



DIVISION of UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION and ACADEMIC PLANNING

# WAC/WID NEWSLETTER

*We collaborate to serve students and enhance learning*

## Improving Student Writing at SF State

Writing is essential to good learning; it is an important tool for reflection and deep thinking. But, as Ernest Hemingway said, "Easy writing makes hard reading"; writing well requires work and life-long commitment. Encouraging students' desire to improve their writing and to see themselves as writers is critical to their success as they transition from SF State to the workforce and beyond. Writing is one of several important high-impact educational practices with demonstrated benefits for college students from diverse backgrounds.

Writing across the curriculum/writing in the discipline (WAC/WID) describes a student-centered national movement to integrate writing across the curriculum and within all disciplines in higher education. At SF State, the Division of Undergraduate Studies and Academic Planning (DUEAP) and the Committee on English Proficiency (CWEP) share responsibility for university-wide WAC. The WAC/WID program on campus, under the leadership of Juliana van Olphen, director, and Jennifer Swanson, associate director, aims to provide support to faculty teaching writing-intensive courses through creating opportunities for faculty to share best practices for effective writing pedagogy and strategies to assess student writing.

WAC/WID on campus is flourishing. In addition to the now over 100 GWAR (the Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement) courses offering students intensive writing instruction within their major disciplines, there are several new initiatives underway. A GWAR Mentoring program that has paired experienced GWAR instructors as mentors with novice instructors was piloted in the spring of 2016 and will continue with a new cohort of mentor/mentee pairs this fall. A pilot assessment of student writing at SF State, adapting the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) Written Communication

VALUE Rubric (see <https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/written-communication>), was conducted by a group of committed faculty from across the university. Monthly interactive roundtables on different writing topics offer faculty opportunities to learn about effective writing pedagogies, with the first in the fall on designing effective writing assignments scheduled for Monday, September 26, 12-1. Please visit the WAC/WID website (<http://ueap.sfsu.edu/wac>) to sign up to receive email alerts about WAC/WID events on campus. SF State's commitment to improving student writing reflects its commitment to students and their success. For more information, please contact Juliana van Olphen ([jvo@sfsu.edu](mailto:jvo@sfsu.edu)), director of WAC/WID or Jennifer Swanson ([jimpeters@sfsu.edu](mailto:jimpeters@sfsu.edu)), associate director of WAC/WID.

## Where can SF State students go for reading and writing support on campus?

Both the Learning Assistance Center (LAC) and the Campus Academic Resource Program (CARP) on campus offer reading and writing support through their tutoring services and other programs. The LAC is faculty-run, and provides most of its services during the day. CARP, on the other hand, is student-run and provides most of its tutoring in the late afternoon and evening. Students can receive reading and writing support through both programs. LAC and CARP tutors are graduate and undergraduate students from across the disciplines who receive training in tutoring and teaching skills. The tutors are available to work with individual students or with groups of students from a particular class or department and tutoring is offered both on a one-time and ongoing basis. In addition, CARP has a GWAR Writing Fellowship Program placing a Writing, Reading, and Study Skills (WRSS) tutor in a GWAR course to provide assistance to students in the course. For more information, complete the inquiry form at <http://carp.sfsu.edu/content/fellowship-program>.

The LAC is located in HSS 348 and is open Monday through Thursday, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm, and Friday, 9:00 am - 12:00 am. Contact the LAC at (415) 338-1993 (email: [lac@sfsu.edu](mailto:lac@sfsu.edu)) or visit <http://lac.sfsu.edu/> for more information and to make appointments.

CARP is located in HSS 344 and is open Monday through Thursday from 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm and Friday from 11:00 am – 2:00 pm. Summer tutoring hours are 10:00 am to 3:00 pm Monday through Thursday and 10:00 am to 2:00 pm Friday. Contact CARP at (415) 405-0316 (email [carp@sfsu.edu](mailto:carp@sfsu.edu)) or visit <http://www.sfsu.edu/~carp1/> for more information and to make appointments..

