

Writing Notes

IN THIS ISSUE

Thank you for picking up this Fall 2016 Edition of the *Writing Notes Newsletter*.

In this issue you'll find a variety of important updates about ASU Writing Programs. This semester, we've embraced *Writing Notes'* unique ability to spread information in a visual, impactful way. So, you'll find an in-depth description of the English Department's plans to move to a newly-renovated building on campus. We've included a large number of images of the new building (although they are all pre-remodel), which particularly emphasize its inviting entryway and large, naturally lit open spaces.

You'll also find recaps of the Writing Programs' ongoing charitable activities. In addition to our regular Adopt-a-Family event, you'll learn about our work with the St. Vincent de Paul Dream Center, which included donating school supplies and working with children in the tutoring center. Fall 2016 was our first time engaging in this activity, and we hope to grow our involvement in coming semesters. Both of these recaps were provided by Adelheid Thieme.

In much sadder news, this newsletter contains two articles In Remembrance of extraordinary Writing Programs teachers we lost this year, Debra Schwartz and Bob Sarka. Please take a moment to reflect on the gifts they gave us through their presence and their work.

Finally, as a quick note, I would like to point out that this *Writing Notes* newsletter is a bit shorter (and later-arriving!) than normal, and only contains contributions from editors on the Writing Programs Administration team. Unfortunately, no course releases were provided for the Assistant Director position for the Fall, which impacted this newsletter. **However, we are eagerly accepting submissions for our year-end Spring 2017 issue! Please see the last page for details!**

Enjoy!

-Sean Moxley-Kelly, Writing Programs Assistant Director

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ENGLISH DEPARTMENT MOVING TO NEW LOCATION

Building Exterior



McAllister Ave

Floor to second-story ceiling
windows on North side

Exterior fixture to
be removed

As many reading this know, Writing Programs and the rest of the English Department are slated to move to a new home in time for the Fall 2017 semester, the former Ross-Blakley Law Library, situated on the southeast side of campus near S. McAllister Ave. Please look over the pictures on this page and the next, but keep in mind that these show the building in its current state. Mock-ups of the final outcome are not yet ready for release.

Over the last 6 months, representatives from CLAS, including Dean of Humanities George Justice and architects from the University's Facilities Development and Management Office, have been working with members of the English department and Writing Programs to get input on design plans. After multiple rounds of revision, a design has been developed that meets many of our unique needs.

In preparation for the move, representatives led faculty, staff, and students on tours of our new building and explored options for the space. To ensure final decisions were made with accurate, useful information, Writing Programs then created and distributed a Workspace survey (see page 4 for more on the survey) to all faculty ranks of the department. The survey results were provided to the deans of the department and CLAS. Additionally, during the Fall 2016 semester instructors were consulted in two different meetings about plans for the space. Significant revisions were made after these meetings, and plans currently call for the creation



Entryway

of “neighborhoods,” which would be communities of approximately nine instructors sharing six desks and a small conference table in a partitioned area. This will allow instructors to desk share in small groups, independently negotiating their seat time with one another as needed, while maintaining a consistent general location.

Continued on next page...

In early December, once the plans for the instructor offices were nearing completion, a meeting was held with TAs and graduate students to present and gather feedback on a tentative design for a large communal space on the first floor. While furniture and partition options are still being developed, this space for TAs and FAs will be an open area of approximately 4,000 square feet with exceptionally high ceilings and a wall of glass windows. Tentatively, this will feature neighborhoods of six desks for 12 TAs. Because this space is more open and accessible, assigned lockable spaces are being included for TAs.

All teachers will also have access to nearby “enclaves,” or unassigned rooms designated for conferencing with students. Plans currently include 10 enclave rooms on the first floor, adjacent to the TA space, and 8 on the second floor in close proximity to the instructor neighborhoods.

There are still many decisions to be made regarding the space before the move, and representatives of both CLAS and the architects continue to express their desire to partner with faculty, staff, and students on these decisions. It is reasonable to expect more requests for feedback as the Spring semester progresses.



