WRITE FREE OR DIE

What Faculty Know About "Writing Intensive" at UNH

Meaghan Dittrich, PhD
Director, University Writing Programs

In Fall 2023, the Writing Program distributed a university-wide survey to faculty regarding awareness of the UNH Writing Requirements; 65 faculty responded (83% of which have taught a WI course at some point). While addressing all survey responses would be ideal, we understand brevity is valued, especially during this overextended time of the semester. For a more thorough report, please feel free to reach out to me. Meanwhile, we'll highlight key takeaways, pertinent for *all* faculty, as writing is integral across disciplines and essential for advising students on meeting the WI requirement for graduation.

- **31% of faculty surveyed say they know there is a Writing Requirement but don't know the specific details.**
  - What exactly *are* the details of the UNH Writing Requirement? In a nutshell, undergraduates must take four WI courses with a passing grade:
    - English 401 (First Year Writing)
    - A Writing Intensive (WI) Course in the Major
    - A Writing Intensive (WI) Course at the 600-level or above
    - A Writing Intensive (WI) Course (any other)
  - For more information about this sequence, please visit our page on the WI requirements.
- **15% said they had at some point been assigned to teach a course without knowing that it was designated WI.**
  - This is, unfortunately, the case at many institutions. Often it stems from a faculty member being given the course at the last minute, inherited from a previous instructor who may not work at the institution any longer. For a master list of all WI courses on the UNH catalogue, see the Registrar's page.

Future Tense: Upcoming Writing Across the Curriculum Events

Events made possible by the generosity of the Dey Family Gift Fund
To stay up to date, please visit our Events page on our website

WAC Spring Guest Speaker: Tuesday, April 16, 12:40-2:00pm in MUB Theatre II
"Gaming Assessment: Reclaiming Equity and Fairness in Classroom Evaluation." The WAC program's annual event is pleased to bring Dr. Stephanie West-Puckett, currently Assistant Professor of Writing & Rhetoric and Director of First-Year Writing at the University of Rhode Island. She'll be visiting UNH in April to speak with faculty about writing assessment and will include discussion on alternative assessment practices to create richer understandings of what writing is, along with points regarding how faculty can use AI in writing assignments. **Refreshments provided. Please register HERE.**

Writing Invested Faculty Retreat at the Browne Center: June 3 & 4, 2025. The annual WI Faculty retreat is open to *any* faculty member interested in integrating writing into their courses. Among the goals will be to give faculty a more complete awareness of the principles underlying WI courses, to equip them with practices to enhance working with student writing, and to promote exchange and forge connections among faculty. **Breakfast & Lunch provided. Up to 12 available spots.** For more information, see our flyer on the last page of this issue or contact unh.writing.programs@unh.edu.

WAC(ky) People

UNH Writing Program

Nicoletta Gullace
*Faculty Director, Discovery Committee &
Writing Programs*

Meaghan Dittrich
Director, University Writing Programs

Cyndi Roll
Associate Director, University Writing Programs

Elizabeth Drummey
Assistant Director, University Writing Programs

Rachel Roy
Assistant Director, University Writing Programs

University Writing Committee: College Representatives, Term End

Paul—Inchan Kim **2024**
(Decision Sciences)

COLSA—Davida Margolin **2024**
(Molecular, Cellular, and Biomedical Sciences)

CEPS—Thomas Ballestero **2026**
(Civil & Environmental Engineering)

COLA 1—Clara Castro-Ponce **2025**
(Literatures, Languages, & Cultures)

COLA 2—Tom Alsip**2023**
(Theatre & Dance)

CHHS—Lauren Ferguson **2025**
(Recreational Management & Policy)

UNHM—C.C. Hendricks* **2026**
(English, Director of First-Year Writing Program)

Permanent Representatives

Director of University Writing Programs
Meaghan Dittrich (Academic Affairs)

Manager of Connors Writing Center
Cyndi Roll (Academic Affairs)

Director of Composition
Lisa MacFarlane (English)

Discovery Committee
Elizabeth Slomba (Dimond Library)

Ex officio (non-voting)

Committee Secretary
Elizabeth Smith (Registrar)

*Faculty Chair

- **71% of faculty said they had not received any special orientation or guidance for teaching a WI course, and 20% of faculty were not aware of any WI development or resources for classroom support at UNH.**
  - The Writing Program offers workshops, the WI annual faculty retreat, one-on-one consultations, a WAC faculty network, and training programs for writing fellows and TAs. For more on these professional development opportunities, see our webpage.
- **15% of faculty do not indicate that their course is WI on their syllabus; 26% indicate without an explanation; and 48% indicate with an explanation.**
  - Based on recent NECHE accreditation recommendations, there has been a push to move toward standardizing syllabi across the university for elements like general course information (course number, date/time/location of the class, catalogue designations, etc.). We provide boilerplate language you can copy/paste into your syllabus. This offers an opportunity to be transparent with students about expectations and why they benefit student learning outcomes. If the instructor already has learning outcomes on their syllabus, it's a chance to reinforce those projected goals by articulating how writing contributes to that knowledge and those skill sets.
  - During her 2017 visit to UNH, assessment expert Barbara Walvoord suggested integrating writing outcomes into department program review guidelines, as advocated in her book *Assessing and Improving Student Writing in College.* This aligns with UNH's longstanding emphasis on department-centered planning in writing across the curriculum. Integrating writing into department goals and assessment plans will not only meet NECHE standards and Faculty Senate Motion XXI-M16 but also enhance visibility and systematize writing across disciplines at UNH. We strongly advocate working with your department to align your course's writing goals with your department outcomes.
- **41% of faculty assign and work with student writing in non-WI courses; 34% say they do but not as extensively as in WI courses.**
  - This indicates a positive dedication to writing across the curriculum from faculty teaching courses not designated WI, suggesting that writing is integral to all course work and learning experiences.

