gayle morris
sweetland | writing center
university of michigan

Newsletter

from the Director... Anne Ruggles Gere

Looking back on nearly a year and a half as Director of the Sweetland Writing Center, I see a number of changes and a variety of new activities. Revising the Directed Self-Placement (DSP) process for first-year students; restructuring Writing Practicum into **SWC 100: Transition to College Writing** and adding Course Assistants; introducing electronic portfolios for students in SWC 100; hiring new colleagues; broadening our outreach to graduate students; initiating an online scheduling system for Writing Workshop; instituting an undergraduate internship program; undertaking a project in science writing; planning for our move to **North Quad**; and reshaping the Fellows Seminar — these are just some of the things that have made life at Sweetland very busy and productive.

In the pages that follow you can learn more about how we've changed the process by which students select their first writing course through **Directed Self-Placement**. For students who elect to take SWC 100 before they move into a course that satisfies the First-Year Writing Requirement, the opportunities for one-on-one attention to their writing are increased by the presence of **Course Assistants**, and students' capacity to reflect on their own development as writers is enhanced by **electronic portfolios**. Gina Brandolino, who joined our faculty this fall, will help to support faculty in the implementation of these changes.

With the leadership of Associate Director Naomi Silver, we are offering a series of new Rackham workshops designed to parallel the key moments in graduate study. We continue to broaden our offerings in science writing, and, with support from an **IDEA grant**, we are developing a supplemental writing intensive curriculum for introductory courses in chemistry and biology. Technology plays an ever larger role in our work since students may now bring laptops to Writing Workshop; we have implemented an online appointment system, and offerings of **SWC 200: Writing in New Media** continue to draw many students. Chris Schmidt, another new faculty member, brings a welcome specialization in new media writing. Becoming a more "wired" unit prepares us for our move to North Quad in the summer of 2010, where we will join several other technology-rich units.

1139 Angell Hall
734.764.0429
swcinfo@umich.edu
www.lsa.umich.edu/swc/

Writing Workshop (by appointment)
Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri.: 9am-5pm
Wednesday: 9am-12:30pm & 2:30-5pm
Make an appointment online:
www.lsa.umich.edu/swc/

Peer Tutoring Centers (walk-in)
Angell Hall Peer Tutoring Center
G219 Angell Hall
Sunday-Thursday: 7-11pm
Monday-Friday: 12-3pm

Undergraduate Library
1136 Undergraduate Library
Sunday-Wednesday: 7-10pm

Lloyd Hall Writing Center
First floor, Alice Lloyd Hall
Sunday-Wednesday: 7-11pm

Online Writing Lab (OWL)
http://sitemaker.umich.edu/
swcwritinghelp

SWC's New Interns:
LINDSAY NIEMAN & NICOLE PREMO

This summer, Sweetland welcomed its first two undergraduate interns: Lindsay Nieman and Nicole Premo, both LSA seniors and veteran peer tutors. Lindsay and Nicole spent the summer collaborating with SWC staff on important development projects, such as a website update-turned-redesign, piloting a synchronous Online Writing Lab (see page 10), organizing digital representations of Sweetland's history, and reaching out to other units on campus. By working on these projects, the interns gained confidence in new media writing and in coordinating and planning highly technical assignments, skills that will only increase in value as the digital age continues. But beyond that, their work exemplified the collaborative learning process that has been identified as a core value in peer writing tutoring.

The idea of offering Sweetland Internships came from a tutor, Sarah Hughes, then in her second semester of training. From Sweetland's perspective, internships provide additional support for summer projects and give tutors the opportunity to take significant ownership in the center, learning what it means to work as professionals in such a place. A writing center internship meaningfully extends Sweetland's mission: as we work to enlist students in their own writing processes and encourage active learning, it seems logical to enlist them in the making of their own center as well.

Lindsay and Nicole acknowledged that, as interns, they took on a new role: "We are peer tutors, we are interns, we are members of the larger professional writing center community and yet we remain undergrads at UM." Being tutors/undergraduates and interns/pre-professionals simultaneously provided a sense of empowered belonging to and identification with a community of scholars and professionals — something still relatively rare in the undergraduate experience.