Windowed conference room



Instructor neighborhoods to primarily occupy second story



Workspaces

Shelving to be removed to make space for TA/FA neighborhoods



Floor to second-story ceiling windows on North side



Entryway

Skylights above English Department front desk

THE DEPARTMENTAL WORKSPACE SURVEY

In the Fall, Professor Shirley Rose encouraged doctoral students in her seminar on Writing Program Design and Development to look for new approaches to the Writing Programs sponsored ViTA Project, a visual ethnography of teaching in action. At the same time, Kevin Kato, Gregg Fields, and Sean Moxley-Kelly were planning a survey of Writing Programs teachers to learn where and how the work of teaching writing occurs outside the classroom. In light of the move to Ross-Blakley Hall, these two efforts (to extend ViTA, and to survey teachers about outside-of-the-classroom teaching) were combined in the hope that the intersection of this data could inform the design and planning for the new building.

After obtaining IRB approval, a survey was sent out to the department in September. It quickly received over 110 responses proportionally distributed across faculty rank, and the results were forwarded to the English Department Chair and the Dean of Humanities. It included data on conferencing styles, locations, times, and even topics, as well as numbers of students and levels of satisfaction connected to current workspace accommodations. The survey had 26 questions with a mix of likert scales and open-ended options, allowing stakeholders to speak back to administrators in very specific terms about current workspaces benefits and challenges as well as recommendations and concerns regarding the new workspace plans.

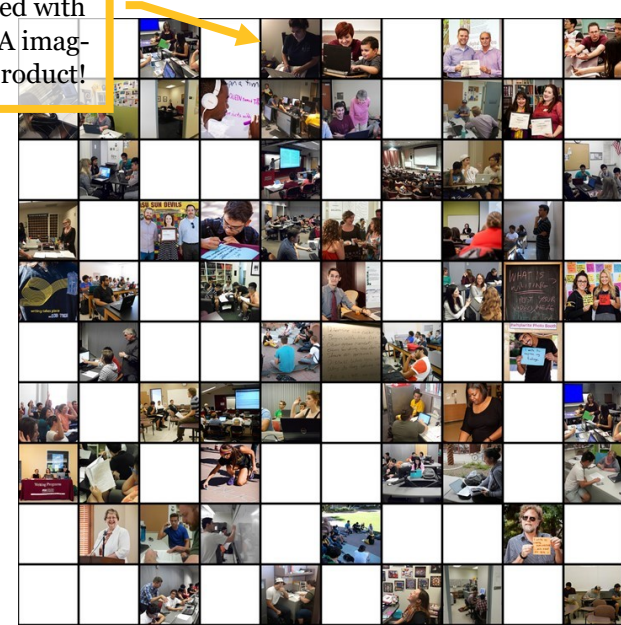
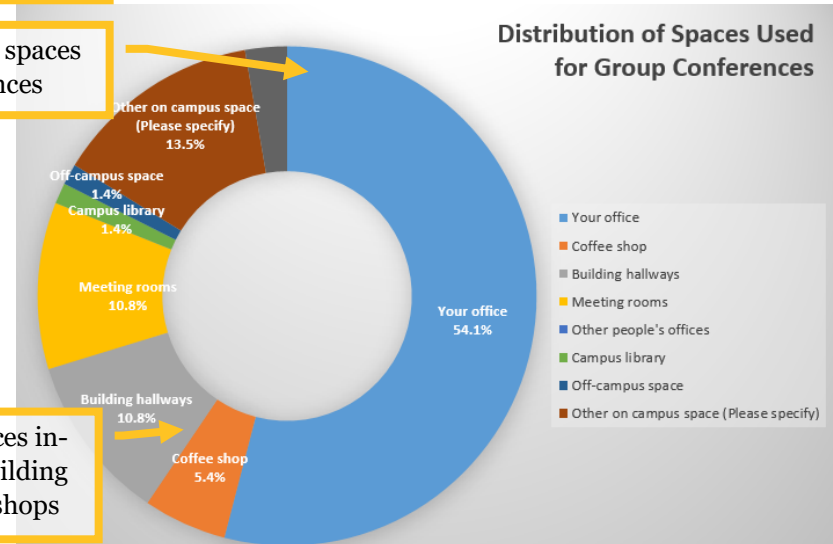
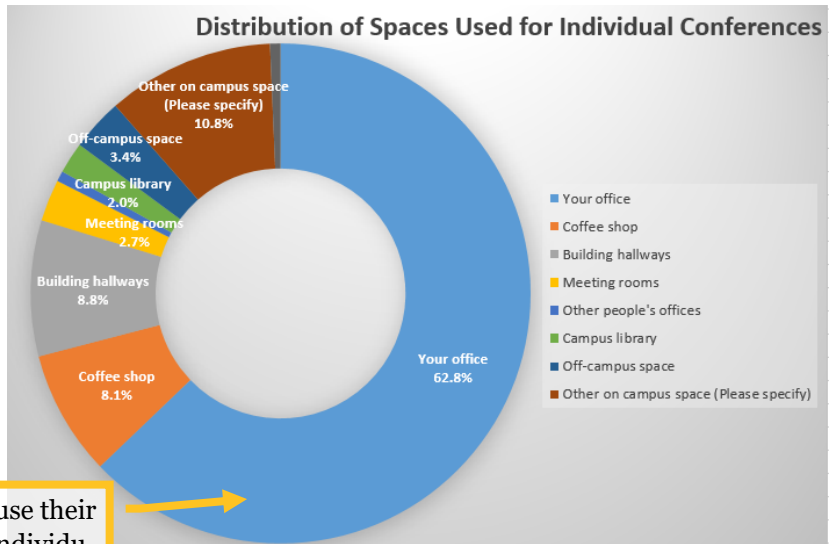
Included here are some highlights.

