Writing in the Disciplines and the Writing Center
Annual Report, 2012-2013

The Writing in the Disciplines Program serves faculty and students across the University of Vermont campus. For faculty, WID provides a range of professional development programs that support individuals and departments. For students, the Writing Center offers direct support for writing, in individual, group, and workshop settings. Within the Writing in the Disciplines Program, the Writing Center and WID exist as equal partners.¹ This report highlights the accomplishments of the Writing Center and WID, summarizing the ways we have worked independently and together to provide support for both students and faculty (our mission statements and a brief history are found in Appendix A). This report covers the following:

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¹ Since the Writing Center joined the Writing in the Disciplines (WID) Program in 2009, the name “WID Program” has referred to both the combined student support and faculty development programs and to just the original faculty development program. In this report, we use “Writing in the Disciplines Program” to refer to the combined units and “WID” to refer to the faculty development program only.
WID and the Writing Center: Highlights and Support for Institutional Priorities

In selecting highlights from this year’s report, we have featured ways that both WID and the Writing Center have contributed to core institutional priorities. Faculty development and direct student support for writing carry many inherent benefits for those who participate in them, of course, but it is also important to note the ways in which our programming helps support and develop institutional initiatives.

Advancing Quality and Excellence

In providing hands-on support to faculty and students, WID and the Writing Center are directly involved in the university’s core activity: providing a high-quality academic experience for students. The University’s mission statement emphasizes our common commitment to communication skills, and President Sullivan’s vision for the campus includes a focus on enhancing the quality of the academic experience, creating access to excellence through the provision of academic support, and raising academic expectations. The Writing Center and WID support these aims in many ways.

Supporting Faculty who are Developing and Revising Courses

WID’s open programming, as well as the intensive WID Institute in May, offered a variety of options for faculty who are seeking to refine an existing assignment or design a whole new course. With programming ranging from 15 minute Sound Bites programming to the 4 day WID Institute, WID offered programming suited to the quick pace of campus work in terms of both workshop length and topics. This academic year featured a heavier emphasis on extended programming, offerings which permitted small groups of faculty to meet multiple times during the year to focus on particular areas of interest (such as plagiarism, teaching first-year students, or grading/responding). Popular workshops included ones on assignment design, plagiarism, and responding to writing. More than 130 individuals attended WID programming this year (many more than once).

Engaging Students through the Writing Center

The Writing Center celebrated its thirtieth year of providing UVM students with a variety of opportunities to become more engaged with and through writing. The number of Writing Center contacts with students topped 5,000 (a record), with 2,658 individual tutoring sessions, 1,476 contacts through group tutoring sessions, and 895 contacts through in-class writing workshops. In evaluating their individual tutoring sessions, 96% of the students who filled out a survey reported finding the session useful, and 98% of the students said they would recommend the Writing Center to other students. In addition, Sue Dinitz had many contacts with staff and faculty in a variety of units about issues related to student writing.

Providing a Service-Learning Experience for 50 Peer Tutors

The Writing Center created an opportunity for engaged learning for 50 of UVM’s outstanding students. In addition to providing individual and group tutoring, tutors gave class presentations and workshops, designed new materials for our Writing Center, presented at the Northeast Writing Centers Association conference, shared a student perspective at several WID and General Education workshops, and served
as writing mentors for students in grades 3-12. All of the tutors achieved certification through the College Reading and Learning Association at the Regular, Advanced or Master level.

Supporting General Education

**General Education as a Driver for WID and the Writing Center**

WID and the Writing Center directly support the university’s mission and goals: of preparing students who will “bring to their work . . . effective problem-solving and communication skills,” and who will be prepared “for success as accountable leaders in the 21st century.” WID’s mission, focusing on faculty development, is “to ensure writing is a significant part of undergraduate students’ education beyond the foundation of a first-year experience,” while the Writing Center’s mission, focusing on student support, is to help students “discover writing as both a fulfilling activity and a tool for effectively creating and communicating ideas—a tool that will help them excel while at UVM and after they graduate.”

In our vision for the future, UVM students will graduate with the writing skills that are key to success in every field. Students in every major will have a rich, thoughtfully designed college writing experience. They will be engaged in meaningful assignments throughout their college years, assignments that have been created and responded to by instructors who have participated in faculty development around the teaching of writing. And students will have access to peer support at every point in the writing process. The Faculty Senate’s work on general education has created a curricular and political context that supports this vision. Indeed, the campus attention to general education—influenced first by UVM’s last accreditation review, which led the Provost to set in motion a process that started with an administrative committee that eventually morphed into a Faculty Senate committee to define, implement, and assess general education for the campus—has enormous implications for the Writing in the Disciplines Program. General Education will provide a curricular framework through which students can develop foundational and advanced writing skills. In order to meet the General Education outcomes, departments will have to develop a plan for identifying and achieving writing outcomes for their majors. This should provide the motivation for departments to work with WID, for instructors to participate in faculty development around writing, and for faculty and students to use the resources provided through the Writing Center and the WID Mentor Program. This year, we made considerable progress toward making our vision a reality, as described below.

**Leadership for General Education**

Susanmarie Harrington served as co-chair of the Faculty Senate’s ad hoc Committee on General Education. As a subcommittee (led by Nancy Welch) carried out a pilot that successfully invited selected sections of English 1, the HCOL seminar, and TAP seminars to work towards 3 broad foundational writing and information literacy outcomes. Simultaneously, Susanmarie’s WID expertise helped guide plans for a 2013-14 pilot of a department-based process that will bring greater attention to writing and information literacy in years 2-4 of the undergraduate experience. She and committee co-chair Char Mehrten’s did regular presentations at the Senate, in departments, and in college meetings in order to build broad support for the continued development of general education.
Supporting first-year writing

The work of the general education committee made great progress toward institutionalizing first-year writing and information literacy experiences. WID and the Writing Center continued their support of first-year students and faculty teaching first-year students in varied ways, some connected directly to the General Education committee and some beyond.

Administrative support for first year writing pilot

WID Program Assistant Kristen Cameron managed the collection of student writing for the pilot writing and information literacy assessment. She also managed the pilot’s budget and stipends, and helped prepare for workshops and events.

TAP workshop

Susanmarie Harrington and Sue Dinitz--along with tutors Jenna Scoville and Brendan Sage--led portions of a May workshop for TAP faculty. Our contributions to the workshop focused on productive ways to use the Writing Center and useful strategies for responding to students’ writing and using rubrics.

Redesigning English 001 to meet foundational writing goals

As a member of the Composition Committee, Sue Dinitz helped to develop a new assignment sequence and to select new core readings for English 1, enabling the course to better address the foundational goals for first-year writing established through the General Education initiative.

Faculty Resource Group for Teaching First-Year Students

In conjunction with the Center for Teaching and Learning, WID supported the second year of a two-year a faculty resource group for faculty teaching courses with large proportions of first-year students. This programming grew out of Susanmarie Harrington and Jennifer Dickinson's continuing participation on the First-Year Experience Task Force. The program provided resources and ongoing discussion regarding engagement strategies appropriate for first-year students.

Writing Center Support for First-Year Students

The Writing Center supported students in the transition from high school to college writing. Tutors worked with 405 first-year students, in 833 contacts, engaging first-year students in conversations about writing through individual tutoring sessions, in-class workshops, and weekly open writing workshops in the Honors College dorm. This year, we experimented with placing WID Mentors (usually reserved for courses for majors) in TAP classes. The tutors felt very useful in this role, where they were able not only to introduce students to college writing but also to help students connect writing to their college experience and future goals.
Supporting writing in the major

Benchmarking WID

We benchmarked WID against UVM’s peer and aspirant institutions as well as against 4 additional institutions selected for their prominence in the field of WID/WAC. Examining the other institutions in light of the curricular structure for writing, the types of WID/WAC programs offered, and the staffing for WID/WAC, we discovered that UVM lags behind in terms of curricular attention to writing. All but 3 of the 19 comparator institutions had more than a 1-semester writing requirement; 10 have requirements of some sort at the upper and lower levels. Most of our comparators also have more robust staffing and structure for the WID program (although this is difficult to evaluate given the diversity of curricular structures and institutional sizes). UVM stands up well, however, in terms of breadth of programming offered. We are among the leading institutions in this regard. (Appendix B)

Developing writing in the majors

As the General Education committee turned its attention to ways that writing and information literacy outcomes can be addressed in years 2-4 of the undergraduate experience, WID’s previous work with departments provided a useful model for the committee to consider. Susanmarie was able to draw from WID’s synthesis of department-based WID/WAC models to guide the general education committee’s work. She connected the committee with Pamela Flash, director of the University of Minnesota’s Writing Enhanced Curriculum project; contact with Flash encouraged the committee to develop a department-based plan for developing, supporting, and assessing writing and information literacy outcomes.

Department and College Conversations about Writing

WID facilitated workshops for graduate teaching assistants in Biology as well as a year-long conversation about writing in Romance Languages and Linguistics (RLL). The RLL collaboration involved two workshops and a student survey (Appendix C). WID’s contribution allowed the department to gain insight into student perception of writing instruction in the department. RLL faculty were able to see the ways in which students appreciate their availability and what sorts of writing assignments were perceived as most valuable. In addition, WID facilitated a conversation about the qualities of writing intensive courses. This work will resume in fall 2013.

WID Mentor Program

In our fourth year of piloting this program, we placed mentors in 18 classes, resulting in close to 1000 contacts with students. In this year’s annual report, we summarize what we have learned over four years of experimenting with WID mentor placements, and imagine how to design the program to support a general education outcome related to writing in the major. As part of the general education initiative, faculty will be rethinking the role of writing in their courses and their own role in teaching writing. In this context, mentors can provide not only student support
for writing but also faculty development. The mentors’ contribution to faculty development is unique: they help faculty see writing assignments and experiences from the student perspective.

Writing Center Support for Upper-level Courses

Over nine hundred tutorial sessions in the Writing Center (39% of all sessions) were with juniors, seniors, and graduate students working on papers for advanced courses.

WID Mentors were attached to nine classes at the 100 level or above, in a variety of disciplines including anthropology, nursing, biology, classics, and natural resources.