*"If you can't describe what you are doing as a process,
then you don't know what you are doing."* ~ W Edwards Deming

So, what are the criteria and guidelines that make a course WI?

Many faculty – and students – conflate the *quantity* of writing in a course as equivalent to a writing "intensive" experience and often miss the mark on crucial aspects of the guidelines. In addition, the philosophy of the guidelines are primarily focused on writing as an *ongoing* practice throughout the semester (rather than, for instance, all piled up into one major end-of-term assignment). Here are the guidelines in brief:

1. Students in the course should do substantial writing that enhances learning and demonstrates knowledge of the subject or the discipline. Writing should be an integral part of the course and should account for a significant part (approximately 50 percent or more) of the final grade.

2. Writing should be assigned so that students must write regularly throughout the course. Major assignments should integrate the process of writing (prewriting, drafting, revision, editing). Students should receive constructive feedback (peer response, workshop, professor, T.A., etc.) during the drafting/revising process to help improve their writing.

3. The course should include both formal (graded) and informal (heuristic) writing. There should be papers written outside of class which are handed in for formal evaluation as well as informal assignments designed to promote learning, such as invention activities, in-class essays, reaction papers, journals, reading summaries, or other appropriate exercises.

Again, for a more detailed description of the WI criteria, please see our website. However, for those interested in a more immersive opportunity to integrate best practices into your classes, you can apply to our annual WI Faculty Retreat. It's a multi-day offsite experience followed by several meetings in the ensuing academic year. Participants receive a completion certificate and recognition as core members of the WAC Faculty Network. Read about this year's retreat in the "Past Perfect" section of this newsletter.

Overall, most faculty know about the WI requirement but lack awareness about our services. Stay updated on events and offerings on our website.

Many of the faculty surveyed learned about UNH WI guidelines through word of mouth. Please keep spreading the word and direct colleagues to our office for resources and support.

_____

Walvoord, Barbara E. *Assessing and Improving Student Writing in College: A Guide for Institutions, General Education, Departments, and Classrooms.* Jossey-Bass, 2014.

"Grading Has Always Made Writing Better"
By Mitchell R. James
Excerpted from *Bad Ideas about Writing*
https://textbooks.lib.wvu.edu/badideas/badideasaboutwriting-book.pdf (open source text)

There are a number of problems surrounding the ubiquitous practice of grading student writing. In *Schools Without Failure,* William Glasser notes that grading tends to be perceived by students as various levels of failure. In addition, Marie Wilson argues that a focus on failure leads teachers to approach student writing in search of deficiencies instead of strengths, which puts students in a state of preventative or corrective mindsets when trying to learn. These mindsets are especially troubling for students in writing classes, where errors must be made in order for students to grow and develop.

Another problem with grading, Brian Huot notes in *(Re) Articulating Writing Assessment for Teaching and Learning,* is that it rarely communicates anything of value to students. When I take a narrative that a student has written in one of my courses— something that has evolved through several drafts and has greatly improved—and I tell that student the paper is an 85%, what am I saying? 85% of what? Am I saying the narrative is in the top 85% of the class, the top 85% of narratives written by all college freshmen in the U.S., or in the top 85% of all the narratives I've ever read? Or maybe I'm comparing what was executed in the narrative to a rubric, and I'm suggesting the student met 85% of the objectives on the rubric, such as effective dialogue, strong verbs, and detailed description. But might a narrative that uses all three objectives still be a poorly written narrative?

The breakdown of communication inherent in this kind of summative-only, end-of-the-paper/project grading is a grave issue.

Ask Ginger: Giving Feedback

As Transposed from Paws to Person by Rachel Roy, Assistant Director, University Writing Programs

Dear Ginger,

I am teaching two writing intensive classes this semester and I have to provide SO much feedback to my students—it's taking me forever! Please help!

-Sincerely,
Drowning Under Papers

Dear Drowning,

Woof! My name is Ginger, and I'm a cockapoo who loves to cuddle humans and would rather not associate with other dogs. As I'm quite picky about most things, I am very experienced in giving feedback to anyone who will listen, so I'm sure I can help give effective feedback to your students!

Try Audio or Video Feedback
The traditional way to give students feedback on their writing is in writing. But audio and video feedback are becoming more *pawpular*, and Canvas makes it easy for instructors to give feedback in these ways. For a detailed breakdown of how to record audio or video feedback in Canvas, you can check out this guide from Carroll University. I'll just tell you about the benefits of using audio and/or video feedback.