62.7% of respondents use their current office to hold individual conferences

54.1% use their office spaces for group conferences

Popular alternate spaces included classrooms, building hallways, and coffee shops

This chart experimented with survey results and ViTA images. Click for the final product!



When WP Faculty are On Campus

Time	% of WP Staff on Campus
Before 7	4
7-8	13
8-9	33
9-10	44
10-11	52
11-12	55
12-1	60
1-2	57
2-3	53
3-4	47
4-5	38
5-6	27
After 6	17

Data from 2016 ASU Writing Programs Workspace Survey. By Sean Moxley-Kelly.



2016 CONVOCATION RECAP

At Convocation 2016, Writing Programs members enjoyed a diverse group of informative speakers and a new, shorter format held on our home turf, the LL Building. The day began, as always, with a delicious German-style breakfast planned by Associate Director Adelheid Thieme. Savory-breakfast-lovers were satisfied by whole-grain German bread varieties and breakfast meats, while more sensible sweet-breakfast-lovers enjoyed apple and cherry strudel and poppy seed cake. Adelheid then kindly welcomed the team and introduced our new and newly-promoted members.

We were pleased to welcome to Convocation a number of very high profile speakers: Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Patrick Kenney, Dean of the Humanities George Justice, and Interim Chair of the English Department Aaron Baker. Each of these speakers emphasized the important role Writing Programs plays in the University.

As always, Demetria Baker directed an educational and informative sketch about first-day procedures, which was followed by a concise round of announcements about upcoming events and activities. Following a short break, Maria Grimshaw-Clark from Counseling Services discussed challenges faced by first-year students and provided an overview of the counseling services available, emphasizing their accessibility and broad variety. We appreciate that a representative of Counseling Services was able to join us again after a thought-provoking presentation on how teachers can help students integrate into college life in 2015.

The most significant change to Convocation this year came in the afternoon, which contained two breakout sessions: one required before lunch and one optional brown bag session after lunch. The required sessions all saw excellent attendance, providing opportunities for Writing Programs faculty to discuss critical topics such as Culturally Diverse Pedagogy, L2 Writers in the Classroom, the Disability Resource Center, and Educating about Sexual Harassment. Following a short break for lunch, smaller groups were given the option to meet up for conversation about specific courses such as English 301/302 and English 107/108/WAC 107.

Through these various activities each Fall, Convocation plays a critical role for Writing Programs, providing a once-a-year opportunity for us to all sit shoulder to shoulder. By coming together at Convocation, we begin the year rejuvenated and reconnected, with a renewed understanding of our positions not just as individual teachers but as an interconnected community of writing educators.

*From top: First Image: Tonya Eick, Valerie Fazel, and Gregory Fields; Second Image: Heather Ackerman and Heather Crook; Third Image: Adelheid Thieme; Fourth Image: Patrick Kenney, Paul LePore, and George Justice
Images courtesy Bruce Matsunaga*

CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES RECAP

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT ADOPTING SIX FAMILIES FOR CHRISTMAS

As in previous years, ASU English Department faculty and staff came together to brighten the holidays of Tempe families. We were able to adopt six families, serving a total of 28 persons. Adults in the families wished for shoes or clothing items such as jeans, sweaters, shirts, or warm jackets; children received a clothing item and a toy. In addition to the Christmas presents, the families received a Fry's grocery card as well as two banana boxes filled with food from the St. Vincent de Paul pantry at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel church in Tempe.