Tutor Tips on Writing in the Major

We continued the project funded last year through an Instructional Incentive Grant to create on-line resources by students and for students on writing in a variety of majors. We launched this resource on the Writing Center website in September 2012, with webpages on writing in anthropology, psychology, English literature, creative writing, natural resources, environmental studies, and introductory biology and chemistry, and have subsequently added pages for political science and history. (See www.uvm.edu/writingcenter/tutortips.)

Diversity and Internationalization

One of UVM’s five goals is to “build a diverse and globally aware university community sustained by an inclusive, supporting, and just campus climate.” To accomplish this goal, the President’s strategic action plan, as outlined to the Board of Trustees on November 7, 2012, includes a new Enrollment Management plan that increases international student undergraduate enrollment from its current 1% to 5 - 7%. To help support this goal, the Writing Center has focused on providing support for English language learners (ELLs), and WID has included programing for faculty development related to ELLs.

Changing the climate toward ELLs

One goal of our activities this year has been to create positive change in the campus climate regarding English Language Learners. Because many UVM faculty have had limited experience teaching ELLs, challenges can arise when faculty turn to grading and responding to writing by English language learners. Because UVM is a complex place, ELL students may not always know where to turn for assistance. Writing Center and WID programs this year have reached out to students and faculty, hoping to support ELLs and prepare for increased numbers of ELLs.

Multi-lingual writers, Multi-literate lives

WID’s program in conjunction with Blackboard Jungle was a faculty panel featuring four multilingual UVM faculty (one whose native language was English; three whose naïve languages were other than English; all of whom do significant scholarly work in a language other than the one they spoke at home as a child). Panelists shared their stories about how they developed
their multilingual capabilities, what supported their language learning, and what challenges they faced. A mixed audience of tutors and faculty found much to talk about!

Writing Across Borders

WID held another screening of Writing Across Borders, a film featuring international students from Oregon State University who explain what their experience of entering American higher education is like. Their stories illustrate that learning to communicate effectively involves far more than grammar; it involves a rich understanding of cultural norms. We also made Writing Across Borders more widely available via our website.

Supporting English Language Learners through the Writing Center

Benchmarking Writing Center support for ELLs

We benchmarked writing center support for ELLs at peer and aspirant institutions, and found that eleven of the fifteen institutions make specific mention of ELL support through the writing center on their writing center and/or international student webpages. In responding to the growing number of international students at UVM, the Writing Center is following the best practices used at our peer and aspirant institutions: providing information and links to resources for ELLs on our webpage, training the writing tutors to work with ELLs, and having an ELL Coordinator who works with and through the Writing Center. Six of the eleven institutions with ELL services—all of those with robust services for ELLs—have an ELL Coordinator connected with the Writing Center, whose role includes some combination of providing tutor training, conducting workshops for ELLs, tutoring ELLs, and/or providing faculty development related to ELLs.

Collaboration with the ELL Coordinator

Having the ELL Coordinator (Dana Šehović) located in the WID Program space facilitated a wonderful collaboration between our programs. By working together we were able to provide better ESL training for the writing tutors, easier connections between ELLs and the Writing Center, and consultations with tutors and faculty on ELL issues. This collaboration culminated in a presentation by Dana at the Northeast Writing Center Association Conference.

Writing Partners Program

International students continued to use—and respond enthusiastically to—the Writing Partners Program. In preparing for growing numbers of international students, we looked more closely at their use of the Writing Center this year. We found that most matriculated, full-time international students used the Writing Center regularly (8 times or more) in their first year at UVM, with 26 of the 28 new USPP students asking for a writing partner. About 20% of the students continued using the Writing Center regularly in subsequent years. Some exchange students and other ELLs who are not international student also used the Writing Center regularly. In total, there were 59 English language learners who used the Writing Center eight
or more times, coming for 784 sessions (an average of 13 sessions each). Indeed, 33% of our individual sessions were with English language learners who used the Writing Center regularly. There were many more ELLs who used the Writing Center fewer than 8 times, but as Banner does not identify students as ELL, it is difficult to gather this data.

**Conversation Circles**

Sue Dinitz collaborated with Đana Šehović last spring to create the Conversation Circles class (ESOL 95), in which tutors meet with small groups of students to work on conversation skills. The class proved so successful and popular that ten sections were offered this year, prompting us to develop a plan for expanding the number of classes without having to request additional resources. Continuing Education has agreed to pay the tutors through a modest student fee for enrolled students, and Đana Šehović will provide training for a larger group of tutors through a one-credit class, Tutoring Conversation Circles.

**Summer Bridge Program for USPP students**

We continued to work closely with Continuing Education and Đana Šehović to plan writing tutor support for the USPP summer bridge program. Three writing center tutors were recruited to work for about 18 hours each week during the summer, holding required individual tutorials with each student and facilitating weekly conversation and study groups.

**Integration of Perspectives Regarding Diverse Student Populations**

In order to prepare for the planned increase in international students, as well as to support the diversity of students already enrolled at UVM, WID open workshops have generally begun to stress a framework influenced by the universal design for learning project. Whatever the workshop topic, we stress the importance of constructing assignments and classroom experiences with an eye toward welcoming all learners, supporting students from diverse backgrounds, and supporting students with physical and cognitive disabilities.

Similarly, the Writing Center strives to provide services that are welcoming to and effective for all students by systematically applying the principles of universal design to our spaces, materials, and tutoring strategies. In addition to working with many ELLs, tutors worked with a record number of students with disabilities, including 183 students registered with ACCESS in 588 sessions, and seven students enrolled in Think College, (a program that provides a college experience for students with intellectual disabilities). In end-of-session evaluations, 99% of students reported that the tutoring environment was welcoming, comfortable, and respectful.

**Scholarly Activities**

For the past four years, we have maintained an active research agenda exploring various aspects of how to support students’ experiences learning to write in academic contexts.
Exploring the Effect of Disciplinary Expertise in Writing Tutorials

In August, our article reporting on this research project was accepted for publication in The Writing Center Journal. To learn more about how disciplinary expertise, or a lack of it, shapes sessions, we collected a variety of data related to seven writing tutorial sessions over papers for political science and history classes. In addition to analyzing the session transcripts and evaluating the sessions ourselves, we asked three faculty members in the disciplines to assess the quality of the sessions and consider the roles played by disciplinary expertise. What we found led us to reconsider not only the impact of a tutor’s disciplinary expertise on tutorial sessions, but also the value of directive vs. non-directive tutoring and the very nature of disciplinary expertise itself.

Writing Centers, WID Programs, and Partnerships for Change

We were invited to be joint keynote speakers at the Northeast Writing Centers Association (NEWCA) Conference in April at the University of New Hampshire. Our keynote address drew on our experiences collaborating to argue that when a writing center partners with a writing in the disciplines program, tutors’ stories about the student experience with writing gain the power to promote change. We demonstrated how, when tutor stories are integrated into WID Programming, they can

- affect faculty attitudes and practices around assigning and responding to writing;
- ensure student voices shape curricular initiatives such as General Education, helping to create an argument for changing the way we teach writing; and
- create momentum to improve policies (such as plagiarism policies) related to writing.

Revising National Writing Outcomes

At the 2013 Conference on College Composition and Communication, Susanmarie Harrington presented on the history of the Council of Writing Program Administrators’ (CWPA) First-Year Composition Outcomes Statement. Her paper creates a historical context for current work to update foundational writing outcomes in light of digital and visual literacies. She serves on a task force charged with revising the CWPA Outcomes Statement in light of the last decade’s advances in the field.

Supporting International Students through the Writing Center

At the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA) Conference in October, Sue Dinitz gave a presentation arguing that efforts to promote internationalization of the student body should prompt writing centers to reimagine how they provide services: how students connect with the center and make appointments, how students can get help with conversational as well as writing skills, and how an ELL Coordinator can collaborate on tutor training, ELL student support, and faculty development.

Tutor presentations at conferences

Sue Dinitz mentored two groups of tutors who gave presentations at the NEWCA Conference. Jenna Scoville and Brendan Sage gave a joint presentation on how acting as WID Mentors for TAP classes led them to re-think their roles as writing mentors and, more broadly, how writing is taught and viewed at
universities. Hannah Prescott, Antonia David, Jess Blier, and Adrian Voss, along with ELL Coordinator Dana Šehović, created a panel on various programs through which writing centers can support international students. Both presentations packed the room and engaged (and impressed) their audiences.

**Challenges Facing WID and the Writing Center**

WID and the Writing Center have worked hard to design and expand our programs in ways that address both present and future needs. Working collaboratively to coordinate faculty development and student support, we promote and enhance the development of students as writers throughout their UVM experience. At the same time, we construct our services in ways that can provide a framework for supporting current campus initiatives, such as those related to general education and internationalization. As we close this year, we identify a set of particular challenges we face in the future.

**Challenges Related to General Education**

*Waiting for General Education*

The general education project has made significant progress toward defining ways in which writing and information literacy outcomes are defined and offered throughout the undergraduate experience. WID is working closely with the general education initiative. The relatively slow pace of general education development—necessary in order to build firm support in the Senate—creates uncertainty regarding WID’s future. Some departments and individual faculty are understandably cautious about beginning writing initiatives without clarity about the future of general education. The next phase of the general education project will be telling for WID’s future, as the shape of general education will affect the way WID can support writing in the major. In addition, if general education truly reshapes the ways that departments address writing and information literacy, additional resources will be needed for WID to be able to support and partner with departments, both in the medium term and once the program is fully implemented.

*Administrative Support for the foundational gen ed writing requirement*

As the general education initiative advances, additional demands are brought to bear on WID. Program Assistant Kristen Cameron has been able to provide support to the pilot initiative for foundational writing and information literacy, and will provide valuable assistance next year as the pilot work extends to departments. As the foundational writing and information literacy requirement is fully implemented in fall 2014 and, we hope, the department-based work expands as well, administrative demands will exceed what WID is able to provide. As general education grows, central support for its administrative implementation will be required.
Developing the WID Mentor Program: Financial Support for the Writing Center Director

Currently, the Writing Center director’s faculty position is funded at 100%, with 25% teaching and 62.5% administrative release from the Provost’s Office. This arrangement, an outgrowth of the historical role of the Writing Center director in the Learning Cooperative, permits the administration of Writing Center open programming. Since merging with the Writing in the Disciplines Program, the WID budget has been able to fund the remaining 12.5% of the Writing Center director position (because of savings accrued from the first semester of our operation as we moved into new space and searched for a program assistant) to support the creation of a WID Mentor Program, which attaches experienced Writing Center tutors to courses in the major. However, this funding model is not sustainable beyond next year. Without additional funding from another source, the Writing Center director will not be able to continue to develop and coordinate this program.

