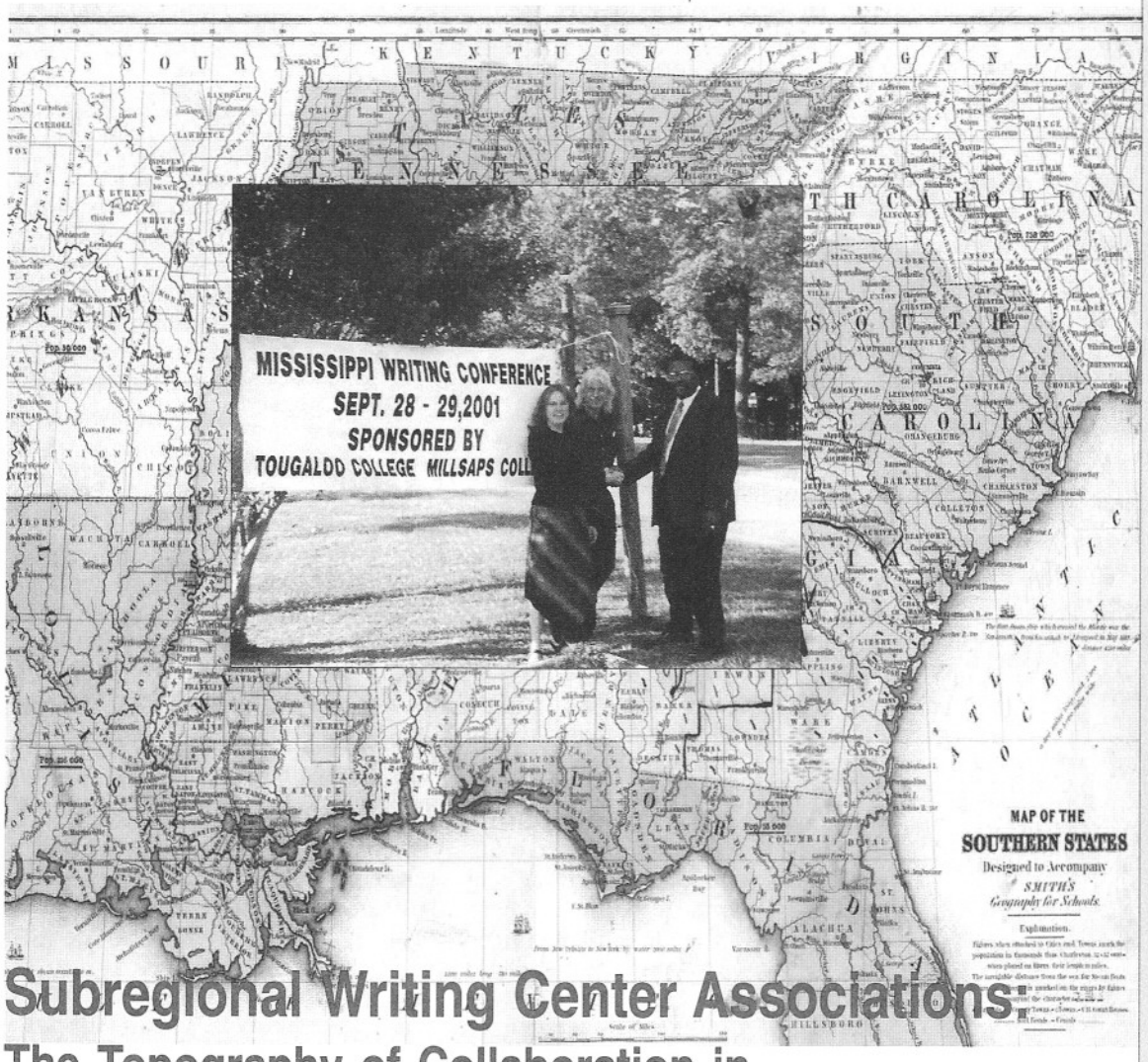
Southern Discourse

Publication of the Southeastern Writing Center Association • Fall 2005 • Volume 9, Issue 1

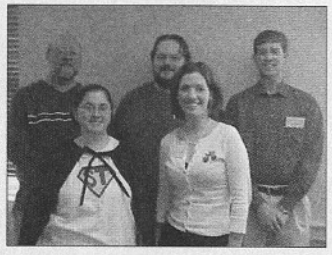


Subregional Writing Center Associations:

The Topography of Collaboration in North Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee

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Deadlines
Spring 2006
15 January 2006

Summer 2006
15 April 2006

Fall 2006
15 September 2006

Southern Discourse is published three times a year in the fall, spring, and summer and is edited and produced at Agnes Scott College.

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Southern Discourse welcomes submissions of all kinds—from news, features, letters to the editor, and editorials to creative works—that are related to writing centers and writing center work. *Southern Discourse* follows the style guidlines set forth in the current edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*. To submit articles, queries, announcements, photographs, or other materials, send an email message to the editor at the address listed below. Photographs must have a resolution of 200-300 dpi; appropriate formats are JPEG, TIFF, or EPS. Completed manuscripts should be sent using MS Word via email attachment or disk.

AGNES SCOTT COLLEGE
THE WORLD FOR WOMEN

A Note from the Editor: Writers' Homes



By Christine S. Cozzens, Agnes Scott College

Christine

While I was on sabbatical last year, I visited a number of writers' homes. At Rowan Oak, William Faulkner's lovely house in Oxford, MI, I strolled among his rooms and around his property accompanied only by the ghosts of his characters and perhaps by that of the handsome gentleman himself. When I went to Jackson to speak at the Mississippi Writing Center Association meeting at Millsaps, Kathi Griffith kindly arranged for me to tour Eudora Welty's house and garden with Suzanne Marrs, author of the recent biography. And on a visit to Rome, I spent a morning in the Museo Keats-Shelley housed in the rooms above the Spanish Steps where Keats spent his last days. He didn't write any poetry there, but I like to think he composed poems in his head as he looked out across the city and down onto the busy plaza below.

All of these places breathe in some way the spirits, the moods, the wisdom of their famous former residents. In each case, I came away feeling that I understood their works better. In important ways, writing centers are writers' homes, too. When visitors come to our center, I want them to know they are in a room where students write, where important works are being and have been composed. I hope that the rooms and furnishings of every writing center offer some insight on the writings of college students.

I am very grateful to Marcy Trianosky for her outstanding guest editorship of *Southern Discourse* last year and to Mollie Barnes and Cailin Copan-Kelly for producing such excellent issues.

The feature articles in this issue illustrate an important trend in writing center history: the growth of subregional writing center associations with missions that broaden and strengthen the writing center community. Mississippi, Tennessee, and North Georgia are highlighted here, but others are emerging across the country.

