



# Richmond Writing Across the Curriculum Newsletter

Issue 6, Fall 2002

## Fellows & Tutors of the Year

In May, tutor David Gordon, and Writing Fellows Kristin Adkins and Ann Chu were given awards for the outstanding help they provided to student writers. Faculty nominated the students, who received gift certificates to Borders Books and a framed certificate from Joe Essid and Terry Dolson. We will again give awards next May; faculty may nominate students for the award by contacting Joe Essid, [jessid@richmond.edu](mailto:jessid@richmond.edu).

## New Web Server

All of our materials are now at: <http://writing.richmond.edu>  
Be sure to change your bookmarks; the new site combines previously separate WAC, Writing Center, and tutor-training materials.

## Faculty Input Needed for New WAC Training Binder

A new edition of the faculty WAC binder will appear soon. We need sample assignments, especially those that include information and advice for students working with Writing Fellows. Also send any assignments that have worked well in your upper-division courses, whether or not the classes employ Fellows. Send materials to Joe Essid as Word attachments.

## Help Needed With Recruiting

As WAC grows, we need more tutors and Writing Fellows. We ask that faculty nominate students who write well and possess good interpersonal skills. Students working in the program should also encourage peers to apply. Students interested in WAC should provide Joe or Cheryl with a faculty recommendation and a writing sample of at least three pages.

poetry, *Uncommon Grammar Cloth*, last year and will come out with a subsequent book, *Into Stillness*, in Spring 2003. I write the dance and performance art column for *Style Weekly* and have been busy at work on a book on Contact Improvisation, a modern improvisational dance. Recent performances favor text over movement, though I continue to blend them, and I dance with a local group.

I have been teaching writing and Contact Improvisation at VCU. My teaching has also taken me far ashore, to Malaysia and Hong Kong, through the international program of Ottawa University in Kansas. The most obvious difference for my coming onboard at UR: I pedal my bicycle west on Grove Avenue, not east.

## Program Announcements

### Welcome to New Faculty!

Joanna Drell in History, Joanna Gidrewicz in Modern Languages & Literatures, Lynn Hooker in Music, and Paula Lessem in Biology join the WAC Program this semester. Joan Bak, who worked with Fellows a few years ago, returns to WAC with two sections of Core 101-102 this year.

### Attention Faculty: Apprentice Fellows & Your Classes

You may have an apprentice from Dr. Joyce MacAllister's Eng. 383 working alongside your Writing Fellows this semester. These apprentices will contact you to introduce themselves; as your schedules permit, please meet to discuss your assignments, philosophy about teaching writing, and your "pet peeves" for student essays.

Welcome back to campus! We now have more students working than ever before: 35 Writing Fellows and 6 tutors assisting 17 faculty members in 21 sections, in lab sections for the Genetics course, and in the study-hall for student athletes. Our schedule is at: [writing.richmond.edu/wac/schedule.html](http://writing.richmond.edu/wac/schedule.html)

This newsletter provides some important back-to-school information and introduces Cheryl Pallant, who will be working with Terry Dolson and me this semester. Next semester, Cheryl will take over Terry's duties as Writing Fellows Coordinator. You'll also find a short column by Lee Carleton, who will be teaching Eng. 103 this fall. Lee provides some excellent advice for those of us trying to "justify" writing to reluctant students.

## About Cheryl Pallant



When I moved to Richmond from New York over a decade ago, I thought I had to limit my creative interests to one discipline, writing or dancing. Unable to abandon either, I continually move between the two worlds. Words have found their way into poetry, fiction, and articles, which have appeared in a number of print and online publications in the U.S. and abroad. Station Hill Press published a book of my

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## **Q. What is an OWL?**

### **A. Help for SCS Students!**

During the last few years, more students enrolled in the School of Continuing Studies have sought help from tutors. This semester, tutors Happy Herbert and Kate Massie will begin to offer on-line assistance through the Richmond OWL, or Online Writing Lab. SCS students will be able to drop off their drafts and receive feedback electronically without coming to the Center for an appointment. At present, we do not plan to offer this service to other students; SCS students, with their work schedules and family responsibilities, form a special population who often seek help outside our ordinary operating hours.

## **Wednesday WAC Faculty Lunches, Fall 2002**

By combining our efforts with the Program for Enhancing Teaching Effectiveness this year, WAC can now offer additional workshops for faculty. If you would like to participate, please notify Pat Schoknecht: [pschokne@richmond.edu](mailto:pschokne@richmond.edu) or x6689 to reserve a box lunch.

### **Sept. 25: Cultural Differences in**

**Writing:** Tyler Haynes Commons, Rm. 331, 12:30-1:30pm.

Faculty members sometimes contact the Writing Center or Office of International Education alarmed by writers' failure to understand patterns of thesis-and-support, the need or requirements for citing sources, or other "basic" issues. Nuray Grove, Richmond's Director of ESL Services, will discuss how cultural traditions of learning and writing instruction influence how our international students work with sources, make claims, and support ideas.

### **Oct. 9: Effective Use of Writing**

**Fellows:** Tyler Haynes Commons, Rm. 331, 12:30-1:30pm.

Whether faculty are new to the WAC program or veterans, this workshop will provide advice for making the most of the student assistance provided by Fellows. Topics will include Fellows' expected duties, solutions for recalcitrant students' (or Fellows') lack of cooperation, and ideas for introducing the WAC program to students effectively. Faculty who would like Fellows for the Spring semester are urged to attend this workshop. Joe Essid and a few veteran WAC faculty will lead the discussion.

### **Nov. 6: Designing Analytic**

**Questions:** Wilton Center Interfaith Room, 12:30-1:30pm.

Joe Essid will moderate a panel discussion about effective analytical writing assignments. Participants should bring their own assignments to share and fine-tune.

### **Send Your Announcements!**

We send out regular (though hopefully not too long or regular) e-mails with announcements. If you have any news, ideas for assignments, or other suggestions please send them to Joe Essid, and he will put them in a future e-mail or newsletter.

## **Writing Tips:**

### **"Writing: More than a Hurdle"**

by Lee Carleton, English

English? What do I need that for? I hate writing and I won't need it for my career so why is it required?" Today's focused, career-driven students often arrive on campus with an eagerness to dive into their particular field of study. While natural and inspiring, this enthusiasm for specialization can sometimes turn into student impatience with foundational courses that are not overtly related to the field. Courses like Expository Writing or the Core Course seem, to these students, as annoying hurdles to clear on their way to the "real" education. Rather than obsta-

cles to be overcome, writing intensive courses are actually the most important courses a student can take for intellectual development.

Ultimately, language and writing are the foundation of civilization as well as all academic disciplines. Without writing, we might still be grunting and throwing rocks instead of surfing the Web. Although sometimes the value of writing is overlooked in the glare of our rapid technological change, our most foundational technology is still the written word. It was the emergence and spread of literacy that enabled humanity to exchange ideas, invent and ultimately evolve. Writing is a powerful yet durable technology that reveals and improves our thinking. It is worth pursuing with persistence.

### **"The Telling Detail"**

by Joe Essid

Good writers can often say a lot while using just a few words. Too often, especially in the Core Course, writers employ summary, not analysis, when supporting a claim. This mistake can mar an otherwise insightful argument. Over the summer, Joe Essid worked with Pattie Fagan, a student in the School of Continuing Studies who provided writing samples rich in "telling detail." Pattie's work and advice about supporting a point with details can be found on the *Writers' Web* site:

[writing.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/detail.html](http://writing.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/detail.html)

## **Good Luck This Semester!**



**Joe Essid, Writing Center Director**

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