

# WRITING@STETSON



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[www.stetson.edu/other/writing-program](http://www.stetson.edu/other/writing-program)

## After the First Year

By Megan O'Neill

It's hard to imagine where the year has gone, but one look at my inbox and I know how I spent a lot of my time. The Writing Program changed dramatically this year, and here I am to tell you what's coming next. Read on!

After seven years of strategic creation, support, and deployment of WE courses, primarily the FSEM program, we can now look closely at the knowledge creation processes that we value in those courses: how do students demonstrate critical reading and thinking skills in their writing? Where are integrative learning assignments placed, and how can we better support students and faculty with information literacy, speaking, and interdisciplinary study?

Because the Junior Seminar is where much of this vital work develops significantly, the Writing Program and the Writing Center will be closely involved with the JSEM program during the next year. At the same time, we will be addressing faculty concerns about student ability to read critically. Stay tuned for details about the Reading Institutes and the JSEM Initiatives.

## Rollout of New Requirement: Status Update

The '16-17 academic year saw the start of the new writing requirement, the launch of the Writing Fellows program, and the promised faculty development workshops and assessment initiatives. The short story: everything is moving along well.

Early assessment indications are that FSEM student writing was strong this year, with about **75% of the samples we read meeting or exceeding expectations**; full assessment results will be available this fall. Every FSEM instructor provided the requested samples, and a group of those faculty road-tested the VALUES Rubric for Written Communication as we move ahead on updating our

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

After the First Year	1
Rollout of New Writing requirement	1
The Writing Fellows Program	2
Faculty and Fellows speak out	3
Writing Program Goes on Tour	4
Dean Mero Speaks Out	5
Faculty Seeking Fellows? See here	6

The Writing Center, under the excellent leadership of Leigh Ann Dunning, has grown and expanded: now that the Writing Fellows program has taken off, the Writing Center is poised to debut online tutoring to support graduate and commuter students (for example, those students enrolled in the Adult Degree Completion program). Look for the announcements to come!

In January, Leigh Ann and I invite you to join us as we bring to Stetson the Small Liberal Arts Colleges conference for writing directors. Sixty program directors, representing the country's best small schools, will be here to reflect on creating and supporting student agency in difficult times.

I wish for all of us a happy and restorative summer.

assessment methods. We will look at adopting a variation of the VALUES rubric sometime in the 2017-18 academic year, pending faculty approval.

Faculty who attended the development and training workshops have told us over and over that **talking about writing with colleagues** provides the most effective source of development. When we put faculty who typically teach upper division students next to faculty who typically teach FSEM, great things happen!

Thanks for all you do. It's been a team effort, and it will continue to be that.

## Writing Fellows Are Here!

The most visible part of the new writing requirement has been the Writing Fellows. These consultants get intensive training to do their collaborative work with faculty and students. We're proud of the first crop of Fellows!

**Jeremy Jackman, Management (Class of 2018)**

**Taylor Silveira, English (2017)**

**Adrian Fonseca, English (2017)**

**Catherine Howell, Religious Studies (2018)**

**Martha Hunsucker, English/Gender Studies (2017)**

**Melaina Mills, Music (2017)**

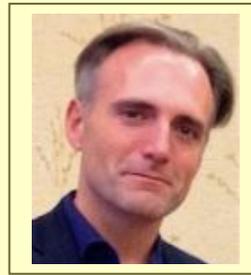
The Fellows have been strategically deployed around campus in FSEM, JSEM, Music History, Psychology, Sociology, and Professional Communications. Elsewhere in

## The Fellows Program: PSYC 498

I would like you to think that I asked for a Writing Fellow to support my course as a gift to my students or a sign of my commitment to improving undergraduate writing. The truth is more self-serving.

Frankly, I wanted to minimize the labor and the occasional heartbreak I associate with the grading of undergraduate writing. Working with a Writing Fellow did not prohibit heartbreak entirely, but it did free up valuable class time to cover additional course content and led to a much richer pedagogical experience. For example, just the act of setting an appointment with a Writing Fellow compelled students to have a complete draft or revision ready long before the class deadline. As a consequence, far

*"Far fewer assignments came in late...and the quality of student writing improved."*



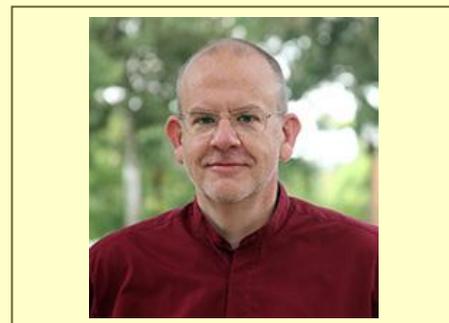
*Glenn Hutchinson, PhD, came to consult with the Writing Fellows program*

this issue, faculty and Fellows express their reflections on their experiences.