I had a wonderful year of writing, reading, and traveling, but I'm glad to be back home in my writing center and in the welcoming community that surrounds it. I hope that this issue of *Southern Discourse* helps you know the value of your work and find new ways to make your writing center a writers' home.

Let's Research: Gathering Evidence to Support Writing Center Work

By Vicki Russell, Duke University

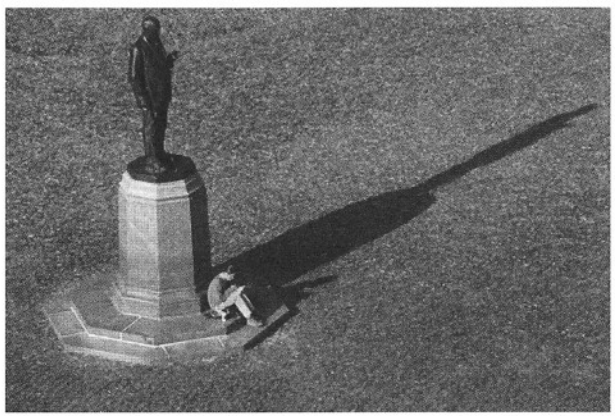
The 2006 SWCA conference in Chapel Hill will be here before we know it. Look at what the conference planners have in store for you:

Let's Register

Avoid a late fee by registering for the conference by Nov. 15.

Let's Eat

Award winning cuisine from the historic Carolina Inn: two plated lunches, one breakfast, snacks, and a "Meet and Greet" reception – all included in the registration fee.



Let's Tour Duke University

The Thursday afternoon free bus tour will take you to see both East and West campuses. Highlights include the Duke Chapel, the new Nasher Art Museum, the Writing Studio, and Duke Gardens (weather permitting). The bus will leave at 2:30 p.m. and return to the hotel by 5:30 pm.

Let's Play Writing Center Games

Part of Friday afternoon's Research Fair are presentations of games we play in the writing center both to have fun and promote learning.

Let's Enter a Contest

In 100 words or less, describe how this scene might represent the conference theme.

Winners and prizes announced at the conference. Email entry to vgr@duke.edu.

Let's Workshop

Saturday afternoon, February 18, features two workshop opportunities from 1:45 to 4:45 PM. Pre-register by checking the box on the online SWCA 2006 registration form. The cost for each workshop is $20, payable at the conference.

Let's Get Started: For New Writing Center Administrators

If you're new (or relatively new) to the writing center world, this workshop is your chance to meet with other newcomers. Experienced writing center directors are welcome to attend, too, if they'd like to meet and support colleagues new to the field. Participants will discuss basics about writing center administration, literature, theory, and practice; consider any writing-center related questions you want to pose; and be offered an opportunity to create mentoring relationships that can continue once the conference is over. Neal Lerner, keynote speaker for SWCA 2006 and former leader of the Writing Center Summer Institute, will be the workshop facilitator.

Let's (Re)Start a Secondary School Writing Center

How do we increase student learning and the quality of student writing as well as student attitudes toward writing? How do we encourage teachers to value the use of writing to improve the learning of content across the disciplines? The answer to these and many other questions may be found by establishing a writing center in every high school. Although writing centers vary from school to school, they function as an indispensable resource for the learning of students and faculty rather than a remedial facility. This workshop will focus on the idea of a secondary school writing center and the possibilities one offers to an institution. Research, practical application and continuous revision will be the basics of this interactive workshop. Dr. Pamela B. Childers, board member and former president of the IWCA, will be the facilitator.

SWCA Conference
Chapel Hill, North Carolina
16-18 February 2006
http://uwp.aas.duke.edu/wstudio/swca

Growing the North Georgia Writing Center Consortium (NGWCC)

By Beth Burmester, Georgia State University

When I returned to Atlanta after participating in the IWCA Summer Institute for Writing Center Directors at Clark University in July 2004, I was seeking a way to extend the intellectual atmosphere and energizing social contacts that had taught me so much about administration and writing and that had refueled my passion for writing center work. As I sat on the plane, my novel still buried in my carry-on bag, I frantically scribbled in my notebook: "How can the kind of mentoring that occurs so readily out-of-town become accessible in the midst of a semester's everyday concerns and constant interruptions? How can connections be forged and maintained close to home so that directors in my state could benefit from similar professional and scholarly support, outside of traveling to conferences, but including getting to know each other, and creating opportunities for collaborative research? And what kind of formal structure would mentoring like this need?"

Rather than competing with the purposes of the SWCA or IWCA, I hoped to form an organization that would offer opportunities for the exchange of ideas and experiences among writing center directors and staffs in roundtable conversations, through a discussion board, and at special interest meetings held at other professional conferences. The heart of the network would be developing relationships across institutions and communication, rather than producing publications or conferences. I discussed my ideas with the graduate students who were working with me during summer term, and they heartily endorsed the idea, asking if we could extend the group to include them. They wanted to meet other tutoring staff, talk to their own peers and find out how they worked on their campuses, and meet and receive mentoring from other directors, who could also share advice on doctoral programs, publication ideas, and research projects.

My assistant director, Beth Godbee, who came to GSU with experience working in Agnes Scott's Center for Writing and Speaking, remembered that Christine Cozzens had once helped to organize a group called the North Georgia Writing Center Association, though the group had not convened since 1998. Beth got a contact list from Agnes Scott, and she and a few other dedicated graduate student administrators—Tanya Cochran, Robin Bellinson, Kathy Kincer, and Yoon Nam—helped created a comprehensive contact list of twenty-three institutions and twenty-five individuals who had expressed interest in initial queries about forming a professional group.

Georgia State hosted the inaugural meeting on Friday, 29 October 2004 and welcomed sixteen participants, including directors and tutors from eight campuses and representing a mix of public and private institutions, two-year colleges, four-year colleges, and institutions with graduate programs. Our agenda at this stage was to introduce ourselves and identify some of our common interests and goals. A few people had experience with the previous association and were excited to recreate a local network. As a group, we chose the name "North Georgia Writing Centers Consortium (NGWCC)," and decided that the leadership would be collaborative, democratic, and informal, allowing for spontaneity and open opportunity to sponsor events or projects. We also decided the group would operate within the auspices of the SWCA and IWCA, much like a special interest group.

Through our listserv, we set 31 March 2005, as the day for our first NGWCC-sponsored event as a way to connect and create shared experiences. For "Word Play Day," we each opened our writing centers to word games and contests, then asked participants to share photos and descriptions of their activities and student responses to them. At Georgia State, we munched on home baked sugar cookies in each letter of the alphabet, as we played *Boggle*, *Scrabble*, *Pictionary*, and *Magnetic Poetry*. All members who sponsored game days considered them a success and well worth continuing.

