The George Mason University WAC Program Newsletter

Teaching with WRITING Across the Curriculum

wac.gmu.edu | Spring/Summer 2011 | writingcenter.gmu.edu

This issue focuses on working with multilingual writers in, across, and outside the disciplines.

Writing Center News

In the spring semester, the **Writing Center**:

- saw more than **550 (174 new)** clients, for a total of more than **1001** appointments.
- met with **63** students in **12** workshops.

WAC News

Watch for the debut of a "re-visioned" *The George Mason Review,* an undergraduate journal featuring exemplary writing across the curriculum, produced for the first time by an all-undergraduate editorial board that revised the mission statement and goals for the Review, created a new logo and design, and set up a submissions peer review committee. Faculty advisors *Lynne Constantine*, School of Art, and WAC director *Terry Zawacki* were privileged to work with these exceptional students: editor in chief *Paula Salamoun*; assistant editor *Justin Voigt*; managing editor *Candace Baker*; art director *Brittany Hill*; marketing director *Rheal Radwany*; marketing director *Iman Bahabib*; and graduate advisor *Jay Patel*.

Just out! A new edition of "Writing in the Disciplines: Advice and Models," a supplement to the popular handbook *A Writer's Reference* includes a chapter on "Writing in Criminal Justice," written by Terry Zawacki in collaboration with *Devon Johnson* and *Shannon Portillo*, faculty in Criminology, Law, and Society. This chapter, along with chapters on "Writing in Business" and "Writing in Nursing," includes sample papers written by Mason students.

And...Terry Zawacki, WAC director, and *Paul Rogers*, incoming director of the Northern Virginia Writing Project, co-edited *Writing Across the Curriculum: A Critical Sourcebook*, published by Bedford/St Martin's.

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Writing in Engineering and English as a Second Language (L2): A Double Challenge

Multilingual speaker/writer *Nathalia Peixoto,* associate professor in the Department of Bioengineering and Electrical and Computer Engineering, explains why good writing is a necessity for all engineering students, regardless of whether English is their first or second (or third) language. *See page 2*

From English L2 to Writing Tutor to Essay Contest Winner: An International Student Writer's Journey

M.A. candidate in economics *Romina Boccia* writes about her journey from a native German speaker with a basic understanding of casual spoken English to an accomplished writer and writing tutor in English. *See page 5*

Students as Literacy Teachers: ESL at Culmore

Rachel Hatcher, GTA in Modern and Classical Languages, writes about Mason Spanish students who are engaging with the community by teaching ESL and community literacy to Spanish-speaking immigrants from the Culmore neighborhood of Falls Church, VA. *See page 5*

New ACCESS Program Supports Int'l Student Writers

Composition teacher and former writing center director *Anna Habib* writes about a new initiative directed through the Center for International Student Access (CISA) that prepares international students for the American academic environment through linked fall and spring courses focusing on rhetorical awareness and research-driven composition. *See page 7*

Advice and Strategies for Working with L2 Writers

WAC director *Terry Zawacki* offers advice from her research on second-language writers and writing in the disciplines. *See page 3*

AND ALSO...

The WAC program is pleased to support Mason's QEP, Students as Scholars: Fostering a Culture of Student Scholarship.

Writing in Engineering and English as a Second Language: A Double Challenge

All writers in neural engineering are second language writers. Have you ever met anyone who knew the *con*cepts of *prosthesis, electrodes*, and *micro-electro-mechanical-systems* and used them in everyday language? Technical writing, especially when it involves concepts that have been learned in college, doesn't come intuitively. Often it is not straightforward either. We second- (L2) and third-language (L3) writers encounter a further complication: the correct use of written English. This puts us quasi-Americanized faculty and students at a disadvantage: we are always one step behind when writing in English. One consequence of this is that we L2 faculty need to work harder, and we also need to ask more of our L2 students in order for them to raise to a reasonable standard. Those students deserve a good learning experience while in college, and that experience includes obtaining English written communication skills.

