First-Year Writing Program
Annual Report
Academic Year 2014-2015

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Introduction

On behalf of the larger English department, FYW faculty teach more general education courses than any other faculty body or program at the University. Academic Year ’15 (AY 15) has proven to be the busiest yet, with a range of new programmatic initiatives, increased enrollment projections, and the establishment of a growing full-time faculty body. Under the guidance of the FYW Director (Jessica Restaino) and with the support of the FYW Committee and English Department Chair (Wendy Nielsen), the FYW program employs over 80 faculty (full and part-time) who taught 389 sections of first-year writing for a total of 7,308 instructional seats in AY 15 (see below for more details). The past three years have brought annual enrollment increases and projections for AY 16 indicate yet another increase.

The FYW program at Montclair State enjoys a national reputation built on rigorous, best practices in instruction, training, and internal evaluation, as well as consistent and responsive faculty professional development. While the faculty director oversees all programmatic initiatives, first-year writing faculty themselves are also leaders across the program: innovating, experimenting, and collaborating both inside and outside of the classroom. The following report offers summary snapshots of the major initiatives and features of the program, which are integral to advancing a central goal: the development of effective academic writers with the necessary skills for success in college and beyond. Special thanks to faculty committee chairs who submitted summaries of committee accomplishments for inclusion in this report.

Program Administration and Location
Jessica Restaino continues to serve as faculty program director, elected for a second three-year term effective July 1, 2015. The faculty director carries primary responsibility for all aspects of the program, including faculty hiring, training, and evaluation. The director (tenured faculty; 6 TCH per semester) receives support from one associate director (Jennifer Holly-Wells; full-time professional staff) and one assistant director (Bonnie Dowd; FT NTT faculty; 3 TCH per semester). Additional support comes from the English department administrative office staff, who split responsibilities between the writing program and larger English department. The associate director position has been a new addition in AY 15, providing essential support to our large program particularly around scheduling, data collection, and student issues. The director chairs and additionally receives support from the department’s first-year writing committee, which consists of both tenure-line and contingent faculty representatives who review policy, curricular changes, and hiring proposals and advise the director.

First Year Writing faculty offices are located on the first floor of Dickson Hall; administrative offices (Director and Associate Director) are on the fourth. There is an adjunct office located in DI 115, which includes some space for student conferencing, as well printing and computer support for faculty. Full-time faculty share offices (2-3 per office) on the first floor as well and maintain regular office hours. DI 118 serves as a

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1 The program was awarded the Conference on College Composition Certificate of Excellence award in the 2011-2012 academic year.
much needed break room with lockers, coffee maker, and supplies, designed to primarily support our adjunct population, which does not otherwise have a dedicated space for securing valuables or food. As enrollment increases continue and our full-time faculty population expands, additional office space for faculty remains a need area.

**Students: Instruction, Services, and Support**

The First-Year Writing (FYW) Program provides instruction in academic, argument-driven college-level writing to all of the University’s undergraduate students, including those transfer students who have not completed the two-course requirement. This two-course sequence includes ENWR 105/College Writing I, “Intellectual Prose,” and ENWR 106/College Writing II, “Writing and Literary Study.” A small percentage of the incoming population (typically 12-14%) take ENWR 100, “Introduction to College Writing,” in advance of 105 and 106. Students are enrolled in ENWR 100 via a qualitative, double-blind review process (details below). FYW is the largest general education program at the University, offering more instructional seats and employing more faculty than any other general education program on campus.

**Program Enrollment**

In AY 15, the FYW Program ran 389 sections of first-year writing, a total of 7,308 instructional seats. The table below shows the total offerings, broken down by semester, as well as the seat capacity per course type. As the data indicate, the program rarely runs courses not at full seat usage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>100 section 100 seats</th>
<th>100 used</th>
<th>% capacity</th>
<th>105 section 105 seats</th>
<th>105 used</th>
<th>% capacity</th>
<th>106 section 106 seats</th>
<th>106 used</th>
<th>% capacity</th>
<th>Total seats</th>
<th>Total used</th>
<th>Total Capacity Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>90.7%</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>277*</td>
<td>94.3%</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>570</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*cap raised to 16 on all sections; two sections added late with cap of 15
**time sections of Studio had cap raised to 21
***thirteen sections of Studio had cap raised to 21

**Advising**

First-year students seek advisement for several issues, including: evaluation of courses taken at other universities, concern about an instructor, appeal of a plagiarism charge, grade grievances, and placement in writing courses. The FYW administration maintains office hours each week: the associate director is available on a standard professional staff schedule and the faculty director keeps weekly office hours and appointments by request of students and faculty. Both correspond with students via email to meet the extensive demand. The associate and assistant directors take primary responsibility for review of transfer evaluations, consulting the director in more controversial cases, many of which require additional document collection and evaluation (syllabi and sample papers) and a few of which require an in-house essay assessment. Course waiver records are maintained in an online database designed to enable tracking and report-generation.
Grade grievances and disciplinary issues (most often plagiarism) demand time and attention from both the director and associate director. The program works regularly with the University conduct officer (Jerry Collins) to enforce the University and program plagiarism policies, and partners with the Dean’s office (CHSS Asst. Dean Yolanda Alvarez) on grade appeal issues as needed. The program insists that students follow a process that involves first a faculty meeting before progressing through administrative appeals; most issues are resolved on the programmatic level and do not require Dean-level involvement. The faculty director also works regularly with the Dean of Students office, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), and the Director of the Disability Resource Center to address struggling students and their resource and support needs.

Faculty: Staffing Structure and Type, Hiring, Retention and Development

The First-Year Writing Program at Montclair State enjoys high national and regional regard among scholars and teachers of college composition. Teaching positions in the program attract a high volume of applications from talented and well-qualified candidates. Measures of teaching evaluation and student performance, from student grade and survey data to classroom observations, indicate faculty deliver engaging, rigorous, high quality writing instruction. The following table outlines the staffing structure for AY 15:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FYW Staffing AY15</th>
<th>Fall -- Number/Percentage of Sections Taught By</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IS/One Year Faculty (12/12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sections</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Taught</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Faculty Type

The FYW program consists of 24 full-time, non-tenure track (NTT) instructors of two types: Instructional Specialists (with multi-year, continuously renewable, 12-month contracts) and temporary one-year instructors (with 10-month contracts, renewable each year for up to three years). This full-time faculty cohort carries light committee or service responsibilities, teach four courses per semester per instructor (IS can teach as many as 12 courses in 12 months), attend monthly faculty meetings facilitated by the director, and participate in an intensive professional development workshop at the end of the spring semester each year. The faculty director evaluates FT NTT instructors for reappointment as contracts dictate.

