busy in Summer 2009: It will host new Writing undergraduates (June), host the MFA in Writing’s Summer Residency (August) and host a Young Writers’ Conference (August).

Our Composition specialist, Professor Patrick Ryan, remains extremely busy and wears many hats on behalf of The Writing Department and the university. Professor Ryan is active in the Bridge Program and coordinates CSU online tutoring. He also directs the Writing Lab and the Tutoring Resource Center. And he remains active in the classroom. (See Appendix 1 for a report on the Writing Labs. See Appendix 2 for a Tutoring Resource Center Report. See Appendix 3 for a detailed overview of Writing Placement and Assessment.)

Professor Abbey Zink continues to divide her time between teaching for the Writing Department, serving as Assistant Dean of Arts and Sciences, serving as A&S coordinator of the Bridge project, and serving on various other university committees.

Goal 1: Outstanding Faculty

Our faculty remains extremely productive. The Writing Department's professors are active writers. Our faculty presented their creative works, critical essays and research at various national and international conferences. They organized conferences on and off campus. They coordinated readings and workshops.

Briggs, John

- initiated and helped organize a evening lecture by distinguished CSU Professor Norton Mezvinsky (CSU Professor of History Central Connecticut State) for the Honors program. The subject of the lecture and discussion was "Is a Two-State or a One-State Proposal the Best Approach to a Solution of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict?" Dec. 8, 2008, sponsored by the Honors Program and the Provost.
- served with other CSU Professors on the panel judging the CSU Research and CSU Teaching Awards from the Board of Trustees, fall 2008.
- with Prof. Mezvinsky began work with the council of provosts to create a series of CSU Professor lectures and events on the four campuses.
- gave a lecture to Professor Greg Jin's graduate management class at Ancell on the role of chaos in the financial markets, Nov. 2008.
- conducted an stage interview of Pulitzer-Prize winning author Jhumpa Lahiri, part of the "One Book, One Community" event, Nov. 5, 2008.
- invited and featured presenter at an aesthetics a two-day conference on *Le Beau Ordinaire* (Ordinary Beauty) Université York, Toronto, Canada, April 30, 2008. The title of his paper was "Beauty, Art, Nature and Chaos."
- an invited and featured presenter at EL I CONGRESO INTERNACIONAL DE PROCESOS PEDAGÓGICOS, UN ENFOQUE INTERDISCIPLINARIO (International Conference on Pedagogy with an Interdisciplinary Focus),

convened by La Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico and La Universidad Sergio Arboleda and the Arboleda campus, Bogata, Columbia, October 22-24. The title of his presentation was "Creativity and Education in the Context of 'The Primal Paradox.'"

-- conducted a workshop for the 2008 summer residency of the MFA on "The Power of Ambivalence in the Creative Process."

-- conducted a workshop for the department's MFA winter residency on "Photography—Inspiration and Vision." Participants took photographs of the Nature Reserve on the Westside campus in light of a discussion of chaos, creative process, aesthetics and the visions of Edward Hopper, George Inness, Kasimir Malevich and classic fine art photographers.

-- initiated and helped shape the launch of the "Planetary Story Project" for Black Earth Institute (where Briggs is a fellow):

http://www.blackearthinstitute.org/planetary_intro.htm

-- conducted an all day workshop at Wisdom House, Litchfield Connecticut, April 25, 2009 on "Discovering Wisdom in the Unknowable." The workshop explored the role of the unknowable in science, mathematics and art. There were 22 participants.

-- worked closely with students through the fall semester to develop an article for the spring issue *Connecticut Review* about two WestConn student artists. CR intern Kevin McNulty-DeNunzio wrote the article which featured Western's MFA painter Bryn Gillette and student photographer Adam Schwarz. The article described how the two students have employed their artistic talent to aid orphaned children in Ghana and Haiti. A painting of Haiti by Bryn was featured on the cover of the spring 2009 CR. The inside art section was entirely devoted to the work of the two student artists.

-- worked with Western alumnus Genette Nowak (a recent MFA from The New School in New York and a freelance music critic) to conduct and shape a long interview on the creative process with Massachusetts painter David Bowerman. The edited interview and Bowerman's paintings will appear in the Fall 2009 issue of *Connecticut Review*.

-- co-authored with John Briggs Sr. an article on presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama published in Truthout.org and The Public Record.org., October 2008.