Space For a Writing Program

As UVM adopts a curricular framework through which students can develop foundational and advanced writing skills, there will be increasing advantages to creating a broader writing program (similar to what we proposed in a Spring 2010 document for the Provost’s Office, “The Center for Writing Excellence at UVM: A Vision for Promoting Writing Across Campus”). Creating an umbrella Writing Program that includes WID, First-Year Writing, and the Writing Center would allow for greater efficiency and effectiveness as we work collaboratively to help all UVM students become better writers. One of the biggest challenges to such collaboration is lack of space. If the Writing Center tutoring space were relocated from the WID suite to somewhere else in the library, it would be possible to house a larger Writing Program in WID’s current space.

Challenges Related to Internationalization

Increased funding for additional writing tutor support

According to President Sullivan’s strategic action plan, UVM hopes to increase international student undergraduate enrollment from the present 1% to 5% - 7%. Our analysis of use of the Writing Center by current matriculated international students and our benchmarking of services provided to ELLs by our peer and aspirant institutions both suggest that as the number of matriculated English language learners grows, the demand for Writing Center services will continue to increase. This year, Gayle Nunley worked with Sue Dinitz to estimate how much to budget for Writing Center support of ELLs in the future, and we will certainly need these additional funds.

Providing faculty development on responding to and evaluating writing from ELLs

In the course of our regular WID programming and Writing Center consultations, we have already encountered questions from faculty about working with English language learners, questions that often reveal the faculty member’s lack of understanding of how students develop literacy skills in another language and of best practices for responding to and evaluating writing from ELLs. As the number of international students grows, there will be an increasing need for faculty development related to ELL
writers. Currently, there is no one with this expertise whose job description includes working with WID to provide faculty consultations and workshops focusing on ELL writers.

**Challenges Related to Tutoring Space**

When the Writing Center moved from Living/Learning to become part of the Writing in the Disciplines Program, we creatively adapted an office in 302 into a space for tutoring during the day (in addition to our small office on the first floor). Though we love having the students and tutors be part of the WID suite, this makeshift space for tutoring does present some challenges: students have difficulty finding it and voices can be overheard by everyone working in the Writing in the Disciplines Program. Also, with tutors spread out in the library, it is more difficult to create a sense of tutor community, allowing tutors to learn from and assist each other, and to create for students a sense that they are entering a vibrant, supportive writing community.

Furthermore, we have outgrown our current space. Often we have three tutors working at the same time, but only two tutoring spaces. In the fall, Bailey Howe Library was kind enough to provide us with an additional study carrel on the ground floor of the library, which we can reserve as an overflow space as needed. As writing center programming increases to support such campus initiatives as Internalization and General Education, the need for a larger and intentionally planned tutoring space becomes more pressing.

**Challenges Related to Funding**

* Lack of Summer Support for the WID and Writing Center Directors

Much of the work of the Writing in the Disciplines Program continues into the summer. With the WID Institute in mid-May, the lengthy project of writing our annual report—so crucial to analyzing the current year and planning for the future—extends into June. End-of-the-year budget planning also must happen in late May/June. Some preparation for the upcoming year has to take place in the summer, such as consulting with WID mentor faculty as they develop their courses. With the USPP Program, the Writing Center Director spends summer time coordinating the writing tutoring for the summer bridge program and connecting with the USPP students so they will take advantage of the Writing Center in the fall. August is an ideal time for faculty development workshops, programming which needs to increase in connection with any general education communications outcome. We hope that increasing resources devoted to the Writing in the Disciplines Program, perhaps through funding connected with general education, will allow us to be compensated for summer time devoted to WID/the Writing Center and to expand our programming in the summer.

* Budget Cuts for FY14

The Writing in the Disciplines Program budget was cut by almost $3000 for FY 14. This represents almost 5.8% of our operating budget. To partly address this cut, we will reduce the number of WID mentor placements we offer next year.
Challenges Related to Scheduling and Database Software/Systems

In the past, scheduling for the Writing Center has been handled through the Learning Cooperative, using the jointly purchased software TutorTrac. Next year, the Learning Co-op will no longer be able to perform this service. Since scheduling for TutorTrac happens via the phone and we are not able to staff a phone line, we found a program that supports on-line scheduling, WC-Online, which is used by many writing centers. We suspect students will view on-line scheduling as an improvement. Unfortunately, WC-Online has a much more limited reporting function than was available through Tutor-Trac, which was connected to Banner.

Shifting to this new software will likely present challenges throughout the coming year. Kristen Cameron and Sue Dinitz will work over the summer to get the system ready for on-line scheduling by September 1, and then will have to discover the best ways to work with the new database system to access data related to Writing Center use. And though the Learning Co-op has agreed to pay this year’s annual fee for WC-Online of $715, we will need to come up with an additional $500 to pay for the fee beginning FY15.

WID: Support for the Teaching of Writing

Establishing an Institutional Framework

WID’s fifth year was a productive one. Much of our work was closely linked to progress on the campus general education initiative. In addition, we continued to develop relationships with departments and as always, remained flexible and responsive to emerging needs. By creating quality workshops for faculty, seeking departmental partnerships, offering program tailored to the needs of particular constituencies (such as faculty teaching first-year students) and participating to the fullest extent possible in the campus conversations about reshaping undergraduate education and assessment, we seek to prepare WID to be a central resource for faculty interested in writing. As the campus slowly develops clarity about its vision for writing and information literacy, WID stands ready to expand its services.

WID’s model is well-suited to a campus whose curricular structures are in flux. Our approach brings together expertise from WID with disciplinary expertise across campus in order to address the problems, opportunities, and challenges around writing identified by individual faculty members and/or academic units.

WID’s approach grows from these assumptions:

- For now, effective WID work will grow out of faculty-identified local needs. In the absence of an institutional driver that organizes campus attention to writing, WID must be responsive to the experiences of faculty in the disciplines. Faculty who are already exploring changes to how writing works in their courses or units are ripe for collaborating with WID.
• WID workshops and departmental partnerships can be designed in order to provide resources and assistance for faculty-led curricular development, to help address problems that have emerged in the experience of teaching particular courses or challenges that emerge in the design of new ones, and to help departments assess how to proceed as they design new experiences for their students.

• The goals and design of particular advanced writing experiences emerge from faculty leadership in the disciplines. Successful WID partnerships rely on leadership within units, as both expertise from WID and expertise from the disciplines are necessary.

• Collaboration with other faculty development units (such as CTL) is essential in order to maximize the effects of the limited resources each unit has and to assist faculty and departments with their work.

While the current campus climate means that WID must be responsive to whatever needs faculty and departments identify, it is important to acknowledge the core message at the heart of what WID brings to any activity. These fundamental assumptions about writing guide all our activities, and cannot be fully realized until an institutional framework for writing is in place:

• Serious engagement with a range of writing tasks across their experiences at UVM will position graduates to meet the personal and professional challenges of an increasingly globalized world.

• Well-designed writing experiences can help deepen students’ intellectual experiences on campus and prepare them for professional experiences in a global economy post-graduation.

• Writing is essential to achieving learning outcomes in every academic discipline. Writing is both a way to learn and a way to demonstrate learning, and is an important part of almost every profession.

In the past year, WID met its goals of developing more flexible programming that would attract new participants and continuing to connect with faculty and departments. Relationships between the faculty programming offered through WID and the student support offered through the Writing Center continue to thrive and develop.

**WID Programming**

A variety of WID workshops and other activities for faculty, graduate students and staff with teaching responsibilities helped expand conversations about writing. These conversations encourage reflection, pedagogical experimentation, and assessment. A total of 133 individuals (including 95 faculty members, 6 staff, 25 graduate students, and 7 undergraduate students) attended WID programming (see Appendix D for details). Eight people from 6 different departments requested individual consultations with Susanmarie Harrington. Attendance was, compared to last year, stable overall. Though we held fewer open workshops, we increased the number of extended and unit workshops. Thus attendance at open workshops is down slightly compared to last year, with 64 individuals participating (some more than once), for a total of 117 contacts (this figure does not include attendance at the “Sound Bites” series; attendance at those sessions is not tracked). Meanwhile, attendance for extended and unit programming increased to 83 individuals and 133 contacts. Relative to 2011-12, we also saw greater
representation from some schools including the School of Business Administration, College of Arts and Sciences (most notably from the Biology and Romance Languages departments) and from the Graduate College.

Our programming offers a mix of introductory and advanced sessions. Sessions like “Designing Assignments” introduce fundamentals of writing across the curriculum, while our extended programming for units or small groups of faculty pursuing more narrow interests allow participants to explore some topics in greater depth. These specialized programs promote connections across department boundaries and permit faculty with shared interests (such as first-year students, or plagiarism) to develop new approaches over time, sustained by continuing conversation and resources. In addition, conversations about writing within units were supported by our continuing department or unit partnerships. By promoting connections across departments as well as offering units the opportunity to have focused conversations about writing in their discipline, WID programming encourages instructors to become ever more reflective about their teaching.

Open Programming

Open workshops offer instructors the chance to make connections across departments; our open programs are typically one-time workshops, open to any instructor who wishes to attend. This year, 64 individuals (including 42 faculty members, 6 staff, 10 graduate students, and 6 undergraduate students) from 30 departments and 6 programs took part in WID open programming which included workshops addressing the following themes:

General Principles of Teaching Writing

Through conventional workshops and short film screenings, workshops explored key topics in the field of writing in the disciplines and writing across the curriculum: assignment design, the role of feedback in writing development, rubric design, peer review, plagiarism and source use, and writing to learn. The Sound Bites series, developed in conjunction with other professional development units, offered faculty the chance to get a very short introduction to key topics (such as writing course goals, saving time while grading, or running effective discussions).