The program retains two types of part-time faculty: three “3/4” part-time instructors, positions occupied by long-standing personnel, who teach three courses per semester, and a high number (by comparison to our peer institutions) of adjunct faculty (who teach 1-2 courses per semester).
Hiring
On behalf of the program, the faculty director submits a hiring proposal annually that is vetted by the first-year writing committee and approved by the English Council and larger English department. The official request and rationale statement for the AY 16 hiring proposal is immediately below; at the time of this writing the Provost’s office has not approved any additional full-time hires beyond AY 15 numbers (24). Enrollment projections are based on Fa ’14 and are likely higher than anticipated as we head into Fa ’15.

REQUEST
At present, we are at 50% part-time (adjunct and ¾-time) faculty teaching first-year writing. To align our program with the Modern Language Association’s recommendation that 70% of undergraduate courses be taught by full-time faculty, we need to increase full-time faculty numbers (a combination of Instructional Specialist and “O” or one-years) to 34.2

FYW Projected Section Need for AY16, Fall: 194 (Consistent with Fa ’14 enrollments)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FYW Staffing AY16</th>
<th>Fall -- Number/Percentage of Sections Taught By</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IS/One Year Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sections</td>
<td>1351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sections/Percentage</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION

Given that adjunct faculty can teach a maximum of only two courses per semester, and in fact some are available only to teach one, our current 50% reliance on part-time faculty means that we must manage many more individuals—85 total instructors—to cover our course offerings. Essential issues of professional development and training, assessment (class observations, tracking of grade data, student course evaluations), programmatic meetings, email correspondence, faculty needs around student issues, illness, scheduling conflicts, copying, technology, and parking, among others, are all increased given the high number of instructors teaching in our program. Scaling up significantly our percentage of reliance on full-time faculty also means scaling down our actual faculty numbers overall, thus saving the University in terms of demands on other resources and also ensuring more effective oversight of the FYW program’s sizable faculty.

2 MLA/ADE Ad Hoc Committee on Staffing. *Education in the Balance: A Report on the Academic Workforce in English* (2007); see also the U.S. House Committee report, *The Just-In-Time Professor* (Jan 2014), which summarizes the working conditions of part-time faculty and thus highlights the inherent difficulties to student learning and retention given over-reliance on such faculty.

3 Assistant Director and Instructional Specialist, Bonnie Dowd, receives 3 credits of reassigned time for administrative support provided to program.
We propose a move to 34 full-time FYW faculty, which should be a balance of both Instructional Specialist and “O” or one-year faculty lines. The program would like to retain “O” lines as a probationary period during which faculty can be evaluated and from which they may apply for IS status. Accordingly, we propose a combination as follows for AY 16:

20 “O” lines: 12 (returning); 8 (new)
14 “IS” lines: 12 (returning); 2 (new)

At present, we have 12 IS and 12 O faculty, with two “O” faculty currently in their third year at “O” status and thus eligible to apply for conversion to IS for AY 16. In subsequent years, as we build enough faculty numbers to maintain a healthy balance in the program of full-time teaching and as IS positions are better established in the University, our request can increasingly emphasize IS faculty, thinning our reliance on “O” lines in favor of continuously renewable positions.

We have additionally retained, in AY 15, 3 “3/4-time” positions. We would like to maintain these three positions in AY 16, as they have been occupied by long-standing, successful faculty and help to cut down on adjunct numbers.

Faculty Retention, Evaluation, and Development Activities
New faculty members—however extensive their previous training—are introduced to the FYW Program through a mandatory two-day orientation that takes place in August. The orientation curriculum requires that faculty engage with foundational scholarship in composition theory and best practice, both as a means to orient them to the philosophical stance of our program and to ensure that they have a solid grounding in this pedagogical and research area. The workshop also reviews grading criteria, benchmark papers, program policies, and gives new faculty the opportunity to apply a variety of assessment and instructional techniques. Finally, the workshop introduces faculty to a variety of materials for their use and experimentation. New faculty are compensated for this time commitment.

All faculty are required to attend an “opening day” meeting at the start of each semester. This meeting typically includes a short professional development exercise, providing faculty with a new assignment or technique they can try in the classroom, and also apprises them of any new policies or initiatives in the program.

Curriculum and Programming: Initiatives and Faculty Committees

Achievement of the program’s educational goals hinges upon systemic and foundational professional development across our diverse faculty body, as well as rigorous and engaging curricula, consistent assessment practices (from the classroom to the larger program), and ongoing, sustained faculty involvement in the life of the program. A series of committees, made up primarily of full-time fyw faculty, which are overseen by and report to the faculty director, help drive forward, inform, and advance the larger goals of the program in focused ways. Committee work is part of full-time faculty members’
service to the program; occasionally, part-time instructors volunteer for a committee, though their participation is not required. Full-time faculty service is monitored and expectations are clarified in collaboration with the faculty director.

AY 15 Initiatives
• Revision and updating of FYW website
• Writing studio pilot
• Revision of assessment criteria
• Faculty assessment: grading, course evaluations, observations, reappointment
• Incoming student course placement
• Montclair Book

Revision and Updating of FYW Website
Not only is the First-Year Writing website often the initial “face” of the program for first-year students and prospective faculty and staff—not to mention the general public—it is also a key factor to the FYW Program’s uniform success due to its being a resource-rich center for programmatic information, updates, materials, assessment, policy, and support. To date, the website has been curated and maintained by Rick Reid, a full-time instructor in the FYW Program, with assistance from program’s leadership. The site is maintained regularly with current materials and information and now features a full color, image-based “News & Events” feed to keep students, faculty, and the general public aware of upcoming events and recent accomplishments. In turn, the website is both an important and effective tool for orienting new faculty and students to the expectations of First-Year Writing and for providing the information and resources to keep students, faculty, and the general public involved with the FYW Program.

Over the course of the 2014-15 academic year, the FYW Program website underwent a major overhaul to not only streamline and update the information and material located on the site, but to also optimize the navigation of the website itself through restructuring. Through the course of a series of meetings between Rick Reid and the FYW Program Director, Associate and Assistant Directors, multiple web pages within the site were clarified and updated with both organizational and line-by-line edits, and a more efficient left-navigation menu was developed for ease of access and more efficient use. Some of the more significant of the 26 itemized changes for the website included the creation of up-to-date “Live Literature,” “Faculty Accomplishment,” “Course Format,” “Exemplary Essay Awards,” and “Professional Development” pages as well as a completely re-designed “Designing Your Course” section for FYW faculty with its own drop-down navigation that includes such features as “Syllabi Basics & Samples,” “Canvas Help,” and “Grading Policy.” The “First-Year Writing Faculty” page was updated with a photograph of all current FYW Faculty—both part-time and full-time. Further, the “Academic Integrity and Plagiarism” pages were updated for both students and faculty to reflect the most up-to-date policies and procedures along with clear links to the University’s policies on Academic Honesty. Finally, along with the addition of a link to the successful FYW Blog (“Deep Down in the Classroom”) and the FYW Annual Report, the former Blackboard materials and links were updated for Canvas and the overall aesthetics of the major pages were enhanced with current photographs of faculty and
students from the FYW Program.