Briggs and Briggs | "McCain, Obama and the Psychology of Decisions"
<http://www.truthout.org/102008R>
 and

<http://www.pubrecord.org/commentary/414.html?task=view>

John P. Briggs, MD, and J.P. Briggs, PhD, Truthout: The bailout crisis at the beginning of October dramatically illustrated the decision-making psychologies of the two presidential candidates - that is, their ability to deal with ambivalence.

Clements, Brian

Publications

Books

Clements, Brian. *And How to End It*. Florence, MA: Quale Press, 2009.

Clements, Brian. *Disappointed Psalms*. St. Helena, CA: Meritage Press, 2009.

Editing

Sentence: a Journal of Prose Poetics, ed. Brian Clements. #6.

Poems in Journals and Anthologies

"Man Looking for Orchard." *Best of Online Writing: 1997-2006*. Snowvigate Press, 2009.

"Subatomic Particle Ritual," "Basket of Brains," "A Cycle," "Nomenclator," "Still Life with Supernova," and "Gamut." *Tex*: Fall 2008, Vol. VI, No. 1.

"Guantanamo." *Connecticut River Review*: Fall 2008.

"from *Disappointed Psalms*." *Blue Mesa Review*: Fall 2008, #20.

"Archmedes in Syracuse." *Bateau*: Fall 2008, Vol. 1, No. 2.

Essays

"What Does John Yau See in Mirrors?" *Galatea Resurrects*, #9, March 2008. (<http://galatearesurrection9.blogspot.com/2008/03/nine-books-by-john-yau.html>)

Interviews

"An Accumulation of Astonishments." Interviewed by Rauan Klassnik on Holy Land blog, January 21, 2009. <http://rauanklassnik.blogspot.com/2009/01/brian-clements-interview-accumulation.html>

"An Interview with Brian Clements from Firewheel Editions." Interviewed by Sam Pink on HTMLGIANT blog, March 24, 2009. <http://htmlgiant.com/?p=6357>

Community Service

Readings at Marist University, Wednesday Evening Poetry Series in Bethel, CT, Waterbury Public Library, King School in Stamford, CT

Delivered a poetry lesson to second graders at the Hawley School in Newtown, CT

Professional Service

Member of Association of Writers and Writing Programs Low-Residency Directors Caucus. Attended annual meeting in Chicago.

Service to the Department and University

Continued as MFA Coordinator.

Authored/edited the university's NEASC 5-year report on behalf of the NEASC Steering Committee.

Authored/edited the Community Health Report Card for Western Connecticut on behalf of the university and a coalition of cooperative institutions in the area.

Served on the Provost's One Book/One Community Committee.

Chaired the DEC for Writing, Linguistics, and Creative Process.

Cohen, Elizabeth

Publications

MORE magazine, feature article, 12/2008.

Essay, "The Fourth Commandment" in Bread and Fire: Jewish Women Find God in the Everyday, edited by Rifka Slonim, Urim Press, 2009

Essay in Behind the Bedroom Door: Literary Writing About Sex, edited by Paula Derrow, Random House, 2009

Poems in Beyond Forgetting: Poetry and Prose about Alzheimer's Disease, Kent State University Press, 2009

SELF magazine, feature article, forthcoming, 11/ 2009.

Weekly columns and articles in The Press & Sun Bulletin, Binghamton, NY,

2008/2009

Conference Presentations

Co-organized conference, “Veteran’s Voices,” writing workshop, keynote and film screening about the experiences of recently returned veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Community Service

Read from my children’s book Georgie, The Flying Dog at New Fairfield Public Library, New Fairfield, Ct.

Read from Georgie the Flying Dog at Maimonides Academy, Danbury, Ct
(donate all proceeds from book sales to Autism Society/autism research)

Serve as an author/ advisor for the Alzheimer's Foundation of America,

Fiction Editor, *Broome Review*, Binghamton, NY

Professional Service

Member: Author’s Guild; American Society for Professional Journalists; National Family Caregiver’s Association

Service to the Department and University

Co-organized campus writing conference; brought established authors to campus for class visits (and cyber visits); read student work in consideration of special honors; read student work in consideration of special honors (MFA program)

De Los Santos, Oscar

Publications:

Books:

“Irwin Allen’s Recycled Monsters and Voyages” (essay). In *Channeling theFuture: Essays on Science Fiction and Fantasy Television*. Ed. Lincoln Garaghty. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009.

