



BOSTON COLLEGE

Writing Fellows Program

Pilot Project



Year-Three Progress Report 2006-2007

Prepared by

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Executive Summary

Since 2004, Dr. Paula Mathieu (English), in cooperation with Suzanne Barrett and The Connors Family Learning Center, has directed a pilot Writing Fellows Program at Boston College to create an initiative for enhancing the effectiveness of writing instruction in undergraduate courses. The program has made trained graduate-student writing fellows available to interested faculty members from any department who want to focus more attention on student writing in a course. Three to four times during the semester, fellows meet individually with students to offer feedback on paper drafts before revised versions are submitted to faculty. The writing fellows receive training in responding to student writing and in the rhetorical expectations of the specific discipline, and they meet with cooperating faculty to fully understand expectations for the writing assignments.

The Year One Pilot, supported by a Boston College Teaching, Advising and Mentoring Grant (TAM) partnered with one course: Dr. Paul Gray's Comparative Social Change, a core Sociology course with 60 students. Four Writing Fellows, all incoming English MA students, went through training in reading and responding to student writing, and met three times with students during the semester to offer feedback on drafts of papers. Research into the effectiveness of the Year-One Pilot was anecdotal, but strongly positive, from the perspectives of both students and faculty.

2005-2006: Working from a second year of TAM funding, the Writing Fellows Program tested its pilot in three new disciplines: History, Political Science and Geology. (The TAM committee requested a focus on testing out various disciplines for the program). All participating faculty commented on the higher level of writing in their courses overall, particularly from students who seriously committed themselves to the process. Two also noted that they found the program helped their own design of assignments. Of students, 80% found the program a useful resource.

2006-7: The goals identified and accomplished this year were to increase the diversity of courses with which the writing fellows program has worked as well as to create continuity by extending partnerships with faculty beyond one semester. With \$15,000 in funding from the College of Arts and Sciences, the Writing Fellows initiative worked in the fall with two courses: Dr. Ann Spinney's (MU 301) Introduction to World Music, an undergraduate elective that fulfills the cultural diversity core requirement; and Prof. Kerry Cronin's (PL/TH 090-091) Perspectives on Western Culture, a yearlong core philosophy and theology course. In the spring, the program continued with Prof. Cronin's Perspectives course and cooperated for a second year in a row with Dr. Noah Snyder on his course, (GE 170) Rivers and the Environment, an undergraduate core science course. The feedback from all cooperating faculty was unanimously and strongly positive (see p. 8-10). Feedback from student evaluations shows that an overwhelming majority of students (92%) see the value of the program in improving their writing skills; and nearly as many (86%) would take another Writing Fellows course or recommend one to a friend. Each year the program has received increasingly positive feedback from students and faculty.

The program directors feel the pilot has been successful and the time is opportune for expanding the scope of the Writing Fellows Program beyond a pilot level.

The Need

In a survey of the BC graduating class of 2003, only 41% of students stated that they felt their writing skills had been “greatly enhanced” during their four years at Boston College. In 2007, only 36.1% said that their writing was “much stronger” than when they entered college.¹ The First-Year Writing Seminar, which students typically take in their first semester—or may not even take at all because of high AP test scores—is the only core course in which the development of students’ writing is the primary concern. Many among the BC faculty express a desire to incorporate more attention to writing in their classes but, especially in the core, large classes limit one’s ability to work individually with all students.

Many national groups advocate that writing should become more integral to a college education. In “The Neglected ‘R’: The Need for a Writing Revolution,” the National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges recommends that “Colleges and universities have an obligation to make writing more central to their own programs of study. The teaching of writing at the college level should be infused across the curriculum” (27).

College writing can be difficult for students because there is no one set of rules that encompass “good writing.” Disciplines, genres, and individual writing tasks vary in the type of approach, research, style and documentation necessary. According to the English scholar Wayne Booth, the earmark of a successful writer is an ability to “discover and maintain in any writing situation a proper balance among . . . the available arguments about the subject, the interests and particularities of the audience, and the voice of the speaker” (172). In other words, an adept writer is one who can accurately assess a rhetorical situation and call on a range of writing skills to respond; a novice writer, on the other hand, often generalizes rules for “good writing.” Student writers may encounter difficulty, for example, if they apply techniques that worked well in a reflective theology essay to a geology research report, earning less-than-positive results. Rather than understanding that differing rules of genre, evidence and citation are at work, students may feel frustrated, stating that they didn’t know what their individual teacher “wanted.”