Writing and Diversity

WID’s commitment to diversity includes mounting programs with a central focus on issues of diversity in the classroom as well as on including an emphasis on diversity within most workshops we offer. Part of our general message about teaching writing is that writing offers broad opportunities for students to learn and to display what they have learned; writing assignments thus offer the opportunity to create varied opportunities for students to proceed through a course. We often incorporate principles from the Understanding Diverse Learners (UDL) perspective to our work, particularly in collaboration with the CTL on programs such as “Teaching in Higher Education.” In addition, we continue to support Blackboard Jungle by offering a related workshop (this year on multilingual writers and emerging linguistic competence).
GTA Programming

In collaboration with the Center for Teaching and Learning, we have supported the Graduate Teaching Certificate Program. This program provides feedback and encouragement for graduate students as they explore ways various high impact teaching practices can be useful in their teaching. WID and CTL offered a workshop on teaching in higher education specifically for graduate students and we welcome graduate student participants in other workshops that are connected to the program. Preliminary conversations with chairs of departments offering doctoral degrees have begun to explore the ways WID might help faculty support graduate students writing dissertations.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

WID sponsored a book group in the fall. Eight faculty members and the associate director of the Center for Student Ethics and Standards read Susan Blum’s My Word! Plagiarism and College Culture.

Evaluation

Faculty members motivated to attend our workshops were happy with the programming and reported that it was of great value to their teaching. At the conclusion of each workshop, we asked participants to fill out an evaluation to help us assess the effectiveness of the activities and to solicit suggestions for additional programming. The 61 evaluations collected this year showed that participants were overwhelmingly satisfied with the workshops. Virtually all respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the workshop was valuable, that discussion helped them learn, that they would use ideas from the workshop in their teaching, and that they would recommend the workshop to others. Over 90% of participants thought the workshop they attended met their goals and balanced presentation, activities, and discussion well.

Participants were also asked open-ended questions about what element of the workshop was particularly helpful and whether there are any other activities, materials, or programs they would like WID to offer. The most common responses to the first question were that participants appreciated the chance to learn from and connect with colleagues in other departments; the chance to see examples of others’ approaches, and exposure to new perspectives and teaching tools to enhance teaching. (More detail on workshop attendance and evaluations is given in Appendix D)

WID Institute

The WID Institute, a four-day program in May, supports full-time faculty developing or revising an undergraduate course with a significant writing component. Participants develop a clear plan for the role of writing in the course, create assignment materials and class activities, and create assessment tools and strategies. This year, fifteen faculty from 8 different programs or departments in the Colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Arts and Science, Business and Rubenstein participated. We were

"I got some solid practical ideas I can implement. These things fire me up again and renew my sense of purpose."

16
pleased to welcome Professor Char Mehrtens (Geology) for the first day of the workshop; she drew on her extensive experience with the NSF-funded project On the Cutting Edge: Professional Development for Geoscience Faculty, for which she has been a workshop leader on course design. Her contributions to the Institute provided a strong foundation in the construction of course goals which guided everything else participants developed. This year saw the largest-ever participation of librarians from Bailey/Howe, which provided all participants with the opportunity for information literacy consulting during the course development process. Follow up activities will help support faculty teaching as well as writing.

“"I am planning on revamping my approach to my teaching in general as a result of what I learned here.""

Faculty evaluation for the 2013 WID Institute was overwhelmingly positive. 12 out of 14 evaluation forms reported that the participants strongly agreed that the Institute was valuable and that they would recommend the Institute to others (and the 11th agreed while the 12th was neutral). Virtually all participants agreed or strongly agreed that the Institute balanced presentation, activities, and discussion well. Open-ended comments indicate that the Institute’s emphasis on the connections between course activities and course goals, and the variety of ways to use writing assignments opened up many new insights for participants. This work led participants to consider both new kinds of assignments as well as new strategies for grading and responding and peer review. (More detail is given in Appendix E.)

We continued our practice of inviting Institute alumni to do brief presentations each day. These visits helped current participants see the light at the end of the tunnel, and also helped provide concrete examples of the ways the many options that are discussed at the Institute can come to fruition in a finished course.

During the year, we held one Institute reunion meeting for participants. This practice helps participants keep in touch with each other and enhance participants' teaching experience.

Extended Workshops, Programs, and Activities

Faculty Resource Group

The Faculty Resource Group on teaching first-year students completed a two-year course of meetings and conversation. The resulting strategies and suggestions will form the basis of a new cohort of faculty teaching first-year students who will be invited to join the 2013-14 Faculty Resource Group. This program was done in collaboration with the Center for Teaching and Learning.

Faculty Writing Workshops

In conjunction with the Center for Teaching and Learning, since 2011, WID has sponsored faculty writing retreats, which help faculty invigorate summer and break writing projects. This year, the faculty writing retreat continued through the academic year. Although our summer retreats are
better attended, we had a small group of faculty continue to use weekly writing times to anchor their writing routines. In total we had 24 participants from 17 departments.

New Faculty

WID once again joined the Fleming Museum, the Center for Teaching and Learning, Community-University Partnerships and Service Learning, and the Center for Cultural Pluralism in presenting at New Faculty Orientation. The orientation presentation brings current research to the attention of new faculty and offers the opportunity for interaction with the material and with colleagues.

Departmental Partnerships

We have consistently sought opportunities to work with faculty in departments, looking at the ways WID can collaborate with groups of faculty to explore the relationships among teaching practices, writing, and disciplinary and professional expectations. These collaborations encourage faculty to identify the ways writing already functions as a natural process in the discipline, and seek to build on those disciplinary experiences to strengthen attention to writing across courses in the unit. This year, we pursued two new departmental partnerships and explored new ways those partnerships might function. Beginning with local goals, connected to work that is already underway in the department, is a promising strategy for forming new relationships with units.

Biology

WID ran a workshop with online follow-up for TAs in Alison Brody’s professional development seminar, BIO 371C, Biology Survival Skills. The workshop focused on the development of rubrics and grading techniques, and Susanmarie participated in the Blackboard site in order to share additional resources as the semester continued.

Romance Languages and Linguistics

WID sponsored a year-long conversation about writing in Romance Languages and Linguistics (RLL). The RLL collaboration involved two workshops and a student survey (see Appendix B for a fuller report). WID’s contribution allowed the department to gain insight into student perception of writing instruction in the department. RLL faculty were able to see the ways in which students appreciate their availability and what sorts of writing assignments were perceived as most valuable. In addition, WID facilitated a conversation about the qualities of writing intensive courses. This work will resume in Fall 2013.

The TAP Program

The TAP Program provides first-year seminars for students in the College of Arts and Sciences. Susanmarie Harrington and Sue Dinitz--along with tutors Jenna Scoville and Brendan Sage--led portions of a May workshop for TAP faculty. Our contributions to the workshop focused on
productive ways to use the Writing Center and useful strategies for responding to students’ writing and using rubrics.

WID and General Education

As in the previous year, WID was heavily involved with general education. Susanmarie Harrington’s continued work as co-chair (with Char Merhtens) of the General Education Committee brought WID experience and expertise to the development of a campus-wide initiative. By May 2013, the General Education Committee’s pilot Foundational Writing and Information Literacy Working Group had enabled the Senate passage of a first-year writing/information literacy requirement. The full General Education Committee spent the year working on a plan to weave writing and information literacy work into the regular work departments do with curriculum. Susanmarie shepherded the committee through a review of best practices in the field of writing in the disciplines/writing across the curriculum, and the committee settled on a model inspired by the University of Minnesota’s Writing Enriched Curriculum. Over the year, the committee created a plan to invite 4 pilot departments to test a process. At the very end of the spring semester, the Provost committed funding for this pilot, called WILD: Writing and Information Literacy in the Disciplines (or perhaps in the Departments). The evolution of WILD will have major repercussions for the future shape of WID work.

The progress of general education is closely tied to the development of a firm institutional footing for WID. How the campus chooses to structure attention to writing and information literacy outcomes in the majors and across the undergraduate experience has many implications for WID’s activities and resources.

The Writing Center: Support for Student Writers

An Overview of Writing Center Services for 2012-2013

An Overview of Services Provided to Students: Opportunities for Engagement

The Writing Center offers students the opportunity to talk about their writing with a trained and experienced peer tutor at any point in the writing process. It offers services through two programs: open programming, which can be scheduled by any student or arranged by any faculty member, and the WID Mentor Program, which attaches tutors to classes and is available to faculty who have participated in the WID faculty development program.

This year, the number of writing center contacts with students reached an all-time high, topping the 5,000 mark (5,029), for a modest growth rate of 2%. This modest growth rate was intentional. In AY12, partly through additional funding from the Provost’s Office, we saw a 25% increase in the overall number of student contacts. Realizing we had little room for growth, we did only minimal promoting of the Writing Center this year. Use of specific services is included in Table 1.
The number of individual tutoring sessions stabilized at close to 2,700.

The number of group tutoring contacts more than doubled due to the offering of Conversation Circles classes both semesters (after the class was piloted in Spring 2012). In this class, small groups of English language learners meet with a tutor to practice conversation skills. On the other hand, in the WID Mentor program, the number of contacts through group tutoring decreased by over 50% due to the nature of the mentor placements this year (see pp. 35-36).

The number of contacts through class writing workshops declined by about 25% through both open programming (possibly reflecting our decision not to promote our services) and the WID Mentor Program (reflecting the nature of the mentor placements this year, as described on pp. 35-36).

**Table 1: Student Contacts through Writing Center Programs 2012-2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of session</th>
<th>Open Programming</th>
<th>WID Mentor</th>
<th>Total Contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual tutoring</td>
<td>2342 (-2%)</td>
<td>316 (0%)</td>
<td>2,658 (-2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group tutoring</td>
<td>1280 (+131%)</td>
<td>196 (-59%)</td>
<td>1,476 (+43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class workshops</td>
<td>428 (-23%)</td>
<td>467 (-27%)</td>
<td>895 (-25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Contacts</strong></td>
<td><strong>4050 (+16%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>979 (-32%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,029 (+2%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An Overview of Services Provided to Tutors: A Service Learning Experience

All of the above services were provided by fifty peer tutors, ranging from sophomores to seniors, and from a variety of majors. The writing tutors are carefully chosen through an interview and application process after being recommended by a professor. Their training is framed as an academic learning experience, which begins with the two courses required of first-year tutors (English 104 and 105) and continues through regular staff development meetings for second- and third-year tutors and for tutors serving as WID mentors.