Working with our interns has helped to crystallize the idea that it is the responsibility and privilege of university administrators and teachers to support undergraduates by empowering them to take charge of their experience at the University, and by giving them opportunities to engage deeply in meaningful learning as authentic members of our community. We hope that the interns' experience of having a greater stake in their professional community will better enable them to transform the future communities they enter — and in inaugurating and shaping Sweetland's new internship program, they are now part of the center's future as well as its history.

A version of this article appears in the Fall 2009 issue of Praxis: A Writing Center Journal *on Professionalization and the Writing Center.*

T Hetzel, Gina Brandolino, and Christopher Schmidt.

SWC's New Faculty:
GINA BRANDOLINO

Gina Brandolino holds a Ph.D. in English and certificate in Medieval Studies from Indiana University Bloomington, an M.A. in English from DePaul University in Chicago, and a B.A. in English from the University of Saint Francis in her hometown of Joliet, Illinois. Her area of specialization is medieval English literature, but Gina has extensive training in and experience with teaching freshman composition at many levels, and especially enjoys working with at-risk and non-traditional students. Her scholarly interests include Middle English religious narratives and questioning and expanding the early English canon. Gina also studies social class in the U.S. and, in particular, the troubled relationship between social class and higher education.

T HETZEL

T Hetzel earned an MFA in poetry from the University of Michigan in 2007. She hosts *Living Writers*, a weekly radio program on WCBN FM Ann Arbor where she talks with writers about their craft and new work. She also teaches for the English Department Writing Program. In 2008, she was a Writer-in-Residence at Bunche Elementary for the InsideOut Literary Arts Project. T has worked for Richard Hugo House in Seattle and Copper Canyon Press in Port Townsend. She currently lives on the West Side, where she is working on a group of poems about County Clare, Ireland.

CHRISTOPHER SCHMIDT

Christopher Schmidt recently received his Ph.D. in English literature from the Graduate Center, CUNY, where he was awarded the Paul Monette Prize for Best Dissertation in Gay and Lesbian Studies as well as the Graduate Student Paper Award from the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies. His first book of poems, *The Next in Line*, was published in 2008 and received the Slope Editions Book Prize. His poems and essays have recently appeared in *Tin House*, *Court Green*, *SubStance*, and *The Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies*; reviews and journalism have been published in *The New Yorker*, *The Village Voice*, *Boston Review*, and *The New York Observer*. An experienced web designer and web editor, Christopher teaches new media writing at the Sweetland Writing Center. He is currently revising his dissertation into a book about the relationship between technology and poetic innovation in queer avant-garde writing.

Nicole Premo and Lindsay Nieman.

Year Two of Teagle-Spencer Grant for Studying Metacognition in the ULWR

This three-year project, funded by the Teagle and Spencer Foundations and carried out by researchers from Sweetland and the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT), will collect a second round of data on the effects of introducing metacognitive strategies to students in Upper-Level Writing Requirement (ULWR) courses this Winter. Findings from Year One suggest that asking students to insert metareflective comments in the margins of their papers is a "low-cost" source of insight into student thinking that is easy to integrate into existing assignments. During Year Two, we will implement a three-stage metacognitive model that asks students to complete pre-assignment "planning" surveys and post-assignment "self-evaluation" surveys for each paper they write in addition to inserting these metareflective "self-monitoring" comments in their papers.

The UM's project is part of a thirteen-university initiative on "Systematic Improvement of Learning in Research Universities" headed by Robert J. Thompson of Duke University. In September 2009, Thompson visited Michigan to meet with our research team and attend UM's Provost's Seminar on Teaching (PSOT), where we presented a poster on our findings. We have also presented our work in other venues this year as well — most recently at the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) conference in October 2009. The thirteen sponsored projects are encouraged to collaborate across institutions, and to that end, three members of our project team met with team members from Indiana University and the University of Kansas at ISSOTL to begin a long-term exchange of data and methods.