## WAC/WID Goals

- To improve students' writing proficiency throughout their education at San Francisco State University (SF State)
- To promote principles<sup>1</sup> of WAC/WID at SF State
- To foster faculty engagement in teaching writing and support the development and dissemination of effective writing pedagogy across campus
- To promote the development and dissemination of effective practices and tools to assess student writing across campus
- To create a campus culture that values writing as a high impact practice in higher education.

<sup>1</sup> Nationally recognized principles of WAC acknowledge that writing is a life-long learning process, and that a successful WAC program must have support from an institution's administration and faculty.

## About the University Committee on Written English Proficiency

The University Committee on Written English Proficiency (CWEP) is an Academic Senate subcommittee that “serves as a ‘clearing house’ for all-University literacy efforts” (Senate Policy S16-014). For several years, CWEP’s focus was on approving GWAR classes for departments across campus. As GWAR has become established, CWEP has turned its attention to other matters such as graduate writing and supporting faculty who teach (or want to teach) writing.

CWEP serves in an advisory role on campus policy related to writing for all students – incoming freshmen, transfer students, multilingual students, and graduate students. It collaborates with the Director of WAC/WID as well as a wide variety of academic and administrative committees as well as the Office of Academic Affairs to solve problems and develop faculty professional development and outreach.

CWEP consists of voting members representing each College, as well as the Library; the Learning Assistance Center; the English department; the Composition program; the Composition for Multilingual Students program; and student representatives. Non-voting members from the administrative offices at SF State reflect the widespread support for WAC/WID on campus.

CWEP is deeply committed to fostering writing across campus and welcomes any member of the campus community to bring any ideas or concerns to the Committee. We strongly feel that dialogue is a critical element to building a strong university culture around writing.

### CWEP Voting Members:

Name	Position/Role	Department
Juliana Van Olphen	Director of WAC/WID	Health Educ.
Jennifer Trainor	Composition Director	English
Priya Abeywickrama	Coordinator of CMS	English
Paul Morris	English department	English
Nicole Allensworth	Library representative	Library
Theresa Roeder	Chair; BUS representative	Decision Sci.
Anne Krause	COSE representative	Mathematics
Cassandra Stewart	HSS representative	Kinesiology
Betsy Blosser	At-large member	BECA
Jennifer Swanson	Associate Director	LAC
Peter Ingmire	LAC representative	LAC
vacant	GCOE representative	
vacant	Ethnic Studies representative	
vacant	Associated Students representative	

### CWEP Non-Voting Members:

Lori Beth Way	Dean of UEAP designee	DUEAP
Misook Kim	Graduate Studies (interim)	Kinesiology
Nancy Gerber	EPC representative	Chemistry
Cecilia Hermann	Provost’s representative	DUEAP

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## Interview with Theresa Roeder, Chair of CWEP

Q: How long have you been a member, and Chair, of CWEP?

A: I’ve been on CWEP since 2011 and chair since Fall 2015.

Q: Why did you want to join CWEP?

A: I became involved in teaching writing almost accidentally, and ended up serving as the course coordinator for the College of Business (CoB) GWAR course. The CWEP CoB rep at the time was not able to attend meetings, so it seemed a natural fit for me to take his place.

Q: What do you like most about serving on this committee?

A: I love the fact that we are working on improving student writing - the committee is full of deeply committed, insightful individuals who care about our students and want to do our best for them. There are no politics or animosities; we just stay focused on our objectives.

Q: If you were trying to convince a faculty member to consider joining CWEP, what would you say?

A: It is a committee that does not feel like a waste of time. We have thoughtful conversations about pedagogy, outreach, and policy, and try to make a difference in advocating for student writing.

Q: Can you share one thing you would like students to know about CWEP and its “behind the scenes” work to improve their experience at SF State?

A: We are always thrilled to get honest feedback from students about how they perceive writing instruction, but also how writing is valued on campus.

Q: If there were one nugget of wisdom you could share with a new faculty member teaching writing at SF State, what would that be?

A: Try not to be overwhelmed by what might seem to be an insurmountable challenge. Pick one or two things you want to focus on, for example audience, and work on that with students. And a second nugget - ask for help! The WAC/WID team is fantastic and would be more than happy to work with you.

Q: Thank you for your time, Theresa. Is there anything else you would like to share?

A: I wish everyone a fantastic academic year!