

# THE WRITING CENTER

## BULLETIN AUTUMN 2006

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### CONTACT US

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### LOCATION

Liberal Arts 144  
[www.umt.edu/writingcenter](http://www.umt.edu/writingcenter)

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### OUR PROGRAMS

All programs are supported by Academic Affairs and are free to UM students, staff, and faculty.

#### § Tutoring

Open weekdays and evenings, Aug. 28 – Dec. 12, except holidays. Referrals and walk-ins welcome. Extra tutoring hours for non-native speakers of English on Monday and Thursday evenings.

#### § Workshops

Custom workshops in your class, seminar, or department. Call x2470 to arrange.

#### § Writing Assistants

Assigned by The Writing Center to help faculty critique, but not grade, students' drafts in courses. Call x2470 by Sept. 22 to request a WA for autumn semester.

#### § Online Help

Go to [www.umt.edu/writingcenter](http://www.umt.edu/writingcenter) for free instructional handouts, links to writing sites and guides, information for faculty and advisors, overview and preparatory materials for the UDWPA.

## New Resources on our Webpage

To mark the anniversary of our remodeled website, we added a few features and revised others. When you log on to our website and click on **Resources for Faculty**, you will find a new Frequently Asked Questions section to support your teaching and advising efforts. Also new is a compact list of documents you might like to have handy while you prepare a new course (*ASCRC Writing Course Guidelines* or *Writing Across the Curriculum Philosophy in Your Classroom*), advise students (*UDWPA Facts for Advisors*), or mull over a case of plagiarism (*The Writing Center Statement on Plagiarism*). You will also find a one-page flyer that introduces students to the Writing Center services and hours for the current academic year. Copies of the flyer may be printed as needed for your classes or individual students you refer to the Center. Instructional handouts for students are still located under "Handouts & Links".

Another new feature on the Resources for Faculty page is a link to the **Writing Across the Curriculum Clearinghouse**. This resource is hosted and managed at Colorado State and offers an overview of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) philosophy and practice as well as links to WAC discussion groups and materials from around the world. As we find particularly good WAC articles and resources we will add these to our site for easy access. However, the WAC movement has generated a good deal of practical information and research that is available on the Web. We are happy to assist you in locating the materials you need to create or redesign effective writing assignments in your discipline.

Finally, we added two new links to the website that complement those that you are used to seeing. One link takes you to the University of Alberta Library's **Guide to Plagiarism and Cyber-Plagiarism** for a cogent overview of plagiarism by students and what to do about it. You will find pages

## Webpage (cont.)

there to share with students on the pitfalls of plagiarism. Another new link connects to the Dartmouth College Library service **Sources**, a site that describes and illustrates the most common citation formats and styles that you might expect your students to use.

We cannot be sure how often UM faculty and students use the Web for writing advice but we do know that it is a practice that has caught on elsewhere. The Purdue Online Writing Lab—another link you will find on our website—had more than 23 million hits in 2004. Before you ask your students to buy a style guide they may not buy or use, go see the comprehensive offerings of the Purdue OWL. Online writing help at reputable sites is free, always available, and very student friendly. Given the way today's students use technology, they may be more willing to look things up online than thumb through a book.

We invite you to send feedback about our website to [growl@mso.umt.edu](mailto:growl@mso.umt.edu). Our goal is to put what you need for writing instruction at your fingertips.

## Tutoring Staff Updates

New tutors for 2006-2007 will include:

**Beth Hahn**, A.B.D. at the University of Michigan in a joint program for Natural Resources & Environment/Ecology & Evolutionary Biology; **Jake Hansen**, second year graduate student in UM's M.A. in English Teaching program; and **Greg Hill**, former doctoral student at Purdue University and English instructor at Robert Morris College, Chicago. Returning tutors are Tom Bateridge, Henrietta Goodman, Dr. Gretchen McCaffrey, and Molly Varley.

Last winter, Goodman received the 2006 Beatrice Hawley award for a collection of poems. Alice James Books, which sponsors the award, will publish Goodman's first book in April 2007. Stop by The Writing Center in LA 144 during the Academic Expo, Aug. 29-Sept. 1, to meet Goodman and the other

tutors who will be working with you and your students in the coming academic year.

## ESL Students and The Writing Center

Every semester a few faculty call The Writing Center to ask if we can help a non-native speaker of English who is struggling with written coursework. The first thing to understand is that all UM students, undergraduate and graduate, are welcome to use The Writing Center. Because some non-native speakers of English (we refer to them as ESL students) do not know about The Writing Center, you can help them by telling them how to contact us and what help they can expect from us. They should know that they can make an appointment during any of our regular tutoring hours. On Monday and Thursday evenings, 6:00 –9:00 pm, we reserve The Writing Center for ESL students only, with all appointments at least one hour long. ESL students can request tutoring as often as necessary, within reasonable limits. All tutoring is, of course, free.

It is important to emphasize that writing tutors do not line edit papers written by ESL students any more than they do for native speakers of English. Tips and discussions of grammar and usage points may be more common with ESL students, but tutors also cover composition and process issues such as pre-writing, organization, and development. The Writing Center is not an English language center and ESL students remain responsible for the intensive study, observation, and practice necessary to master English as a second language.

ESL students sometimes struggle to understand why tutors do not just cross out and fix all their usage errors. But merely editing their papers teaches students too little, even if it does make the papers easier to read for their professors. If students combine their own study of English with classroom experience and tutoring sessions, over time their English will improve. There simply is no silver bullet for second language learning.