Reel Rebels. (Book editor and essay contributor.) Hartford: Fine Tooth Press, 2008.

Essays:

“‘They Never Went Away:’ Exeter 40 Years Later.” *Fate*. Vol. 61 Number 6 Issue 698. Lakeville, MN: 2008. (Article co-authored with JJ Sargent.)

“‘The Andy Griffith Show:’ Mayberry’s Sheriff without a Gun.” TV Sitcoms Online. June 28, 2008. <<http://www.sitcomsonline.com/blog/>>

Conference Presentation

“Gene Roddenberry and *Star Trek*’s Utopian Intimations.” Society for Utopian Studies 33rd Annual Meeting. Portland, ME: November 1, 2008.

Service to the Department

Chair, Department of Writing, Linguistics, and Creative Process (August 2007-Present)

Department of Professional Writing, Linguistics, and Creative Process Journalism Professor Search Committee (Chair, Fall 2008-Spring 2009)

Member, Department Evaluation Committee (DEC)

Member, Writing Department Graduate Committee

Service to the University

Member: Provost’s “One Book / One Community” committee

Member: WCSU Minority Recruitment and Retention Committee

Hagan, Ed**Publications**

“From ‘Peace and Freedom’ to ‘Peace and Quiet’: *The Quiet Man* as a Product of the 1950s.” *After the Flood: Irish America, 1945-60*. Eds., Matthew O’Brien and James S. Rogers. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009. 100-113.

“It’s OK to Talk about Genre Again.” Rev. of *Genre and Cinema: Ireland and Transnationalism*. Brian McIlroy, Ed. *Irish Literary Supplement* Winter 2009.

“A John Ford *Wunderkammer*.” Rev. of *John Ford in Focus*. Kevin L. Stoehr and Michael C. Connolly, eds. *Irish Literary Supplement* Fall 2009. [forthcoming]

Conference Presentations

“Against the Vernacular: the Aestheticism of John Banville and Anne Enright, or, How to Win the Booker.” American Conference for Irish Studies. Midwest Regional Conference. Metropolitan State University, St. Paul, MN. October 10, 2008.

“The Aesthetic and the Demotic: John Banville’s *The Book of Evidence* and Patrick McCabe’s *Call Me the Breeze*.” American Conference for Irish Studies. National Conference. National University of Ireland Galway. Galway, Ireland. June 13, 2009.

Professional Service

Member: American Conference for Irish Studies
Columbia University Irish Studies Seminar

Lomuscio, James

Publications:

Newspaper Stories:

The following stories appeared in the Stamford Advocate, a Hearst newspaper, throughout the academic year. In the belief that I should practice what I preach, some of these stories were used in my journalism classes.

Arguing for fun Debate event attracts 400 students

Author: James Lomuscio
Date: April 19, 2009
Publication: Advocate, The (Stamford-Norwalk, CT)
Page: A005

Students delve into the past for history competition

Author: James Lomuscio
Date: April 5, 2009
Publication: Advocate, The (Stamford-Norwalk, CT)
Page: A008

Angry taxpayers throw 'tea party' to protest the president's budget

Author: James Lomuscio
Date: March 29, 2009
Publication: Advocate, The (Stamford-Norwalk, CT)
Page: A005

It's easy being green at parade

Author: James Lomuscio
 Date: March 15, 2009
 Publication: Advocate, The (Stamford-Norwalk, CT)
 Page: A005

13th labor of Heracles stretches students' Odyssey

Author: James Lomuscio
 Date: March 8, 2009
 Publication: Advocate, The (Stamford-Norwalk, CT)
 Page: A004

Foreclosure event offers help, hope

Author: James Lomuscio
 Date: March 8, 2009
 Publication: Advocate, The (Stamford-Norwalk, CT)
 Page: A005

Himes offers help and hope at foreclosure event

Author: James Lomuscio
 Date: March 8, 2009
 Publication: Advocate, The (Stamford-Norwalk, CT)
 Page: A001

Teachers, teens mine the message of hip-hop

Author: James Lomuscio
 Date: March 1, 2009
 Publication: Advocate, The (Stamford-Norwalk, CT)
 Page: A007

NAACP Celebrates Obama Victory

Author: By James Lomuscio
 Special Correspondent
 Date: November 8, 2008
 Publication: Advocate, The (Stamford-Norwalk, CT)
 Page: 0