Dan Shiflett, director of the writing center at Berry College in Rome, and his tutors hosted our spring term meeting on April 15. Over coffee and bagels, Sandee McGlaun from North Georgia College and State University and Christina Bourgeois from Georgia Tech led a collaborative writing workshop to create our mission statement. Tutors and directors alike called out phrases, word substitutions, and additions and asked questions.. Our work resulted in a statement draft: "The North Georgia Writing Center Consortium is a community of writing center administrators and tutors at institutions of higher education in North Georgia. The NGWCC was formed in 2004 for the purpose of sharing information, practices, speakers, and resources, and to enable participants to collaborate on research, publication, and grant/funding projects."

Following the spring meeting, The Writing Studio's current assistant director, Robin Bellinson designed a space for us on the Yahoo! Community groups. She created a logo, links, and uploaded our new mission statement, files of meeting minutes, and our database of members. We have the potential to engage in online conversations, and to index discussion threads as we move into projects and share more materials and information among our group. Eight members are subscribed

NGWCC: Continued, Page 13

The Birth of the Mississippi Writing Center Association, 2000-2005

By Kathi R. Griffin, Millsaps College

During our first year as writing program director and writing center coordinator at Millsaps College in Jackson, MS, Dr. Paula Garrett and I learned about writing center theory and pedagogy as we trained peer tutors and tutored along side them. Together we read articles by Stephen North, Frank Smith, John Trimbur, Muriel Harris, Harvey Kail, Linda Flowers and John Hayes. Before we knew it, we had amassed many of the articles collected in tutor-training readers and *The Writing Center Resource Manual,* which we would not discover until two full years later. Along the way, we learned from each other, from talking about what we were doing, what we were trying to do, and why; and we took our conversation to faculty and students who helped us articulate our role on our campus.

After that first year, as our roles became more defined and overlapped less, I realized that I need to interact with colleagues in positions like mine, so I approached my teaching assistant, Mandy Young, and asked her to present with me at SWCA in the spring 2001 where I hoped to gain colleagues and insight, but where I gained so much more. We arrived at Auburn University just in time to hear Lisa Ede describe how she came to writing center work, and I felt reassured.

While at the conference, I met Bruce O'Hara, dean of Arts and Letters at Tougaloo College also in Jackson, MS. Like us, he and their new writing center director were trying to build a writing center, so we exchanged contact information, and the rest, as they say, is history. The week after we returned to Jackson, I called Bruce, and he invited me to his campus and introduced me to writing center director Herbert Becks. They showed me around their writing center, and as we talked, they told me about Philip Gardner's impending visit to their campus to talk with them about writing center issues. I asked if I might join them—yes, of course. So I asked if I could bring some tutors—yes, of course. And I asked if we shouldn't invite a few others from colleges in the area—yes, of course. Peer tutors came with their advisors from around the city—Steve Price and Kerri Jordan from Mississippi College (MC); Jean Chamberlain, Monique Guillory, and Iley Mohammad from Jackson State University (JSU); Paula Garrett and I from Millsaps College. Each group presented, and Philip helped us reflect on our experiences. Afterwards, we realized how important this conversation had been. As a result we decided to meet again the next year and to invite colleagues from all institutions who do and might like to have writing centers.

Thus the first Mississippi Writing Center Association was born 28-29 September 2001 at Tougaloo College. The following year the conference was held at Millsaps College with positive (and financial) support we continue to receive from our dean. We invited colleagues from two-year and four-year colleges and universities around the state and high school teachers in Jackson, offering CEUs as incentive. Murray Shugars, writing center director, and Dianne Bunch from Alcorn State brought several tutors; a past tutor from Millsaps College who is currently teaching English in a local high school participated; three English teachers from the magnet high school in the process of trying to start a writing center joined us; teachers, instructors, and professors from around the state came together to discuss the teaching of writing in Mississippi. We invited Carol Severino, director of the nation's oldest writing center, to be our keynote speaker. Attendance doubled, and again at the end of the day each participant expressed a desire to meet again next year, which we did with the help of Brenda Robertson from Ole Miss and the support of Monique Guillory at JSU.

During the following year, Millsaps and JSU worked together to train undergraduate tutors for the opening of JSU's new writing center, which would be directed by Brenda Anderson. At JSU we began to discuss how we might become an official organization and to look around for models; we began to ask questions about affiliation—should we or shouldn't we, and with whom: What do we need most here in Mississippi? In the meantime we began to plan for our 4th annual conference and looked around for a keynote speaker. We decided to ask someone who might be able to help us think through some of these issues and turned to a past president of the Southeastern Writing Center Association and editor of *Southern Discourse*, Christine Cozzens, whom I had heard speak and read. So on October 1, 2004, we began to discuss in earnest the possibility of becoming a state organization, one that could bring conferences to Mississippi, bring colleagues and professionals from around the country to talk about writing, about the teaching of writing, and about the important role writing centers can play in helping support teachers and writers as they struggle to meet a host of expectations.

Following the conference, Brenda Robertson, Ingrad Smith, Murray Shugars, and I applied for nonprofit status and, this summer, received approval. And over the summer Kerri Jordan, who wrote her dissertation on writing center work, headed up a committee that includes the new writing center director at Tougaloo College, Rochelle Glenn, and me, to set our conference agenda.

So although we have been interrupted by Katrina, we have not been deterred. This fall we will begin to shape our organization to fit the needs of Mississippi. To help us articulate our needs, we will bring our stories to help us determine our futures; and to help us understand our needs, we have invited Governor William Winter, civil rights and education activist since the 1960s, to be our keynote speaker.

A Conversation about Writing Centers: TWCC Connects Tennessee Centers

By Trixie G. Smith and Alan Coulter,
Middle Tennessee State University

Writing center people in Tennessee have formed a state-wide collaborative network with the goal of providing an easily accessible environment for promoting writing center work and camaraderie. The meetings of this collaborative differ from conferences at the regional (SWCA) and (inter)national (IWCA) levels in their intimate and conversational style, as well as their underlying focus on state issues. Even the formation of this group was somewhat informal and definitely collaborative.



Tennessee Spirit at the TWCC

TGS: At the SWCA Board's summer meeting in 2004, the membership committee suggested that members host local gatherings of writing center folk in order to introduce new members to the SWCA and the benefits of being a part of a regional organization. A few months later, I had this idea in the back of my mind as I listed possible administrative projects for the graduate students in my Writing Center Theory course. I asked them to plan a meeting for individuals in the Middle Tennessee region who were running writing centers or tutoring facilities that worked with writing at all academic levels. Groups working on administrative projects had a budget of $60, with the option of requesting additional funds with a detailed budget, and about two months to plan and execute their projects. Alan and a committee of four volunteered for this task. Erica Marsh and Abigail Lockett worked on the budget while Jessica McKee, Nicholas Bush, and Alan researched the guest list.