To facilitate the growth of the Fellows Program, Writing Center Director Leigh Ann Dunning invited Glenn Hutchinson, Interim Writing Center Director at Florida International University, to campus in March 2017. Dr Hutchinson's conversations with students, staff, faculty, and administration opened up lines of inquiry into making this promising program a full-blown success.

fewer assignments came in late.

More importantly, the quality of student writing improved, as the Writing Fellow's primary responsibility was to identify ideas or logical structures that were unclear in preliminary drafts. Thankfully, she also identified individual errors in APA style, which meant I could spend far less time in class detailing the byzantine rules of discipline specific writing conventions and more time on the complexities of experimental design. Many students also commented on how useful peer-review is to the writing process. Given how important writing is to professional success, this may turn out to be their most valuable lesson. – Robert Askew



*Robert Askew, Psychology, worked with Martha Hunsucker (ENGL)*

## The Fellows Program: Music

Emphasis on student writing is fundamental to my teaching, and it is the one element most shared by all of my courses, regardless of their intended audience and level. I always seek out new ways of getting students actively engaged with their own writing, and during this academic year I have experimented with having Writing Fellows embedded in three of my four writing-enhanced courses. The experience has been largely positive and productive, for it has enabled my students to receive continuous and multilayered help on all stages of their writing projects both from the Writing Fellow and me.

Over the course of the semester, Writing Fellows present a handful of mini-lectures on the mechanics and logistics of writing: comma usage, devising a thesis, writing a successful abstract, documenting sources, etc. But the most important work between the Writing Fellow and each student takes place outside class in one-on-one meetings, during which the Writing Fellow can target the student's specific needs.

Because Writing Fellows usually do not have the subject matter expertise, they bring a degree of neutrality to student's work and focus on the writing itself. I require my

students to meet with the Writing Fellow twice during the semester, and I offer them extra-credit points towards the course grade, if they meet with the Writing Fellow three additional times. The students who take advantage of this system almost always show noticeable improvement in their writing.

The success of the collaboration between the Writing Fellow and the instructor varies based on the commitment of the Fellow (for instance, consistency in providing quality summary reports after their meeting with students); the clarity of expectations and directions which the instructor communicates to the Writing Fellow; and, of course, students' willingness to participate in the program. --- Daniil Zavlunov

***Faculty who are interested in working with a Fellow should contact***

***Leigh Ann Dunning, Writing Center Director***

***[ldunning@stetson.edu](mailto:ldunning@stetson.edu), 822-7714.***

***See the back page of this newsletter for additional detail!***

## Being a Writing Fellow: Katie Howell

*By Katie Howell, RELS, Class of 2018*

Writing Fellows tailor their tutoring to meet the needs of a specific class while the Writing Center offers a more general service.

I act as a kind of liaison between the professor and students by conveying the professor's expectations concerning the written coursework to the students and relaying the students' needs, questions and progress to the professor throughout the semester. I give written feedback to students in the form of a letter or short paragraph when I review submitted drafts; I try to provide concise, clear suggestions for improvement rather than vague criticism in these notes. I meet with students repeatedly for tutoring.

I also sometimes work with them in the classroom. For example, Dr. Zavlunov has a research paper due at the end of his course which requires Chicago style formatting and an annotated bibliography. I composed and presented in his class, with another Fellow, a 15-minute PowerPoint which

boiled down the complexities of the citation style in a comprehensive manner and provided examples of bibliographic entries that were most relevant to his class. When I meet with his students for tutoring appointments, I have a rubric at hand of elements that he specifically looks for while grading drafts. I also relate to him any recurring issues within students' writing so that he may address those points in class as he sees appropriate.

I think the Writing Fellows are a big step forward to optimizing the writing-enhanced courses.



