

From the Director

Welcome to the first issue of the *University Writer*, a newsletter designed



to inform readers about the University Writing Program (UWP). Our goal is to highlight writing on campus and in the community, and alert readers to the recent efforts, innovations, and accomplishments of the UWP. In this first edition you will find news regarding some of our major initiatives. **A new writing major is underway**, one that can be paired with a variety of student interests and majors. And you'll find news on the **Dreamkeepers**, a collaboration with Glendale Middle School that supports student literacy and instills confidence in young adults to achieve academic success. Readers can expect future issues to feature news about individual students and faculty, workshops on campus, and new writing classes and events. The *University Writer* will appear twice a year, with our next edition in December, 2013. Enjoy!

Maureen

Dr. Maureen Mathison,
Director

The UWP Gets a New Look and Writing Major

For Writing Program, 2013 is a year of remarkable growth

The University Writing Program, its own independent academic unit since 1983, hopes to soon be the Writing and Rhetoric Studies Department, complete with a major of the same name. The major status only awaits final approval from the Board of Regents. Maureen Mathison, Director of the University Writing Program, says this will bring the University of Utah in line with other major institutions. "More importantly," she adds, "it gives students at the U an edge in today's job market. Good writers are in great demand, no matter their profession."

Although some work still remains before final approval of the Department, this should not stop students from declaring the major when it becomes available this July. Currently, the Literacy Studies minor (to be renamed the minor in Writing and Rhetoric Studies on July 1), and the new major will offer students a bachelor's of arts or science degree with skills that are highly valued in the job market.

"More writing is being done overall in the workplace, even if less of it is on white paper," says Jay Jordan, assistant professor in the University Writing Program.

The emphasis in the major is on flexibility. Only two classes are required, Intro to Rhetoric and Writing as Social Practice. Once those are fulfilled, students can decide which direction their studies will take.

Jordan says the major can stand on its own, but the diversity of the course offerings also make it suitable as a first or second emphasis in a double major.

"We've made it so students can take courses that

speak to other majors while completing many of their general education requirements,"

explains Mathison. One option, digital environments, allows students to practice writing done for the web, allowing students to hone skills needed for the new digital job market. "Another option for students in pre-Law includes courses such as Language of the Law and Discourses of Legal Rhetoric," Jordan adds.

Just as important, student response to the writing major "has been overwhelmingly positive," Mathison says. "Sixty-three percent of the respondents [in a recent survey] would consider Writing as a second major." With over 30 classes to choose from, ranging from document design and grammar classes to writing about popular culture and studies in rhetoric and composition theory, the new Writing and Rhetoric Studies major will offer students a variety of options.

-- **Louisa Austin**



The UWP's new digital writing lab, now open in LNCO

Dreamkeepers Help Struggling School

A Writing Program teacher gives local students a reason to dream about college

Sometimes inspiration appears when we least expect it—on a walk, while listening to music or talking with friends. It was during one of these simple moments that friends Heather Hirschi and Jennifer Mayer-Glenn came up with "The

Dreamkeepers Project." Hirschi, an award winning Assistant Professor/Lecturer in the University of Utah



Glendale Middle, where Hirschi leads the Dreamkeepers

Writing program, was discussing the 50% drop-out rate among 9th graders at Glendale Middle School with Mayer-Glenn, the school vice-principal. They had recently watched Chimanda Adichie's 2009 TEDTalk, "The Danger of a Single Story." According to Adichie, "The problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story the only story."

See **Dreamkeepers** inside

Faculty Spotlight

One founder of the Writing Program prepares for his next act



For Professor Tom Huckin, one of the most widely published and well-regarded authorities on discourse analysis and writing studies, Fall 2013 will be his last semester teaching full-time in the UWP.

Huckin has been a professor in the University of Utah Writing Program since 1989 and was instrumental in its dramatic development. In the 1980s, Writing was a service unit for undergraduate teaching; then, in his first term as Director (1990-1995), Huckin shook things up, creating the Graduate degree in Rhetoric and Composition.

Huckin, a self-proclaimed pacifist and agitator says he's always taken "a dissenting view to the power structure here. I am very much a radical."

Maureen Mathison, the current Writing Program director, says Huckin has been a driving force in three important areas. Besides the creation of the PhD, "he's been instrumental in hiring faculty whose interests complement each other's work and he's helped us create a professional identity as an institution, nationally and internationally."