Research has found (and professors have also shared anecdotally) that students find audio and video feedback to be effective. Rodgers (2019) surveyed 104 of his former students from courses where he gave audio or video feedback on at least one assignment. He found that 70% of students felt the audio/video feedback was more detailed and that nearly 75% of students felt "more confident about the fairness of their grade" when they received audio/video feedback (12). Importantly, Rodgers found that once he had adjusted to using the technology, that he was grading much faster using audio/video feedback (11), since we tend to talk faster than we write. Rodgers tries to limit his feedback videos to 3-5 minutes, and Rodrigue similarly suggests keeping videos under 5 minutes. Personally, I love short audio feedback; "Ginger, no!" has helped me remember to not eat strange food on my walk many times!

Do Less...But Be Intentional
Whether you're giving audio/video feedback or written feedback, you should still limit yourself to how long you spend leaving feedback. To help with this, I suggest leaving fewer comments on student writing. According to Crook's 2022 review of research on feedback and revision, both students and instructors see feedback as necessary to both justify the grade and to help the student improve their writing and knowledge of the subject (599). Thinking of feedback in this way might help you to strike a balance between justification and instruction.

The top dog of feedback and friend to our writing program, Nancy Sommers (2013) suggests offering students just one lesson at a time (1). Sommers explains that when instructors comment on nearly every line of writing, fixing both big ideas and grammar, that students are both discouraged and left confused (4). Choose one (maybe two) lessons that you want the student to work on in their next draft or their next paper for you. I, too, have found that it's easier to learn one trick at a time. I also find that getting treats helps...

The Timing of Feedback
You should consider the timing of your feedback—will your students have a chance to revise based on your feedback? Or, is this the final assignment for the class? Your answers to these questions will help you decide if you should give formative feedback—feedback given to help the student develop their writing—or summative feedback—feedback given on the final draft.

Underwood and Tregidgo, in their review of the literature, found that "feedback is most effective when used for formative improvement, as in the case of multiple drafts of writing" (90). Similarly, Crook found that many students feel that feedback on their writing is not helpful when they can't use it right away (603).

So, if you're giving feedback on the final draft of the last assignment of the course, you don't actually need to leave a lot of feedback. You could leave summative feedback, which will also justify the grade to the student, but the moment for instruction has passed. However, if students have the chance to revise, you'll want to give feedback that helps students to "feel forward" (Higgins 274), or to revise their work in a meaningful way.

It's not im*paw*sible to grade effectively *and* efficiently. I hope these tools and suggestions can make grading a bit easier for you, and remember, the WAC office

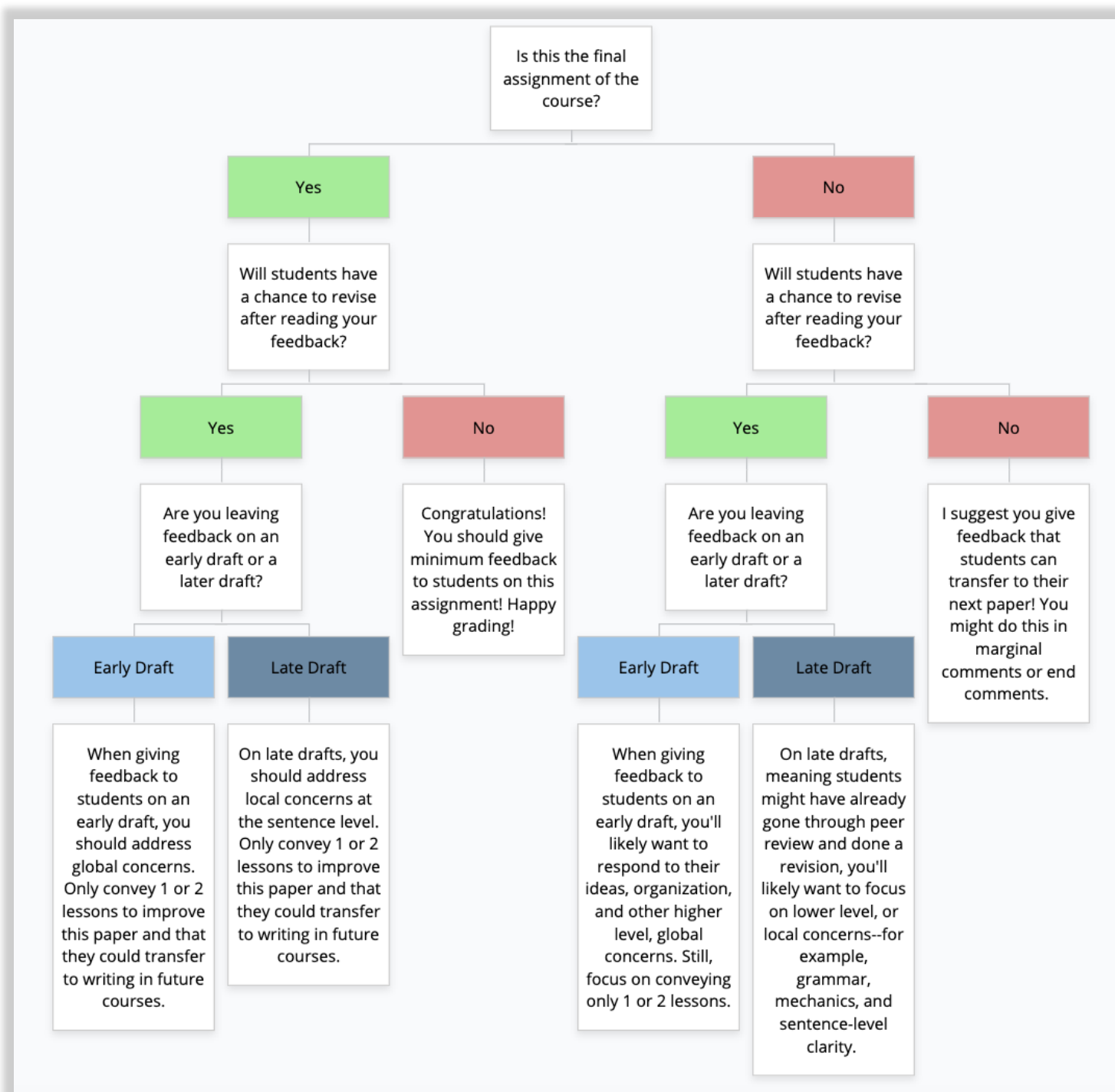is always available to you for one-on-one consultations!