AC: My classmates and I were already so amazed at the mere existence of writing center theory that we couldn't wait to find other nearby centers and to discover how they operated. Jessica researched area high schools and questioned their interests in writing center work, while Nicholas called and e-mailed local community colleges looking for writing and/or resource centers. Using a list from the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) Web site and by Googling for Tennessee writing centers, I came up with an invitation list for the gathering. During this process, our focus began to grow beyond the Middle Tennessee area because news travels fast in the South; soon schools from East and West Tennessee asked to attend.

TGS: I emailed invitations to everyone on our lists and quickly discovered that the email was passed along to others outside our region. We soon had 25 people planning to attend the first meeting in the alumni center on the MTSU campus. We asked people to let us know of their interests and to suggest specific topics for breakout conversations at the first meeting. We were interested in issues that pertained to operating in the state of Tennessee as well as general issues of writing center organization/operation and tutoring. Attendees also wanted to discuss problems intrinsic to community college writing centers, ideas for working with ESL students and basic writers, and how to form online writing centers or Web sites.

AC: On meeting day, all participants introduced themselves and stated what they wanted to glean from the meeting and the network in general. The experience and training levels of attendees varied from novices to experts, which resulted in animated conversations about tutor training, documentation, services and responsibilities, and other issues. The morning ended with a tour of our University Writing Center, where we had lunch and took pictures to commemorate the day. Immediately following the afternoon breakout conversations, everyone came together to discuss the formation of the network. After intense brainstorming, the group had a name and a plan: we were officially the Tennessee Writing Center Collaborative (TWCC). We made arrangements for the next meeting and compiled everyone's e-mail addresses to make a Yahoo! Group listserv for facilitating communication.

TGS: While the spring meeting focused on Writing Across the Curriculum, the agenda also included the drafting of a Mission Statement for TWCC (already

TWCC: Continued, Page 15

Compass Points:
A Different Kind of Collaboration

By Pamela B. Childers,
The McCallie School and Lesley University


Pamela Childers

Since Sonja Bagby and I started this column several years ago, we have both survived a series of changes in our lives. What has worked so well in this collaboration is that each has covered for the other when needed. You have heard about most of these changes as part of our collaboration in previous columns; however, Sonja has decided to take a leave from writing the column to finish her degree and enter the job market. I am considering her decision as a temporary leave and will continue to write our column based on the input of others in the most collaborative way I can.

The very idea of working on a degree and entering the job market reminds me of a different kind of collaboration that many of us experience as part of our positions as writing center directors. In most job descriptions, there is seldom reference to how we collaborate with our colleagues outside of the classroom, although a recent one speaks of working with faculty on "editorial assistance for professional, grant, and proposal writing." Many writing center directors might respond, "I don't want that in my job description because I already have too much to do." This is a good point, and I am not encouraging us to add to our workload; instead, I am asking us to acknowledge that we do collaborate with colleagues on more than their writing assignments and the assessments of them, and on more than what they teach and how they teach it. In fact, we help them with their professional careers as collaborators, coaches, confidantes, and even cheerleaders. Let us consider some of the ways we do this, and remember, the academic level does not change our collaboration with faculty on graduate work, promotion and tenure, and even job searches. We also encourage them in working on proposals and papers for publication, grants, and even special national or international awards. Surprisingly, few of us think of these roles that we play as anything unusual, yet I doubt that many of our administrators have any idea that this is an important function we fulfill that enhances their position as well.

As collaborators, we often encourage colleagues to write about the great projects they are doing in their classes. We may even be coauthoring the piece just to get them started on writing and submitting it for publication. Over the years, I have co-authored computer science, math, science, history, art, and English papers for publication because I heard colleagues talking about writing projects they were doing in their classes or ideas that were especially creative. This role may mean that we work with them on proposing and presenting a workshop or their research at a regional, national or international professional conference, sometimes out of our area of expertise. For example, I have given workshops at annual conventions of both the National Science Teachers Association and the National Associatioof Independent Schools with colleagues in other departments, and some of them have presented with me at regional and national writing conferences. We have all benefited from these collaborations.

As coaches, we take the role of critic in helping colleagues organize documentation for promotion and tenure, update their curriculum vitae to focus on their expertise, and locate opportunities for publication, presentation and grants. The responses may vary during the process, but the appreciation once the work has been completed is well worth both the time and effort. Sometimes these duties include becoming a personal confidante, since our colleagues may not want others to know that they are applying for other positions or special awards. I remember spending a quiet December day in the writing center with a colleague over the holidays last year, working on revised drafts of his philosophy of education and personal statement for a job application. We test our own professionalism when we take on these roles.

Finally, we occasionally have to become cheerleaders for those with whom we work. For instance, we must research opportunities for grants, awards, and recognition of colleagues in various departments. Last year alone, I had nominated teachers of math, science and history for state and national teaching awards. My job had been performing the legwork of getting the documentation for the nomination, meeting with administrators to support the nominations, writing to request letters supporting the nominations, and working with the nominee to organize a dossier that included an autobiographical essay and curriculum vitae. More important than the specific work, I had found the challenge of helping colleagues reflect on all the positive experiences during their careers to be a process we all need to do more often.

COMPASS POINTS: Continued, Page 13

Back to the Center: A Visit to the Francis Marion University Writing Center

By Jennifer Liethen Kunka, Francis Marion University



Jennifer Liethen Kunka

Uma Thurman gazes outwards from her place on a *Pulp Fiction* poster. Chinese lanterns dangle from the ceiling. Magnetic poems cover the cabinet doors. Candy dishes filled with Dum-Dums are located on every table. Pictures of people with pencils behind their ears, in their hair, in their hands, and up their noses populate a display case. And everything—from the computers to the pencil cups—seems to have a name. These are just a few of the sights visitors encounter as they enter the Francis Marion University Writing Center. In addition to providing a stimulating atmosphere for writers, the writing center is uniquely situated, with energetic undergraduate consultants and dynamic English department faculty tutors working side by side to help visitors improve their writing skills.

Nineteen Years and Counting

The writing center concept evolved on campus throughout the early 1980s, and in 1986, the FMU Writing Center opened its doors for the first time. Phillip Gardner served as the first director, and under his gifted guidance, the facility thrived and became one of the most popular academic support facilities on campus. In 2001, I joined the English department faculty and took over the reins as the center director.

Since its creation, the writing center has been located on the first floor of Founders Hall, a classroom and office building that houses the English Department and other academic units. In 2003, President Luther "Fred" Carter generously donated his adjacent office in the department of political science to the, resulting in a significant increase in the space of the facility. As the FMU Writing Center approaches its twentieth anniversary, the university anticipates a renovation of Founders Hall, at which time we expect another increase in space to help us serve the growing population of students visiting our center.

A Collaborative, Creative, and Caring Staff

From the day I walked on the FMU campus, I knew that this university—administrators, faculty, staff, and students—valued its writing center. The facility is cared for by the two groups that offer its services, English department faculty and undergraduate tutors. For one credit hour of their teaching loads, faculty members are assigned to tutor three hours per week in the center. Between eight to twelve faculty members tutor during the fall semester, and five to seven faculty tutor in the spring.