No Headline

Author: By James Lomuscio
 Special Correspondent
 Date: November 8, 2008
 Publication: Advocate, The (Stamford-Norwalk, CT)
 Page: 0

No Headline

Author: By James Lomuscio
 Special Correspondent
 Date: October 19, 2008
 Publication: Advocate, The (Stamford-Norwalk, CT)
 Page: 1

No Headline

Author: By James Lomuscio

Special Correspondent
 Date: October 18, 2008
 Publication: Advocate, The (Stamford-Norwalk, CT)
 Page: 1

What He Did with His Star Quality

Author: By James Lomuscio
 Special Correspondent
 Date: September 29, 2008
 Publication: Advocate, The (Stamford-Norwalk, CT)
 Page: 1

Lecture recalls commotion made by the revolution in Sound

Author: By James Lomuscio
 Special Correspondent
 Date: September 15, 2008
 Publication: Advocate, The (Stamford-Norwalk, CT)
 Page: a6

No Headline

Author: By James Lomuscio
 Special Correspondent
 Date: September 14, 2008
 Publication: Advocate, The (Stamford-Norwalk, CT)
 Page: 1

Oyster Festival

Author: By James Lomuscio
 Special Correspondent
 Date: September 6, 2008
 Publication: Advocate, The (Stamford-Norwalk, CT)
 Page: 0

Books:

Lomuscio, James. *Writing with Your Head and Your Heart: Balancing Logic and Emotion to Create Powerful Nonfiction*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008.

* Book is scheduled to enter Second Edition by Spring 2010, and it will include several writings of WCSU students from the 2008-2009 year.

* The text also features two essays from an Iraq War veteran. They were read during the WCSU Writing Department-sponsored veterans' conference.

Conference and Community Service Presentations

On Sunday, March 29, 2009, James Lomuscio was the featured speaker at the annual meeting of the Redding Land Trust held at the Highstead Arboretum in Redding, CT. More than 60 Connecticut residents attended to hear Mr. Lomuscio read from his nonfiction book Village of the Dammed: The Fight for Open Space and the Flooding of a Connecticut Town.

On Thursday, Jan. 1, 2009, Mr. Lomuscio gave a reading of his New York Times article, "When a Car is a Home in Westport," at the residency of WCSU's MFA in Professional Writing Program.

Mr. Lomuscio will be presenting a workshop at WCSU's scheduled Writing Camp this August 2009.

Mr. Lomuscio was the featured guest in the two-part cable TV show *About Town*. The show ran Friday and

Saturday evenings from March 20 to May 9. Discussed were Mr. Lomuscio's books, his recently completed play *Pied-a-Terre*, and WCSU's Writing Department, which was well touted.

Professional Affiliations:

James Lomuscio is Past President of the Connecticut Press Club.

Paris-Purtle, Lynne

Publications:

Dragonfly Wings (Last Automat Press)

Community Service:

Clerk for Board of Directors of New Fairfield tax district

Fall, 2008: Reader for Banned Books Week

April 2009: Poetry reading for National Poetry Month

May, 2009: Poetry reading with Elizabeth Cohen at New Fairfield Library

Service to Department:

2008-2009: Writing Department Recruitment Committee

Created Writing Camp for August, 2009

Served as liaison to New Fairfield High School's English Department

2009: Read Senior Portfolios

Spring, 2008: Worked at Freshman Orientation

2008, 2009: Manned the department booth at University Open Houses

Service to University:

2008-09: Served on Arts and Sciences Advisement and Recruitment Committee

2008-09: Served on University's Veterans Task Force

June, 2008: Served as consultant to "Building a Bridge" program

April, 2009: Gave keynote speech at Impac Award ceremony

April, 2009: Helped Dr. Abbey Zink give presentation to faculty of Norwalk

Community College on scoring freshman placement essays.

April, 2009: With Elizabeth Cohen, organized and promoted Student Veterans conference

Ryan, Patrick

Conference Presentation

“Biblical Historiography in Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy*,” Sixteenth-Century Studies Conference, St Louis, October 24, 2009.