Check out our website here: www.montclair.edu/chss/english/first-year-writing/

**Writing Studio Pilot**

The Writing Studio is a pilot, course redesign that reflects an innovative approach to a national trend of writing instruction that prioritizes one-on-one instruction, student-directed learning, and flexible scheduling while featuring productive technological tools for more hybrid and multi-modal engagements to maximize the efficiency of the learning spaces within and beyond the classroom. The end of spring 2014 marked a full year of implementation of the innovative Montclair State University First-Year Writing Studio pilot. After an in-depth design and planning phase involving three full-time instructors and overseen by the FYW Director during the summer of 2013, the three full-time faculty of Laura Field, Jordine Logan, and Rick Reid collaborated to design and teach more than 450 first-year writing students in ENWR 105 over the course of the 2013-14 academic year.

Since its inception in the fall of 2013, and with IRB approval and regulation, the Writing Studio has undergone and continues to undergo multiple layers of assessment between in-class anonymous student surveys—at both midterm and final periods, evaluations and observations of the Studio faculty by both students and the FYW Director and Associate Director, as well as a longitudinal assessment implemented by Associate Dean Emily Isaacs that includes student surveys, grade data analysis, and comparative writing trait analysis. Further, after working early on with Scott Warnock (Drexel University), Anne Herrington (University of Massachusetts), and Angela Clark-Oakes (Arizona State University), The Writing Studio also continues to receive consultation from such outside sources as AJ Kelton, the Director of the CHSS Emerging and Instructional Technology, to help with its curricular development and integration of technology.

Most recently, over the course of the 2014-15 academic year, the Writing Studio continued to develop and expand in its ongoing effort to meet its goals of effectiveness and efficiency by emphasizing student-directed learning and flexibility. For the fall semester, the Studio added additional students to the original 12 sections as well as an additional section of ENWR 105, along with an adjunct instructor—Emily Lagg—to expand to a 260-student semester population. The expansion, along with a number of curricular changes, were in regard to student responses that cited one-on-one interaction with instructors and student assistants as being the most productive part of their learning, as well as an increasing demand for Studio availability within the program. It also recognized the possibility of the Studio as an effective mentoring ground for new FYW faculty. In the spring of 2015, the Studio offered ENWR 106 for the first time that represented the first instance in which students could elect to take their ENWR 106 class in the Studio format and resulted in a more than 50% return-rate of Studio students from previous semesters with an overall increase in student population from 260 to 280 students. In all, between student population expansion and continued curricular refining, the 2014-15 year was highly productive both in reaching toward the Writing Studio’s goals of academic effectiveness and efficiency, as well as providing perspective about
heightening those outcomes and goals as we move toward the 2015-2016 academic year with further expansion and increased curricular design efficiency in the works. AY 16 will bring the incorporation of several adjunct faculty and yet another design expansion to more fully accommodate the studio’s largest student cohort to date (483 instructional seats in Fa ’15)

The studio continues to be a subject of scholarship and research for involved faculty. In July of 2014, Jessica Restaino and Laura Field presented a paper on Montclair’s Writing Studio pilot project at the Council of Writing Program Administrators Conference in Normal, Illinois. Additionally, Emily Isaacs has a chapter, “Course Redesign in First-Year Composition” in a forthcoming book on the topic of course re-design in which she references Montclair’s studio pilot. The three-instructor team presented on the Studio at Montclair’s Summer Institute for Online/Hybrid Teaching and Learning this coming June of 2015. Field and Restaino additionally have a panel proposal under review for the 2016 Conference on College Composition and Communication, to be held in Houston.

Below are the studio course descriptions for purposes of charting changes to the overall course since its inception.

**Studio Description (Fall 2014 – ENWR 105, course syllabus)**

The Writing Studio is a creative course redesign for ENWR 105 that combines collaborative teaching, student-directed learning, on and off-site class-based activities, and a range of technological tools to support and enhance learning and interaction. The course involves a four-instructor faculty team that “shares” thirteen sections. Class is organized around three major, required parts—studio attendance (featuring discussion sessions and workshops), studio tasks (both online and face-to-face), and the submission of a writing portfolio—all designed to maximize peer and instructor interaction and drafting during the composing process. The studio portion of the course is worth 40% of a student’s total grade with the final portfolio representing 60% of that total grade. Portfolios will be assessed via collaborative review by the faculty team, though individual faculty will be responsible for final grade calculations for assigned-sections. With its unique design, the Writing Studio generates an active intellectual community to give students all the resources necessary to develop as critical thinkers and writers. Throughout this semester we will learn to write clearly focused, developed, organized and analytic essays in response to the intellectual and cultural issues that confront our society today. The dual emphasis of this course—on writing strong, clear, analytic essays and thinking carefully about complex issues—are complementary because to become an academic writer means to become an active critical thinker. In turn, College Writing I: Intellectual Prose recognizes that writing and critical thinking are best learned as processes and introduces students to the processes that can help them to create meaningful, clear, and intellectually valuable prose. These processes include active critical reading; free-writing, brainstorming and other pre-writing activities; receiving and giving constructive commentary to peers; conferencing; learning revision through writing multiple drafts; and editing and proofreading. The goal of College Writing I is for students to emerge capable of engaging in, taking on, and supporting positions on contemporary cultural and intellectual issues that face citizens in our multicultural,
international society. Students are required to attend the Studio once per week, but are encouraged to attend multiple times a week per their learning needs. The semester includes four modules that includes its own essay assignment and lasts the duration of three weeks per module. All students are required to attend an orientation session during the first week.

**Studio Description (Spring 2015 – ENWR 106, course syllabus)**
The Writing Studio is a creative course redesign for ENWR 106 that combines collaborative teaching, student-directed learning, on and off-site class-based activities, and a range of technological tools to support and enhance learning and interaction. The course involves a four-instructor faculty team that “shares” thirteen sections. Class is organized around three major, required parts—studio attendance (featuring discussion sessions and workshops), studio tasks (both online and face-to-face), and the submission of a writing portfolio—all designed to maximize student, peer, and instructor interaction and drafting during the composing process. The studio portion of the course is worth 40% of a student’s total grade with the final portfolio representing 60% of that total grade. Portfolios will be assessed via collaborative review by the faculty team, though individual faculty will be responsible for final grade calculations for assigned-sections. Students receive feedback on their writing weekly through written peer and instructor comments and open-conferencing. Scheduling is flexible: students will attend discussion sessions on a weekly basis, and will additionally have 24-hours of weekly open studio time for conferencing, studio tasks, and small group discussions. All students are required to attend an orientation session during the first week. At the conclusion of the course, students should be able to: insightfully question literary texts, sources, and authorities and arrive at fresh analysis; apply a critical lens to literary works; form an intelligent argument centered on a claim and supported with strong textual evidence; offer effective peer critique and use critique to revise; use MLA style with confidence, including proficient incorporation of outside sources; synthesize the ideas of other writers; and have ideas understood through effective writing marked by clarity of prose. These outcomes will support student writing throughout their academic careers to help them become more critical, analytic, and proficient thinkers and writers.

