



THE WORD

NEWSLETTER FROM WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM (WAC) PROGRAM

WAC Spring Events

THURSDAY, APRIL 14
12:00 2:00 PM
Faculty Dining Room

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM COLLOQUIUM.
CONSCIOUS PEDAGOGY:
ENGAGING WITH LANGUAGE
DIVERSITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Our Featured Guest Speaker
Dr. Shondel J. Nero is an Associate Professor of Teaching and Learning at Steinhart School of Culture, Education and Human Diversity at New York University. Dr. Nero will conduct a workshop on specific pedagogical techniques for engaging diversity in the classroom.

TUESDAYS; 12:00 TO 2:00 PM; Writing Center

WRITING CENTER WORKSHOPS FOR STUDENTS, PLEASE ANNOUNCE TO YOUR STUDENTS!

- FEBRUARY 23, PERSONAL STATEMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL AND GRADUATE SCHOOLS
- MARCH 8, THE COLLEGE ESSAY
- MARCH 15, STUDY SKILLS
- MARCH 29, MLA & APA CITATION/ ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
- APRIL 12, RUN ONS/ FRAGMENTS
- APRIL 19, AVOIDING PLAGIARISM
- MAY 3, INTRODUCTIONS/ THESIS STATEMENTS
- MAY 10, MLA & APA CITATION/ ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
- MAY 17, CONCLUSIONS

A Faculty Guide to the Writing Center

You probably know that York College has a Writing Center located in AC-1C18, but do you really know what happens there or what the Writing Center can do for you and your students? The Center has undergone several changes this year:

- Jonathan Hall is now Faculty Director of the Writing Center
- Jo-Ann Glenn is now the Writing Center Manager
- The WAC Fellows are now working closely with the Center, acting as writing tutors and leading workshops for tutors and students.



With these changes in place, the Writing Center can play an even more significant role in learning at York College. We want to update faculty on the Center's method and services and to solicit feedback in order to continue to strengthen connections between classrooms and the Writing Center.

What happens at the Writing Center?

Many students and faculty members assume that a writing center tutor's job is to edit a student's paper, correcting grammar mistakes and suggesting organizational improvements in order to strengthen the assignment before the student hands it in. Writing scholar Jeff Brooks describes this type of tutoring session as a "a writing center worst-case scenario." When a tutor simply edits a paper, the student has no agency to learn how to better her writing. The immediate paper grade may be improved, but she does not learn replicable tools to use in future writing assignments. In order to avoid this form of passive interaction most writing centers -- including the York College Writing Center-- operate on a set of guiding principles.

Principles of the Writing Center:

- The writing center focuses on students as writers, not on specific papers.
- The student is the primary agent of the tutoring session and the expert on the paper. The student maintains ownership over the paper throughout the session: she guides the direction of the session and she makes the changes to the paper.
- The tutor has a secondary role, helping the student focus on structural issues on her writing. The tutor might ask questions, assign concrete writing tasks, or point out patterns of error.

How could faculty play more of a role in this process?

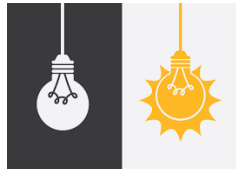
- Infosheets:** The York College WAC Fellows have created several Infosheets that outline general writing processes such as "Organizing your Paper". These can be used either in the classroom or by students individually and are available at <https://www.york.cuny.edu/wac/for-students/info-sheets>.
- Discipline Specific Infosheets:** WAC Fellows are available to help faculty create tutoring tools that are designed for your particular assignment. Contact the Writing Center for more information.
- Workshopping Assignments:** WAC Fellows are also available to meet with faculty to workshop writing assignments.
- Classroom Visit:** WAC Fellows and Writing Tutors can visit your classroom to introduce students to the Writing Center and reduce any stigmas attached to using tutoring services. To request a classroom visit, fill out and submit the form on <https://www.york.cuny.edu/student/writing-center/for-faculty/request-for-classroom-visit.pdf/view>
- Refer a Student:** Refer a specific student to the Writing Center for weekly tutoring or help with a specific assignment. Studies have shown that students are more likely to use the center if a faculty member specifically encourages it. To refer a student, fill out and submit the form on <https://www.york.cuny.edu/student/writing-center/for-faculty/faculty-referral-form.pdf/view>
- Review Student's Tutoring Feedback forms:** After each tutoring appointment, the Writing Center sends a feedback form to the tutee's professor. The form outlines what was worked on during the session and can be a useful tool for evaluating students' needs and progress.
- Recommend students to be writing tutors:** The Writing Center is always looking for students who are strong writers in any discipline with patient, supportive personalities. Please send recommendations to Jonathan Hall.