BC’s First-Year Writing Seminar (FWS) offers first-year students intensive practice and one-on-one faculty feedback to help them develop skills for drafting and revising effective prose. FWS also helps students understand that each act of writing is a unique rhetorical situation. Beyond FWS, discipline-specific writing instruction is currently not visible in the BC curriculum. The University Core purports to offer writing-intensive courses, but large class sizes inhibit close attention to student writing.

Other than significantly lowering class sizes university-wide or adding a host of writing-intensive courses to the undergraduate curriculum, are there ways to encourage BC undergraduates to write more and to write better? Several universities (such as Brown, Tufts, Wisconsin, and Colorado State, etc.) have found that a Writing Fellows Program can efficiently and effectively enhance the quality and visibility of writing throughout the curriculum. Since 2004, a Writing Fellows Pilot has been testing whether a Writing Fellows Program could enhance the quality of writing and writing instruction at Boston College.

¹ Source: BC Department of Enrollment Management. (For internal circulation only.)

What is a Writing Fellows Program?

Simply defined, a Writing Fellows Program is one in which faculty can apply to have a course designated a Writing Fellows class, meaning that it will have trained peer writing fellows² attached to it. Working with the fellows becomes an integral and required part of such classes, ensuring that students are not writing papers at the last minute and that they are getting quality feedback on their writing. Students in the course must submit drafts of required writing to the Writing Fellows and have individual conferences with them to revise their papers. The faculty member also engages in dialogue with the WF Program to clarify what constitutes effective writing in each specific disciplinary and rhetorical situation. The Writing Fellows themselves receive training and support in both writing and productively responding to the writing of others.

Our approach to a Writing Fellows program owes much to the distinction Anne Beaufort makes in *Writing in the Real World: Making the Transition from School to Work*.³ Beaufort claims that writers need five kinds of knowledge to succeed as workplace writers: discourse-community knowledge, rhetorical knowledge, genre knowledge, process knowledge and subject-matter knowledge. Through training by the WF Program directors and dialogue with the course faculty member, the fellows learn the discourse-community, rhetorical, and genre expectations. Through discussions with the students they reinforce and help teach process skills of revision. And while the fellows do not become experts in the course content, they are in a position to pick up on students' confusion and direct students to the faculty for further explanation.

History of Writing Fellows at Boston College

The idea for the BC Writing Fellows Program began at a meeting of the BC Core Curriculum Committee in 2003 when Prof. Paula Mathieu (English) attended the meeting to discuss the aims and structure of the First-Year Writing Program—the only required writing course at BC—which she directed. Prof. Paul Gray (Sociology) asked how he might better teach writing in a core sociology course of 60 students. Prof. Mathieu briefly described the Writing Fellows concept as one used at other universities that might work here. Dean Joseph Quinn followed up that meeting by encouraging Mathieu to apply for a Teaching, Advising and Mentoring (TAM) Grant to develop a pilot for such a program.

We designed the Writing Fellows Pilot to test three hypotheses:

1. **That students will become more adept writers** if they encounter greater continuity between their First-Year Writing Seminar and discipline-specific core courses. One way to accomplish this continuity is to offer one-on-one conferencing support within

² Currently, all writing fellows are graduate students. While other programs around the country do use some undergraduate tutors within writing fellows programs, we—as well as every cooperating faculty member—feel the presence of graduate students helps the undergraduates learn and that the experience is very helpful in the formation of graduate students as teachers.

³ NY: Teachers College Press, 1999.

undergraduate courses to help students plan, revise, and edit in light of the expectations of the given course and discipline.

2. **That a Writing Fellows Program will aid faculty across various disciplines as they seek to teach students** what are often tacit assumptions about what constitutes successful writing in their disciplines.
3. **That the experience of conferencing with undergraduate writers in core courses will help Writing Fellows**—many of whom will be teaching fellows in the FWS Program in their second year—to develop pedagogical skills that will enhance undergraduate learning at BC.