Our undergraduate consultants come from a variety of majors—English, business, biology, psychology, and education, to name a few—and complete an extensive interviewing and training process. Student consultants attend training sessions throughout each semester and are paid for their attendance. The writing center usually maintains approximately fifteen undergraduate writing consultants.

The collaborative relationship between student and faculty tutors in our center has provided a terrific educational experience not only for our visitors, but for all of our staff. Our undergraduate consultants have benefited tremendously from the formal and informal mentoring that our faculty consultants provide by modeling tutoring strategies and talking about their own writing. Likewise, the faculty has learned a great deal from our undergraduate consultants about their responses to writing assignments and other student concerns. Over the years, these collaborations have resulted in several joint student- and faculty-tutor presentations at SWCA conferences.

Two years ago, a group of undergraduate consultants gave an SWCA poster presentation titled "When Is a Tutor Not a Tutor," in response to all of the odd, late-night, after-hours, mid-date, and in-traffic requests they received from students who wanted tutoring when our center was closed. With the large volume of students seeking our services, our undergraduate consultants have become some of the most popular students on campus—so popular that we have had to discuss strategies for establishing boundaries when off the clock.

Naming items in our writing center after our graduating student tutors has become an endearing tradition, marking how each person has contributed an important part of themselves to our work and our facility. We have a computer named "Patrick" and a dictionary called "Derrick." "Vicki" is a pencil cup, "Erika" is a table, and "Kenney" is a lamp. Our bookcase was recently designated the "Mary

A. Grimes Resource Library." With these names, we celebrate every day the many personalities and voices that have enriched and energized our writing center experiences.

By the Numbers

Francis Marion University: a four-year state-supported master's-level university located in Florence, South Carolina
Enrollment: approximately 3600 students
Writing Center Director: Jennifer Liethen Kunka, Ph.D., since 2001
Tutorials: 2181 tutorials for the 2004-2005 academic year
Overall usage: 3716 user requests (includes tutorials, workshops, and all other Writing Center services)
Consultants: faculty members of the FMU English Department and trained undergraduate consultants

Tutoring, Workshops, and More

The FMU Writing Center offers a variety of services to the students, staff, faculty, and alumni of our university. In addition to providing one-to-one consultations five days each week in the writing center, we also provide evening writing assistance in the Tutoring Center, another academic support facility on campus. The writing center assists with writing projects in all academic disciplines. Approximately thirty percent of our tutorials are for projects outside of the English department. In addition, our staff provides tutoring on resumes, cover letters, graduate school applications, scholarship essays, creative writing, and PowerPoint presentations. Our staff is also continuing a project to develop online materials to support the writing needs of our students.

During the first two weeks of each semester, we invite professors to bring their classes to the center for a tour of our facility. The tours help to acquaint students with our services as well as introduce them to some of the friendly faces they will meet during their tutorials. This fall, we greeted approximately 600 students during thirty class tours of our facility.

In 2002, I began the Writing Center Workshop Series at FMU. Each semester, the Writing Center offers a weekly forty-five minute interactive workshop focused on a writing-related topic, including such titles as "Strategies for Successful Writers: Managing the Writing Process," "Conquering the Comma," "Avoiding Plagiarism," and "Writing for the Sciences: Lab Reports." Attendance at these workshops has reached as high as sixty-five students, so the workshops are now conducted in a nearby auditorium equipped with a state-of-the-art multimedia system, including a computer console, ceiling-mounted AV projector, and sound system. These workshops have helped to inspire students to visit the writing center for tutorials. Faculty members occasionally come to the workshops to learn strategies for addressing writing concerns in their classes.

FMU faculty members have been the writing center's most effective means of promoting our services to students. In addition, our center has enacted a marketing plan to establish a "brand identity" on campus. Our logo appears on every document we produce. With the help of student interns from our Professional Writing Program, we have generated a variety of brochures, flyers, and bookmarks to publicize our tutorials and workshops. Our advertising strategies have been so successful that university administrators distribute our materials to prospective students at high school recruiting events.

Exciting Days Ahead

During the past five years, the number of Writing Center tutorials has doubled and our overall usage of the center's services has more than tripled. Guided by a dynamic leadership team and a talented faculty, Francis Marion University is also growing. Enrollment has increased steadily over recent years, and our university has just started a new nursing program on campus. We are also delighted to begin a search this fall for a tenure-track English faculty member to join us as assistant director of the writing center. With the increased demand for writing center services, we are excited about the challenges and opportunities that the future holds at Francis Marion University.



Francis Marion University Writing Center staff

What's the Point?
Dashing Toward the Point

By Peter Carriere,
Georgia College and State University



Peter Carriere tutoring a student

Until now I have ignored one of the most popular student marks: the dash—a catch-all mark used to cover lack of knowledge and proficiency in the use of colons, semi-colons, and commas. The dash's long history in English extends back over 1,500 years, though the word was first used to indicate a violent blow rather than a punctuation mark, as in this line in the *OED* by one W. Walker in 1690: "Let me alone, or I will give you a dash on the teeth." I must admit that the appearance of the dash in student writing makes me want to administer a dash on the teeth in order to make the point that there are more appropriate marks! What sublime dreaminess we would all experience from the momentary emotional relief that would follow such a dash. A now obsolete definition, used from the 1500's through the 1700's, seems particularly apt in describing my mood when I run across an erroneous dash: "a stroke that casts down, confounds, depresses, dispirits . . . an affliction, discouragement."

We can hardly blame students, though. The *Chicago Manual of Style*'s definition of the dash as a punctuation mark (indirectly quoted here) can be daunting: Dashes vary in length and include en dashes, em dashes, 2-em dashes, and 3-em dashes, with the most commonly used being the em dash, which *Chicago* simply refers to as "the dash." Furthermore, the en dash is one-half the length of the em dash and is longer than the hyphen. Oh, yes, one more thing: "in typing, a hyphen is used for an en dash, two hyphens for an em dash. . . ." Frankly, I'm amazed at the irony of it: students have adopted a complicated mark, the dash—en, em, or otherwise—as a way around the complications of colons, semi-colons, and commas!

Not until we get to definition 6 in the *OED* do we find ourselves in more familiar territory. Definition 6 reads, "a hasty stroke of the pen." Even so, the first illustration of this definition, from a writer named Stephens in 1615, suggests more the stature of the pointer than any stroke of the pen: "And thus by meere chaunce with a little dash I have drawne the picture of a Pigmey." Of course, all of us have sometimes had images of the Pigmey come to mind during 3 a.m. nightmares about grading student essays, so this definition may not be so far-fetched as it seems.