Service to the Department and University

Educational Access Program Committee
 Arts & Sciences Planning Committee, Chair
 Building a Bridge to Success, Writing, faculty liaison
 Coordinator First-Year Composition
 Coordinator Writing Lab
 Founding Coordinator of Online Tutoring
 Coordinator of the Tutoring Resource Center

Community Service

Volunteer editor for the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas website:
<http://www.lipanapachetribe.com/>

Professional Service

Member: Council of Writing Program Administrators
 International Writing Centers Association
 Northeast Writing Across the Curriculum Council

Scrimgeour, James

Publications:

On Thacher Island, chapbook, The Last Automat Press, 2008

Edited and wrote introduction for *Distant Music*, full length book of poems by John Tamas, Fine Tooth Press, 2008

Workshops:

Writing Nature Poetry (2 sessions) , MFA Residency, January 2009

Writers' Day on Thacher Island, August 2008

King School, Stamford, CT April 12, 2009

Readings:

Rockport Art Association, Rockport, MA, August 2008

Pleasant Street Coffee House, Gloucester, MA, August 2008

Faculty Reading, WCSU, Spring 2009

King School, Stamford, CT, April 12, 2009

John Tamas Memorial Reading, April 2009

WXCI, "Meet the Author," with Harry Rinker, April 22, 2009

WCSU classes (Jim Lomuscio and Lynne Paris-Purtle) Fall 2008, Spring 2009

Sabbatical:

"En Plaine Aire," Monet in the 21st Century, (2009-2010) approved.

Zink, Abbey

Publications

Rev. of *Front-Page Girls: Women Journalists in American Culture and Fiction, 1880-1930* by Jean Marie Lutes. *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*. 25.2 (Fall 2008): 347-348.

Conference Presentations

“Building a Bridge to Improve Student Success” (with Linda Rinker and Linda Vaden-Goad). Invited presentation. Innovation Lab: The College Ready New England Annual Conference (sponsored by the New England Board of Higher Education). University of Massachusetts-Boston. 27 March 2009.

Community Service

Member, Board of Directors, Women’s Center of Greater Danbury

Professional Service

Member of the following organizations:

American Conference of Academic Deans (ACAD)

Modern Language Association (MLA)

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)

National Popular Culture Association and American Culture Association
(PCA/ACA)

Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ)

Society for the Study of American Women Writers (SSAWW)

Service to the Department and University

Serve as Assistant Dean, School of Arts and Sciences

Serve as A&S Coordinator of the “Building a Bridge to Improve Student Success” Project

Organized Barack Obama Inauguration Panel/Event at WCSU. Prof. Lionel Bascom was one of the panelists. 20 Jan. 2009.

Member, Advisory Committee on Accreditation, Connecticut Dept. of Higher Education (DHE)

Chair, CSUS Writing Placement and Proficiency Committee

Member, WCSU Diversity Committee

Member, WCSU Orientation Committee

“Building a Bridge to Improve Student Success.” \$150,000. Connecticut State Department of Higher Education, Legislative Public Act, 07-03JSS. Funding given to us to continue our successful work with Danbury and Bethel high schools in Writing, Mathematics, and the Sciences.

Goal 2: Location

WCSU is centrally located in New England. We can tap writers to the east and west, north and south of our locale – and we do. Our students profit from on-site visits from writers who live in the northeast and New York. During our MFA residencies and throughout the semester, as part of the MFA, writers from further away visit the university and conduct numerous workshops and readings. Thanks to our online courses, some of our faculty conducts online Q&A sessions and workshops with writers.

Goal 3: Diverse University Community

Our faculty’s interests are extensive and varied. Together, we cover a diverse number of approaches to creative writing and political and social writing in our classes. We extend our analysis to gender and race. Because part of our charge is to provide students with Linguistics studies, we touch on history of the English language, language analysis, grammars of English and the ongoing evolution of our language.

Goal 4: Range of Quality Academic Programs

WCSU’s Writing Department has a solid reputation. We receive queries from prospective students located throughout the nation. These students inquire about our undergraduate and graduate offerings. The Writing Department has received extremely favorable press, thanks to its outstanding active faculty, who do much more than teach. Our teachers/writers have been featured in prominent journals, magazines and newspapers. Their output includes journalism, political commentary, film criticism, essays, fiction, poetry, editing and more (see “Goal 1: Outstanding Faculty”).