2004-2005: The Year One Pilot, supported by a Boston College Teaching, Advising and Mentoring Grant (TAM) partnered with one course: Dr. Paul Gray's Comparative Social Change, a core Sociology course with 60 students. Four Writing Fellows, incoming English MA students, went through training in reading and responding to student writing, and met three times with students during the semester to offer feedback on drafts of papers. In the second semester, the Directors and Writing Fellows researched large, fully realized Writing Fellows Programs at nearby universities such as Brown and Tufts. Research into the effectiveness of the Year-One Pilot was anecdotal, but strongly positive. Dr. Gray felt there were "more A's and fewer C" papers than in previous semesters of the course. Seventy-two percent of the students responded that the program provided a useful resource.⁴

2005-2006: Working from a second year of TAM funding, the Writing Fellows Program tested its pilot in three new disciplines: History, Political Science and Geology. (The TAM committee requested a focus on testing out various disciplines for the program). All participating faculty commented on the higher level of writing in their courses overall, particularly from students who seriously committed themselves to the process. Two also noted that they found the program helped their own design of assignments. Of students, 80% found the program a useful resource.

⁴ The full reports from Year One or Year Two of the Writing Fellows Pilot project are downloadable as pdfs at www.bc.edu/connors.

2006-7 Report on the Writing Fellows Program

The Partnerships

In years one (2004-5) and two (2005-6), the Writing Fellows Project was funded by a Teaching Advising and Mentoring Grant, and that committee encouraged us to test the Writing Fellows Programs in as wide a variety of disciplines as possible. This year's funding of \$15,000 was provided by the Office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences, which allowed us to test out both variety of courses and continuity with partnering faculty. This year we increased the diversity of courses with which the writing fellows program has worked and created continuity by extending partnerships with two faculty beyond one semester.

In fall, 2006, we partnered with two new courses:

Dr. Ann Spinney's **(MU 301) Introduction to World Music**, an undergraduate elective that fulfills the cultural diversity core requirement; and

Prof. Kerry Cronin's **(PL/TH 090-091) Perspectives on Western Culture**, a yearlong core philosophy and theology course.

In the spring 2006, we extended our partnership with two courses:

Prof. Cronin's Perspectives course from the previous semester and

Dr. Noah Snyder's **(GE 170) Rivers and the Environment**, an undergraduate core science course, with which we had partnered the previous spring.

The Partners (2006-7)

Ann Spinney, Assistant Professor, Music Department

Ann Spinney has been at Boston College since fall 2002 and has taught Introduction to World Music here and elsewhere since 1997. She found several benefits of working with Writing Fellows, for both her students and herself.

Noah Snyder, Assistant Professor, Geology and Geophysics

Noah Snyder has been at Boston College since fall 2005 and has taught Rivers and the Environment three times, twice in cooperation with the Writing Fellows Program. He has seen increasing benefits with each Writing Fellows partnership.

Kerry Cronin, Faculty, Philosophy and Theology Department

Kerry Cronin had taught in the Perspectives Program for twelve years before partnering with the Writing Fellows program. Since Perspectives is a double-credit, two-semester core course for first-year students, this partnership allowed students in this class to work over the course of a full school year with their graduate writing fellow. Prof. Cronin reflects on both expected and unexpected values of the yearlong partnership.

Each of the Three Hypotheses Achieved

Since 2004, when the pilot project for the Writing Fellows Program began, we have collected response data from participating faculty, from the graduate writing fellows, and from participating students to assess the effectiveness of the program. Our hypotheses (see p. 5)—that the program would help students become more adept writers, would help faculty with articulating their expectations for writing, and would help writing fellows in their formation as teachers—have been overwhelmingly confirmed by survey and interview data. Even more encouraging, the responses have gotten increasingly positive each year.

1. Students Have Become More Confident and Accomplished Writers

In 2006-7, students were surveyed anonymously at the end of the semester for their feedback on the writing fellows program. **Ninety-two percent of the students surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that their work with the writing fellows improved their written work for the course.** (We have asked that same question every year, and this number was up from 80% last year and 72% in the first year.) In addition, 73% of students replied that the Writing Fellows Program provided a valuable resource, and 86% of students said they would elect to take another Writing Fellows course or recommend one to a friend.

The students' views were strongly supported by the faculty partners:

“Papers Were 100% Better”

Kerry Cronin, when asked if she noticed an improvement in the quality of the papers compared to earlier semesters teaching the same course, replied as follows: “Yes, oh my gosh completely. . . I didn’t have to look for their answers as much. The Writing Fellows helped students organize their ideas. Before, I struggled to find what they were getting at. It was really nice to have the papers more thought out and organized. And better grammar! Papers were 100% better.”