Ginger's Short & Sweet Summary:

- Try giving feedback using audio or video formats—it can save you time and research shows that students like it too!

- Set a time limit for yourself when grading and giving feedback—10-20 minutes should be good for 5-7 page papers.

- Less is more! Your feedback only needs to convey one or two lessons.

- On early drafts, comment on global concerns (clarity of ideas, organization, etc.) and on later drafts, focus on local concerns (grammar, mechanics, etc.).

- If you're grading a final paper in the course and students will not be able to revise, you should give short, summative feedback.

When in doubt, you can use my feedback cheat-sheet to find out what kind of feedback you should give:

Is this the final assignment of the course?

Yes
- Will students have a chance to revise after reading your feedback?
  - **Yes** → Are you leaving feedback on an early draft or a later draft?
    - **Early Draft**: When giving feedback to students on an early draft, you should address global concerns. Only convey 1 or 2 lessons to improve this paper and that they could transfer to writing in future courses.
    - **Late Draft**: On late drafts, you should address local concerns at the sentence level. Only convey 1 or 2 lessons to improve this paper and that they could transfer to writing in future courses.
  - **No**: Congratulations! You should give minimum feedback to students on this assignment! Happy grading!

No
- Will students have a chance to revise after reading your feedback?
  - **Yes** → Are you leaving feedback on an early draft or a later draft?
    - **Early Draft**: When giving feedback to students on an early draft, you'll likely want to respond to their ideas, organization, and other higher level, global concerns. Still, focus on conveying only 1 or 2 lessons.
    - **Late Draft**: On late drafts, meaning students might have already gone through peer review and done a revision, you'll likely want to focus on lower level, or local concerns--for example, grammar, mechanics, and sentence-level clarity.
  - **No**: I suggest you give feedback that students can transfer to their next paper! You might do this in marginal comments or end comments.

Crook, Stephanie. "A Social-Constructionist Review of Feedback and Revision Research: How Perceptions of Written Feedback Might Influence Understandings of Revision Process." *College Composition and Communication* 73, no. 3 (2022): 593-614.

"Recording Video Feedback in SpeedGrader." Caroll University. https://www.carrollu.edu/professional-development/documents/teaching-commons/carrolu-recording-video-feedback.pdf

Rodrigue, Tanya. "Teaching Writing Tip of the Week: Using Video Feedback on Student Writing." Salem State Writing Program. *Substack*, February 27, 2024.

Sommers, Nancy. *Responding to Student Writers*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2013.

Underwood, Jody S., and Alyson P. Tregidgo. "Improving Student Writing Through Effective Feedback: Best practices and Recommendations." *Journal of Teaching Writing* 22, no. 2 (2006): 73-98.

The Grammar Box:
Colons vs. Semicolons: What's the Difference?

Elizabeth Drummey, Assistant Director, University Writing Programs

"Here is a lesson in creative writing. First rule: Do not use semicolons. […] All they do is show you've been to college."
–Kurt Vonnegut

Here at the Writing Program, we cannot agree with Vonnegut's statement, but we acknowledge that semicolons are one of the most misused punctuation marks. It's easy to understand why. The colon and the semicolon look similar and are even on the same key, making them seem interchangeable. In fact, they both serve similar functions: to link two related thoughts. However, each does this in a slightly different way. Let's take a look!

A colon is used to introduce the second clause of the sentence and place emphasis on it. Vonnegut has inadvertently given us an excellent example with the statement, *"First rule: Do not use semicolons."* Here he is introducing us to his first rule of creative writing, albeit one that we hope you won't pass on to your students! I did something similar in the previous paragraph when introducing the functions of colons and semicolons. Colons also frequently precede lists and examples. Let's take this sentence: *"They will travel to four countries: Portugal, Spain, France, and Italy."* I gave you two for the price of one there. The clause "Let's take this sentence" introduces that I'm going to give an example. The following sentence is that example. The clause "They would travel to four countries" introduces that the second clause will list those countries. When used before a list, the colon is taking the place of phrases like "for example," "such as," or "including." If you are using one of these phrases, you should not include a colon.