In fact, Huckin has been involved in the international writing and rhetoric scene for decades (he's taught and lectured around the world). He currently teaches a variety of upper division classes, including *Grammar and Stylistics*, *Discourse Analysis*, and *Writing, Persuasion and Power*.

Though he admits he'll miss his students most, he plans on staying busy and continuing his peace activism by going to rallies, writing letters to the editor, participating on blogs and teaching continuing education classes.

"I'll miss the interaction with younger minds," he says, "[but] I'll have more time to devote to these topics that animate me, like making trouble in the community."

His knowledge and experience have been indispensable assets to the Writing Program. "We're losing his presence on a more regular basis," Mathison says, "but we refuse to let him go. We'll get him back to guest lecture or teach a class. He's not allowed to leave. I already told him that."



-- Traci Grant

The Writing Center: Helping Writers of All Stripes

A valuable resource for University writers keeps growing

On the second floor of the Marriott Library, behind a set of heavy glass doors, comfortable desks and chairs welcome University writers. Most students and faculty are aware that the Writing Center exists, and many even know where to find it on campus. But some are under the impression that going there means they're bad writers.

"Actually it's quite the contrary," says Maureen Clark, director of the University Writing Center. "The best writers are always having someone read their work. The more you care about your writing, the more reason for you to come to the Writing Center."

Clark says the Writing Center is an open space, where many different levels of writers come to get meaningful feedback that will help them improve their writing beyond one particular assignment.

Faculty, staff, and students alike visit the Writing Center to get help with writing projects, or to generate ideas for a piece of writing they want to start. Writers can go to the Writing Center at any stage in the writing process—while some students come in with nothing but the assignment sheet to get started, others want someone to proofread their final piece.

The writing consultants are University students, carefully selected based on samples of writing, and well-equipped to coach the different levels of writers. These consultants have experience working with a broad range of writing projects, from chemistry papers to creative fiction pieces. In fact, many people who visit the center are working on writing projects outside the classroom (like job letters).

The Writing Center also offers a number of free workshops each semester. These can include workshops in preparing for the GRE, writing personal statements, and resume writing. For more information about the Writing Center, visit their website at www.writingcenter.utah.edu.

-- Elise Barrus

Dreamkeepers, cont.

Mayer-Glenn found a single story repeated among eighth grade Latino boys at Glendale. The students questioned the purpose of graduating high school since most felt they would never go to college.

"We felt we had to show students another story, broaden their perspective" Hirschi explains—and the Dreamkeepers Project was born.

In the spring of 2012 Hirschi introduced the project to Maureen Mathison, director of The University Writing Program, who immediately offered support. Hirschi volunteered in the school's after school program last year. During six-week sessions, and with the assistance of young group leaders in the program, Hirschi "worked closely with Glendale faculty to establish innovative academic interventions to im-



prove literacy.” The program aims to help Glendale students recognize that their stories hold value in an academic community, and encourage students to research their own histories and that of their community to build digital media projects. According to Hirschi, “Dreamkeepers is premised on the idea that if students can imagine themselves as college students, they are more likely to get to college.”

Current plans for the Dreamkeepers span at least the next 10 years, and Hirschi anticipates they will include continued growth. The program has already attracted generous support from the community, teaming up with the Glendale/Mountain View Community Learning Center, Spy Hop, SHIFT, and University Neighborhood Partners. Most recently, the program was awarded a special teaching assistantship position from the University Writing Program.

“We are very excited that Amy Williams, a University of Utah PhD candidate, has received a University Teaching Assistantship,” Hirschi says. “This will help us establish the Dreamkeepers as a longitudinal research project in Fall 2014.”

—Shauna Edson

New Horizons for Writing

University Writing to play instrumental role on new South Korean campus

On an empty waterfront between Seoul and Incheon, the South Korean government saw economic potential. At an invested cost of more than \$10 billion dollars, Songdo International Business District officially opened on August 7, 2009. Designed as a Free Economic Zone, the city has parks, a canal system, a hospital, residential and commercial districts, and a university.

Songdo Global University is an alliance of four universities: the University of Utah, SUNY, George Mason, and Ghent University. Maureen Mathison, the current director, explains why the Writing Program chose to be part of SGU. “It is critical to establish international connections and have students understand and learn to manage those connections through written communication. It’s important for students to live in another culture and understand that the world is larger than our backyard.”