Students Met the Assignments’ Goals Better

Noah Snyder noticed even greater improvement in student writing this year, his second year of pairing with Writing Fellows: “Somehow, it seems, the students read the assignments more carefully. I don’t know if the assignments themselves were so much clearer or if the fellows were able to identify places they were missing, or both. Either way, the students were better meeting the goals of the assignments. . . . I’m a Big Fan [of the Writing Fellows Program].”

Papers Were More on Topic and Better Organized

Ann Spinney said her students’ papers were “more on topic and more organized.” The writing itself was better, too, with fewer errors, and better constructed sentences as well as arguments. The Writing Fellows had “an uncanny ability to read my mind,” she said, and were able to say exactly what she would have said in their conferences with students. The Writing Fellows program helped her students “understand the centrality of writing” to her course material. Her goal in papers is to have the students “synthesize the material in their own terms/words,” in other words to help them “own” the ideas. She was pleased that the Writing Fellows were able to see and explain this goal to the students.

2. Faculty Benefited from their Writing Fellows Partnerships

Better Assignments

Noah Snyder had taught Rivers and the Environment, a core class, one time before partnering with the Writing Fellows Program in spring 2006 and spring 2007. He reflects that his construction of assignments improved radically over the three years he has taught it: “As a scientist,” he said, “I was never taught how to create good and clear assignments.” As part of his collaboration with the WF program, the fellows and directors met with Prof. Snyder to discuss and revise his assignments, and he is extremely pleased with the results: “My assignments went from blurry, vague and unfocused to well crafted and constructed. The expectations were much clearer to students. I’m much better at writing assignments now than ever before.”

A new perspective on her topic

Prof. Spinney says that the Writing Fellows Program “challenged [her] to come out of the musicological perspective.” She had to bring the language of her assignments into more general terms in order to explain them to the Writing Fellows and program directors. The “outsider’s perspective” helped her translate what she wanted from her students. She even feels that it helped her as a scholar who discusses music within the broader cultural studies area.

More course time to focus on course content

In addition to reading better papers, Cronin expressed that she was better able to engage the students’ content in depth during her grading process: “Grading was a different ballgame. I felt like the writing fellows were this amazing frontline, and all I had to deal with were content issues. The students felt more confident in their ideas, because they felt they were really presenting their content well.”

Professor Spinney echoed a similar sentiment, that she was able to devote more class time to teaching course material. She felt that the students had mastered the material well enough in their papers that she was able to cancel a class quiz and spend the time on new material.

The Value of Writing Intensive Core Courses

Prof. Snyder appreciates how the Writing Fellows program allowed him to incorporate writing into a core science class with 60 students. “I strongly approve of the goal that the BC Core Curriculum should really aim to teach writing. If you don’t teach writing as part of a liberal arts education, you’re in bad shape. Writing is the most important skill you can learn in college and the hardest skill to learn on the workplace. It can help you get the job and be better able to communicate once in it. . . . With the big core classes, it’s very difficult to have really serious writing in the core. Writing Fellows makes that possible.

A supplement to what faculty offer

Prof. Spinney echoed a similar sentiment: “It is absolutely crucial to a liberal arts program that students know how to write. And not everybody, even after writing a dissertation, knows how to teach undergraduates to write. Also, faculty don’t always have the time necessary to help students explore and synthesize course material. The Writing Fellows were able to do that.” She has recommended the Writing Fellows Program to her colleagues and hopes to see the program grow.

Fewer Grade Complaints

Prof. Cronin noticed a rather unexpected benefit of this partnership: “I can’t account for this, because my grade range was fundamentally the same [as earlier semesters], but I didn’t have one student argue about their grade, and I have never had that before. I think because they had gotten feedback from the fellows, they were more understanding of their writing as a process and how much work they have to do. I was very surprised. I think they saw their own writing as part of the learning process, and students don’t typically have that perspective.”

Better In-Class Writing

Cronin stated that the two consecutive semesters working with the Writing Fellows program had broader positive effects on the students’ writing skills. “[The students] felt connected to their writing tutors. By the end of the year, students reported that they felt they knew what their tutors were going to say about their writing. And while I have no way of knowing for sure, I think [working with Writing Fellow] affected essay writing on exams. I found this class, by second semester, to have gotten much stronger at writing in-class essays, which I would likely attribute to the WF program, their focus on organizing essays, clearly displaying their ideas.”