Now definition 7 finally makes perfect sense: "a stroke or line (usually short and straight) made with a pen or the like, or resembling one so made. . . ." And the third usage under this definition gets suspiciously close to *Chicago*'s: a horizontal stroke of varying length (-,-,—) used . . . to mark a pause or break in a sentence. . . ." The definition goes on to list such things as parenthetical expressions, the omission of words or letters, or using the dash to imply strong language, "hence as a mild substitute for *devil*." Now here's an illustration we can relate to! Is not the ubiquitous and uninformed use of the dash a perfect instance of the emergence of the devil in student writing?

But the definition I find most useful, the one I commit to memory, the one I hang on my wall, the one I hand out to students is the one written by Jonathan Swift in 1733. "In modern wit," wrote Swift, "all printed trash is Set [sic] off with num'rous breaks- -and dashes—." Yes!!! What a great definition!! Good ol' Swift—we can always count on him to set things straight, to be direct, unequivocal. With a grand "dash" (definition 2), Jonathan Swift has cut through the chaff, has put his finger on the problem: "trash is Set off with . . . dashes. . . ." In triumphant, unequivocal fashion, Swift's grand dash has answered that ever-burning question at the heart of all discussions about punctuation: what's the point?

SWCA Mission Statement

The Southeastern Writing Center Association (SWCA) was founded in 1981 to advance literacy; to further the theoretical, practical, and political concerns of writing center professionals; and to serve as a forum for the writing concerns of students, faculty, staff, and writing professionals from both academic and nonacademic communities in the Southeastern region of the United States. A member of the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA), an NCTE Assembly, the SWCA includes in its designated region North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, Puerto Rico, and the American Virgin Islands. Membership in the SWCA is open to directors and staff of writing centers and others interested in writing centers from public and private secondary schools, community colleges, colleges and universities, and to individuals and institutions from beyond the Southeastern region.
Adopted by the SWCA Executive Board 31 May 2003.

One Minute Manager and Groundhog Day: Debriefing New Writing Lab Consultants

By Bonnie Devet, College of Charleston

For a writing lab, there is no busier time than the opening days of a fall semester. Handouts must be run, reference books need to be updated, and, most important of all, attention must be paid to newly hired consultants. Directors listen to the new tutors' concerns, observe their emotional states as they conduct their first sessions, and encourage them in their endeavors. With all the jobs that have to be carried out, directors often find the task of helping these new consultants time-consuming, not to mention, daunting. However, by borrowing from the famous business management book The One Minute Manager and by using a concept from the Hollywood film Groundhog Day, I have found a way to debrief new tutors in order to learn about their worries as new workers. The result is that both the consultants and I reap benefits.



Bonnie Devet directs the Writing Center at the College of Charleston

Kenneth Blanchard and Spencer Johnson's The One Minute Manager, a classic in the business world, stresses that managers (and, of course, directors are "people managers") should focus on only one goal when inter-acting with workers and that managers should talk to employees not when workers do something wrong but when they perform correctly so that desirable performances are re-enforced. My other inspiration is the cult-classic Groundhog Day, where, Bill Murray, as the main character, keeps re-living one day so that he becomes more reflective about his life. How, then, can this book and movie help a lab director debrief new consultants? Inspired by the business book, I try to talk to new consultants *immediately* after they have finished their first consultation, asking them for a positive, not negative analysis of their session. I say, "What do you think was your best technique as a consultant?" And based on Murray's movie, I also ask, "If you could re-do or 'Groundhog Day' the session, what would you do differently and why?"

The first question "What do you think was your best technique as a consultant?" avoids the wording "Well, how did your session go?" since this phrasing, which is too vague, is apt to elicit the stock reply "fine" because employees, desiring to impress the boss, often hesitate to reveal problems. Couching my inquiry as positive and specific, though, allows new consultants to gush forth (and they do become geysers of information!) about their work, glad that someone cares enough to inquire about their tutorial. For instance, one consultant who had helped a Freshman English student with a paper's flow explained, "The session went well. The student did a good job on the essay and was only looking for a little help. I think my best technique was simply having him read his paper aloud because he found mistakes on his own."

This best technique question also provides insight into the emotions of clients, revealing that consultants must support them. One newly hired consultant reported, "My best technique is probably encouraging clients that their writing IS good, even if they don't believe it." The question can pinpoint emotional concerns of consultants as well. After assisting an ESL student, one consultant poured out his worries:

I did have a very hard time though as a native speaker trying to help my client understand grammar points that come naturally to me but maybe not to her. I felt like I did too much pointing, and not enough idea-based higher order consulting. We also had only one hour before she was supposed to go to class, so we were rushed. I enjoyed it, though I'm sure I will get lots of experience in the next two weeks.

Armed with such comments, I can bring up the consultants' experiences in the next staff meeting. By emphasizing the value of having clients read aloud, by stressing the importance of providing affective support to students, and by describing several methods to help with the consultants' worries about doing too much for ESL clients, I can make the staff meeting more pertinent; it will, after all, be based on the consultants' immediate problems.

My other inquiry "If you could re-do or 'Groundhog Day' the session, what would you do differently and why?" is also helpful. Asking this question (what consultants have labeled as the "re-wind, re-play" question) foregrounds strategies and invites consultants to reflect on their own performance. So, when consultants

DEBRIEFING NEW CONSULTANTS: Continued, Page13

2006 SWCA Awards

Achievement Award

The SWCA Awards Committee is pleased to announce the 2006 Achievement Award. The SWCA Achievement Award is presented annually on a competitive basis to any writing center administrator at an educational institution in the Southeastern region for his or her outstanding service to the SWCA. Research and service contributions to the nominee's writing center and the writing center community will also be considered. The winner will be recognized with a plaque and a check for $250 at the SWCA conference in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 16-18 February 2006.

Eligibility: Any writing center administrator currently employed by an educational institution (including high schools, two-year colleges, and four-year colleges or universities) in a state or province located in the SWCA region is eligible to receive the award Nominees should be current members (either student, individual, or institutional) of the SWCA.

Nominations: Writing center directors, administrators, staff members, and tutors, as well as institutional colleagues may nominate an eligible candidate for the Achievement Award. Self-nominations are also accepted. Please forward the name, institution, address, phone, and email of the nominee to Dr. Shevaun Watson, Awards Committee Chair, by **1 November 2005** at swatson@gwm.sc.edu.

Application Process for Nominees: Anyone who accepts nomination and would like to be considered for the Achievement Award must submit an application packet by midnight on **1 December 2005** that includes the materials listed below. Only email submissions with attachments in Word will be accepted.
A cover letter indicating acceptance of nomination and description of relevant contributions to his or her writing center, SWCA, or the writing center community; at least three letters of support; a curriculum vitae.Optional materials to include (totaling no more than forty pages): Conference materials and publications relevant to writing centers; materials illustrating involvement in and contributions to the SWCA; writing center materials developed by the nominated candidate; websites and online resources created by the candidate.