To work with a Writing Fellow on the aforementioned or any other writing-centered projects, email Jonathan Hall, WAC Coordinator: Writing Fellows and Assessment, Faculty Director of the Writing Center: jhall1@york.cuny.edu

How to Write Effective Personal Statements for Graduate School

On October 20th 2015 the Writing Center, in collaboration with York Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) professors Robin Harper (pre-law) and Andrew Criss (pre-med), offered a hands-on workshop to help students in all fields write personal statements for their graduate school applications. About 15 students attended the workshop, representing diverse graduate interests including medicine, law, social work, and criminal justice. Christin Bowman, a WAC fellow and doctoral candidate in Social Psychology at the Graduate Center, led the workshop. "As a graduate student myself," she told the group, "I am uniquely qualified to lead this workshop, because I have recently written a personal statement that got me in!"

The workshop focused on one particularly effective structure of personal statements, which can be applied to nearly any field, and students were given ample opportunity to work on their own personal statements during the workshop using this suggested structure. Bowman advised students to think of their personal statements as containing three main sections:



1. A personal story or "aha!" moment: In this section, students should write a story about when and how they realized their career goals. This section can include personal experiences and/or challenges, stories of overcoming adversity (either personally or academically), and/or an account of what motivates the student. Importantly, this personal narrative should lead to a realization of the student's career goals (e.g. "That is how I realized I wanted to be a lawyer"), which then poses the question of how to achieve those goals.



2. A statement of the preparation the student has accomplished: In this section, students should elaborate on the preparation they have already done to ready themselves for graduate school. This section can include jobs, internships, academic successes, leadership experience, research experience, and other evidence of motivation, skills, and character.



3. An explanation of why this particular field and program are right for the student: In this section, students should explain why their chosen graduate field (and the particular program to which they are applying) is the only way they can achieve their career goals. This section should make a clear case that the student's skills and experiences make the student a good fit for the field/program, and should also detail how this field/program will help the student achieve their career goals.

Bowman offered several additional tips to workshop attendees before providing ample time for them to begin work on their own personal statements. Students were encouraged to really do their homework on the programs to which they planned to apply, and to tailor their statements to specific programs and even, for some fields, to specific professors or research areas. Bowman also stressed that students should provide evidence for all claims they make in their statements – they should show instead of tell. No matter what field students would like to pursue, providing evidence for claims is always foundational. For example, rather than tell the reader, "I have been academically successful at York," a student could show the reader, "I have received a 4.0 average every semester at York, and have been an active member of X honor society." Bowman also cautioned students to avoid overstatement and exaggeration, and to always be honest about their experiences and accomplishments.

Student feedback on this workshop indicated that it was very well received, and due to continuing interest, the Writing Center and its collaborators will offer a repeat of this workshop this spring, led again by Bowman. **The workshop will take place on Tuesday, February 23 from 12-2pm in the Writing Center, and all are welcome.** Additional resources about writing personal statements can be found at www.york.cuny.edu/wac/for-students/writing-personal-statements-for-graduate-school.

WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE PROPOSAL

Please consider proposing and offering a Writing Intensive (WI) course for the Summer or Fall 2016 terms. In order for the proposal review process to be completed in time for registration, WI course proposals must be submitted by **TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2016**.

We are particularly interested in expanding the number of lower-level (100- and 200-level) WI offerings. Ongoing faculty commitment to writing on campus has helped students complete these required WI courses in a timely fashion, and we would like to increase the number of available courses. Students are also required to complete at least one upper-level WI in the major.

With the exception of permanently designated WI offerings, which are governed by the college curriculum process, all WI offerings are proposed by the instructor and reviewed by the Writing Intensive Advisory committee before being recommended for approval as a WI. Faculty must also have the support of their chair to offer WI since such offerings have enrollment and scheduling implications for the academic departments.

FULL REVIEW: Courses that have NOT been previously offered as Writing Intensive by the same instructor need to go through the full review process. New proposals should include:

a) The WI Course Proposal Form (attached and available on our website): <http://www.york.cuny.edu/wac/york-wac-program-information/wi-proposal>

b) A statement about the writing element of the proposed WI course

c) A tentative syllabus

Please submit all of the above materials as attachments to wac@york.cuny.edu by the March 1st deadline.

CONTINUING REVIEW: Courses that have been previously offered as Writing Intensive by the same instructor are eligible for our expedited continuing review process. Repeat instructors need only submit the syllabus and a note about any changes they are making to the writing element of the course. Please submit these materials to wac@york.cuny.edu.

Please contact sinayatulla@york.cuny.edu if you have any questions.