**Revision of Assessment Criteria and Benchmark Language: ENWR 100, 105, and 106**
Via extensive collaboration and conversation with full-time faculty, we have drafted new language for our programmatic assessment criteria and grading benchmarks for student writing. The new assessment criteria is immediately below and applies universally to each of the three courses; the new grading benchmarks are now appropriate to each course, taking into consideration the status of developing writers in ENWR 100 and the focus on literary analysis in ENWR 106. Below please find the most recent draft language, which will be finalized over the summer, incorporated into new faculty training in August, and posted to the program’s website for the Fall ’15 semester.

**Assessment Criteria**
The criteria below represent essential elements of any successful, argument-driven academic essay. However, the overarching, encompassing feature of any successful
writing process is the prevalence of rigorous, thoughtful revision, which reimagines and reworks any—and likely all—of the criteria listed below.

• Central Claim

The central claim (often also called the “thesis” or “main point”) is a debatable stance or argumentative position the author establishes and advances throughout the essay. Good central claims do more than state the author’s opinion and instead reflect a complex thought or idea that needs to be explored, supported, and developed throughout the essay. In his book *Rewriting*, Joseph Harris helps us to better understand the central claim of an essay with these questions: “What issues drive this essay? What ideas does it explore? What lines of inquiry does it develop?” (Harris 16-17).

• Development

A successful argumentative essay advances its core ideas or issues through sustained engagement and conversation with other writers and texts. This is at once about providing “examples” and “evidence”—complete with appropriate, correct documentation and citation—and yet also about stepping beyond the listing of examples. Successful development requires the author to carry an initial idea further, either by building on or extending the work of another author or by countering, arguing against, another author in order to more fully expand her own ideas.

• Analysis

A necessary component of development, analysis builds on and complicates claims and evidence when the writer asks, “So what?” This question pushes the writer to offer reasons for the connections between her ideas and available evidence to support those ideas. Analysis shows why any evidence, examples, or citations are essential to advancing the essay’s central ideas and it also shows why those central ideas—the main ideas and central claim(s) of the essay—are important overall.

• Organizational Focus

Organizational focus is defined by two main criteria: the presence of a core argument or set of ideas that are consistent throughout the paper, and logically connected paragraphs that take the reader through the author’s thought process as this core argument is developed, substantiated, and expanded. Sometimes students use the word “flow” to describe the organization of an essay; this can be a helpful term. With good “flow,” the progression of ideas make sense to the reader as she follows the author’s argument; there are no gaps, no surprising omissions or inclusions. In a paper with effective organizational focus each paragraph builds on and transitions smoothly from what comes before it in a logical progression of ideas.

• Clarity of Prose
A successful essay demonstrates clarity of prose, which requires mastery of English grammar, usage, and mechanics, as well as careful proofreading. Such mastery may also involve the writer’s ability to manipulate usage to further advance and develop the central claim(s), ideas, and analysis of the overall essay. Word choice and grammatical structure often serve a rhetorical purpose, exemplifying the ideas the author is exploring.

**Benchmark Language**

**ENWR 100**

*A* papers present a strong and clear central claim, well supported with evidence and reasoning connected to the central claim. The paper is developed and organized for a reader’s ease of understanding. It demonstrates thoughtful textual analysis and engages with sources in a variety of ways, making use of summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation in a fluid manner. The prose is clear and highly readable, generally correct mechanically and displaying strength of voice; while non-standard English may be present, its use does not detract from and may enhance readers’ understanding.

*B* papers present a clear central claim adequately supported with evidence and reasoning. The essay is sufficiently developed and organized. It demonstrates textual analysis connected to the central claim and engages sources, making generally effective use of summary, paraphrase, and/or direct quotation. The prose is generally readable, although sentences are not always clear, and while non-standard English may be present, its use does not detract from readers’ understanding.

*C* papers present a central claim that may be vague or overly general and/or that may be weakly supported. Though evidence and reasoning are present, the essay may be unevenly developed or underdeveloped. Essay organization is functional but often not ideal, with areas of repetition and/or weak transitions. The paper engages sources, although use of summary, paraphrase, and/or direct quotation may be ineffective. Analysis is present but may be limited or disconnected from the central claim. The clarity of the prose may break down with unclear sentences, although meaning is conveyed overall. Non-standard English may be present, but it does not significantly impact readers’ understanding.

*D* papers may contain some strong elements, but they lack a central claim or have a central claim that is not easily identifiable or that is unsupported with evidence and reasoning. The paper may be undeveloped and/or organized in a confusing manner without a clear sense of rationale for paragraphing or order of ideas. The paper engages sources minimally, making limited use of summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation, and offering little to no relevant textual analysis. The clarity of the prose may break down often with unclear sentences that significantly detract from readers’ overall understanding; non-standard English may be present and significantly impact readers’ understanding.
*F* papers have not addressed the assignment in terms of form, content, length, deadlines, and/or other requirements. Papers that violate the university’s policy for academic dishonesty will earn an F.

ENWR 105

*A* papers present powerful, engaging arguments and central claims. In an A paper, the writer’s central claim is clear and yet also complex and sophisticated. The central claim and core ideas of the essay are supported by compelling evidence, logical reasoning, and analysis. Relevant sources are integrated and documented appropriately. The essay is highly readable because it is organized for the reader’s ease of understanding, and the paragraphs and sentences are clearly, articulately written and enhance the overall effectiveness of the essay.

*B* papers present strong central claims and arguments that are well supported with evidence, logic, and analysis. Relevant sources are integrated and documented appropriately. The essay is organized appropriately and the prose is clear though it likely does not have the articulateness of an “A” paper.

*C* papers present central claims and arguments that a reader can follow but that may be only partially supported by evidence and examples. Organizational focus and analysis may be weak, suggesting that significant revision is needed. Often there is evidence that the author has either misread or only superficially read the text or sources under analysis; sources may not be integrated well or documented appropriately. The prose is generally readable, though sentences are not always clear and errors are sometimes distracting.