At noon, a gift wrapping party took place, followed by the delivery of the presents to the six families. The families were very appreciative of the gifts and food.

The success of this program depends on the collaboration of many English Department members. Under the leadership of Karen Dwyer, who collected the funds and set up shopping lists for those willing to head out to the stores and buy the gifts, the program reached its climax on Wednesday, December 21. At noon, a gift wrapping party took place, followed by the delivery of the presents to the six families. The families were very appreciative of the gifts and food and thanked the delivery persons with smiles and hugs. They asked to extend their thanks to all those in the English Department who helped them experience the joy of the season.



Preparing the delivery of gifts and food to the adopted families are (from left to right) Tonya Eick, Itzel Romero, Karen Dwyer, Tina Norgren, and Shauna Dranetz.

WRITING PROGRAMS' BACK-TO-SCHOOL INITIATIVE

DREAM CENTER ENRICHES CHILDREN'S LIVES

At the beginning of the Fall 2016 semester, the Writing Programs in the English Department started an initiative to support the St. Vincent de Paul Dream Center in Phoenix. Over several weeks, faculty and staff collected back-to-school items to benefit the children who attend the Dream Center in the St. Vincent de Paul Family Dining Room in Phoenix.

Every night, this public dining room offers nutritious meals to approximately 400 low-income families. After sharing dinner with their parents, children ages 4-14 engage in enriching activities like art, crafts, reading, writing, and science experiments. The Dream Center features a tutoring station, a reading library, and computers. Volunteer tutors interact with the children in this year-round program that allows children of economically disadvantaged families to thrive academically.

On August 25, 2016, seven Writing Programs faculty and staff members drove to the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room to volunteer as tutors and deliver the collected back-to-school items. Parents who do not have the funds to purchase these items for their children may request them from the Dream Center as needed.

While the material support is greatly appreciated, the personal interest of staff and volunteers in the children's education is another critical part of helping them realize their dreams. Ms. Cynthia, the Dream Center's main or-



from left to right: Adelheid Thieme, Jennifer Baum, Jessica Boykin, Glenn Newman, Demetria Baker, Sean Moxley-Kelly, Sarah Young

ganizer, knows each of the 80-100 children who come to the Center every night by name. She greets them with a hug, helps them find the blue lanyard with their name tag, and partners them with as many volunteer tutors as are available.

This evening, Cynthia introduced the ASU Writing Programs group to the children and paired each tutor with one or two children. The tutors helped the children memorize their multiplication tables, write out spelling words, complete a book report, etc. It was rewarding to see how engaged the children were and how eager they were to produce high-quality work.

Once the children had finished their work, the children showed their completed assignments to Ms. Cynthia. Each child received stickers to be placed on a wall-mounted chart. The number of stickers earned reflected the quality and complexity of their work. Every month, the children can use their stickers as "currency" to purchase items in the adjacent St. Vincent de Paul thrift

store. The stipulation, however, is that they buy these items for someone else (a sibling, a friend, or a parent). Watching her tutor adding stickers to her chart, one 7th grader said, "I want to do well in school and get good grades so I can go to college just like my sister."

Support for the Dream Center gives the opportunity to reach educational goals, build confidence, connect with role models, and make friends. For more information about St. Vincent de Paul including services, volunteering, and current events, visit their website at <http://www.stvincentdepaul.net>.



Collected items included backpacks, pencils, crayons, scissors, composition books, folders, etc.

IN REMEMBRANCE

DEBRA SCHWARTZ

On May 20, 2016, members of the Department of English at ASU gathered in remembrance of English Instructor Debra Schwartz, who passed away at the close of the Spring 2016 semester. After remarks by Rabbi Tiechtel, Director of the Chabad Jewish Center at ASU, and Professor Mark Lussier, Chair of the English Department, colleagues and friends honored Debra by remembering her significant contributions to her students' education and the community as a whole.