Goal 5: Student-Focused Environment

The Writing Department has a faculty that extends learning beyond the classroom. Our faculty advises students during season of advising – but beyond these necessary meetings, our faculty mentors students who gravitate to various faculty members for additional leadership, tutelage and advise about breaking into the writing world. We provide students with frank advice and guidance; put them in touch with each other; serve as faculty advisors to their organizations; and find internships for them at various journalism and publications in the area.

Goal 6: Affordability

WCSU's Writing Department continues to offer solid "bang" for the student's "buck" – more so, we believe, than any other institution in the region. This sounds like bragging but it's not. We have a solid complement of students. As seniors graduate, a fresh crop replaces them. Moreover, we seem to have a growing number of students who are changing majors and becoming Professional Writing majors or are deciding to work on a Writing minor. Additionally, because the national budget crisis is forcing students to stay closer to home and attend state institutions rather than ritzy private schools, our Fall 2009 Writing course offerings are filling at unprecedented rapid rates.

Appendix 1

Writing Lab Reports

LEARNING LABS

Number of students served in fall and spring:

Writing Lab

Fall 2008: 276 (fall 2007: 374)
Spring 2009: 257 (spring 2008: 327)

The decrease in the number of tutorial sessions correlates with a decrease in the number of staff hours per week. Graduate assistants were available to tutor forty-eight hours each week in the fall of 2007, 65 hour in the spring of 2008, but only 36 hours in the fall of 2008 and 28 hours in the spring of 2009. Dr. Ryan has requested two GAs to work 15 hours each week in the Lab.

Online Writing Lab

Fall 2008: 70 (fall 07: NA)
Spring 2009: 357 (spring 08: 12)

Appendix 2

Tutoring Resource Center

Western Connecticut State University

Comparative Compilation of Center Usage

From Academic year 2007-08 and 2008-09

Compiled by Jeanne I. Lakatos, University Assistant
May 21, 2009

Total number of students working independently or in study groups:

Fall 2007 = 979
Spring 2008 = 1461
Fall 2008 = 1681
Spring 2009 = 1338

Total number of individual tutoring sessions:

Fall 2007 = 278
Spring 2008 = 280
Fall 2009 = 416
Spring 2009 = 702

Total number of students registered for TRC sponsored Workshops:

Fall 2007 = 26
Spring 2008 = 35
Fall 2008 = 7
Spring = 6

Total number of students served during semesters Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 = 3,059

Total number of students served during semesters Fall 2009 and Spring 2009 = 4,998

These totals do not include numbers of students served during the summer sessions for
Summer 2008 nor Summer 2009.

Appendix 3

Writing Placement

Writing Placement

Use of SAT Scores in Writing Placement

Prof. Ryan, Coordinator of First-Year Composition, has recommended using scores on the Writing and Critical Reading sections of the SAT when placing freshmen into writing courses. So far, the university has used scores on the Critical Reading section only, because the newly instituted Writing section lacked reliability. However, in June of 2008 the College Board established a level of reliability a bit higher for the SAT scores on the Writing section than for the Critical Reading section. Further, in an informal assessment of placement procedures, Dr. Ryan found that our students' scores on the Writing section of the SAT are a bit more reliable than scores on the Critical Reading section with reference to results for our Writing Placement Essay Examination. Dr. Ryan has recommended the following use of SAT scores to place students into first-year writing courses:

1. With a score of 600 or higher on either the Critical Reading or Writing section of the SAT, a student is placed directly into a "W", or writing-intensive, course bypassing WRT 101: The Habit of Writing.
2. With a score between 510 and 600 on either test, a student is placed into WRT 101: The Habit of Writing as prerequisite to taking a "W" course.
3. With a score of 500 or less on both tests, the student writes a placement essay that serves as the basis for placing the student into WRT 101 or WRT 098: Written Communication, the remedial course that the student must complete with a grade of C or better before taking WRT 101 and, subsequently, a "W" course.

CSUS Statement on Writing Abilities Expected of First-Year Students

A three credit-hour remedial course, Writing 098: Written Communication prepares first-year students for college writing. The course does not count toward graduation and cannot be transferred for credit to another university. Further, by Connecticut state policy, once the university's Office of Admissions and the Writing Department place a student into WRT 098, he or she must complete the course or an equivalent college course with a C or better within the first year of college study. Failure to do so makes the student ineligible to enroll at a state college or university. About 20% of WCSU's first-year students are placed into WRT 098 (the national average is 8%).