While a colon is used to connect two clauses, they are generally not two independent clauses; at least one of them cannot stand as a sentence on its own. A semicolon, on the other hand, is used to connect two independent but closely related clauses. Each of these clauses could be its own independent sentence, but instead of separating them or joining them with a comma and a conjunction, you can use a semicolon instead. Vonnegut could have easily used a semicolon to combine the clauses "Do not use semicolons" and "All they do is show you've been to college." Semicolons can also be used within lists to separate complex items. Let's return to our previous example. Instead of listing just the countries, maybe we want to include the amount of time spent in each. *"They will travel to four countries: Portugal, where they will spend two days; Spain, where they will spend three days; France, where they will spend three days; and Italy, where they will spend four days."* Using only commas would make it hard to separate the list items; the semicolons make it clear.

Now you can go forward using colons and semicolons with confidence, no matter what Vonnegut says!

As a case in point, Liesel K. O'Hagan and colleagues demonstrate the lack of useful information gleaned by students when grading is implemented in a classroom. As a part of the study, one student wrote, "I don't even understand what the grade means on my paper. The top says something like a B and then all the comments say positive things and then there are all these errors marked. Then the person next to me wrote only half as much as I did and has even more errors marked and he got an A. It just doesn't make any sense to me."

Assessment and grading are not synonymous. Grading is a silent, one-way evaluation, where a teacher assigns a letter, rife with a set of socio-cultural significances, to a piece of student writing. Assessment, on the other hand, provides the opportunity for two kinds of evaluation—formative and summative.

Formative evaluation—done typically by responding to in-process student writing several times during the semester—replaces the punishment or praise of student learning… with a process that encourages communication... When using formative evaluation, teachers and students speak with one another often. [It] creates safe spaces for student learning because students are not focused on trying to avoid failure but, instead, are searching for insight and growth. As grades lose their power, the desire to evade punishment or failure can dissolve into the desire to seek knowledge and learn something new. Finally… students develop the capacity to talk about and, in some instances, even teach the material themselves as they work with their peers to explain what they know.

James, Mitchell R. "Grading Has Always Made Writing Better." *Bad Ideas About Writing*. Edited by Cheryl E Ball and Drew MLowe. West Virginia University Libraries. 2017, pp 255-258.

Dangling Modifier
How to Work with a Writing Fellow on Your WI Course
Elizabeth Drummey, Assistant Director, University Writing Programs

You're staring at a pile of thirty student essay drafts on your desk. You need to give feedback on these in time for the students to revise for the final draft due in a week and a half. A quick skim through shows that most need lots of help with structure and other basic writing tenants, to say nothing of the actual content. You're teaching two other courses that also have assignments and tests to grade, your kids need help with their homework and to be driven to their soccer games, the laundry at home is piling up, and it might be nice if you get a bit of sleep. You're only one person, so how are you going to ensure your students get the feedback they both need and deserve? One solution could be a Writing Fellow for your WI course. While a Writing Fellow isn't a substitute for feedback from the instructor, they can be an important supplement for supporting students' writing.

What is a Writing Fellow?
A Writing Fellow is a student who has been trained in peer tutoring by the Writing Program and assigned to a specific class to provide other students with feedback on assignment drafts. Their purpose is threefold: "to improve student writing and writing processes, to promote collaborative learning, and to encourage instructors to use writing to learn in their courses" (Severino and Knight 217). They are often graduate students, but undergraduates who have previously taken the course and received a good grade can be hired as well. This is a paid position, and they are expected to work between three and five hours a week. A Writing Fellow can provide a unique perspective in feedback to students since they are both familiar with the course content and trained in peer tutoring.

So, what does a Writing Fellow giving feedback to students actually look like? The majority of a Writing Fellow's time is spent conferencing with students either during set office hours or in individually scheduled appointments. The Writing Program trains Fellows in best practices for providing feedback to students, including "how to ask smart questions of student writers, how to listen carefully, and how to structure a dialogue to help a student rethink and revise a paper" (Hall and Hughes 31). Like the Connors Writing Center, the Writing Fellows Program uses a peer tutoring model based in collaboration. Writing Fellows can help students in the course at any point in the writing process, whether it's generating ideas, outlining, revising a first draft, or polishing a final draft. However, a Writing Fellow's work is not limited to individual conferencing. They may also provide feedback via email, lead small group discussions in class, and help run peer review workshops.

You may be asking, "Isn't that just a TA?" The short answer is no; there are important distinctions between Writing Fellows and TAs. First and foremost, Writing Fellows should not be involved in any formal assessment for the course. While a TA may be asked to grade quizzes, a Writing Fellow cannot do this because the program is based in the peer tutoring model. One benefit of working with a Fellow for a course is that students may be more comfortable approaching them for feedback than the instructor. A Fellow grading students' work would change the nature of the relationship entirely. A Fellow is familiar with the course content so they can fully understand the assignments and help students with genre conventions, but they should not be grading, approving topics for projects, or advising on methods. This should be left to the instructor (Halls and Hughes 26). However, while a Writing Fellow should not act as a TA, a TA can be trained in the same skills as a Writing Fellow! You can submit a request for your TA to be trained on giving written feedback here.