IDEA Grant for Writing in the Sciences

Sweetland has received a grant from the UM Instructional Development and Educational Assessment (IDEA) Institute, an interdisciplinary unit which focuses on improving teaching and learning in science and math. The grant enables us to develop for introductory science courses a supplementary curriculum that integrates writing into each major topic. Collaboration between scientists and specialists in writing enables us to focus writing assignments on specific concepts that students typically find difficult. The curriculum will be completed by the end of the Fall Semester, and a pilot version of the curriculum will be implemented during the coming Winter Semester. Data gathered during the pilot phase will enable us to learn more about the types of writing assignments that foster effective learning in science courses. We hope to develop a model that can be extended to multiple introductory science courses.

Rethinking the Upper-Level Writing Requirement

The Sweetland Research Team is also beginning to gather baseline data about current practices as part of a multifaceted project to examine the Upper-Level Writing Requirement (ULWR). The Team is looking at the distribution of ULWR courses across the College, determining how courses that meet the ULWR vary across departments, and investigating effective strategies for fostering student learning through writing. This baseline data will enable the Team to determine new ways of supporting faculty who offer courses that fulfill the ULWR. Through a collaborative partnership with survey research students at the Institute for Social Research (ISR), the team is developing a faculty and Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) survey and interview protocols which will assist Sweetland in enhancing the coordination and support provided to individuals participating in Upper-Level Writing Requirement courses. The survey and interviews will gather basic information about the profile of an ULWR course and will ask instructors to reflect on the range and type of writing instruction that occurs in their courses, including approaches to pre-writing and revision, the use of online tools and new media, and impressions regarding what constitutes writing proficiency in that instructor's particular field or discipline.

SWC OUTREACH

Have you been wondering how to get your students started on that research project you're planning, how to make better use of peer review during the writing process, how to respond to a difficult paper, or what options your department should consider as it discusses revamping its Writing Requirement courses? If so, a Sweetland Writing Center consultation or outreach visit might be the answer.

As part of its regular service to the university community, Sweetland provides several forms of outreach support to undergraduate and graduate classrooms and student groups, to individual faculty and GSIs, and to UM departments and programs.

Some recent highlights: As part of its PLAN initiative, we worked with Rackham to develop several workshops for graduate students at different stages of their programs; two of our faculty gave presentations at Ross School-sponsored sessions for high school seniors from Detroit on writing the college admissions essay; our Associate Director met with members of the CAAS faculty to discuss changes to the program's ULWR course; SWC faculty have gone into LSA classrooms this semester to conduct workshops on argumentation, citation style and effective use of evidence, and getting started in the writing process, among other topics; and staff and undergraduate peer tutors manned information tables at Welcome Week events.

No matter the occasion, we work to tailor our presentations to the particular needs of your curriculum – nothing is canned or prepackaged. As part of that process, we will consult with you about the details of the class or event, and about specific materials that will complement your course. To best accommodate your request, we ask for 2-3 weeks lead time. To learn more, visit our website, **www.lsa.umich.edu/swc/instructorsupport**, or email **swcinfo@umich.edu**.

One of Sweetland's goals is to ensure that **all students** have an opportunity to develop their writing abilities, and to that end the Center has focused on rethinking the experience of **first-year students**, particularly those who may be under-prepared for college writing. In this section you will find a detailed description of the revised system of **Directed Self-Placement (DSP)**, the process by which students select the first writing course most appropriate for them. At the same time that DSP was being revised, Sweetland also updated **SWC 100: Transition to College Writing** (formerly known as Writing Practicum) so that it includes an undergraduate **Course Assistant** for every section and an **electronic portfolio** component. This combination assures that first-year students are more likely to find their way to a course that is right for them and that those who enroll in SWC 100 will receive all the **individual attention** they need.

Using the DSP in First-Year Writing

Students began the semester by writing about their experiences of meeting the DSP prompt's rhetorical demands compared to high school writing demands as the precursor to individual conversations with me about personal writing goals. Beyond the initial conversation, we periodically return to the DSP reading to address students' concern over difficulty negotiating the author's choices in developing his argument. As we move toward a final reflection synthesizing learning initiated last spring when they wrote the DSP essay, in anonymous midterm evaluations students identified the DSP process extending into classroom conversations as beneficial in building their confidence about joining the academic discourse of UM.