*D* papers are either unsuccessful in presenting central claims and arguments, or present arguments that are essentially unsupported. D papers may vary in length, but the paragraphs are frequently organized in a way that confuses rather than guides readers. External sources are often not present or well-integrated; sources are likely not documented correctly. Papers that are written in prose that is confusing will receive Ds, though not all D papers will have confusing prose.

*F* papers are unsuccessful in presenting and supporting arguments, either because they contain no central claims or, if they do, these claims are poorly developed. Essays are organized and written in a confusing manner, and prose is often inaccessible for the reader. Sources are typically not documented at all or not documented correctly. Often the essay does not meet the expectations outlined in the assignment.

ENWR 106

*A* papers present powerful, engaging arguments and central claims that present the author’s original interpretations of literary texts. In an A paper, the writer’s central claim is clear and yet also complex and sophisticated. The central claim and core ideas of the essay are supported by compelling evidence, logical reasoning, and analysis. The author demonstrates sophisticated close reading of the text(s), appropriately documented and
integrated external research, and a clear understanding of relevant literary genres. The essay is highly readable because it is organized for the reader’s ease of understanding, and the paragraphs and sentences are clearly, articulately written and enhance the overall effectiveness of the essay.

*B* papers present strong central claims and arguments that are well supported with evidence, logic, and analysis. The author demonstrates close reading of the text(s), appropriately documented and integrated external research, and a clear understanding of relevant literary genres. The essay is organized appropriately and the prose is clear though it likely does not have the articulateness of an “A” paper.

*C* papers present central claims and arguments that a reader can follow but that may be only partially supported by evidence and examples. Organizational focus and analysis may be weak, suggesting that significant revision is needed. Often there is evidence that the author has either misread or only superficially read the text or sources under analysis; the author may lack familiarity with relevant literary genres and sources may not be properly documented. The prose is generally readable, though sentences are not always clear and errors are sometimes distracting.

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**Faculty Assessment: Grading, Course Evaluations, Observations, Reappointment**

**Grading**

Standardized grading practices across the program is a major and demanding priority area in a program of our size. The program philosophy around grading emphasizes and values revision, and faculty are expected to assign grades that are aligned with the program assessment criteria and grading benchmarks. The letter grades students receive at the end of the semester are predominantly reflective of the quality of their academic writing rather than other components of the course, such as participation, attendance, and the completion of low-stakes assignments.

The director requests grade data from the Office of Institutional Research at the close of each semester. This data indicates averages per course type across the program, as well as grade frequencies (As, Bs, Cs…) per instructor per course. Typically the director, in
consultation with the associate and assistant director, identifies outlier faculty who have assigned a prevalence of either notably high or notably low grades. The director typically articulates concerns in writing and meets with the instructor; the program now has an “assessment committee” designed to support faculty in need of greater assistance aligning their grading to program standards and often the director will connect the struggling instructor to this resource.

As part of the standard professional development offered in the program, each fall there are multiple “grade norming” workshops, essential particularly for newer faculty, facilitated by either the director or associate director. In the spring, we tend to target struggling faculty on a case-by-case basis. In particular, adjunct faculty teaching at more than one institution face the steepest challenge in aligning their grading practices with our program.

Faculty Observations and Course Evaluations
All faculty teaching in the program receive consistent course evaluations and are observed with regularity. Course evaluations are completed in two of the lecturers’ four classes per semester, and in all of the courses taught by 3/4-time and adjunct faculty. These course evaluations are reviewed by the Director, Associate Director, and Assistant Director, and are distributed to faculty. Summaries of each faculty member’s evaluations each semester are also entered into a master database that is regularly reviewed by the Director. Notably weak course evaluations are flagged in this database and the instructor in this case is usually invited to discuss the class with the Director for some assistance in improving the situation. In rare cases, consistently weak course evaluations, coupled with weak class observations, can result in termination of employment or non-renewal.

All FYW faculty are observed on a rotating basis, with new faculty the “top priority.” Full-time lecturers are observed by either the faculty director or another English department tenure or tenure-track faculty member; the faculty director observes all new full-time instructors personally during their first year. All other FYW faculty (part-time/adjuncts) are observed by either the Director or full-time FYW faculty. Observation reports are submitted to the Director for review and of course shared with individual instructors. These observation reports are an essential component of the Program’s evaluation of faculty.

Reappointment
Faculty on full-time contracts require reappointment review at the close of each contract year for renewal. Faculty submit an application for review which documents their performance as writing instructors and the faculty director reviews all files and writes recommendations, as appropriate, for each faculty member under review. As our full-time numbers have continued to increase, this work is of particular importance and is of course notably time consuming. The faculty director submits all recommendations to the English department chair for final approval and submission to the Dean’s office.
Incoming student course placement

In AY 14, we revised our placement process to target incoming students immediately following their commitment (deposit) to the University and in advance of their attendance at summer orientation. All incoming students are given a standard placement assignment and must submit by a set due date. After extension discussion, Jim Davison, Director of Enrollment Services, created a quantitative metric which combined numerous factors (including rigor score, SAT, grade performance) as tested and refined against grade performance in our ENWR 105 course to isolate students considered “high risk” for close, qualitative review and possible placement into ENWR 100. This proved an effective and efficient combination of quantitative and qualitative assessment to isolate students in need of additional instructional support. Students not categorized as “high risk” are placed directly into ENWR 105; students marked “high risk” receive an additional qualitative, double-blind read of their placement essays by fyw faculty “expert readers,” trained and supported by the faculty director. Faculty teaching ENWR 105 review students placement essays at the start of the semester and incorporate these essays into the first unit of the course, providing feedback and allowing students to develop their essays for a grade. The same is true of students enrolled in ENWR 100 after close review.

In AY 15, the University moved to an “SAT optional” policy and the first screening mechanism—the quantitative analysis designed to isolate high risk students for close review—was powerfully impacted by the change. Many more students than originally anticipated opted out of submitting SAT scores and the quantitative metric netted a far higher number of close review students than initially anticipated. Though expert fyw faculty readers ultimately reviewed several hundred student essays (marked “close review” by the quantitative metric), placements into ENWR 100 were surprisingly low (about 35% of the “high risk” population and around 10%, currently, of the overall entering first-year class). Expected placement into ENWR 100 has typically hovered around 12-14% and, in the phenomenon of this year’s SAT optional policy shift, it is not clear that students marked “high risk” are necessarily appropriately marked as such. It is possible, too, that students classified as “automatic” ENWR 105 placements—*not* high risk according to quantitative analysis—may in fact be a varied mix of students appropriately placed *and* students in need of more support (ie, ENWR 100). In short, the SAT optional policy rendered the quantitative screening insignificant and our qualitative reading, though more extensive than originally planned, may have simply missed students not slotted for close review.