Intellectual Mentoring for Undergrads by Grad Students

A final key benefit Cronin noted was the opportunity for BC undergraduates to be mentored by graduate students. “This program fosters, it is, intellectual mentoring. It’s a type of mentoring we’re not capitalizing on as much as possible at BC. Something that is lacking here are relationships between undergrads and grads. Master’s students can be that bridge, they can show what it means to go on to graduate school.” She described the benefits of “freshman getting to know very nice normal people in graduate school who model what the shift to graduate student life might look like. BC is getting good at mentoring spiritually, socially, pairing faculty with students for retreats, but Writing Fellows are part of an important intellectual mentoring experience.”

3. Writing Fellows Gained Valuable Pedagogical Experience and Insight

Each year, we interview the outgoing Writing Fellows as well as those two years out to learn if being part of the program helped prepare them for future pedagogical challenges. To date, all fellows have gone on to teach either the First Year Writing Seminar or to be a teaching assistant in the British Literature and Culture survey course with their own discussion section. Since the transition from graduate student to teacher is often a large and challenging leap for graduate students, this program sees teacher formation as key to its mission.

Niall Twohig, a Writing Fellow in 2006-7, was a first year MA student in the English department who was later selected as a teaching fellow and will teach two sections of First Year Writing Seminar in the 2007-8 academic year. A few weeks after beginning to teach his first section, he reflected on how the Writing Fellows Program helped him develop pedagogical strategies:

My first conferences as a Writing Fellow were rigid. Before conference day, I spent hours looking for every grammar mistake and structural flaw in my students' papers. In conferences this rigidity did not translate well. I talked a lot, unsure of whether the student was listening. I tried to tell them my vision of their best papers.

Over time, I naturally took on a different role. Our talks became more natural and free-flowing. I began to work from an unmarked copy. Conferences became a dialogue rather than a monologue.

As a Writing Fellow, my role began to shift from the editor, who holds all the answers, to some other role; "mentor" may be the decent name for this role, but it seems rather inadequate. What I became was a friend in the conference, someone who tried to act as a guide, listening to the other person in the conference, taking directions from them when I did not have the best vision. That role is one half of the contrary role that I am trying to balance in the conference and classroom this year: guide and teacher - the person who grades the papers, but also the friend who works with the student to get from here to there.

Like Niall, **Eden Wales**, was a 2006-7 Writing Fellow who now is teaching the First-Year Writing Seminar and feels the experience helped prepare her for classroom teaching:

The Writing Fellows program has helped me as an FWS instructor this year -- mainly because last year's conferences helped to facilitate a certain ease/comfort in meeting with individual undergrads and guiding them through the writing process. Being a WF also helped solidify in my mind what makes "good" writing and (more importantly) how to articulate praise/criticism to my students -- both in class and conference.

Matthew Freedman, a doctoral student in English and a 2006-7 Writing Fellow, describes how his work prepared him not only for teaching writing, but literature as well:

I believe that the experience of conferencing with students on a regular basis served to prepare me for my current position as a teaching assistant in a British Literature Survey course. Primarily, I believe that I am now more able to assess student work in a productive manner and help students improve their composition mechanics. I also believe that my work as a writing fellow will aid me in creating assignments that facilitate the students' ability to create logically sound arguments while expressing their thoughts clearly and convincingly. Quite simply, my time as a writing tutor has made me a more qualified instructor.

Chris Dibiase, a Writing Fellow in 2005-6, went on to teach FWS for the 2006-7 school year and then to pursue scholarly interests in the area of writing pedagogy and rhetoric. In fall 2007, he began doctoral study in Composition and Rhetoric at the University of Massachusetts. He describes his experience as a Writing Fellow as useful in terms of pedagogical practice, assignment design and time management:

Meeting with students one-on-one for a semester was great preparation for FWS, which has one-on-one conferences as a cornerstone of its design. Working with other professors to develop writing assignments also helped me to think more carefully about the types of assignments I created for my own classes. On a more practical level, being a WF improved my time management skills so that I wasn't overwhelmed when it came time to read a class-load of papers.