This fall, composition faculty from the four Connecticut state universities met twice, at the behest of the chancellor, to review and assess their respective procedures for placing students into remedial writing courses or regular first-year courses. (Dr. Ryan of our Writing Department and Dr. Abbey Zink, Assistant Dean of Arts & Sciences, represented WCSU at the meetings.) The working group adopted a common statement

of Writing Abilities and Experiences Expected of Incoming Students for the Connecticut State University System, including a rubric for evaluating placement essays (see below):

Writing Abilities and Experiences Expected of Incoming Students for the Connecticut State University System (CSUS)

Entering students should be able to...	But they may have difficulty with...
<p>1. Read, understand and glean information from a variety of informational texts (textbooks, manuals, instructions) and literary texts (stories, poems, plays). This includes being able to</p>	<p>Understanding particularly challenging texts. Such texts might challenge readers with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficult vocabulary/jargon • highly abstract concepts or theories • complex structure (whether at the sentence, paragraph, or more global level)
<p>2. Read and understand information and arguments (especially expository and nonfiction texts such as editorials, evaluations, commentaries, advocacy letters, etc.).</p>	<p>Understanding particularly challenging persuasive texts. Such texts might challenge readers with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficult vocabulary/jargon • highly abstract or theoretical reasoning • complex structure (at any level) • acknowledgement of and interaction with a variety of competing perspectives
<p>3. Use information gleaned from research and reading to support or illustrate key points in their own writing.</p>	<p>Conducting and incorporating research at a college-level. This includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using the academic databases in a university library • evaluating the credibility and quality of information from unknown sources • meticulously following specific guidelines for academic citation (MLA, APA, etc.) • making intelligent use of sources that complicate or disagree with the student's own ideas or positions • synthesizing their own ideas with those of sources in order to place themselves within the ongoing conversation around an idea or issue • making use of particularly challenging source texts (see 1 and 2 above)
<p>4. Write in several school-based genres beyond the five-paragraph essay (such as science lab reports, research-based essays, literary responses, book reports).</p>	<p>Conceiving of and writing in more complex genres and rhetorical situations. This includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writing for a specific reader other than the teacher or a vague "general audience" • asserting a position with authority and credibility in both the third and first person • organizing and formatting texts when the ideas or concepts within them cannot be expressed in a straight-forward and/or

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strictly prescribed structure making adjustments to their tone and diction that are more nuanced than simply “formal” and “informal”
5. Use common prewriting/invention, drafting, revision and editing strategies to develop and improve their written work.	<p>Taking a more sophisticated and active approach to revision. This includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using feedback from peers and teachers to identify areas needing further development or reorganization Initiating—without explicit feedback—deeper or more global revisions that result in substantial changes in the content and structure of later drafts. Revising for greater sentence variety and clarity. Editing for more appropriate diction and eliminating wordiness

Entering students may have valuable <i>out-of-school</i> experiences that enrich literacy...	But they may have avoided or missed opportunities to...
6. Reading a variety of texts for information and pleasure (such as popular fiction and other literary genres, newspapers, magazines, blogs, graphic novels, fanfiction, etc.)	Read varieties or instances of such texts that are more challenging in the ways described in 1 and 2 above.
7. Writing in a variety of informal, workplace, and/or personal genres (letters, emails, journals, applications, blogs, etc.)	Adapt their writing to the needs of a specific audience, or make their writing public.

Placement essays are read for evidence (in students’ self-reporting) of the above abilities and experiences. Making allowances for the time limitations imposed on the students, readers also look for the following qualities in the product of the essay itself:	
The writing of a student prepared for the primary credit-bearing writing course should...	The writing of a student <u>not</u> prepared for the primary credit-bearing writing course should.....
8. Have a clearly stated thesis/argument (that articulates the student’s course request)	Have an unclear, tentative or oddly placed thesis/argument
9. Provide adequate and relevant reasons in support of that argument	Provide inadequate or inappropriate reasons in support of that argument and/or simply restate the general criteria provided in the brochure
10. Develop those reasons with specific and relevant examples from their experience	Have little development of reasons or develop them simply through broad generalizations or repetition
11. Be organized in a logical and readable manner at both the paragraph and essay levels (may be five paragraphs)	Lack a clear or logical organizational structure at the paragraph and/or essay level
12. Address the reader (college professors) with tone, register and diction that show awareness and understanding of the expectations of critical, educated readers	Address the reader in an inappropriate tone (for example, too conversational or adversarial) or with inappropriate diction (slang, text-message abbreviations, etc.)
13. Be reasonably free of sentence-level errors in punctuation, syntax and usage	May contain a distracting number of sentence-level errors and/or a pattern of error indicating the need for individualized and focused instruction in