What are the benefits of working with a Writing Fellow?
It has been shown that Writing Fellows have a significant impact on student work. A study conducted at Pomona College showed "a positive and measurable difference in students' writing" when there was a Writing Fellow for the course (Regaignon and Bromley 48). All but one of the students in the session with the Writing Fellow reported their writing had improved at the end of study survey; in contrast, 57% of the students in the session without a Writing Fellow felt their writing had not improved (Regaignon and Bromley 49). Other studies have found that professors note a positive difference in the quality of student writing when there is a Writing Fellow. Papers tend to be

clearer, better organized, and more strongly argued (Severino and Knight 224).

Students are not the only ones who benefit from working with a Writing Fellow; instructors can benefit as well. Through communicating with the Fellow and seeing their use of process and collaboration with students, instructors can "reflect critically on their own practices in designing writing assignments, in coaching students through the process, and in evaluating student writing" (Hall and Hughes 21). Professor Jayson Seaman found that he had more time to provide content-based feedback to his students since their essay organization had improved so much due to the Writing Fellow's help ("Writing Fellows"). There are several things instructors can do to ensure both they and their students benefit from having a Writing Fellow in the classroom:

- **Communicate with the Writing Fellow**

  Communication is vital for the success of the Writing Fellows Program. Be open with the Fellow about what you expect from them and what you expect from students on each assignment. Foster an environment where the Fellow feels they can be honest with you about any concerns they may have, whether it's with a student, an assignment, a deadline, or something else. It is best to think of the Fellow as a "teaching partner" who you are collaborating with (Hall and Hughes 24). You may even ask for their input with assignment design and due dates.

- **Be open to the process and best practices suggested by the Writing Program**

  As previously mentioned, Writing Fellows are trained in best practices by the Writing Program. These practices are based around research in Composition studies and have been proven to work. However, the Fellow cannot help students if you are not fully on board. Be open to the Writing Program's philosophy of writing as a process that should include multiple drafts and both high and low stakes assignments. To learn more about these, you can read the Writing Intensive Course Guidelines or apply for the 2025 Writing-Invested Faculty retreat (June 3-4, 2025).

- **Encourage students to seek out the Writing Fellow**

  Sometimes, students need a little push in the right direction, so make sure they are aware of the opportunity to meet with the Writing Fellow for your course. Mention them in class often and direct individual students to them as needed. You can even require that they meet with the Fellow a certain number of times during the semester (just be sure to negotiate it with the Fellow ahead of time and factor it into their weekly hours). You also might ask the Fellow to attend class once a week. This will ensure students are aware of them and can have a moment after class to schedule a meeting.

This all sounds great—how do I sign up?

To apply, reach out to the University Writing Program here! The deadlines are July 1st for the Fall semester and December 1st for the Spring semester. Once you have applied, the Writing Program will work with you to identify a potential Fellow and discuss the process of reaching out to your department about cost.

_____

Hall, Emily and Bradley Hughes. "Preparing Faculty, Professionalizing Fellows: Keys to Success with Undergraduate Writing Fellows in WAC." *The WAC Journal*, vol. 22, November 2011, pp. 21-40. *EBSCOhost*, doi: 10.37514/wac-j.2011.22.1.03

Regaignon, Dara Rossman and Pamela Bromley. "What Difference DO Writing Fellows Programs Make?" *The WAC Journal*, vol. 22, November 2011, pp. 41-63. *EBSCOhost*, doi: 10.37514/wac-j.2011.22.1.04

Severino, Carol and Megan Knight. "Exporting Writing Center Pedagogy: Writing Fellows Programs as Ambassadors for the Writing Center." *The St. Martin's Sourcebook for Writing Tutors* edited by Christina Murphy and Steve Sherwood, 4th ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011, pp. 214-227.

Featured Profile: Dean Cari Moorhead

Rachel Roy, Assistant Director, University Writing Programs

Cari Moorhead

As the dean of the graduate school, Dr. Moorhead has been a champion of supporting graduate students in their writing process. When asked about her own approach to writing, both as a graduate student and as a dean, Moorhead said that because her background had been in sports and recreation, "writing didn't come naturally" to her; she had to "grapple with that when writing [her] dissertation." This, in part, "undergirds [her] passion for creating writing opportunities for students." For example, each January, the graduate school hosts the Winter Writing Retreat, a week-long retreat for graduate students to work on their writing together with the support of faculty and the Connors Writing Center. The Winter Writing Retreat will be renamed the Moorhead Writing Academy going forward.

Dr. Cari Moorhead, dean of the Graduate School, will be retiring later this semester on April 12, 2024. Dean Moorhead first came to the University of New Hampshire for graduate school herself—she earned her Ph.D. in Education in 1995. Being a UNH alumna has given Dean Moorhead a unique perspective in her current role. She explains that she can, "appreciate school. So, I can appreciate that piece too...[it] certainly helped support my awareness of the transitions that take place when students come to grad school." Moorhead also shared that her degree in Education was really interdisciplinary (her dissertation, *Queering/Querying Identities: The Roles of Integrity and Belonging in Becoming Ourselves* is available through the Dimond Library archives). Working in an interdisciplinary field, she explained, "allowed me to see multiple perspectives. When you work at the grad level that is really important—everyone's experiences are so different."