The new Songdo campus will welcome University students and faculty in 2014

At Songdo University, all instruction will be conducted in English, and Asian students will earn a degree from an accredited American school (diplomas will be from the University of Utah, not Songdo) without spending the money to travel to the US.

University of Utah students will also have the chance to travel to Songdo as part of their program. Mathison explains, “Students who start at Songdo will do 3 years there and finish their last year at Utah. Students who start at the U will go to Songdo for a year of their choice.”

Jay Jordan, a professor in the Writing Program, adds, “Our students will benefit from an undergraduate focus on writing and rhetoric studies, and they will work closely with a small, energetic group of faculty members who have strong national and international connections.”

In March 2014, students are scheduled to enroll at the University of Utah’s first international campus. The U will offer undergraduate degrees in Social Work, Psychology, Communication, Writing, and English Language Teaching. For more information, visit <http://www.sgu.or.kr/sgu/eng/main.htm>

— Traci Grant



Calendar of Upcoming Events

UWP Awards Ceremony
April 22

Summer Term
May 13 - July 31

New Writing Major Begins
July 1

Fall Semester
August 26 - December 13

Western States Rhetoric & Literacy Conference
October 25-26

Mad Men to play part in new writing class

Since 2007, AMC’s TV series, *Mad Men*, has captivated audiences and earned critical attention. Now a new course (WRTG 3018), part of the UWP’s Writing in Popular Culture emphasis, will examine the popular series. *Mad Men*’s nuanced depiction of life in the 1960s

provides students with unique opportunities to think and write critically about many issues, particularly the social and cultural forces that continue to shape contemporary society. Visit the University’s class catalog for more information.

Enviro writing in Capitol Reef

This summer the UWP will again give students the chance to explore the envi-

ronmental and rhetorical complexity of Utah’s Capitol Reef National Park as part of WRTG 4080. Situated in the center of the state’s red rock region, Capitol Reef offers students a chance to explore the area’s history and culture, as well as the continued importance of our natural resources. For more information about UWP courses please visit the program catalog online. ▼▲▲



The University Writing Program

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Western States Conference Returns to Utah

With an exciting new focus and the broadest pool of participants in its sixteen year history, The Western States Rhetoric and Literacy Conference is coming back to the University of Utah, October 25-26.

The theme for this year's conference is Material Rhetorics. Assistant Professor Casey Boyle, of the University Writing Program explains that the focus of the conference reflects "the relatively recent focus in writing and rhetoric studies on material conditions in which writing and rhetoric emerge."

Traditionally, writing studies have focused on the symbolic nature of language, while de-emphasizing or ignoring altogether its physical substance and the way it might lead to material consequences. "The WSRLC is the first such event in the field devoted to the topic of materiality," says Boyle.

Previous gatherings of the WSRL conference have taken place at the University of Winnipeg,

San Francisco, Washington, and Montana. This year represents the first time the WSRL Conference has returned to Utah since '09.



Marilyn Cooper will deliver the keynote, "Rhetorical Being"

And this year's conference will feature a number of highlights, including keynote speaker, Marilyn Cooper. Cooper, a Professor of Humanities at Michigan Technological University and former editor of *College Composition and Communication* (CCC), will deliver her plenary talk, "Rhetorical Being" on Friday Morning. Cooper has written extensively on the interaction be-

tween human writers and technology, dramatic speech, technical writing, digital literacy and personal narratives.

According to Jay Jordan, Assistant Professor, English, "over its history, the WSRL conference has developed a reputation as a small but high quality event that has maintained its regional flavor." The smaller and more intimate nature of the conference allows it to highlight panels that encourage audience participation and discussion. Topics will include the material practice of teaching, digital and networked technologies, writing and ecology, and the rhetoric of the body. The conference is free and open to the public, and Salt Lake offers a variety of lodging and dining options attendees.

With more than 130 applicants, the most in the conference's history, and plans to invite 75-80 panelists and workshop leaders, the conference promises to generate a great deal more interest in writing at the University. For more information about the conference and to view updates on panelists and a schedule of sessions, please visit <http://www.public.asu.edu/~petergo/wsrl/2013cfp.htm>