Debra was last seen camping by herself the morning of May 4, 2016, at the Pine Flat Campground near Oak Creek Canyon. When she did not return to the campground on the day when she had planned to check out, various search and rescue teams spent several days searching the area until they discovered her body in an unnamed slot canyon below the rim of Oak Creek Canyon. An autopsy determined that she must have accidentally lost her footing while hiking.

Debra will be remembered for her creativity, her caring spirit, and her passion for the craft of writing.

In 2011, Debra joined the Writing Programs faculty, teaching first-year composition classes as well as business writing and writing reflective essays. "We are deeply saddened by the loss of our colleague, Debra Schwartz, who devoted her career to helping others find the joy of newfound knowledge and creative ability," ASU Executive Vice President and Provost Mark Searle said in a statement. "Our hearts go out to Debra's family, and to them we offer the comfort of knowing that she helped enable so many to learn and understand the world a little better."

While Debra enjoyed teaching writing at all levels, she was most engaged in reflective writing. As one of her students from her Fall 2015 ENG 217 class wrote, "Professor Schwartz was clearly invested and motivated in helping me succeed. She helped me pull words that I had been looking for for a very long time. I really appreciate her unorthodox approach and the out-of-the-box attitude on writing. It gave me a different perspective and made me a better writer."

Debra was also active in the community, volunteering at the Justa Center, a resource center for homeless seniors in Phoenix, where she taught homeless senior citizens how to write, encouraging them to express and validate

their unique experiences in their own voices. Helping them write their memoirs, she enabled some of them to take stock of their lives, move forward, and find closure. Barbara Lewkowitz, the Justa Center's executive director, praised Debra for being instrumental in transforming lives. "This is obviously a woman who cared deeply and was very empathetic about people who she wanted to give a voice to, and give them an opportunity to share their life story," said Lewkowitz.

Debra also had a keen interest in environmental conservation and wrote articles about environmental issues for various newsletters and business publications. Her book, *Writing Green: Advocacy & Investigative Reporting about the Environment in the Early 21st Century*, was published in 2006. She was also a grant writer for the Arizona Council on Economic Education.

Debra will be remembered for her creativity, her caring spirit, and her passion for the craft of writing. Under her mentorship, many individuals improved their own writing skills and discovered opportunities that would allow them to advance in their careers and move forward in their lives.



ROBERT (BOB) SARKA



With gratitude, students and colleagues in the Writing Programs remember Robert (Bob) Sarka, who passed away on January 7, 2017, after an extended battle with cancer. Bob joined the English Department at ASU in August 2001 and taught ENG 101 and ENG 102 until the end of the Spring 2016 semester.

Bob was passionate about the teaching of writing. Guiding his students in a step-by-step process in the development of their papers, he would rely on traditional methods such as summarizing and paraphrasing, using notecards for bibliographic information and annotated bibliographies, and testing their knowledge of MLA source documentation with quizzes. His standards for first-year composition were high, and he would meticulously provide detailed feedback on each component of his students' drafts and final papers. His students appreciated the dedication and commitment he showed in each class period.

While Bob's students valued his vast knowledge as a writer and pedagogue and

enjoyed the candy he would often bring to class, they loved him for the life lessons he taught them. Most of his classes began with a poem that he would read to them with great passion. Furthermore, he had a great sense of humor and would share funny stories of his life with them. He was not only a teacher, but a man who deeply cared about his students' growth as individuals. As one of his students said, "Not only is he an English professor, he is also a life-coach. Though I understand MLA format better, Professor Sarka also helped me learn about myself and taught me ways to become a better human being."

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Many of Bob's students will remember him as a teacher and mentor who motivated them to give their best effort in their academic work and impacted their perspectives on life by the wisdom he shared. They are thankful for the privilege of having been in the class of a knowledgeable, kind-hearted, and inspirational person.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS, SPRING 2017

Writing Notes again seeks contributors for the next issue.

We invite **book reviews** of approximately 500 words on pedagogical texts of interests to the Writing Programs. We also ask for 150-word submissions on “**Classroom Strategies that Work**,” a continuing segment devoted to sharing the practices we employ in our own classrooms with other Writing Programs teachers.

Have any article submissions or suggestions? Please share them with us. And don't forget to submit your Kudos!

Want to discuss what you've read in this issue? Visit any of our media outlets, including the Writing Programs Blackboard site, to provide your feedback and commentary.



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