Required Writing Intensive, or “W”, Courses

At present, undergraduate students are required to take one writing-intensive, or “W”, course. As a long-term objective, the General Education Committee plans to require each student to take two “W” courses. Below is the proposal developed by the committee:

Very Brief Proposal concerning Writing Requirements at WCSU

The first writing requirement is already established, and in the hands of the writing department. Until we can get them to partner with us, I think we’ll leave that one alone.

The second writing requirement is a proposed 200-level course for non-writing majors to take outside of the writing department (but not necessarily in their major). The prerequisite would be a W course. The new designation would be something like 2XXw2. This second writing requirement should NOT add any credit hours, but rather encourage those already teaching 200 level gen ed courses to include a writing component. To qualify, the course would need

To be at the 200-level.

Not be in the writing department.

Have a W course as a prerequisite.

Include writing assignments that total at least 3000 words.

Include rewriting based on feedback.

Include a real audience for some of the writing (beyond the professor’s eyes only).

Have a maximum class-size of 25 students.

To implement this proposal would require addition of approximately 50 writing-intensive courses. Dr. Ryan has recommended that, as a preliminary step toward requiring a second “W” course, the committee identify professors who are now teaching courses that could qualify as writing intensive and ask to professors to designate them as such.

Appendix 4

Annual Report for MFA in Professional Writing

Overview

The program continues to attract students from inside and outside the state. Ten students will graduate from the program at the end of the spring semester. Since Spring 07 (the first semester the program had graduates), an additional 30 students have received the MFA in Professional Writing. This semester, there are 36 students enrolled in the program. We have admitted 20 new students for Fall enrollment for a total of 46 students in the program (some of the students will be attending part time).

Goal 1. Outstanding Faculty

Daniel Asa Rose, MFA Writer in Residence, is the author of *Larry's Kidney: Being the True Story of How I Found Myself in China with My Black-Sheep Cousin and His Mail-Order Bride, Skirting the Law to Get Him a Transplant—and Save His Life*. The book was just released a few days ago and has been getting featured and starred reviews in all the major review outlets.

Brian Clements, MFA Coordinator, published two books of poems in 2009: *And How to End It* (Quale Press) and *Disappointed Psalms* (Meritage Press), and edited the sixth issue of *Sentence: A Journal of Prose Poetics*.

James Scrimgeour edited *Distant Music* (Fine Tooth Press), a collection of poems by John Tamas, a late WCSU student.

Goal 2. Location

Our students have taken advantage of a wide range of opportunities in the area for writing, editing, and publishing internships and teaching practica, including some students working as Gas at WestConn.

Goal 3. Diverse University Community

Our program is designed for maximum flexibility to accommodate diverse student interests. Students currently in the program are specializing in 15 different genres. We

use writing mentors from all over the country, with a diverse set of backgrounds and varying experience in writing, publishing, communications, and teaching.

Goal 4. Range of Quality Academic Programs

The program is becoming more and more visible due to national print advertising, search engine marketing, the Coordinator's participation in AWP, media attention on our programming (such as recent articles in the Times) and the success of our students and faculty. The program is still the only MFA that trains writers for professional careers, but more programs are beginning to tend in our direction.

Goal 5. Student-focused Environment

All students in our program are required to complete internships and teaching practica, and those experiences have translated into jobs for several of our grads. We also promote program networking by keeping our grads involved in the program as mentors and at the residencies. They become valuable resources for students still in the program for jobs, writing tips, and professional advice. We use the program blog, as well, to keep grads informed and involved. All of these, along with the expert advice provided by our faculty, is resulting in more and more jobs and publications for our students and grads—for example, grad Ron Samul is in his first year of teaching at Mitchell College, and student Lisa Siedlarz just published a chapbook (an excerpt from her thesis) with Clemson University Press.

Goal 6. Affordability

Many of our students take advantage of student loans, some work as GAs, and some of them apply for graduate scholarships. We lose many applicants to other programs because we do not have any dedicated scholarships for the program. Other universities tend to fund their MFA students quite well.