Our L2-3 students often ask why they need to learn to write well in English if "all I want to be is an engineer." Often the reason they selected engineering in the first place, as I learn from talking with them, is that they could communicate through math only and demonstrate their knowledge through the numerous exams from Digital System Design to Electric Circuits, which include graphs, formulas, and numbers but require fewer than ten words of written text to achieve an "A." Many of our students are indeed excellent, high-GPA students. Despite claims to the contrary (sometimes by our own engineering faculty), engineering students do need to communicate in written English if they are to receive a degree from George Mason University. This need is obvious in some senior undergraduate and graduate classes where they have to explain their ideas for designs and argue for their point of view in writing.

To achieve the highest level of the new Bloom's Taxonomy—"create"—it is imperative that the student writer know how to express ideas appropriately in English. It is disturbing when a sentence makes no sense, but more than that the impact on the information transfer is enormous. As an instructor, the first question that comes to my mind is whether the student understood any of what I talked about in class. The second question is what the student actually means. To explain how critical this skill is, I use an analogy with my students: Imagine you are trying to look through a glass window at something your friend is pointing at, but the window is very dirty and you can only partially see through it. So it almost doesn't matter what your friend is pointing at, you want to first clean the window in order to understand—to see—what he is pointing at, his point. The window is their writing skill, I tell them, and they need to clean up the writing so that I can clearly see what they mean when they describe their ideas.

Actually, there is nothing more important for engineering students than learning to communicate effectively while they are still in college. If students are still unmoved by that argument, then maybe a 2009 survey conducted on behalf of the AACU (Association of American Colleges and Universities) will be more convincing. When employers were asked which outcome (out of 17) they believe should be most emphasized by colleges, 89% answered "the ability to effectively communicate orally and in writing." The second-ranked outcome, with 81%, was "critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills." No technical outcome exceeded the communication skill. This fact, along with the ABET requirement that students be competent communicators, makes the task of convincing our engineering students very straightforward: "Do you want a better job? Learn to communicate in English."

Nathalia Peixoto, Bioengineering and ECE

AACU document available at the following link (accessed March 15 2011): http://www.aacu.org/membership/documents/2009MemberSurvey_Part1.pdf

Mason Hosts International Writing Research Across Borders Conference

Writing researchers, teachers, professionals, and students from around the world came to Mason in February for the 4th International Conference on Writing Research, otherwise known as Writing Research Across Borders (WRAB). This year's conference included over 600 participants from 40 wide-ranging countries and many of the world's leading organizations. After the conference, Paul Rogers, assistant professor in English who co-chaired the conference with Charles Bazerman, a Writing in the Disciplines scholar, talked about some of the highlights.

"The first thing that really jumped out at me for this year's conference was that it was truly international," Rogers said. "Not only were over 40 countries represented, but they were from all over the world. They weren't just clustered from Europe and North America." In addition to the individual scholars from all over the world, Rogers listed a diversity of organizations that were represented at the conference: "Just to name a few: NCTE [National Council of Teachers of English], CCCC [Conference on College Composition and Communication], AERA [American Educational Research Association], and also several from Europe. And because of Mason's location, we had a number of government agencies come, like the NEH [National Endowment for the Humanities] and NCHD [National Commission for Human Development], among several others."

"More than the quantity though, I was impressed by the quality of this year's conference," he added. "It's exciting how much excellent research on writing is going on in so many countries, including strong interest in disciplinary genres and L2 writing. I think the conference emphasized the idea that writing instruction and practice is vital at all stages. For all of us, but for second- and third-language writers especially, every new writing task has its own set of standards and challenges. There is no one right way to write."