Going forward, we plan to address this year’s anomaly in two ways. First, we will implement a sweeping, initial review of students in ENWR 105, relying on instructors to quickly read placement essays (since all students completed them the program has all on record) at the start of the semester and identify students potentially in need of more support. This summer we will explore some options for providing that support through the fall semester. Second, working with admissions, enrollment services, the testing and advising offices, we must revise our placement assessment to target all incoming students given the current unreliability of a quantitative metric to isolate a high risk population for close review.
Montclair Book

The FYW program has been a supporter of the Montclair Book initiative since its inception. In past years, including for the incoming class of Fa ’15, the Montclair Book was used as the focus for the placement writing assignment and then faculty focused on a short unit at the start of the fall semester dedicated to the book. The faculty director and, most recently, an Instructional Specialist (Catherine Keohane) have sat on the book selection committee.

In Sp ’15, we removed the Montclair Book as the focal point for our placement assessment, as survey data from faculty and students indicated lower levels of engagement with the book than desirable. It seemed the linking of the book with the placement assessment might disengage it from more substantive engagement during the regular semester. Accordingly, the faculty director made the decision not to use the book for placement and instead to have all ENWR 105 faculty develop and teach a full unit in the first weeks of the semester dedicated to the Montclair Book which, for AY 16, will be David Margolick’s *Elizabeth and Hazel: Two Women of Little Rock* (2011). A second curricular change for AY 16 is that the Montclair Book will not be taught in ENWR 100. After a number of attempts to this end, input from faculty indicates that the focus on a full book in 100, where students need sustained, close attention to short readings and extensive draft and one-on-one work in their writing process, may undermine the goals of the course. Accordingly, the faculty director asked the ENWR 100 committee (convened formally this year) to review the issue and make a recommendation; the recommendation of the committee was to forego the Montclair Book in ENWR 100. However, as students progress to ENWR 105 in the spring, they will have an opportunity to study the book as their peers did in the fall semester. Additionally opportunities to be involved in the Montclair Book program are standard currently in the GNED 199 (“New Student Experience” course) and so students enrolled in ENWR 100 will not miss an opportunity to experience the book in the fall semester as well.

**Faculty Committees**

Committees, for which full-time faculty serve as chairs and active members, and which report to the faculty director, are essential in shaping the program and advancing its core goals. The following committees were active throughout AY 15 and summaries of their accomplishments for the year follow:

- Faculty Development and Collaboration
- Creative Writing for FYW
- Exemplary Essay Awards
- Hybrid/Online Teaching Best Practices
- Live Lit!
- Textbook Review Committee
- Assessment Support Committee
- ENWR 100 Committee

**Faculty Development and Collaboration**
The Faculty Development and Collaboration committee supports a number of initiatives around professional development across the program. In consultation with the director, committee members select, plan, and deliver professional development workshops and support a number of additional programs designed to engage faculty sharing of pedagogical approaches, strategies and materials. All FYW faculty are asked to attend a minimum of one workshop per semester.

A: Accomplishments (all workshop, blog post, and colloquia titles are listed below)
- 14 Blog Posts for the 2014/2015 Year
- 10 Professional Development Workshops
- 2 Informal Workshops (“Colloquia”) in the Fall
- Surveyed Faculty for Topic Suggestions
- Exit Surveys for Workshops

B. Outline of Goals Going Forward
- Revisit the Informal Observations/Class Visits
- Plan an Assignment or Curriculum Sharing Workshop/Activity with English Department
- 2 Brown Bags in each Fall and Spring
- 4-5 Workshops in each Fall and Spring
- Topic Survey for Workshops in the next couple weeks
- Setting up and cleaning up Professional Development page to include resources / archives

AY 15 Workshops

**Fall 2014**
- "The Personal in Academic Writing with a Discussion of Scarcity" offered by Bridget Brown and Henry Margenau, Monday, September 22nd 12-1pm, Cohen Lounge
- "Grade Norming Workshop" offered by First-Year Writing Associate Director Jennifer Holly-Wells, Tuesday, October 7th 2:30-3:45pm, Studio.
- "Assignment Design" offered by Christa Verem, Tuesday, October 21st 5:30-6:45pm, Cohen Lounge
- "Combating Student Apathy" offered by Erica Dolson and Shil Sen, Wednesday, October 22nd 2:30-3:30pm, Studio
- "Grading Norming Workshop" offered by First-Year Writing Director Dr. Jessica Restaino, Wednesday, October 22nd 4-5:15pm, Studio
- "Teaching FYW with Canvas" offered by Sarah Ghoshal, Liz Martin, and Rick Reid, Tuesday, October 28th 4-5:15pm, Studio

**Spring 2015**
- “Teaching Poetry and Integrating Live Lit into the 106 Classroom” offered by Henry Margenau and Jennifer Russo, Wednesday, 2/11, 4:00-5:15pm, Studio
- "Accessibility as the Work of First-Year Writing" offered by Jenn Fishman, Associate Professor, Marquette University, Tuesday, 2/17, 5:30-7:00 pm, Cohen
Teaching Drama in ENWR 106 offered by Gerrie Logan, Carrie O'Dell, and Shil Sen, Thursday, 2/19, 2:30-4:00pm in Cohen Lounge

"Step One: Building Trust in the Writing Classroom" offered by Jess Restaino, Thursday, 3/26, 1:00-2:15 pm in DI 179

Colloquia
Portfolio Week Activities and Peer Review, Wednesday, Nov 19th, 1:00-2:00pm in the Studio

ENWR106 Syllabus Planning, Wednesday, Dec. 4th at 4:00-5:00pm in the Studio

Peer Observation Program
Coordinated by Tavya Jackson, this program invites faculty to visit each other’s classrooms to observe in a non-evaluative context. Faculty have the option of volunteering their classrooms as “open” to observation, and those interested in seeing a colleague teach are able to coordinate an observation. This program is particularly useful for new faculty who may benefit from observing a specific classroom practice or activity (peer review, for example) that is a common challenge. The director often recommends an instructor in need of modeling for the peer observation program.

Mentoring
Chaired by Tatum Petrich, the mentoring program pairs incoming faculty with more experienced instructors who serve as resources on teaching strategies, program policy, grading criteria, and University systems and resources. Mentor faculty report to the director with updates and troubleshooting or need areas regarding mentees. The program concludes with a dinner each spring.

Blog
The “Deep Down in the Classroom” blog, coordinated by full-time instructor Shil Sen, is a collection of practice-based posts, written by first-year writing faculty (and, on one occasion so far, a guest blogger), that engage a national and international audience on issues relevant to the college composition classroom. Readers are welcome to comment on blog posts and the blog is updated regularly throughout the academic year.