Through their training, tutors explore how every writer’s abilities and writing processes are shaped by aspects of their background, experience, and identity, and learn ways of supporting academic literacy development at all levels, with focused units on ESL writers and writers with disabilities. The tutors develop a wide range of skills: in writing, teaching, leadership, public speaking, working in both one-on-one and group settings, time management, responsibility, and professionalism.

Tutor Highlights

In addition to providing close to 2700 student contacts through individual tutorial sessions, 1500 through group tutoring sessions, and 900 through class workshops, tutors collaborated in the improvement and development of our services and participated in broader conversations within the field by presenting at conferences and creating materials for use in our Writing Center.
• All tutors earned certification through the College Reading and Learning Association at one of three levels (each level requiring a minimum of 10 additional hours of training and 25 additional hours of tutoring). We had 1 tutor certified at the “Regular” level, 27 at the "Advanced" level; 15 at the "Master" level; and 7 completed an additional 25 hours of tutoring and 10 of training beyond the Master level (our “Grand Master” tutors).

• On April 13, two groups of tutors participated in panel presentations at the Northeast Writing Centers Association Conference at the University of New Hampshire. Tutors Jess Blier, Antonia David, Hannah Prescott, and Adrian Voss (along with ELL Coordinator Dana Šehović) offered a panel entitled, “Internationalization and the Writing Center: Partners in Change,” in which they each presented on some aspect of how writing tutors support international students. In “WID Mentors as Agents for Change: Exploratory Writing and Career Inspiration in First Year Seminars,” tutors Jenna Scoville and Brendan Sage discussed how their experiences as WID Mentors led them to re-think their roles as writing tutors and, more broadly, how writing is taught and viewed at universities. Both presentations packed the room and engaged (and impressed) their audiences.

• Many tutors contributed to improving our spaces and services, creating, for example, materials on writing literature reviews, tip sheets for tutors and students on strategies for writers with dyslexia, and a webpage on writing in history for our Tutor Tips website, along with new annotated sample papers for the Natural Resources and Environmental Studies webpages. Tutors also consulted with the staff and peer mentors at Think College (a program through the CDCI for students with intellectual disabilities) to better coordinate writing tutor support for these students.

• Tutor Jenna Scoville served as Presentation Coordinator, organizing 37 class presentations and workshops about the Writing Center.

• Four tutors served as mentors for the Young Writers Project (YP), providing feedback to student writers in grades 2-12.

• Tutors Brendan Sage and Jenna Scoville gave two workshops for faculty in May: at a workshop for TAP faculty, they provided a student/tutor point of view on effective practices for responding to writing, and at the WID Institute they discussed how to design effective peer review of student work-in-progress.

“Being a tutor has been one of the most influential experiences I’ve had in my four years at UVM. I never would have thought that I would become a part of such a great team of people and have such wonderful experiences. I’ve learned so much, and am so thankful for all the tools you have provided me with.”

--tutor Adrian Voss
Who Used the Writing Center?

Class Standing

Matriculated undergraduates from each class used the Writing Center. First-year students (adjusting to the expectations of college writing) and seniors (working on lengthier writing projects and application essays) each accounted for a little over 20% of the contacts; sophomores nearly 30% (reflecting use by USPP students) and juniors 15%. Continuing education students accounted for another 10% of the contacts (including several ELL exchange students), and grad students another 3%. This pattern of usage is fairly similar to last year’s and differs from the historical pattern of having at least 40% of the contacts be with first-year students, reflecting decreased use by students taking first-year writing classes (see pp. 31-32) and increased use by international students.

Chart 1: Class Standing of Students Using the Writing Center

Gender

Many writing centers report that more students identifying as female take advantage of their services. This continues to be true at UVM; students identifying as female accounted for 65% of the students using the Writing Center and 65% of the sessions.

College/School Affiliation

As in the past, students from all of the colleges and schools used the Writing Center, in numbers roughly proportional to college/school enrollments but influenced by the disproportionate number of English language learners enrolled in the School of Business Administration and Continuing Education.
Table 2: Use of Writing Center Services by College/School (excluding contacts through Conversation Circle classes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College/School</th>
<th># of students, AY13</th>
<th># of sessions, AY13</th>
<th># of sessions, AY12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAS</td>
<td>615 (44%)</td>
<td>1520 (40%)</td>
<td>1920 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSAD</td>
<td>90 (6.5%)</td>
<td>402 (11%)</td>
<td>486 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE</td>
<td>93 (6.5%)</td>
<td>377 (10%)</td>
<td>351 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALS</td>
<td>146 (10%)</td>
<td>325 (9%)</td>
<td>266 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CESS</td>
<td>125 (9%)</td>
<td>297 (8%)</td>
<td>439 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEMS</td>
<td>89 (6.5%)</td>
<td>283 (8%)</td>
<td>357 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHNS</td>
<td>122 (9%)</td>
<td>290 (8%)</td>
<td>160 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSENR</td>
<td>80 (6%)</td>
<td>144 (4%)</td>
<td>209 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAD COL</td>
<td>43 (3%)</td>
<td>110 (3%)</td>
<td>151 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1403 (100%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>3748 (100%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>4375</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Services Provided Through Open Programming

*Individualized writing support, open to all students for 52 hours a week in Bailey Howe Library*

This year, tutors held 2342 sessions at the Writing Center, including 858 through the Writing Partners Program. Table 3 gives a historical snapshot of the growth in individual sessions through our open programming over the past eight years. Following last year’s growth of nearly 25% (thanks in part to additional funding from the Provost’s Office to support the Writing Partners Program), use this year stabilized, with an increase in the fall and a decrease in the spring, ending with an overall decrease of 2%. (Writing Centers nationwide have puzzled over this pattern of a decreased use during the spring semester.) As was true last year, close to 40% of these sessions were scheduled through our Writing Partners Program.
### Table 3: Number of Individual Tutoring Sessions through Open Programming

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Fall Semester # of sessions</th>
<th>Spring Semester # of sessions</th>
<th>Total # of sessions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>1401 (+8%)</td>
<td>941 (-14%)</td>
<td>2342 (-2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>1292 (+21%)</td>
<td>1095 (+28%)</td>
<td>2387 (+24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>1071 (+11%)</td>
<td>858 (+9.7%)</td>
<td>1929 (+10.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>964 (+2%)</td>
<td>782 (+4%)</td>
<td>1746 (+6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>949 (+7%)</td>
<td>697 (+9%)</td>
<td>1646 (+8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>890 (-10%)</td>
<td>640 (-3%)</td>
<td>1530 (-7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/07</td>
<td>986 (+22%)</td>
<td>662 (-1.5%)</td>
<td>1648 (+11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td>808 (+18%)</td>
<td>673 (-3%)</td>
<td>1481 (+8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students came to work on papers assigned in classes across the curriculum, at all levels, as well as on application essays. While many writing centers work primarily with students required to schedule sessions, we have seen fewer and fewer required sessions over the years. Many faculty wanting all of their students to use the Writing Center have been able to request a WID Mentor. Historically, about 25% of sessions were required. This year, only one faculty member required students to use the Writing Center (Sarah Turner), resulting in 21 required sessions (making up less than 1% of all sessions).

**Writing Partners Program**

Now in its third year, this program allows students who want to use the Writing Center regularly to be matched with an appropriate tutor for weekly appointments, thanks to additional funding from the Provost’s Office. We created the Writing Partners Program in 2010 when we noticed that many ELL and ACCESS students came to the Writing Center frequently, often meeting with a different tutor each time. Knowing that the numbers of international students would be growing, we hoped this program would provide more consistent, efficient, and effective writing support.

This year, use of the Partners Program stabilized, with the number of partners increasing modestly from 84 to 92 students, who came for 858 sessions. Of the 92 partners, 61 came for additional sessions in the Writing Center, resulting in 216 additional sessions. Thus, students matched with partners came for a total of 1,074 sessions, accounting for 46% of all sessions through open programming. The average number of sessions per partner was 9.5.

A breakdown of the types of students who requested partners is included in Table 4. Of the 92 partners this year, 49 were English language learners, 27 were ACCESS students, 4 were referred by Athletics (most of whom were also ELL or ACCESS students), and 16 came for other assorted reasons, including writing anxiety and challenges with time management.
Table 4: Types of Students Use Used the Writing Partners Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of student</th>
<th># of students</th>
<th># of sessions as partners</th>
<th># of additional sessions</th>
<th>Total # of WC sessions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With a disability</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language learner</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>858</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>1,074</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student evaluations of the Writing Partners Program

We emailed all 91 writing partners at the end of the semester, asking them to respond to a brief questionnaire. Forty-two of the students took the time to email a response. For a compilation of all the student comments, see Appendix F.

Students loved this program! All of the students said the program fulfilled their expectations, using superlatives such as “amazing,” “exceptional,” and “excellent.” In describing what they gained from meeting with their partner, many (15) focused on how it helped them improve their general writing skills. Several noted that this improvement in skills gave them increased confidence. Thirteen students described how meeting with a partner helped them with planning, developing their ideas, and organizing. Eight mentioned more generally that meeting with a peer was helpful. Many described the advantages of meeting regularly with the same tutor (e.g. “I found what is useful meeting with my writing partner is that we get to know each other, so she knows [what] my writing style is like. She also knows what is the best way to help me with my writing assignment. By working with the same writing partner, I feel more comfortable because I do not need to introduce myself every time to a new writing tutor.”)

“My writing partner is a perfect match: we work well together and accomplish most everything. I’m learning a lot and greatly improving my skills.”

“I think this program helps me a lot, not only for the writing. It also helps me find a good chance to talk with American students and I feel I could practice all I learn from English class.”