Conclusion: 2007-8 and Beyond

We—Paula Mathieu, Director of the Writing Fellows Program, and Suzanne Barrett, Director of the Connors Family Learning Center—are heartened and optimistic about the potential for the Writing Fellows Program, given the enthusiastic feedback we have received from participating faculty, fellows and students. If the goal of a pilot is to prove the potential effectiveness of a program, we feel the Writing Fellow Pilot can be considered a success. We feel it is time for the university to commit to this program, so it can grow and reach its full potential, helping a majority of the undergraduate students become more adept, confident writers.

In 2006-2007 academic year, the Writing Fellows Program worked with approximately 130 undergraduate students: that's only 1.4% of the current undergraduate population of 9,000 students. For the sake of comparison, the Writing Fellows Program at Brown University works with more than half its undergraduates each year (see Appendix B).

In 2007-8, the Writing Fellow Program received \$25,000 in funding from the Office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences and is seeking to expand its reach as much as possible. In fall 2007, we have partnered with Dr. Juliet Schor's (SC093) Shop til You Drop, a core class of over 170 students and four sociology teaching assistants. Our goal for this year is to work out the logistics to allow the Writing Fellows Program to grow while maintaining its high level of pedagogical excellence. Our goal for the year is to have doubled the reach of the Writing Fellows Program to have worked with at least 3% of BC undergrads by the end of the year.

Going forward, our goal is to see the Writing Fellows Program continue to grow until it is a fully realized and established program within the university—with a program director, stable budget, and the ability to reach a quarter to half of BC undergraduates annually. We think this program would be an ideal piece to a much-needed university Writing Center, which could house not only the Writing Fellows Program but the Online Writing Center (OWL) and writing tutoring. In the fall of 2009, Paula Mathieu will resume her directorship of the First-Year Writing Program within the English Department and will be unable to maintain her teaching load and run both programs simultaneously. In other words, the next two years will be key in deciding the future of the Writing Fellow initiative at Boston College.

About the Report's Authors

Paula Mathieu, Director, Writing Fellows Program, is Associate Professor in the English Department and trades off responsibility with Lad Tobin running the First-Year Writing Program. She is a specialist in rhetoric and writing pedagogy, with a doctorate in Language, Literacy and Rhetoric from the University of Illinois at Chicago. In 2005, she published *Tactics of Hope: The Public Turn in English Composition* and has co-edited two other books. In addition to writing pedagogy, her scholarship centers on public discourse and homeless writers.

Suzanne Barrett is Director of the Connors Family Learning Center. With a doctorate in English literature from Brown University, Dr. Barrett has worked at BC since 1992. In addition to coordinating all the services of the CFLC, she teaches a wide array of undergraduate courses and runs pedagogy and orientation workshops for Teaching Assistants and new faculty.

Acknowledgments

As in any successful educational initiative, collaboration has been essential to the Writing Fellows Pilot; the collegial relationships forged here have been extremely rewarding. This initiative began from a series of conversations: lunch between Paula Mathieu and Bryan Marinelli, where we first discussed the idea of writing fellows; a meeting of the Core Curriculum Committee, where Paul Gray expressed concerns about his students' writing with Paula Mathieu; and subsequent e-mails from Arts and Sciences Dean Joe Quinn, who encouraged Paula to develop the idea further. The collaboration among Paula, Bryan and Staci Shultz was key to getting the pilot off the ground, and the insights and hard work of Staci, Bryan, Sue Barrett and Diane Hotten-Somers have been essential in giving this program life. The faculty with whom we have cooperated—Dr. Paul Gray, Dr. Jenny Purnell, Dr. Noah Snyder, Dr. Crystal Feimster, Dr. Anne Spinney and Kerry Cronin—were generous with their time and adaptable to this new idea as well as supportive throughout. Our three years of Writing Fellows—Matt Freedman, Niall Twohig, Eden Wales, Liane Marquis, Nicole Biergiel, Bridget Cooper, Eileen Fenn, and Jon Jurich, Christopher DiBiase, Kristin Imre, and Alicia Pilar Perez—offered their hard work, enthusiasm, and vital feedback, which helped refine this pilot.