Dean Moorhead has held many roles in her 36 years at UNH. After graduating, she became an academic advisor in the business school, then the Whittemore School of Business and Economics. She also worked in Student Affairs and in the Student Union before returning to the business school as director of advising. She has been the dean of the graduate school since 2005. Moorhead noted that in her time at UNH, "things have changed a lot...we're not bound by place in the same way. [And while] there are some benefits to that, [there's a] risk that you're not always as present with other humans."

Dean Moorhead's commitment to UNH students was recently highlighted in the latest issue of *UNH* magazine, in which she is quoted as saying, "That's what UNH is all about. We genuinely care about people...That's what I have, in essence, invested in during my time at UNH" (Sasko). Jovana Milosavljevic-Ardeljan, Director of Career, Professional, and Community Development at the Graduate School, notes that, "Dean Moorhead has always put writing support to the forefront of her mission and vision for higher education. A big part of that support has always been mental health and community building. She's been such an amazing champion of graduate student support and her legacy will live through all the programs she implemented."

Although Moorhead doesn't do much advising of graduate students in her day-to-day, when asked if she has any advice for graduate students who are writing their theses or dissertations, Moorhead immediately replied that "It takes longer than you think! It's hard!" She explained that she likes to reassure students that even the people who are the best writers struggle with how to communicate their work—and that's okay. "Writing is a process, it is iterative, it takes a while to work through." Milosavljevic-Ardeljan was lucky enough to have Dean Moorhead on her dissertation committee: "she has always reminded me to pace myself and take care of myself, which doesn't happen very often in academia. She was on my dissertation committee and her insightful comments and questions helped me gain perspective when it was really hard to see the forest from the trees."

I also had the chance to talk about my own dissertation research with Dean Moorhead, and she gave me further advice on writing about qualitative research, explaining that it's important to find "the narrative...the through-line...[ask] How do I embody [participants'] voices and tell that collective story with integrity in writing?" When I shared that this

"Things have changed a lot...we're not bound by place in the same way."

~ Cari Moorhead

was something I was aiming for, but struggling with in my own dissertation, she described the process as "creating a new mosaic of a collective vision, rather than just a jigsaw of voices." I know that I, personally, will keep this metaphor in mind while writing my dissertation, and I'm sure it will resonate with many writers across disciplines.

In reflecting on her time at UNH, Moorhead says that, for her, "UNH is all about relationships. After 36 years, I have really enjoyed my time working in a variety of roles across campus and in different schools and colleges as well...[I] have had several lives here." And the best part of her job as dean of the Graduate School? "It's the best job on campus. You get to work with everybody—faculty, staff, students—to create an environment where they can learn and grow...that's been a huge honor for me." Faculty, staff, and students will all dearly miss Dean Cari Moorhead's exemplary leadership and mentorship. In the words of one of her close colleagues, Peg Kirkpatrick, "It is hard to believe you are leaving us. You have brought so much talent, energy, and kindness to UNH. As you move on to your next adventures, of which there is no doubt that there will be many, please know that there are countless of us who are so grateful to you for lifting us up and bringing us along with you in your many successes. You made one phone call for me, years ago, and that changed everything. I'll miss your laughter, your insight, and your ability to cut the quick. Thank you for being such a wonderful colleague and friend."

"Writers learn they usually have to write badly to write well...
The wrong words lead to the not-so-wrong words, and then almost right
words may reveal the right words."