List of Blog Posts (2014-2015 Academic Year)
Engendering Authority in the Classroom
Question of the day: What do you do during peer review?
Mind-Mapping as a Teaching Tool
Question of the day: How do you engage your class?
Combating Student Apathy workshop
On the “Edge” of Writing: Embodiment in Writing Practice
Question of the day: When students don’t read
Question of the day: What do you do on the last day of class?
Grading Class Participation
Student Evaluations: Reading Them, Reading Us
Gendered Language in Teaching Reviews
Teaching Drama in 106 (Spring 2015 version)
Sharing our creativity: What a concept!
Trust, Risk, and the Gift of Failure
(How) Do you deal with sentence-level issues in student writing?

**Creative Writing for FYW**

**1. Summary of accomplishments**

This year the Creative Writing Committee for FYW accomplished many things including:

a) We held a nonfiction creative writing group for students enrolled in 105 and 106.
b) We created a group writing space for faculty and students called the 75 Minute Club.
c) In addition to a faculty development workshop on how to help students become prepared and attentive listeners for Live Lit, we also ran a fiction writing workshop for students enrolled in 106. The goal was to help students learn about fiction "from the inside out" so they could write more purposeful essays in their 106 classes.
d) We started a resource group on Canvas with essays by Wendy Bishop, Patrick Bizarro, Ronda Dively, Bruce Ballenger, Tim Mayers, etc., to explore the intersection between composition and creative writing pedagogy.

**2. Outline of goals going forward into AY 16**

a. We would like to do 12+ student creative writing workshops in fall/2015, spring 2016
   - “Uncreative fiction” workshops (Jen Russo)
   - Nonfiction workshops (Erica Dolson)
   - Fiction workshops (Sasha, Henry, Robin)
   - Screenwriting or playwriting workshop (ask adjuncts and other faculty to lead)

b. We would like to offer faculty development workshops on how to utilize creative writing in the FYW classroom. The goal would be to give faculty a few lesson ideas to work with. We could also have a follow-up meeting to discuss how faculty implemented these lessons.

c. We would like to continue the 75 Minute Club for faculty, with the goal to meet once or twice a month.

d. We would like to organize an Academic Writing Group. This group would meet (online or in person) regularly to talk about ongoing academic projects. Ideally, we would share our work – whether conference paper proposals or book proposals, or fully realized essays or book chapters – and give each other feedback.

e. We will continue to add to the creative writing resource database on Canvas, including essays about the intersection of composition and creative writing pedagogy.
**Exemplary Essay Awards**

The Exemplary Essay Awards competition for students enrolled in FYW courses is judged by a committee of program faculty and seeks to identify the strongest paper written in each of our courses during the academic year. Full-time instructional specialist Donna Phillips served as Chair for Spring 2015. The committee received a record total of 300 essay submissions during the Spring submission period (ending May 13). The committee will collect essay submissions again in Fall 2015 before the final winners are chosen. Submissions are received in each of the three courses in the FYW Program and a winner is determined in each course category. Students’ essays are judged on the following criteria: Originality/Creativity; Focus; Development; Organization; Critical Thinking/Analysis; Clarity of Prose. Student award recipients receive a $100 MSU Red Hawk Dollars award, an invitation to the annual English Department Awards ceremony (for presentation of award), and all winning essays are published on the FYW Program website.

**2015 Winners:**
- ENWR 100 winner: TBA (by mid-late February 2016)
- ENWR 105 winner: TBA (by mid-late February 2016)
- ENWR 106 winner: TBA (by mid-late February 2016)

**Hybrid/Online Teaching Committee**

**Overview**

During the AY ’14-’15, the Hybrid/Online Teaching Committee, chaired by full-time Instructional Specialist Sarah Ghoshal, continued the exploration of hybrid study and practice of First Year Writing at Montclair State University. The committee also expanded to include new fully online courses. In academic year 2014-2015, 10 professors taught 7 ENWR 105 sections and 10 sections of ENWR 106, while simultaneously teaching 16 sections of FYW traditional face-to-face courses. A total of 288 students received grades in a hybrid course in ’14-’15, 110 students in ENWR 105 and 178 in ENWR 106.

In the Fall, the committee pursued the development of FYW hybrid pedagogy by assessing student readiness for hybrid learning and best practices for instructors across the board. While the development of new hybrid pedagogical tools and methods remains essential to the FYW Hybrid Committee, the AY ’14-’15 committee emphasized student readiness, working with the registrar to instate a minimum GPA for registration in a hybrid course and to offer students a survey to assess their own readiness for online and/or hybrid learning. In addition, there is always an ongoing and open discussion and evaluation of hybrid student populations and community.

Of particular note this semester was the creation of certain standards for hybrid/online teaching, such as a consistent attendance policy and evaluation of online class work and interaction, as well as the creation of an observation template for hybrid and online courses. The first ever online observations were completed in the Spring semester by
Sarah Ghoshal, Wendy Nielsen, Bonnie Dowd, Jennifer Holly-Wells and Jessica Restaino. This template is still evolving to meet the needs of our instructors and to accurately assess the effectiveness of the courses.

Finally, Sarah Ghoshal and Rick Reid taught two summer courses in 2014 fully online and during the coming summer session; Christine Giancatarino and Dayna Acurio will teach two more in Su ‘15. Most importantly, the first two ever full semester online sections of 106 were taught by Ghoshal with the use of an online text, further broadening the scope of varied modes in First Year Writing Program instruction at MSU. In addition, the two online courses were offered exclusively to First Year students in an effort to gauge effectiveness.

Committee Tasks
Committee members were responsible for continued discourse and open discussion on hybrid and online teaching issues. Bonnie Dowd and Sarah Ghoshal worked closely to accomplish the above endeavors, with welcome assistance from Jennifer Holly-Wells. Also, hybrid and online instructors are working on a full transition to online work, using Canvas gradebook, holding online office hours and conducting final exam periods online. In the Spring, the committee took the university’s online training course “Empowering Online Teaching and Learning” as a cohort in order to develop effective training for new hybrid instructors. It has been decided that going forward, all new hybrid instructors will take this course (and it may be revised in the future to meet particular First Year Writing Program needs).

Goals for AY ‘15-16
For the coming academic year, the hybrid/online committee will focus on the following:

● Revision/revisitation of hybrid/online observation template - balancing focus on Canvas course layout, online components and quality of instructor feedback and interaction with students

● Address hybrid and online 105 preparedness for the Fall - hopefully have something in place for Fall ‘16

● Collection of social media/multimodal projects from current hybrid instructors, as well as most recent syllabi to keep current needs met

● Pairing new hybrid instructors with veteran hybrid instructors in mentor/mentee pairings

● Add possibly customized Week 5 to OIT’s “Empowering Online Teaching and Learning” course that focuses on FYW specifically

● Standard rubric development for essays, discussion responses and homework responses

● Ongoing or future resource needs: Consistent smart classrooms for hybrid, recommendation for online 106 in the Fall (all seniors?)