Many other hands and minds helped shepherd this small project along, to whom we would like to offer our gratitude. This project would not have been possible without the support of two BC Teaching Advising and Mentoring Grants and the Office of the Academic Vice President, who funded this pilot. The Arts and Sciences Deans Office have shown unwavering support and continued funding for the program. Mary Crane, Chair of the English Department, has also been a strong supporter of the initiative, offering advice, encouragement, and an office for the fellows. Diane Hotten-Somers, who worked as Associate Director of the program in 2005 and 2006, contributed valuable insights from her experience as an FWS teacher and a tutor. We are grateful to the Department of Sponsored Programs, who have met with us on several occasions to discuss the planning, fundraising and reporting of this project. Finally, we would like to thank the students who have and will take part in the Writing Fellows Program, and who, we hope, will appreciate and understand writing a bit more because of this project; the students and their writing is what is most important to the Writing Fellows Program.

Appendix A

Fully Realized Writing Fellows Programs:

Brown University

Brown University has a large and well-developed Writing Fellows program that serves 40 to 50 courses per year, reaching more than half the undergraduates at Brown each year (approximately 3,000 students). The 80 Writing Fellows are undergraduates, carefully selected and trained to help other students improve their writing skills. Competition is stiff: over 300 students vie for roughly 35 positions that open up each year and are chosen based on their demonstrated writing ability and interest in helping other students. Chosen after their first, second, or third undergraduate years, fellows continue to serve the university as peer tutors as long as they are enrolled at Brown.

Once the Writing Fellows are selected, they complete a three-credit seminar, taught by Program Director Professor Rhoda Flaxman, on the theory and practice of teaching writing. After completion of the seminar, fellows are regularly evaluated and participate in on-going training sessions every semester.

Each Writing Fellow is assigned to 15-20 students in a course whose professor has requested assistance. The program serves all disciplines at all levels, from introductory philosophy lectures to seminars in biomedical ethics.

In a "fellowed" course, students submit a first draft of each paper to the fellow two weeks before it is due to the professor. During the first week, the fellows comment extensively on the students' writing, noting strengths and weaknesses in argumentation, analysis, organization, clarity and style. The students then have the next week to consider these suggestions, conference with their fellows, and revise the papers before handing them in to the professor. The students hand in the annotated first draft with the final version, enabling the professor to consider both the process the student went through and the final product.

The annual budget for the Brown Writing Fellows Program is \$200,000, which covers the full-time faculty salary of the program director as well stipends for the 80 Writing Fellows. A full-time administrative assistant services the program as well, but is funded through a separate budget. The location was funded by an endowment from the Rose Family, for whom the program is now named.

Tufts University

At Tufts, the WFs are primarily undergraduates; they receive a \$500 stipend each semester, paid in monthly installments. Fellows are usually assigned to classes in their discipline, and are recommended by faculty for a WF position. During their first semester as a WF, they attend a one-credit course to teach and support their Writing Fellows work. In this course, they research rhetorical differences in the disciplines, discuss grammar, style and produce a newsletter at the end of each course with articles based on their research. Texts used in the course include Patricia O’Conner’s *Woe Is I*, Anne Lamott’s *Bird by Bird*, and Diane Hacker’s *A Writer’s Reference*. Fellows also organize and run an Academic Integrity Workshop as part of new student orientation at the beginning of the school year.

Faculty as well as Writing Fellows receive training and support, in the form of a one-day workshop before the semester begins, for which faculty receive a stipend, and meet with fellows at least twice during the semester. Many faculty members consult with fellows more regularly. In some cases, when it is difficult to coordinate meeting times, the fellows will self-select a point person to meet with the faculty member and disseminate important information (i.e. clarification of assignments) to the others. Currently, the social sciences and engineering departments utilize the WFs the most.

WFs at Tufts meet with their students 2-3 times a semester for up to an hour each time. Larger papers are sequenced, and fellows are given a minimum of ten days between the assignment and the due date to meet with students. The students meet in an on-campus coffee shop for the most part.

While students evaluate their WFs at the end of the semester and faculty compare writing in WF courses to that in their other course, no formal outcomes assessment has been conducted.

Our WFs and those at Tufts shared similar concerns. The Tufts WFs noted that the “professor needs to set the tone and buy into the program” to give the WFs validity and ensure the success of the program. They remarked that sometimes professors unintentionally “sabotage” the WFs’ validity by failing to reinforce their importance to students. Finally, they expressed concerns about the way assignments are written; often the professor’s expectations are not clear to even the WFs, making it difficult for them to help students fulfill the assignment.