Reported by Ben Wilkins, MFA, English

Advice and Strategies for Working with Second-Language Writers across the Curriculum

According to the university's 2009-2010 *Factbook*, in fall 2009, Mason enrolled 1,764 international students from 131 countries, yet these figures do not even account for the numbers of immigrant students who have had some schooling in the U.S. but who may still struggle with writing in standard edited English. The writing center's demographic data provide a glimpse into the range of language backgrounds of international and immigrant students who, for the past several years, have represented well over 50% of those who come for tutoring and workshops on writing. (See writing center language charts at http://wac.gmu.edu/program/documents/Appendix2_Languages_Spr2010-1.pdf). While the writing center can provide individual and group assistance at the point of need, all of us can adapt our teaching-with-writing practices to help our multilingual students—in fact, all of our students—succeed as writers. A first step is to recognize and value the many strengths multilingual students bring to our classrooms as language learners, including the ability to acquire relatively quickly not only a new language but also the unfamiliar vocabulary and conventions of our specialized disciplines.

Advice from the research on second-language (L2) writers in response to often-asked questions:

- *Writing in home language and translating*: Teachers frequently ask whether multilingual students should be encouraged to write in their first language and then translate into English. Depending upon the extent of their experiences and knowledge of the topic in their first language (L1), student writers may be able to generate ideas and retrieve content more easily in their L1.

  Free writing and drafting might also be easier in L1, again depending upon the context in which knowledge has been acquired. As students gain fluency as readers and writers in their disciplines, however, they find that it is easier to write in English about materials learned in English.

- *Drafting and revising*: While drafting and revising are standard practices in writing-intensive classrooms, L2 students are composing the language (syntax and lexicon) in which to write at the same time that they are producing meaning. For them, drafting is likely to be a more constrained and slow process. Revising at the sentence level as they draft may help them access meaning.

- *Reading aloud to catch errors*: Depending upon how long they have been reading and writing in English, L2 students may or may not be able to catch their errors by reading aloud. Unlike English L1 writers, these students have not been immersed in the grammatical and syntactical structures of English and so may not hear or see errors even though they might be quite familiar with the textbook rules governing usage.

- *Correcting student errors*: While too much focus on errors will lead students to think you don't care about what they're saying, too little focus may make them think the errors don't matter. L2 writers need attention to both what is good, e.g. phrasing that demonstrates understanding of course material, and what is not, e.g. incorrect syntax, word choice, or grammar. When teachers correct every error, however, the writer will not know which errors present serious problems with intelligibility and which are comparable to spoken accents in writing.

  Writers, even English L1 writers, will not learn how to correct every mistake you mark for their next paper(s); further, your thorough editing assistance, while helping them produce a cleaner copy, will not necessarily teach them how to correct the errors themselves. Better to focus on persistent patterns of errors, explaining what's wrong and then finding similar kinds of mistakes that they must correct themselves. You can also ask students to "self-monitor," i.e. to keep an error log and to write annotations about the language issues they are struggling with and to which you can respond on subsequent drafts.

Turn page for strategies

Advice and Strategies for Working with Second-Language Writers, cont.

Strategies to facilitate the writing and learning process:

- *Give specific names to writing tasks you assign*. Rather than calling an assignment by a generic name like "research paper" or "essay," use names that reflect the genres typical of your discipline, e.g. proposal, white paper, executive summary, literature review, book review, issue analysis, and so on. Specific names make it easier for students to understand purposes, audiences, structures, and conventions.

- *Be explicit about the goals of assigned writing tasks and how these connect to the writing students will do in subsequent courses and in the field.* You can create a favorable climate for learning and the transfer of learning if you explain why you're giving writing assignments and, more than that, why writing is important to how you know and work in your discipline.

- *Give models and clear criteria for what you expect students to achieve.* Along with model texts, students need explanations of what they are supposed to learn from the model, whether that be how to construct a thesis, incorporate sources, format each section, and/or use conventional phrasing. Research on L2 writers indicates that they draw extensively from models and related texts, e.g., assignment guidelines, notes, and syllabi as resources for learning the expected genres and conventions of a discipline. They may even draw on some of the same phrasing to acquire language to talk about the topic.