## Stetson Writing Goes to AAC&U and ACRL

*(Right) Writing Center Director Leigh Ann Dunning and Program Director Megan O'Neill go to AAC&U in Jacksonville (LEAPing Diversity in Assessment!)*



*(Left) Grace Kaletski, Information Literacy Librarian, and Megan O'Neill present their research on student learning at the biannual meeting of the Association of College & Research Libraries. (Baltimore, 2017)*

## Being a Writing Fellow: Taylor Silveira

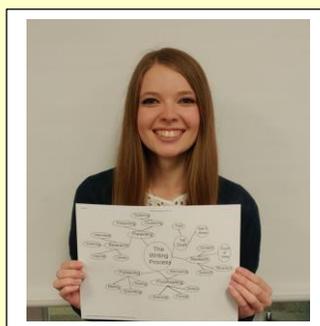
By Taylor Silveira (ENGL)

The Writing Fellows Program had its debut this past fall semester, and I would say that it was a huge success! I was a Writing Fellow for Dr. Zavlunov's FSEM class, "Disney's Musical Universe," and I am so thankful for this experience.

Being a Writing Fellow is very different than being a Writing Tutor because you have the privilege to work with the same students and professor each week. Due to this, I felt like my relationship with the students blossomed quickly and they felt like they could trust me as their mentor, tutor, and friend.

I loved watching their writing grow throughout the semester, and I felt that they helped me grow as well. Working with Dr. Zavlunov was incredibly successful, and I think that working with the same professor for a whole semester helps a Writing Fellow to truly understand how to help the

students in the professor's class. I hope that one day every class has a Writing Fellow, because I think that students greatly benefit from the experience.



*"I loved watching their writing grow throughout the semester...they could trust me."*

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Name the Newsletter!*

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r/WritingProgramNewsletter](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WritingProgramNewsletter)

*Please Help Us Come up with a  
Title that Resonates!*

*Changing the  
World...One Writer at a  
Time!*

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## Dean Mero(SoBA)Speaks Out

This spring, the School of Business collaborated with the University Writing Program to host peer writing tutors in the Lynn Business Center to mentor students taking writing intensive courses. This has been a tremendous learning opportunity for both students and tutors. Students receive additional, personalized instruction in business writing which requires an active and concise writing style.

They also benefit as tutors bring first-hand experience and so are prepared to address specific questions on assignment instructions and faculty expectations. There is also value for tutors, as serving in this role provides experience on the other side of the learning process. As a result, tutors must vary their communication style to suit mentee needs.

Overall, I concur with the perspective of my colleague Mitzi Dykes, who coordinates our business writing course: we are enthusiastic about the use of writing tutors!

*Thanks, Writing Center tutors! You've had a very busy year, and you've done truly excellent work. Have a great summer!*



# STETSON UNIVERSITY

## Writing Center

### *Call for Faculty Needing Writing Fellows*

We seek faculty members who would like to work with a Writing Fellow.  
**Faculty teaching a JSEM will be given priority.**

Since our JSEMs are interdisciplinary, writing-enhanced courses, we believe our fellows will be particularly helpful as students practice and develop the critical skills—writing, reading, thinking—that they need to be successful in their JSEMS and beyond. Fellows are undergraduate students who successfully complete a four-credit advanced composition and writing center pedagogy course and who demonstrate exceptional promise as course-embedded peer writing tutors. Fellows typically work five hours per week and agree, with the professor, to a contract that specifies duties.

#### **You are eligible for a Writing Fellow if you:**

- *Are willing to require that all enrolled students work with the assigned fellow at least once throughout the semester*
- *Are willing to communicate regularly with the assigned fellow to discuss assignments, due dates, etc.*

#### **Writing Fellows can support faculty in the following academic activities (and more!):**

- *Meeting with students one-on-one outside of the classroom*
- *Providing written comments on drafts prior to paper submission*
- *Assisting with in-class peer review/writing workshop sessions*
- *Teaching mini-lessons on writing topics in class*

#### **What are the benefits?**

First, embedding a writing fellow within a course ensures that students regularly receive feedback on their writing. Second, communication between an instructor and writing fellow promotes greater consistency and clarity in the feedback given to the students' writing. 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.

*If you wish to apply for a Fall 2017 writing fellow, follow this link:*

<http://www.stetson.edu/other/writing-center/writing-fellows.php>

*Applications accepted until August 1, 2017.*

*Direct any questions to Leigh Ann Dunning, Director of the Writing Center, at*  
[ldunning@stetson.edu](mailto:ldunning@stetson.edu)