When asked for suggestions for improving the Writing Partners Program, about half of the students responded that nothing needs to be improved. Five requested expansions of the program: to have more partners available or to be able to meet with their partners more often. Seven students said they would have preferred to meet with a tutor from their major. One goal for the future is to recruit more tutors from the School of Business Administration, as many of the international students choose this major.
**Class Workshops and Presentations**

A very effective way of informing students about the Writing Center is to have a peer tutor give a presentation in class when the students are working on a writing assignment. Faculty can request that this presentation be extended into a workshop engaging students in a general conversation about writing, a conversation that might involve looking at a sample paper, considering what makes peer review effective, discussing what makes writing challenging, identifying students’ styles of composing, or some combination of these topics. Tutor Jenna Scoville coordinated 37 such presentations (8 fewer than last year). Sixteen of the presentations involved an in-class workshop (10 fewer than last year), resulting in contacts with 428 student (128 fewer than last year). These included 8 workshops for English 1 classes, 1 for a TAP class, 2 for TRIO students, and 5 for an assortment of other classes at various levels (HDFS 1, MU 085, NFS 195, PSYC 109).

The smaller number of presentations and workshops partly reflects the placement of mentors in 3 TAP classes, resulting in workshops being done through the Mentor Program rather than through open programming. It also reflects the dropping of EDSS 055 from the curriculum, for whom we used to give four workshops a year reaching at-risk students. In addition, we didn’t go into ESOL classes to give presentations and workshops, as many of the students knew about the Writing Center from the USPP summer bridge program and the teachers felt comfortable introducing our services. As the numbers of ESOL courses and faculty grow, we should reconsider the value of giving presentations in these courses.

**Support for Diversity and Retention**

In working with students making the transition to college-level writing, including students with diverse literacy backgrounds and language processing styles, the Writing Center helps support retention and diversity. To accomplish this, we carefully recruit a diverse group of tutors and then provide extensive preparation through which tutors explore expectations for academic writing and connections between literacy practices and various aspects of identity. Tutors learn how to help students build on their strengths and acquire new ways of thinking and writing without sacrificing old ones. We are aware of the many issues that complicate students’ feelings and attitudes in relation to academic writing, and so strive to make our spaces and services welcoming to and effective for all students by systematically applying the principles of universal design to our spaces, materials, and strategies for working with students. We are very proud that in end-of-session evaluations, 99% of students reported that the tutoring environment was welcoming, comfortable, and respectful.

**Support for English Language Learners, Including International Students**

Developing support for English language learners has continued to be a very high priority for the Writing Center.

*Benchmarking Writing Center support for ELLs*

We benchmarked writing center support for ELLs at peer and aspirant institutions, and found that eleven of the fifteen institutions specifically mention ELL support through the writing center on their writing center and/or international student webpages. In responding to the growing
number of international students at UVM, the Writing Center is following the best practices used at our peer and aspirant institutions: providing information and links to resources for ELLs on our webpage, training the writing tutors to work with ELLs, and having an ELL Coordinator who spends some of her time working with and through the Writing Center. Six of the eleven institutions with ELL services—all of those with a robust support program for ELLs—have an ELL Coordinator connected with the Writing Center, whose role includes some combination of providing tutor training, conducting workshops for ELLs, tutoring ELLs, and/or providing faculty development related to ELLs.

Information about use of the Writing Center by ELLs at other institutions, as well as at our own, suggests that as the number of matriculated English language learners grows, the demand for Writing Center services will continue to increase. This year, Gayle Nunley worked with Sue Dinitz to estimate how much to budget for Writing Center support for ELLs in the future, and we will certainly need these additional funds. (For the full report benchmarking ELL writing support at our comparator institutions, see Appendix G.)

_Collaborating with the ELL Coordinator Dana Šehović_

Having the ELL Coordinator’s office in the WID Program has facilitated a wonderful collaboration in providing services for English language learners through the Writing Center. Dana provided additional training to all of the tutors on working with ELL writers, including coming to English 104 and meetings for 2nd and 3rd year tutors. She met with many of the tutors who were matched with an ELL writing partner to discuss goals and strategies for working with that particular student, and was available to consult with any tutor who had a question about a particular ELL student or session. Because her office was in the same space as the Writing Center, these consultations could occur easily and spontaneously. In turn, Dana was easily able to connect ELL students with a writing tutor. And Dana and Sue were able to confer regularly about individual students and about ELL services and support more generally. This collaboration culminated in a presentation at the Northeast Writing Center Association Conference on April 13. Dana and tutors Jess Blier, Antonia David, Hannah Prescott, and Adrian Voss offered a panel entitled “Internationalization and the Writing Center: Partners in Change.” Each presented on some aspect of how Writing Centers can adapt their services to better support international students.

_Individual Tutorials_

As described on p. 24, thanks to additional funding from the Provost’s Office we have developed a Writing Partners Program to allow students wanting to use the Writing Center regularly to be matched with a tutor for weekly appointments. We hoped this program would make it easier for English language learners to connect with the Writing Center, would facilitate the creation of a relationship between tutor and student (which can be complicated by language and cultural barriers), and would allow for continuity of services, with tutors able to build on what had been accomplished in previous sessions.
This year, we worked with 49 writing partners who were English language learners, in 490 sessions. Many of those students scheduled additional sessions in the Writing Center, so in total the 49 ELL writing partners came for 643 sessions. Many more English language learners used the Writing Center, but because this characteristic is not marked in Banner there is no way for us to accurately count sessions with ELL writers. Sue Dinitz was able to read the log notes of students with more than seven contacts to look for confirmation of ELL status, and found 10 additional students who came for 141 sessions. In total, then, there were 59 English language learners who used the Writing Center eight or more times, coming for 784 sessions (an average of 13 sessions each). This means that 33% of our individual sessions through open programming were with English language learners who used the Writing Center regularly. There were many more ELLs who used the Writing Center fewer than 8 times.

Looking at the class standing of the ELL writing partners suggests that most of the USPP students (26 of 28) asked for partners during their first year at UVM (as sophomore), and then about 20% of those continued to use the Writing Center as juniors (5 students) and seniors (5 students). ELL exchange students and staff also requested partners (9 students), along with a few first-year students (3) and graduate students (2). Of the 10 students who came to the Writing Center more than 7 times but didn’t ask for a partner, 7 were juniors or seniors who had used the Writing Center previously, suggesting that once students are familiar with the Writing Center, they feel confident scheduling appointments as they need them.

**Group Workshops: Conversation Circles**

Thanks to additional funding from the Provost’s Office, we expanded our group tutoring through the Conversation Circles class, providing tutors for 3 classes in the fall and 5 classes in the spring. Tutors worked weekly with small groups of ELLs on their conversation skills, creating 1280 contacts. Dana Šehović provided additional training for the tutors, and then their work was supervised by the instructor. This class has proven so popular and the collaboration with the writing tutors so successful that we developed a plan for making the program less costly and more sustainable, so it can be expanded as we enroll more international students. Students are now going to be charged a fee for taking the course, which will pay for the tutor wages. Dana Šehović is going to teach a one-credit class for students who are new to tutoring in the Conversation Circle classes, to provide them with more consistent training and support. This will also allow her to recruit from beyond the pool of current writing tutors.

**Summer Bridge Program for USPP Students**

This spring, Sue Dinitz continued to work closely with Continuing Education and ELL Coordinator Dana Šehović to plan the writing tutor support for the USPP summer bridge program. Three writing center tutors were recruited to work for about 18 hours each week, holding required individual tutorials with each USPP student and facilitating weekly conversation and study groups. To ensure a smooth transition into the fall semester, Sue Dinitz connected with the USPP students on several occasions: providing an introduction to Academic Support at the USPP Summer Bridge orientation (with the Learning Co-op), greeting students when they found the
Writing Center during a scavenger hunt, and doing a workshop on writing and academic support for the group as students began the fall semester.

Support for Students with Disabilities

This year, the number of ACCESS students using the Writing Center increased from 170 to 183, and the number of sessions with ACCESS students from 500 to 588 (an increase of 18%). All of the ACCESS counselors now consult with Sue to connect students with a suitable partner. We connected 20 ACCESS students with partners this year, as compared with 12 last year and 6 the year before. We also continued to provide support for Think College, a program located in the Center for Diversity and Community Inclusion that provides a college experience for students with intellectual disabilities. Seven students enrolled in Think College worked with writing partners, coming for 82 sessions. Students and tutors have commented on the value of this experience.

Support for TRIO/SSS Students

This year, 88 students in the TRIO/Student Support Services Program (serving first-generation college students from limited-income families) used the Writing Center, as compared with 98 last year. They came for 284 sessions, as compared with 330 last year. The Writing Center also offered a workshop each semester to students in the TRIO/SSS STEP program on the connections between academic writing and critical thinking. Given this 10% decrease in students and 14% decrease in sessions (a decrease which continues from the previous year), a goal for next year continues to be to connect with the TRIO Program staff and students. The Learning Co-op hired a new TRIO/SSS director in the middle of this year and will be hiring a new staff member for the fall; Sue mentioned this goal when she attended a Learning Co-op staff meeting in April.

Assessment of Open Programming Sessions

We continued our practice of inviting students at the end of sessions to fill out an evaluation form, asking them to identify their goals for the session and what they worked on in the session and then to rate several aspects of their experience. This year, 366 students completed the evaluation. To address the concern that tutors might be less likely to invite students to fill out a form after less successful sessions, we tried to focus on having all students fill out an evaluation form during the month of April. These results were almost identical to the results from the full set of evaluations. For a fuller summary of the evaluations, including student comments, see Appendix H.

“It was very helpful! I'm much less stressed and now feel comfortable with continuing the writing process!”

“Very helpful. [The tutor] asked questions that helped me develop my own ideas.”
What We Learned about Student Satisfaction with the Writing Center

The ratings for all six evaluative questions confirmed the outstanding service provided by our talented and committed writing tutors. The ratings from the April sessions were almost identical.