- *Give students explicit information about when it is appropriate to consult with you about their writing and how to request a meeting.* Teachers often wonder why struggling writers don't come for help during office hours. Their failure to do so is often interpreted as not caring about their writing or wanting to fly below your radar. But other interpretations might be more likely. L2 students who come from "high-distance" cultures, i.e. cultures where teachers are not approachable or accessible to students, may not know how to approach a teacher to ask for a meeting or the appropriate email etiquette to do so. You can give them advice in class or on your syllabus. Consider giving them a sample email request.

- *Give explicit directions for how to share the workload on collaborative projects.* L2 students are often given a minor role in the writing of group projects. While some research indicates that they may learn by observing the writing process from beginning to end even if they have not contributed to what gets written, they may also feel that they are entitled to fuller participation based on their knowledge of the material. You can facilitate the process by asking the group to assign specific agreed-upon written deliverables to each member and to evaluate each member's contributions. See the Center for Teaching Excellence website for excellent advice on managing collaborative projects: http://cte.gmu.edu/Teaching/active&collaborative.html

Terry Zawacki, Director, Writing Across the Curriculum

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Students as Literacy Teachers: Volunteering in the Culmore Latino Community

Since the fall of 2007, students of Spanish at Mason have been teaching English and community literacy to Spanish-speaking immigrants in Culmore, Falls Church, Virginia. Working with Prof. Lisa Rabin and organizers at Tenants and Workers United, a workers' rights and social justice organization in Culmore, these Mason students have taught not only basic English vocabulary and syntax but also the use of English for gaining better agency at work or in the community. Traditional U.S. methods of ESL literacy programs often teach purely functional English and situate the teacher as the authoritative center of knowledge. In contrast, ESL learners in Culmore classes are encouraged to see language and writing as a way to understand, and even resist, structural forces that shape their environment. Because many immigrants of the Culmore area have had very little formal education, Mason student teachers are also dedicated to helping them gain literacy in the community language of Spanish while they acquire English.

The English class, which is free to Spanish-speaking immigrants from Latin America, meets twice a week for two hours. Through this opportunity, Mason students are learning to lead and control a small class, to prepare effective lessons, and most importantly, to share the critical cultural and linguistic skills of this country with those who are not familiar with them. Prof. Rabin also offers internship credit in Spanish to advanced students who show motivation and interest in this experience.

In a research study I am conducting for my M.A. thesis in Spanish directed by Spanish Prof. Esperanza Roman-Mendoza, I am interviewing and surveying both Culmore student teachers and the ESL learners on their opinions about English language ideologies and the teaching and learning of English in the U.S. Surveys and interviews have provided useful information on student and teacher motivations for taking or teaching the course, opinions on the level of difficulty of the language in comparison to learning Spanish, and on course expectations. Several Mason students said that, after teaching, they are now completely invested in the well-being, development of agency, and education of their Culmore students.

Rachel Hatcher, GTA Modern and Classical Languages

From English L2 to Writing Tutor to Essay Contest Winner: An International Student Writer's Journey

When I first arrived in the U.S. from Germany, my English was just good enough for casual conversation. Nearly six years later, I graduated from Mason with the highest honors in my major, economics. In the process, I served as a writing center tutor and as a WAC writing fellow, assisting native and other non-native English speakers with research and composition. I also won the F.A. Hayek essay contest with a paper on the U.S. financial crisis, and I am currently pursuing a Master's degree in economics while working as a policy analyst for a nonprofit organization.

Learning to express myself effectively in writing in English was hard work. In order to express my ideas, I had to revise, revise, and revise. This required a writing process that included collecting ideas, drafting a tentative thesis statement and topic sentences, and most importantly, having the courage to let go of the words on paper and start over again. Composing grammatically correct, well-structured sentences was another challenge. Handbooks helped and, additionally, I read many papers by established researchers on the topics I sought to write on to familiarize myself with the language of my chosen academy and to appropriate its jargon.