Application packets must be received by midnight, **1 December 2005**: To submit materials, please email the Awards Committee chair, Dr. Shevaun Watson, swatson@gwm.sc.edu. For questions, send email or call the chair at (803) 777-2518.

Tutor Award

The SWCA Awards Committee is pleased to announce the 2006 Tutor Award. This award is presented annually on a competitive basis to a student or staff member who works in any capacity in a writing center at an educational institution in the Southeastern region. The SWCA Tutor Award recognizes the outstanding contributions of a student or staff member to her or his writing center, the SWCA, or the writing center community. Significant contributions may include peer tutoring, center administration, tutor training, campus workshops, writing center innovations, or other relevant work. The Awards Committee seeks to recognize the leadership, commitment, and overall excellence of a student or staff member in writing center work. The winner will be recognized with a plaque and a check for $250 at the SWCA conference in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 16-18 February 2006.

Eligibility: Any student or staff member who is currently working in a writing center as a tutor or administrator at an educational institution (including high schools, two-year colleges, and four-year colleges or universities) in the SWCA region is eligible to receive the award. Nominees should be current members (either student, individual, or institutional) of the SWCA.

Nominations: Writing center directors, administrators, staff members, and tutors may nominate a student or staff person for the Tutor Award. Self-nominations are also accepted. Please forward the name, institution, address, phone, and email of the nominee to Dr. Shevaun Watson, Awards Committee Chair, by **1 November 2005** at swatson@gwm.sc.edu.

Application Process for Nominees: Anyone who accepts nomination and would like to be considered for the Tutor Award must submit an application packet by midnight on **1 December 2005** that includes the materials listed below. Only email submissions with attachments in Word will be accepted. A cover letter indicating acceptance of nomination and description of one's relevant contributions to his or her writing center, SWCA, or the writing center community;a letter of support from a supervisor; two additional letters of support.Optional materials to include: resume or curriculum vitae; any writing center materials developed by the nominee (please limit to fifteen pages); any conference papers or materials, and publications (paper or online) relevant to writing centers (please limit to fifteen pages).

Application packets must be received by midnight, **1 December 2005**: To submit materials, please email the Awards Committee chair, Dr. Shevaun Watson, swatson@gwm.sc.edu. For questions, send email or call the chair at (803) 777-2518.

NGWCC: Continued from page 4

to the NGWCC group, and we anticipate the signing up of many more this semester. We will use the site (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ngwcc/) as an archive for documents and photos as well.

We are currently planning our next meeting for early November, to be hosted by Sandee McGlaun in Dahlonega. We will also gather for breakfasts at the IWCA conference in Minneapolis and again in Chapel Hill at the SWCA conference in February.

Becoming an active organization has been an exciting process that I am grateful to be involved in. Two words capture our raison d'être: collaboration and conversation. The NGWCC also owes its growth to the ongoing commitment, enthusiasm and resourcefulness of several core members: Christina Bourgeois, Sandee McGlaun, and from Kennesaw State University, Mary Lou Odom and Rachel Greil. Outside of our meetings, ongoing plans also include making visits to each other's spaces and exploring cross-institutional and interdisciplinary grant sources.

Anyone in the North Georgia region who would like to join the newsgroup may send an email to: ngwccsubscribe@yahoogroups.com. We welcome all queries about our group at writing@gsu.edu.

COMPASS POINTS: Continued from page 7

These kinds of collaborations, although frequently overlooked, are sometimes the most valuable ones we have. These opportunities give us a chance to interact in a different way with faculty so that they see us as supportive of them as professionals and willing to go out of our way to see them receive recognition. These activities build a new group of writing center advocates who thank us by telling others of the different kinds of collaboration we do. Besides, we are modeling for our tutors certain ethical and professional behavior among colleagues that we hope they will apply when they become writing center directors.

DEBRIEFING NEW CONSULTANTS: Continued from page 11

go into their next sessions, they will be more conscious of their strategies. For instance, when discussing what she would do differently if she could redo the consultation, a tutor confessed, "I do find it a bit difficult to lead them and find myself biting my tongue so I don't tell them what is it that is wrong," showing she should probably vary her approaches from being Socratic to also using collaboration, telling, or modeling. This need to vary methodology would become another topic for a staff meeting. Another consultant demonstrated what should be added to the lab's reference shelves: "I was uncomfortable with using the Harbrace handbook to look up things. I've used Diana Hacker's A Pocket Style Manual for all of my college career, and I remember wishing I had it with me for the consultation." Right away, I ordered copies of this textbook so consultants had an additional resource to serve clients more effectively .

How long does it take to debrief consultants? These important discussions usually last no longer than three or four minutes. But the fact that the lab director takes time to sit down, privately, one-to-one with new workers shows consultants the value of their work and, most vitally, the significance of the consultants' experiences. Besides, a director learns, too, gathering from new consultants important insights and necessary information to improve training and the lab itself.

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SWCA Executive Board Actions

By Jane B. Smith, Winthrop University

The board met in teleconferences on 27 June 27 2005 and 31 August 31 2005.

June 27
Moving the SWCA Website to the Dreamhost Server
Karl Fornes reviewed the Web team's recommendation that we move to Dreamhost. After some discussion of the terms, the level of expertise required for future Web coordinators, and the cost, it was moved and seconded that our Web site be moved to Dreamhost. The board approved the motion.

Awards Team
Shevaun Watson, the chair of the present awards team, reviewed the report from the past team (chaired by Mary Alm) and presented her team's recommendation that the "Peer Tutor Award" be reconfigured as the "Tutor Award." She stressed that getting more nominations should be the board's focus. After discussion of several issues, including the language used in the call for nominations, the nature of the award, and the monetary component of the award, it was moved and approved that we change the name to "Tutor Award" and increase the award amount to $250 for this year. After discussion of the specific language to be used, Shevaun moved that the awards team should be directed to revise the language. The motion was approved.

Board members Present: Christine Cozzens, Karl Fornes, Tracy Hudson, Jennifer Kunka, Vicki Russell, Jane Smith, Trixie Smith, Marcy Trianosky, and Shevaun Watson.

August 31
Web Site Coordinator
Karl, chair of the Web team, summed up the resume of Jean Schwab, the leading candidate, who is currently coordinator of the Center for Collaborative Learning and Communication at Furman University. It was moved and approved that Jean serve as the Web site coordinator. A brief discussion clarified her job description: Jean will serve for one year in a nonvoting position.

Awards Team
Shevaun, chair, reported that the awards team had revised and streamlined the application process for the tutor award, making it more open and flexible. Discussion about the method of submission and the timeline was followed by a motion to approve the language as presented by the committee, to have electronic submission and distribution of applications and materials, and the timeline proposed by the team. This was approved by a majority of the board.