- 96% of the students found the session useful, with 77% strongly agreeing
- 95% were satisfied with what they worked on in the session, with 77% strongly agreeing.
- 99% of the students found the tutoring environment was welcoming, comfortable, and respectful, with 88% strongly agreeing.
- 97% of students felt the process of making an appointment and meeting with the tutor went smoothly, with 83% strongly agreeing.
- 98% of the students said they would probably use the Writing Center again, with 88% percent strongly agreeing.
- 98% of the students said they would recommend the Writing Center to other students, with 90% strongly agreeing.

What Students Worked On at the Writing Center:

Many faculty, students, and new tutors assume the Writing Center is primarily a place where students can have a paper “checked over,” imagining that most of the work involves changes at the sentence level to assure that papers are as close to error-free as possible. However, as indicated in Table 5 below, only a little over half of the students (198/364) reported addressing editing concerns during their sessions. Furthermore, none of these students just worked on editing; students who worked on editing also worked on global concerns involving the paper as a whole, such as organizing and/or strengthening the paper’s ideas or content. Indeed, many of the sessions focused on the content of the writing, with 56% of the students reporting that they worked on “brainstorming ideas,” and 64% on “strengthening ideas, content, or thesis.” 25% of the students reported leaving the session with a clearer understanding of the assignment and/or genre of writing. A smaller but significant number of students worked on using and citing sources, interpreting a teacher’s comments on a paper, developing ELL reading and/or conversation skills, and/or time management.

“Helped a lot and now I have a much better understanding of the assignment”
Table 5  What Students Worked on in Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What students worked on in their session</th>
<th># students who checked N=365</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Feedback</td>
<td>268 (73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening ideas, content or thesis</td>
<td>232 (64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainstorming ideas</td>
<td>206 (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing for grammar, punctuation or style</td>
<td>198 (54%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing</td>
<td>119 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding assignment or writing type</td>
<td>90 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citing and using sources</td>
<td>65 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfilling a class requirement</td>
<td>43 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing teacher’s comments</td>
<td>30 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing ESL</td>
<td>28 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Management</td>
<td>13 (4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why Students Came to the Writing Center:

The degree of match between what students reported working on in their sessions and what they checked as goals for their sessions was astounding. For 201 of the 366 students (55%), there was an exact match between goals and session agendas. Another 99 students (27%) reported addressing all of their goals plus working on additional items. For 35 students (10%), there was a match between goals and agenda, but they weren’t able to address all of their goals in fifty minutes. 23 students (6%) reported working on the same number of items they had checked as goals, but one item was different. Only 7 students (2%) reported no match between goals and agenda.

Growing the Writing Center In a Structure That Will Support General Education

Supporting First-Year Writing/A Foundational Writing Experience

Students making the transition from high school to college-level writing have always been a target audience for the Writing Center. This year, first-year students used the Writing Center in about the same proportions as last year, constituting 22% of the students coming for individual sessions and 29% of the sessions. However, there was a rather dramatic drop in the number of sessions with students enrolled in first-year classes focused on writing. The number of sessions with students taking English 1
or CEMS 95 dropped by 50% (from 161 to 81), and the number of sessions with students taking TAP classes dropped by 25% (from 149 to 111).

The General Education initiative should provide increasing opportunities to connect students with the Writing Center during their first year. More sections of English 1 and TAP will be offered, so all students will be able to take a first-year writing class. The English 1 classes will be following a new sequence with more emphasis on revision, corresponding with the goals for foundational writing classes adopted through the General Education initiative. TAP classes will be expected to address these same foundational goals in their classes. With all first-year writing classes sharing a common set of goals that includes revision, the Writing Center will be better able to connect with students and faculty, explaining how the Writing Center can help them achieve their goals related to writing.

Supporting English 1

Writing Center support for English 1 classes continued the decline which began when the number of English 1 sections was cut nearly in half in 2009-10. Previous to this cut, sessions with English 1 students typically made up about 25% of all open programming sessions. That percentage dropped to 17% in 2009-10, 12% in 2010-11, 6.5% in 2011-12, and 3.5% this year (81 out of 2342 sessions). The number of presentations to English 1 classes also decreased, from 14 to 8, and the number of workshops from 11 to 8.

Table 4: Writing Center Contacts with English 1/CEMS095 Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Individual Sessions # of contacts</th>
<th>In-class Workshops # of contacts</th>
<th>Total # of contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>81 contacts</td>
<td>212 contacts</td>
<td>293 contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>161 contacts</td>
<td>234 contacts</td>
<td>395 contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>240 contacts</td>
<td>180 contacts</td>
<td>420 contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>294 contacts</td>
<td>300 contacts</td>
<td>594 contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>421 contacts</td>
<td>480 contacts</td>
<td>901 contacts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supporting TAP

We continued to work closely with the TAP program, emailing all TAP faculty about our services. We did 13 presentations in TAP classes and worked with students from 14 TAP classes, offering 7 writing workshops, 111 individual sessions, and 5 group tutoring sessions, for a total of 139 contacts.

Table 5: Writing Center Contacts with TAP Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Individual Sessions # of contacts</th>
<th>In-class Workshops # of contacts</th>
<th>Group Tutoring # of contacts</th>
<th>Total # of contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>111 contacts</td>
<td>94 contacts (7)</td>
<td>34 contacts</td>
<td>239 contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>149 contacts</td>
<td>180 contacts (9)</td>
<td>31 contacts</td>
<td>363 contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>64 contacts</td>
<td>216 contacts</td>
<td></td>
<td>280 contacts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We engaged in several special projects with TAP classes. A WID Mentor was attached to four TAP classes: ANTH 095 (Blom), BIO 009 (Miller), CS 095 (Erickson), and ECON 095 (McCrate). Two of the mentors (Jenna Scoville and Brendan Sage) were so impressed with the amount and type of support they could provide that the experience made them (and us) re-think our priority of placing WID Mentors in more advanced classes in the major. They gave a presentation at the Northeast Writing Centers Association on May 13 entitled “WID Mentors as Agents for Change: Exploratory Writing and Career Inspiration in First Year Seminars.” Also, Sarah Turner required all of the students in her English 005 TAP class to visit the Writing Center with a draft of their essay. This proved so successful that Professor Turner requested a WID Mentor for her TAP class next fall.

**Supporting the Honors College First-Year Fall Seminars**

We continued the model developed two years ago of attaching a writing tutor to the Honors College (preferably an HCOL resident), to hold open writing workshops once a week and be available to meet individually with students. This year’s tutor, Emily Howe, excelled at connecting with students, so we assigned another tutor to staff the very busy workshops. Several students attended regularly and arranged for additional meetings with Emily or another tutor at the Writing Center. While last year there were 60 sessions with students in HCOL 85/86, this year there were 99, an increase of 65%.

**Supporting Writing in the Major**

*Writing Center Tutorials*

Helping students understand the expectations for writing in a disciplinary context continues to be the central goal of many Writing Center sessions. With tutors from across the disciplines who receive extensive training on writing in various disciplinary contexts, the Writing Center serves as a central campus resource for students learning to negotiate the increasingly complex expectations of writing in different disciplines. Many students came to the Writing Center to work on papers for upper-level courses: 38% of all open programming sessions were with juniors, seniors, and graduate students taking courses at the 100 level or above.

*On-line Tips from Tutors*

Sue Dinitz continued the project of creating on-line resources by students and for students on writing in a variety of majors, funded in AY12 through an Instructional Incentive Grant. In many Writing Center sessions, students are looking for support connected with learning how to write in a discipline: understanding assignments, how to frame a topic or question, what constitutes evidence, how arguments are constructed, conventions for using and citing sources. We launched this resource on the Writing Center website in September 2012 (www.uvm.edu/writingcenter/tutortips), with webpages on writing in anthropology, psychology, English literature, creative writing, natural resources, environmental studies, and introductory biology and chemistry classes. This year, we have added webpages for political science and history, and have added more materials to the Natural Resources and Environmental Studies pages. Next year, we hope to add webpages for Business and Sociology.
The WID Mentor Program

Because the WID Mentor Program is a separate endeavor from our open programming and is offered jointly with the WID Program, we provide a separate report below.

The WID Mentor Program

In Fall 2009, WID and the Writing Center collaborated to pilot the WID Mentor Program, which attaches experienced peer writing tutors to writing-intensive courses for majors. Developed at Brown University in the early 1980s, this program has spread nationally, often supporting a curricular requirement for writing-intensive courses. The national model assigns one mentor for every twenty students and is used in courses having at least two required papers, one of which is due in the first month of the semester. Mentors read through drafts and meet with each student in the class. In fall 2009, we experimented with this model in four classes and soon discovered that each class integrated writing so differently that the national model had to be adjusted. Since then, we have been experimenting with different models, trying to learn as much as possible about what placements, roles, and practices lead to effective use of mentors in our campus context—all with an eye to eventually using this program to support a general education outcome related to writing in the major.

WID Mentor Placements

This year, we placed mentors in 18 classes, as compared with 20 last year. These classes represented a variety of disciplines, levels, and sizes: introductory classes in anthropology, biology, computer science, economics, English, and global studies, ranging from 17 to 157 students; 100-level classes in anthropology, classics, HCOL/environmental studies, natural resources, plant biology, Spanish, and nursing, ranging from 9 to 103 students; and small senior seminars in anthropology and biology, as detailed in Table 6.

Table 6: WID Mentor Program 2012-13 Placements and Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th># / ind sessions</th>
<th># group sessions</th>
<th># group contacts</th>
<th># wrkshps</th>
<th># wkshp contacts</th>
<th>Total Contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANTH 021</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>Mares</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANTH 152</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Shea</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANTH 095</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Blom</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANTH 296</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Mares</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIO 269</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Brody</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLAS 161</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Bailly</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS 095</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Erickson</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**WID Mentor Programming and Contacts**

In 5 of the 18 classes, we experimented with a new model we named the “basic” model, as opposed to the “advanced” (original) model. In the basic model, how the mentor works with the class is clearly defined and limited: the mentor holds open tutoring hours before papers are due and is available, on a limited basis, to work with individual students on request. We designed this model for faculty who would like to provide some writing support for a class but who have minimal time to spend planning for and working with a mentor. Although the basic model did benefit some students, it didn’t result in many mentor contacts. We learned several important lessons. Several of these placements fell apart because the mentor and faculty member didn’t communicate regularly over the course of the semester. Also, 3 of the 5 placements were with faculty teaching several sections of the same class, which resulted in many students wanting to meet with the mentor at the same time. In future, we need to assign mentors to only one section of a class, and the Writing Center director needs to work more closely with the faculty and mentors using the basic model.