Teachers, tutors, and mentors were tremendously helpful along the way. Asking others for their constructive criticism on my writing wasn't always easy, but I quickly learned how important it was for my development as a writer. Having other readers point out grammatical errors, verbose sentences, and ask clarifying questions accelerated my learning process. It also helped me better focus on my audience and learn to guide my reader through my arguments.

Six years later, speaking and writing in English still feels as though I am attempting to appropriate a foreign language. Although communicating in English may never feel as natural as German does, the hard work entailed in acquiring proficiency certainly paid off.

Romina Boccia, M.A. Candidate in Economics

Students as WAC Scholars: A Shared Emphasis on Students' Learning Processes

As I sit gazing at my pile of student portfolios to grade, wishing that the completed pile was larger than the to-do stack, I have been thinking about the difference between evaluating product versus process. In these portfolios, students have selected recent news stories about health and diseases and have written a one-page critique of each article using an evolutionary and/or anthropological perspective. I enjoy reading these critiques because they demonstrate that students are able to identify and analyze the scholarly process involved in the reporting of the stories. However, what I find myself looking forward to reading are the self-reflective essays, the final element of the portfolio. In these personal statements, I get a glimpse into what value they found in the process of working through the assignment.

One of the (many) ways that Writing Across the Curriculum and the Students as Scholars QEP Initiative intersect is our focus on process as well as product. When we talk about the undergraduate research process, we are interested in having our students learn about the process of inquiry. Students need to see themselves as participants in the process of the scholarly endeavor, rather than just recipients of knowledge. In all forms of research and creative activity, including writing, the quality of the product is the end result of a complicated, iterative process.

Teaching this process is difficult, as we struggle along with our students in grappling with the unknown. Many of them were excellent students in high school, as seen by the improving profile of Mason's incoming classes. Yet they may still be unprepared for the challenges we place in front of them when it comes to writing and construction of knowledge at Mason. Many are excited about the challenge, and others are frightened by it. It will be our challenge, both through WAC and through the Students as Scholars initiative, to increase our efforts to support our students through the inquiry process so that they are able to produce excellent products. As faculty, we too can learn to take pleasure in supporting our students through the learning and writing process that leads to the final product.

Some suggestions for incorporating an inquiry process into your classes:

- Elucidate for your students that they are taking on the role of "student as scholar." This will help engage them in the process and take responsibility for their work.
- Talk about your own research and writing process, including what excites you and what frustrates you.
- Have students keep research logs (or blogs) that are checked regularly.
- Encourage students to write on wikis that track versions of documents.
- Break large assignments into parts that emphasize process, and make evidence of the process part of the overall grade.
- Ask students to discuss the writing or research being presented in class from a process perspective, e.g. "What did it take for the author to move from an idea or question to this result?"
- Ask students to write a reflective essay talking about what they have learned and why it matters. Not only is this valuable to the student, it is also helpful to you.

Bethany Usher, Associate Director,
Center for Teaching Excellence, and Anthropology

Learning by Writing across Many Roles—A Student Perspective

As a graduating senior, I have had the opportunity to evaluate, review, analyze, research, synthesize, and write, and at times I did all of the aforementioned about the process of writing. I was an Honors College student and also a former student member of the QEP committee, where I learned the importance of student learning outcomes to faculty and administrators. Yet, interestingly, my two most significant experiences with undergraduate writing have come most recently in my work as a Writing Fellow for Prof. Shannon Portillo in Criminology 303 and my role as editor in chief of *The George Mason Review,* an undergraduate peer-reviewed journal. Both experiences have challenged my perception of and relationship with the undergraduate writing process.

My work as an undergraduate Writing Fellow is of a dual nature: I am at once a writing tutor and a fieldwork researcher. Throughout the semester, I have sat in on lectures and writing labs, observing the student experience in a writing-intensive course. As I wrote my field notes, I paid particular attention to student-teacher interactions, student-TA interactions, the types of questions students asked, and the general attitude of students about writing, research, and the class environment. These field notes will inform an article Prof. Portillo is working on. At the same time, I also made myself available as a writing tutor to students in this particular class.

