

## **Developing a Writing Fellows Program at Stetson University**

**Maggie Herb, Director, Stetson Writing Center**

### **Do Fellows need to have taken the course they are assisting in?**

No. Every day at the Writing Center, tutors successfully help students with papers in disciplines other than their own. Writing Fellows can do the same; their role is to focus on writing, rather than content. It can be helpful, certainly, if Fellows have taken the course or are familiar with the discipline. We will try to make these matches when possible; as the program becomes more established, we will be able to make these specific matches more easily.

### **Will Fellows work with students on grammar?**

Among many other elements, yes. Just like Writing Center tutors, though, Fellows will be trained to attend first to higher order concerns such as focus, argumentation, development, and organization. If particular students have problems with grammar and mechanics, Fellows can certainly help them become more aware of these issues and how to correct them. Fellows do not edit or proofread, however—they talk, listen, and teach.

### **Do Fellows attend the class?**

Probably not regularly. You would probably ask them to come to class early in the semester to meet your students and talk about their role in the class, however. In most programs, though, Fellows primarily meet with students outside of class—in a Writing Center, a library, or even online.

### **What is the best way to use a Fellow in my course?**

While every instructor and Fellow will need to make this determination individually, most programs suggest that students meet with Fellows during their drafting process. As such, instructors who use Fellows should build drafting into their course plans. For example, a week or two before final drafts are due, you might require students to conference with the Fellow and make revisions before handing in their final draft.

### **How is this different from asking students to visit the Writing Center?**

First, embedding the Writing Fellow within the course ensures that every student is regularly getting feedback on their writing. Second, having the same individual working with an entire class and the instructor together ensures greater consistency and clarity in feedback given. Finally, Fellows are able to establish a relationship with students in the course and become familiar with them as writers, making for more productive conferences.

### **What kind of time commitment would this involve?**

Faculty who elect to use a Writing Fellow would probably be asked to attend a general orientation/meeting at the beginning of the semester and to also meet with the Fellow individually

early in the semester. Aside from this, the instructor and the Fellow do not necessarily need to meet often—this can be determined on an individual basis. Faculty are not responsible for training the Fellow; they will have already gone through extensive training, and only experienced Writing Center tutors who are upperclassmen will be selected as Writing Fellows.

### **Proposed Budget for establishing and growing a Writing Fellows Program**

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Number of Courses using Writing Fellows	20	25	30	35	40
Stipend for Fellows	14,000	17,500	21,000	24,500	28,000
Additional expenses (instructional materials, promotion, events, etc.)	3,000	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,000</b>	<b>19,000</b>	<b>22,500</b>	<b>26,000</b>	<b>29,500</b>

#### Notes:

- Projections are based on research on established Writing Fellows programs, in particular Brown, Swarthmore, and Tufts. The programs at Swarthmore and Brown place more than 40 Fellows in courses each academic year. Our goal would be, by our fifth year, to achieve the sort of usage seen in these well-established programs. Research on stipends for Writing Fellows shows an incredibly wide range (from \$500 to 1200); the projections above use \$700 per Fellow per course, which is on the lower end of the spectrum. Still, if Fellows work approximately 50 hours/semester, this would equal a salary of \$14/hour—fair compensation that would certainly help to recruit Fellow candidates.
- The projected numbers assume that Writing Fellows would be trained through a credit-bearing course; if this were not the case, these projections would need to increase to include cost of training. These numbers also do not account for the salary of any faculty or staff that may need to be hired to administer the program.