Live Lit! Reading Series
Live Lit, chaired by Shelagh Patterson with committee members Claudia Cortese, Carrie
O’Dell, Liz Martin, Henry Margenau, and Melissa Adamo is a popular reading series featuring the creative work of First-Year Writing faculty, English faculty, MSU students, and regional writers who publish locally, nationally, and even internationally. Through the Live Lit! program and requirement, virtually all first-year students, as well as interested upper-level students, have the opportunity to hear professional and student writers read from their work and talk about the craft of writing. This is a hallmark experience of a college-educated person and one for which the FYW program takes entire responsibility.

Among its many purposes, Live Lit! serves as a helpful curricular complement, especially for faculty teaching College Writing II, Writing and Literary Study. Live Lit! also serves as a listing of other creative readings on and off campus and has increased the visibility of the FYW program to the wider university community. In AY ’14, Live Lit! was redesigned to create a more intimate experience for students and faculty. Instead of holding eight large readings as had been done in years past, the reading series expanded to 33 smaller readings, each of which accommodated four to five scheduled class on average.

In AY’15 we continued our innovations with the Live Lit! series. To minimize disruption to faculty course schedules, we consolidated the 22 events for Spring 2015 into a one-week festival. We also reached out to tenure-stream English faculty to emcee as part of department recruitment initiatives. In total, during AY’15 we held 27 Live Lit! events featuring 50 readers and three (3) literary organizations from the campus, local, and greater Northeast communities; one of the events was our annual collaboration with the Creative Writing Program. We also worked with the instructors from Studio to provide Live Lit! to their 13 sections of ENWR106 and coordinated with the hybrid committee to provide Live Lit! opportunities to 18 sections of ENWR106. Informal surveys reveal that few first-year students have ever had such an experience before attending a Live Lit! event; furthermore, students report the experience to be eye-opening and pleasurable.

**Textbook Review Committee**

In AY ’14-’15, the Textbook Review Committee, chaired by Instructional Specialist Bonnie Dowd with support from committee members and IS faculty Sarah Ghoshal, Leslie Doyle, and Allen Durgin, concentrated efforts on choosing a new handbook for program-wide use. The committee evaluated a range of texts, including an online option and adopted a compact handbook for FYW classes in traditional format and the online version for hybrid and online classes. At the committee’s invitation, the publisher of the online handbook offered an instructional presentation to all FT faculty, as they will pilot the use of the online handbook in the FA15 semester and report on its effectiveness for possible program-wide adoption. The committee additionally reviewed three new texts for use in ENWR105, adopting one. The committee continues to create syllabi and support materials for all adopted texts. Additional ongoing projects include the transitioning of the FYW custom material, formerly in the old handbook, to Canvas, updating all syllabi to correspond with adopted and revised texts, and the streamlining of the front matter in syllabi to help provide guidance and consistency for FYW faculty.
Assessment Committee 2014 - 2015

The committee provided grade norming outreach to faculty who could not attend workshops and/or who were found to be grading outside of the First-Year Writing program’s expectations. The committee also fielded individual instructor requests for second-reads on essays and other grading concerns. The year concluded with a grading support session tailored towards portfolio review and end-of-semester grading questions.

In conjunction with the First-Year Writing program director’s grade norming workshops and the tailored Faculty Development committee & the Assessment Committee, grade inflation decreased.

For the 2015-2016 academic year the Assessment Committee can focus its efforts on longer range goals particularly supporting portfolio-centered teaching efforts. More specifically this committee will draft and test portfolio assessment grading criteria and lead a cohort of faculty looking to expand their teaching towards portfolio-centered work.

ENWR 100 Committee

Summer 2014
• Established the committee
• Developed materials and facilitated an orientation meeting for summer EOF faculty
• Met with EOF Director to review previous year’s outcomes and discuss events, curriculum, and logistical matters related to the forthcoming summer program
• Attended regular bi-weekly EOF meetings and maintained contact through the six-week summer program

Fall 2014
• Collected and discussed individual committee members’ ideas, thoughts, and concerns about the course and its future; established short- and long-term agendas
• Portfolio Review:
  o discussed the process and procedures for portfolio review; revised the guideline materials and streamlined the process; facilitated the review at end of semester

Spring 2015
• Grading issue (the re-institution of the F as a course grade):
  o solicited and collected student profiles from Fall 14 faculty with respect to NC and D grades
• Grading criteria revision:
o collaborated on radical revision of current grade descriptions over the course of several extended meetings

• CWE requirement discussion:
  o collaborated in an extensive email conversation regarding the benefits and drawbacks of the current CWE policy as well as changes the committee is interested in discussing further for future implementation

• Additional ongoing discussions:
  o including placement, online handbook, a new reader, the number of required essays, preparation of new faculty orientation for Fall 15, development of support/resources for all 100 faculty, overall course goals and objectives, the course’s distinction from 105 and 106, and EOF orientation planning for summer 15.

Goals for AY 16:
• Finalize revisions for grade descriptions and review/rewrite essay criteria descriptions
• Solidify Summer EOF and Fall 15 faculty orientation plans
• Follow up with Jess and the Provost on collected student profiles with respect to getting the F back as a course grade
• Continue discussing and finalize the CWE policy
• Return to various other projects, including those listed in “ongoing discussions” above

FYW Programmatic Review and Development

Full-Time Faculty Administrative Days

For two days in May immediately following the submission of grades, the director and full-time lecturer faculty completed a focused professional development workshop to address faculty learning needs, including instructional approaches and teaching materials, as well as issues of programmatic policy and procedures. In order to develop a program for this intensive workshop, the director surveys faculty for interests and needs, and then incorporates concerns of the program leadership to create an agenda. In recent years, guest speakers have been incorporated to provide faculty with needed information about campus resources and student needs; this year, Dr. Karen Pennington, VP for Student Development and Campus Life, spoke with faculty about the student body, available resources, and disciplinary processes.

Critical accomplishments of this year’s intensive work period include review and discussion of programmatic assessment criteria and benchmark language for each course in the program; review and discussion of the existing programmatic absence and plagiarism policies; review and discussion of other essential curricular components...
Individual Faculty Accomplishments

FYW faculty are accomplished writers and scholars, publishing their work in a variety of impressive venues and actively presenting work at conferences and public readings. Announcements of faculty achievements are maintained and updated on the FYW website (under “News and Events” to the right of the page) and are included in the larger English department’s Annual Report.

Special thanks to the FYW faculty committee chairs who contributed summaries of committee accomplishments for inclusion in this report.