SWCA Conference 2007: Nashville, TN
Jennifer Kunka was asked to summarize the Middle Tennessee State University's (MTSU) proposal to host the SWCA Conference in 2007. Discussion centered on the excellence of the proposal: the theme, the amount of work already accomplished, and the enthusiastic support promised by area schools and colleges. It was also noted that the last SWCA Conference in TN was held in 1989. It was moved and approved to accept the proposal from MTSU, and Trixie Smith was congratulated for the hard work that led to such a strong proposal.

Board Members Present: Kim Abels, Christine Cozzens, Karl Fornes, Tracy Hudson, Jennifer Kunka, Jane Smith, Marcy Trianosky, and Shevaun Watson.

Note: In the last issue of *Southern Discourse*, it was erroneously reported that the SWCA board met on 10 February 2005; in fact, the board met February 10, 12, and 13, and the summary of the board's actions in that issue included all three meetings.

Position Available at Francis Marion University

Assistant Professor of English. Tenure-Track. Position No. 06-21. Experience and interest in teaching composition required. In addition to teaching within the English program, this new faculty hire will receive reassigned time to work as the Assistant Director of the Writing Center to provide tutor training and outreach services. Ph.D. and writing center experience required.

Materials Needed: Letter of interest (referencing position #06-21), curriculum vitae, one-page teaching philosophy, and FMU Faculty Application. (Official transcripts will be required of the successful candidate.)

Send Application Packet to: Dr. Christopher Johnson, Chair, Department of English, Modern Languages, and Philosophy, Francis Marion University, PO Box 100547, Florence, SC 29501-0547.

Minorities and women are strongly encouraged to apply. Position to begin August 2006. Screening of applicants will begin November 1, 2005 and will continue until position is filled. Interviews at MLA.

The President's Letter

By Marcy Trianosky, Hollins University



As this issue of *Southern Discourse* goes to press, Vicki Russell of Duke University and Kim Abels of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will be busy reading your proposals for the 2006 SWCA Conference, "Let's Research." I'm sure there will be some outstanding presentations, as always. We're all looking forward to seeing you there!

Since my last letter, the board has experimented with a new approach to board communication: the teleconference. No, that's not a television conference, it's a telephone conference! While the board still uses electronic email to discuss and brainstorm many items of interest to our membership, the telephone conference allows us to follow established rules of order for voting and establishing a quorum when we actually reach the decision-making stage. Jane Smith, our dedicated and hard-working secretary, has included with this issue summaries of two such board conferences held this summer and fall. We believe that this new approach (at least, it's new for us!) to board communication has resulted in combining the best of both worlds: the ease of email with the conversational advantages of the telephone. I particularly want to thank Jennifer Liethen Kunka, our vice president and parliamentarian, for her tireless work in helping the board adhere to parliamentary procedure for formal decision making, and for helping all of us maintain clear and open communication.

While Jane's summaries will give you the overview, some of the areas the board has worked through in teleconference are worth mentioning again here:

Tutor Award: The Awards Team, led by Shevaun Watson, has worked hard to revise the language of the Tutor Award, opening it up in a way that the board believes will encourage a larger number of nominations for this important way of recognizing our tutors' work. Be sure and visit the SWCA web site (swca.us) to read the updated guidelines.

Online Coordinator: After several years of dedicated service to SWCA, Jane Love is stepping down as our online coordinator. With her usual grace and thoughtfulness, she has recommended her codirector of Furman University's Center for Collaborative Learning and Communication, Jean Schwab, as her replacement. After carefully considering Jean's credentials, the board was pleased to appoint her to the position. Thank you, Jane, for all you have done for SWCA during your years as online coordinator.

2007 Conference in Nashville, Tennessee: Trixie Smith, director of the writing center at Middle Tennessee State University and at-large member of the SWCA board, submitted an outstanding proposal for the 2007 conference which the board has enthusiastically endorsed. Many thanks to Trixie for her hard work in putting the proposal together. We look forward to having the SWCA conference in Tennessee for the first time since 1989!

As always, please feel free to email any member of the board with your questions, your concerns and your ideas for the future of SWCA. We look forward to hearing from you!

Marcy Trianosky

TWCC: Continued from page 6

premises include providing support and fostering community among writing centers and writing center personnel; encouraging writing across the state at all levels; educating colleagues, administrators, and the larger community; mentoring newcomers; sharing ideas and resources; and collaborating on state initiatives that involve writing and/or writing centers. We also made plans for a TWCC Web site (that is presently hosted by MTSU at http://www.mtsu.edu/~uwcenter/TWCC/twcc.htm). We concluded with plans for the next two meetings: Fall 2005, hosted by MTSU, will focus on tutoring, while Spring 2006, hosted by Austin Peay State University, will explore writing center relationships with faculty and administrators.

The Tennessee Writing Center Collaborative's identity is still evolving as more members join and add their voices to the conversation. If you would like to add your voice to the mix, check out the Web site for information about upcoming meetings and opportunities. You can also join the listserv for more immediate dialogue and announcements. To join, email Alan at ajcoulter22@yahoo.com or the MTSU writing center at uwcenter@mtsu.edu.

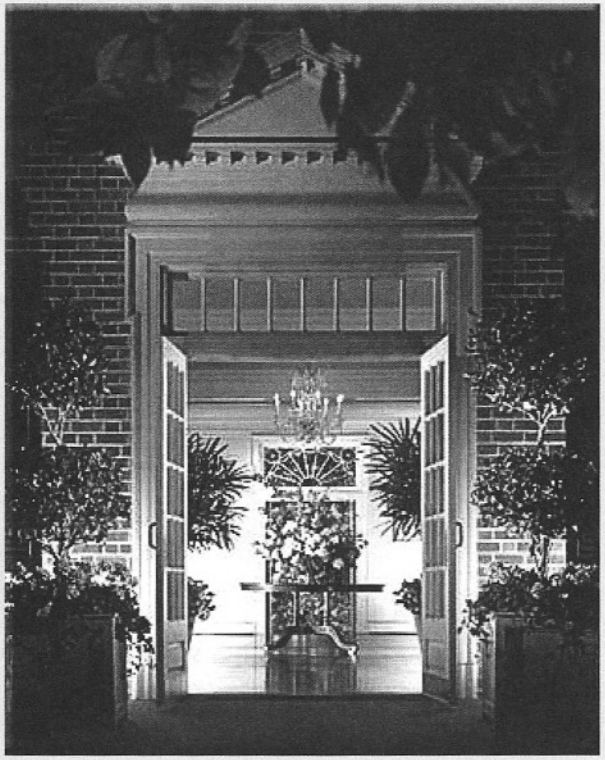
Southern Discourse

Publication of the Southeastern Writing Center Association
Fall 2005 • Volume 9, Issue 1

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SWCA will hold its next conference in picturesque Chapel Hill from 16-18 February 2006 at the Carolina Inn.



Courtesy of the Carolina Inn.