Partly due to the experiment with the basic model, the overall number of contacts through the WID Mentor Program decreased by 32%, as detailed in Table 7 below. The number of individual sessions...
with students actually remained almost identical, as did the number of class workshops (20 as compared with 23). However, because the workshops were held in larger classes last year, the number of contacts through class workshops decreased. The number of group sessions did decrease dramatically: from 105 to 48, with contacts through group sessions dropping by 59%, from 477 to 196. Last year, two mid-size classes experimented with required peer review sessions and a third class with required sessions for group writing projects, resulting in many group sessions and contacts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of session</th>
<th>AY 13 (19 classes)</th>
<th>AY 12 (20 classes)</th>
<th>AY 11 (13 classes)</th>
<th>AY10 10 (14 classes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual tutoring*</td>
<td>316 (-0%)</td>
<td>314 (+31%)</td>
<td>240 (+3%)</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group tutoring</td>
<td>196 (-59%)</td>
<td>477 (+56%)</td>
<td>305 (-45%)</td>
<td>555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class workshops</td>
<td>467 (-27%)</td>
<td>641 (+39%)</td>
<td>462 (+219%)</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Contacts</td>
<td>979 (-32%)</td>
<td>1432 (+42%)</td>
<td>1007 (+8%)</td>
<td>933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evaluating the WID Mentor Program**

Faculty, mentors, and students continue to be enthusiastic about this program. (For a summary of the program evaluations, with selected comments, see Appendix I).

**Faculty Evaluations**

All faculty who filled out an evaluation felt the WID mentor positively contributed to the students’ experience in the class and highly recommended continuing to develop the WID Mentor Program. Faculty noted how much their students’ writing improved, with one reporting that, “All of the student comments were positive, and the papers turned in this year were the best I’ve seen in 15 years of teaching this class.” Several commented on how the mentor helped students understand their expectations for writing (e.g. “She helped them understand my criteria for grading, which are often the criteria anyone would use on a written assignment—so it helped with their writing more broadly.”)

As in the past, many faculty members commented on how much the writing mentor taught them:

**About understanding the student perspective**

“I learned a lot. Mostly, I learned how to approach the writing process from the student perspective.”

“Helps me to have someone to talk over class assignments and plans. Different perspective enabled my understanding of students' experience as well as their work.”

“Helpful to have student's perspective on class and on those who worked with her. She was able to report on their attitudes and concerns.”
About developing assignments and materials/activities related to writing

“Chelsea’s perspective on the papers and the writing assignments was extremely helpful. Without her, I wouldn’t have had the student ‘take’ on the assignments I was designing.”

“[I learned] how much of our teachers’ carefully formatted instructions on assignments go right past the students.”

“I did a better job of planning when drafts would be due.”

“Helped me consider what extra support students might need and then providing that support to students.”

“Henry developed a paper outline for the analytical essay to help students to picture how the assignment instructions mapped out on the page.”

About responding to and evaluating writing

“Sara was extremely valuable in helping me to refine evaluation strategies that would be most helpful (rubrics, etc.)”

“She gave me real and thoughtful insight into how students think. This was very helpful with regard to how I comment on student writing and how I presented information.”

“[I learned] to be more intentional about objectives and evaluation methods for written assignments.”

Mentor evaluations

Not surprisingly, the mentors themselves were more critical of their own contributions to these classes, but offered summary comments that were staunchly supportive of the program:

“This program is so fundamentally unique and empowering for the students, and it is a learning experience for the professors—I hope to see it grow bigger and bigger throughout these future years!”

“This is an incredible program, and one I wish was used more frequently by more professors. I have realized through my work with the WID program that there are hundreds of students out there who are extremely uncomfortable writing on their own. Writing is an invaluable skill, and if WID mentors can help not only with individual assignments, but also with the process of writing, I think this program can have a lasting impact on the UVM community.”

“I think that big lecture classes benefit from having a WID mentor to help prevent some people from slipping through the cracks. It also helps to lighten the load for the professor by having someone the students can go to specifically for papers.”

“Communication is central to almost all disciplines, this should be a priority!”
Student evaluations

Of the students filling out an end-of-semester evaluation form, 97% recommended the WID Mentor Program continue to be developed, and 94% felt having a WID mentor was useful in completing the writing assignments for the class, with comments that echo the mentors’ comments, describing how mentors clarified expectations, taught them about aspects of writing in the discipline, provided a different perspective, forced them to revise, enabled them to talk through their ideas, helped them become organized, and made them more comfortable and confident.

Developing a WID Mentor Program Model

In this year’s report, we would like to synthesize what we have learned over four years of experimenting with WID mentor placements, and imagine how to design the program to support a general education outcome related to writing in the major.

Past placements have shown that mentors can be used in any type of course. Mentors have been placed successfully in TAP classes, in large introductory classes, in 100-level classes ranging from 9 to 200, in writing-intensive classes aimed at seniors, and in 100-level Honors College classes. Mentors have also been placed unsuccessfully in all of these types of classes (except TAP classes, where they have consistently been successful). Similarly, we have not found one role for mentors that seems to work best. Mentors have worked successfully and unsuccessfully in a variety of roles, including offering individual appointments, tutoring students in pairs or groups, holding open hours for drop-in tutoring, facilitating in-class writing workshops, holding optional workshops on writing-related topics outside of class, facilitating peer review sessions, acting as coaches as students practice presentations, and working with groups on group writing projects.

What factors, then, result in a successful mentor placement? The key seems to be context.

Contexts that lead to successful mentor placements:

- When the faculty member has participated in faculty development related to writing (ideally the WID Institute), and has clear assignments that effectively address course outcomes
- When students perceive that there is something new and/or challenging about the assignments
- When mentors are perceived by the students as being knowledgeable
- When mentors can connect with students and are able to attend class occasionally
- When students see requirements to meet with the mentor as providing a clear benefit and as not adding to the normal workload for the course
- When faculty members and mentors communicate regularly, in person
- When faculty members are flexible, interested in adjusting their plans as the semester unfolds
• When expectations for the mentor are clearly defined, realistic, and spread out over the semester (e.g. mentors are not asked on Friday to schedule multiple tutoring hours over the weekend)

• When the program director meets with mentors and faculty at the beginning of the semester to provide information about the program and clarify expectations and opportunities, checks in with faculty again at midterm, and meets regularly with the mentors so the group can troubleshoot problems, imagine options, and plan programming.

Contexts that lead to less successful mentor placements:

• When assignments do not have a clear rhetorical context and/or genre identified for students

• When students feel competent to complete the assignments and don’t see them as presenting any challenges

• When students can complete assignments the night before and get good grades

• When the mentor is positioned as there to help the “bad” writers in the class

• When the mentor is presented as a valuable resource but is not integrated into the course design

• When students don’t think mentors have the necessary expertise (e.g. a junior placed in a senior seminar)

• When tutors are very introverted (and may do fine in the one-to-one setting of the Writing Center but have trouble initiating communication and connecting to groups and faculty)

• When faculty members and mentors stop communicating regularly

• When the class design makes communication challenging (e.g. in large classes where there are multiple sections and different teachers/TAs working with the students)

• When faculty members like to develop a tight plan for the semester and stick with it

A future direction for the WID Mentor Program

In planning the future direction of the WID Mentor Program, one key question involves where to place mentors. The cost of each mentor placement is about $600, so the supply will always be limited. Mentors need to be strategically placed, in classes where they are likely to be successful and to have the highest impact on students’ experiences with writing. Also, mentors cannot be viewed as a continuing resource central to a course’s design—we can’t provide mentors to the same class year after year.

An effective model for a WID Mentor Program could be to offer mentors to departments who are developing a writing-intensive curriculum to support writing outcomes for their majors through the general education initiative. In this process, faculty will be rethinking the role of writing in their courses and their own role in teaching writing. And in this context, the mentor can provide not only student support for writing but also some faculty development. As noted above in the summary of this year’s faculty evaluations, faculty find that they learn much from the mentors about how to assign and
respond to writing, and how to approach teaching writing from the students’ perspective. Currently, we do not include faculty development as one of the explicit aims of the mentor program. (In the national model, faculty development has been regarded as a happy, albeit unintended, effect of mentor programs.) With faculty development so key to the success of the gen ed writing outcomes, using the WID Mentor Program to provide not only support for students in writing-intensive classes but also faculty development related to writing makes sense. Mentors’ contribution to faculty development is unique: they can help faculty see writing assignments and experiences from the student perspective, which in turn helps them rethink their practices related to student writing.

Meanwhile, as we wait for the second level of the general education writing outcome to be piloted and then implemented, we can continue to experiment with ways of using mentors. For next year, this can include experimenting with how to incorporate faculty development more explicitly into WID Mentor placements. Previously, we have not even identified or “counted” mentor work related to faculty development, only noting it in faculty comments. The faculty placements for Fall 2013 have already been determined, but in recruiting faculty for Spring 2014, we can

- include faculty development as one of the stated goals of the program;
- hold a one-day workshop for faculty (led by Susanmarie) in which faculty consider their goals for writing, their assignments, and how they have included writing in their course design;
- figure out a way to document faculty development, perhaps through a log kept by mentors and more explicit questions on the end-of-the-semester form completed by faculty.

Of course, there are many additional questions that will need to be addressed if the WID Mentor Program expands, including how to recruit an adequate pool of mentors, how to provide them with the necessary training and experience, and how to coordinate the program. Currently the WID Program has bought out 12.5% of Sue Dinitz’s time so she can pilot the program (though the funds that support this will be depleted after FY14), and we have used experienced writing center tutors who are majoring in the department where they are placed. If a decision is made to expand the program, we will develop a plan for addressing these additional questions of staffing and resources.
Writing in the Disciplines and the Writing Center Annual Report

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Appendices are available upon request.