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New ACCESS Program Supports International Students as Writers and Researchers

The 2010-2011 academic year at Mason included the launch of a new internationalization initiative – the ACCESS Program – directed out of the Provost's Office and the Center for International Student Access (CISA). In partnership with the English Language Institute (ELI), the ACCESS Program is built upon a language-supported approach to campus internationalization, aiming to meet students at varied points of academic, linguistic, and cultural need. For the pilot year of the ACCESS program, the composition director and select English Department and ELI faculty worked together to design a co-taught, year-long model of introductory composition that moved students toward several major goals, including the development of rhetorical awareness, the expansion of academic writing skills, and the advancement of English language acquisition. The expanded composition course focuses on building the students' fluency and accuracy as they learn to navigate the conventions and expectations of academic writing in the U.S.

Although most of the ACCESS students were relatively fluent in spoken English (at the beginning of the academic year), many of them struggled with their written English. On a class wiki, students indicated that they were very aware of their challenges with English grammar and mechanics and reflected on how their limited proficiency affected their confidence and comfort with writing in all their courses. Therefore, in addition to weekly practice with writing, grammar, and reading exercises, students kept online vocabulary and error logs to help them self-monitor their language acquisition over time. They completed a Language Acquisition Portfolio at the end of the spring semester that included an analysis of their own writing and a reflective essay that tracked their language development and evolution as academic writers over the course of the year.

While the fall semester was designed to give students the confidence and strategies to write more fluidly in English, the spring course focused primarily on developing the students' critical reading skills and their accuracy writing in academic English. These goals came about through a partnership with *Zofia Burr*, Dean of the Honors College, and *Linda Schwartztein*, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, who taught the Introduction to Research course designed for ACCESS students linked to the second-semester composition course. The curricula were reworked to complement each other—the Introduction to Research course guiding students through the process of academic inquiry and research methodologies (with the assistance from peer-mentors in the Honors College) and the composition course focusing more specifically on how to build complex, academic arguments using secondary sources.

This co-teaching approach and the cross-curricular collaboration have resulted in significant progress towards the ACCESS program's goals for these students. Students who struggled with their English language proficiency and their confidence as newcomers to the American academic culture ended their first year at Mason with a much stronger sense of the conventions of academic inquiry and how to write and research in this new language and context, which, for most, is very different from the education systems and academic approaches in their home countries.

Anna Habib, Center for International Student Access, former director of the Writing Center

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Learning by Writing, cont.

On *The George Mason Review* editorial board, I balanced both a managerial position and a content-centered role as the journal underwent redevelopment. Writing became both a product I must sell and an academic entity I and my team must review on its merits. These two identities of writing would often become interrelated during board discussions. A debate on the rebranding of the journal would lead to a discussion by the editors on what journals should look like, which would lead to a discussion on the content we were willing to publish and how that content fit with the re-visioned journal.

Throughout these experiences, my position with writing continuously shifted back and forth between a student who was writing, a researcher who was observing writing, and a figure of authority on someone else's writing. Although I am still processing the significance of my own experience, I can confidently say that I have a better understanding of the complex and multi-faceted nature that is undergraduate writing and much of that understanding came from outside the traditional classroom.

Paula Salamoun, Gov't & Int'l Studies major and multilingual writer

Classroom Strategies for L2 Learners

- Ask your students to read all material before class, noting unfamiliar vocabulary and preparing questions for class.
- Suggest that your L2 students sit with students whose English is better than theirs, consulting with them when necessary. Encourage them to exchange telephone numbers and/or email accounts for any further assistance.
- Advise your students to rework (not redo) their notes shortly after class by adding any information they might have missed during class, expanding on unclear points.
- Encourage your students to review their notes regularly.

Jackie Brown, WAC GRA

WAC News cont.

The Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) committee conducted its fourth review of syllabi from all writing-intensive courses (WI) in fulfillment of its Faculty Senate charge for ongoing assessment of the requirement. Following is a brief summary of the main findings for 2010-2011.

- 47 designated WI courses were taught in Fall 2010 (out of a total of 52 across all undergraduate programs).
- Approximately 75% of the collected syllabi met all WI guidelines.
- Approximately 25% of the collected syllabi were missing necessary WI information or requirement.
- Of the 25% of syllabi missing information, most of these courses were taught by faculty new to the WI requirement.
- There seems to be some correlation between the amount of information given on the WI syllabus and Graduating Senior Survey results.

We encourage faculty to incorporate the following best practices for teaching with writing in any course:

- assign shorter papers due at intervals throughout the semester or divide a single term paper project into stages that receive feedback;
- give written assignments rather than verbal instructions or a short note in the syllabus;
- explain how the assignment connects to learning goals in the course;
- offer advice on what constitutes successful writing in the course;
- provide evaluation criteria with the assignment to convey writing expectations; and
- align feedback and evaluation. criteria to course learning and writing goals.

CONGRATULATIONS to WAC director Terry Zawacki on winning a 2011 Teaching Excellence Award.

Check out the 2010-2011 Student Writing Excellence Award winners at http://wac.gmu.edu/news/student_writing_winners.php

Meet New Writing Center Director, Dawn Fels

We are pleased to welcome Dr. Fels to Mason, starting July 2011. Dawn brings extensive writing center and teaching experience at both the secondary and postsecondary level, most recently at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. As a high school English teacher, Dawn created and directed a writing center in an urban-suburban high school placed on corrective action. Her experiences there started her on a research agenda that includes the effects of federal and state curricular policies on teaching and learning. Her dissertation, "The Vernacular Architecture of Composition Instruction: What the Voices of Writing Center Tutors Reveal about the Influence of Standardized Instruction and Assessment," was awarded an Honorable Mention for the 2011 CCCC James Berlin Memorial Outstanding Dissertation Award. In addition to her hands-on writing center experience, Dawn has served on the Executive Board and several committees of the International Writing Centers Association since 2005 and is a frequent presenter at professional conferences. Her publications cover a variety of writing center-related topics, with the most recent a forthcoming co-edited collection focused on secondary and postsecondary university writing center directors and teacher educators who have worked with area schools to set up centers that serve under-represented youth. An avid St. Louis Cardinals and Pittsburgh Steelers fan, Dawn and her two children, Cameron and Zada, will happily host fans of either team.

Spring 2011 Undergrad Peer Tutors and Writing Fellows

Although most writing center tutors are graduate students, undergraduate peer tutors and writing fellows also play an important role in the writing center's dynamic culture of writing and scholarship. In the spring, outstanding peer tutors were:

- **Michael Hecker,** Government and International Politics major, with a minor in Middle Eastern Studies.
- **Emma Kouguell,** Communication and English double major, with concentration in Media Production and Criticism.
- **Gary Harvey**, Religious Studies major, who also writes fiction.
- **Justin Voigt,** Linguistics major and assistant editor for *The George Mason Review*, and also a peer tutor for International ACCESS students.

Spring 2011 Writing Fellows:

- **George Buzzell** (writing fellow), Psychology, and **Taryn Brooks-Faulconer** (curriculum-based tutor), a Biology and Psychology double major with a minor in Creative Writing, were both assigned to help students in nine lab sections of BIOL 307 coordinated by Prof. *Larry Rockwood*.
- **Kim Ruff,** an Individualized Studies (BIS) major focusing on Applied Music Cognition, was a fellow in CONF 302 with Prof. *Daniel Rothbart*. Kim's research focused on students' perceptions and application of instructor and tutor comments in revising.
- **Paula Salamoun**, Government and International Politics with a minor in Economics, was a fellow in CRIM 303 with Prof. *Shannon Portillo*. See page 7 for a description of her research.

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