~Don Murray

Past Perfect: *Director's Notes*

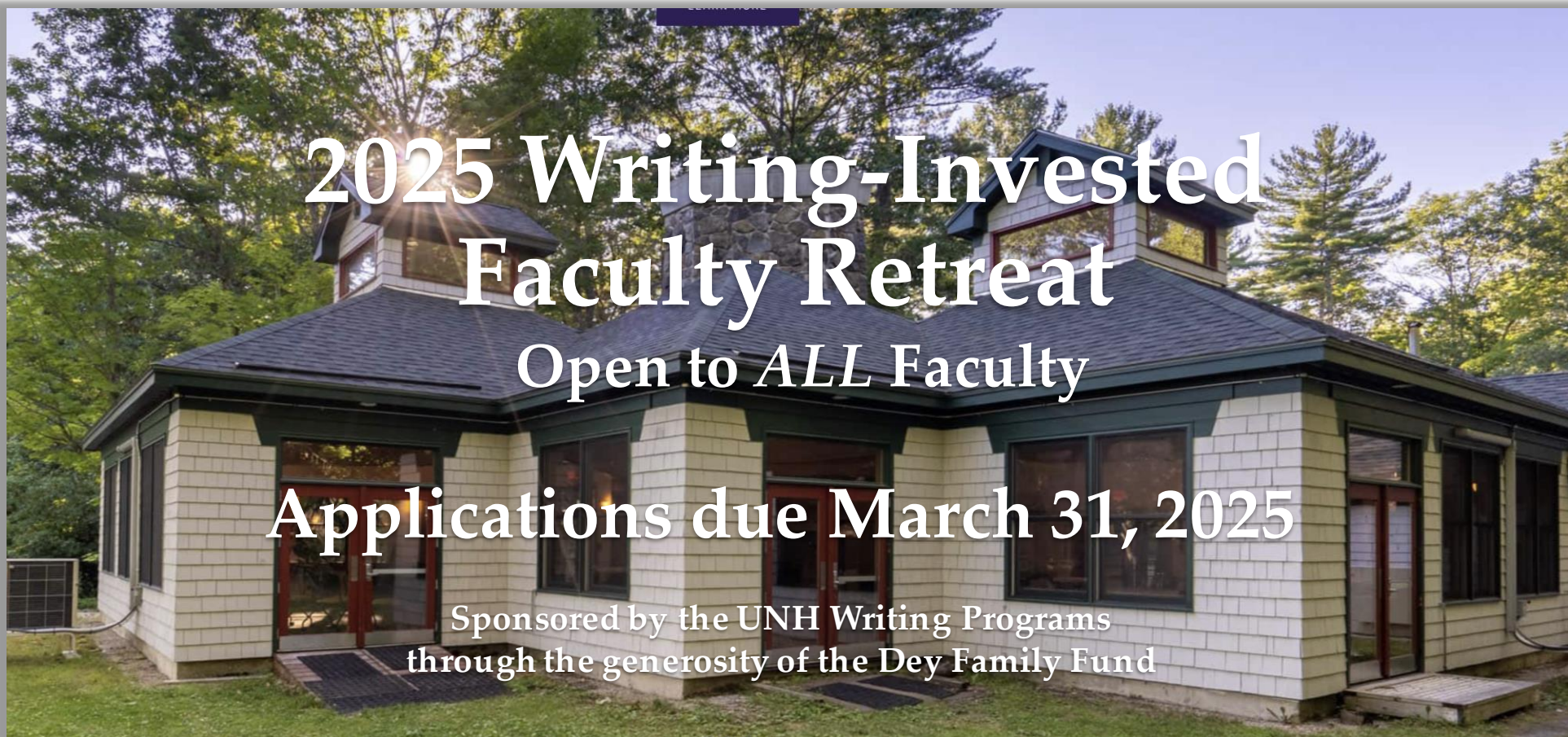*Meaghan Dittrich, Director, University Writing Programs*

The annual WI Faculty Retreat was held this January 16 & 17, 2024 at the Brown Center in Durham – a cozy and more locally accessible shift in location than our traditional excursion to the Mount Washington Hotel. Despite the venue change, this year's retreat proved to be an even more engaging opportunity, since we were able to accommodate nearly double the number of faculty participants. Indeed, we were pleased to host several new UNH CPS faculty – former Granite State College colleagues who have joined our ranks as part of the Manchester and online campus. We were thrilled to have them with us, especially those traveling from far afield (should out to the New Jersey pilgrims who braved the snowstorm!).

Discussion flourished amidst faculty from all colleges across the university. This year, without surprise, conversations gravitated toward AI and how it is affecting writing instruction. Of particular interest were methods for providing feedback to student writers in the form of the increasingly popular audio/video feedback in Canvas. For more details on that, see the "Ask Ginger" section in this issue.

It's always encouraging to see each year's cohort and their investment in writing opportunities for students at UNH. We shared nuanced experiences of challenges and successes in our writing assignments, pondered the variations of student feedback and (mis)aligned expectations, workshopped prompt ideas, played around with if and when it might be appropriate to add a little AI into our process, figured out grading strategies for different contexts, and enjoyed the winter-scape ambiance of a large wood fire all the while.

Inquiries about how you can participate in the next WI Faculty Retreat can be sent to UNH.Writing.Programs@unh.edu or see the ad at the end of this issue.

2025 Writing-Invested Faculty Retreat
Open to *ALL* Faculty

Applications due March 31, 2025

**Sponsored by the UNH Writing Programs
through the generosity of the Dey Family Fund**

The UNH Writing Program invites applications for the Writing-Invested retreat at
The Browne Center: June 3 & 4, 2025.
Writing-Invested faculty are instructors interested in improving student writing in their courses. Spaces available for up to 12 faculty participants.

INCLUDES
- **2-day** seminar at the [Browne Center](#) in Durham, NH
- **Breakfast & Lunch for 2 days**
- **2 follow-up lunch sessions** at UNH in the subsequent year to discuss progress of your work and continue the discussion of improving student writing

HIGHLIGHTS
- Learn current, research-based best practices to enhance student writing
- Understand and discuss the multiple roles of writing in the classroom
- Create assignments aligned with the core competencies of your course
- Discuss assessment and revision strategies
- Gain a network of writing-invested faculty colleagues at UNH

TO APPLY

Please fill out our [PDF application](#) and send to
unh.writing.programs@unh.edu.

Questions can be addressed to the Director of UNH Writing Programs
at Meaghan.Dittrich@unh.edu by **March 31, 2025.**