—Danielle Lillge
GSI for English 125

In my class, students did a self-analysis of their writing and set goals for the course using their DSP essays. Students brought their essays to class and reflected in writing about their thesis structure, use of evidence, analysis of the evidence, and style. After reflecting in these areas, students wrote me a letter using their choice of the following prompts:

In my DSP essay, I saw... • I liked... • I need to work on... • My overall feeling about my own writing is... • My hopes for this class include... • I have these questions about... • I don't understand... • I am worried about... • I am excited about... • My goals for this class are...

The final prompt asked students to come up with two specific goals for the course based on the analysis of their DSP essay. I responded and commented on those goals, as well.

—Crystal Vankooten
GSI for English 125

REVISITING DIRECTED SELF-PLACEMENT

Directed Self-Placement describes a process by which first-year students choose their own first college writing course rather than being placed involuntarily. Various forms of DSP have been operating at UM since 1999, and one of the projects of this past year has been to assess the effectiveness of the existing system and then modify it to serve both students and instructors better.

From 1999-2008, DSP meant that students answered seven questions about their background and experiences as writers, and, on the basis of their answers, received a recommendation about whether to enroll immediately in a course that met the First-Year Writing Requirement or to take SWC 100: Transition to College Writing (formerly called Writing Practicum) first. SWC research showed that many students ignored the recommendations they received, and a number had no memory of answering the DSP questions. Since students answered the DSP questions at the same time that they completed substantive tests in math and foreign languages, writing took on less importance in students' minds since answering a few questions did not seem as rigorous as the tests they were required to take. Accordingly, Sweetland modified the DSP process to provide students with better information about the nature of college writing and a means for comparing their abilities as writers with their peers.

After extensive consultation with the Office of New Student Programs, LSA Academic Advising, and CTools staff, Sweetland launched a modified DSP on April 16, 2009. This version of DSP requires all entering students to read a substantive article, write an evidence-based argument in response to it, and then answer ten questions that focus on the experience of writing this essay. Analysis of student responses to the DSP tasks generates a recommendation for either SWC 100 or a course that meets the First-Year Writing Requirement. The success of this modification is evident in several ways. Academic advisors report that students express a much clearer understanding of college writing, and they vividly remember having written the essay and having answered the questions. As a result, students arrive at their advising sessions with a good sense of which course they believe would benefit them most. Instructors in both SWC 100 and courses that satisfy the First-Year Writing Requirement claim fewer students seem to have selected the wrong course. In a recent survey conducted by Sweetland, a significant majority of first-year students indicated that writing the DSP essay and answering the questions helped them make a good decision about their first writing course.

An additional benefit of the modified DSP is that it has a direct link to instruction because the essays written by first-year students are delivered electronically to their writing instructors before the first class. Instructors use these essays for both diagnostic and pedagogical purposes. Before the class begins, they are able to see the range of abilities in their class and prepare to meet some of the needs that are evident in the student writing. Also, instructors use these essays in their teaching, sometimes to help students reflect on their own development as writers, sometimes to provide an occasion for revision or analysis, and sometimes to create a sequence of assignments. In all cases, it is clear that the Directed Self-Placement essay adds a welcome new dimension to the teaching of writing at UM.

Assessing the Validity of DSP at UM

Currently the SWC Research Team is analyzing the theoretical validity of Directed Self-Placement (DSP) as it has been implemented at UM, and exploring and refining the implementation of the online DSP system. By combining data from interviews, surveys, and course materials, the team concluded that the DSP questions alone did not provide incoming students with enough information to make an informed decision about their first writing course.   The findings of this study provide the theoretical rationale for the changes made to the DSP process in 2009, and point to ways its implementation may be enhanced in the future.

Additionally, this year the team is beginning to collect data relevant to Sweetland's oversight of the Upper-Level Writing Requirement, with the goal of enhancing the coordination and support offered to students and instructors who participate in the requirement.

Ongoing Development of the DSP Process

With the addition of a writing task required of all first year students, Sweetland implemented an enhanced version of the Online Directed Self-Placement process this year. The research team continues to collect data on the new system. Feedback on the modified DSP has been positive overall: most students found the online system easy to use, and over 60% of incoming students found the process "Helpful" or "Very Helpful." One student wrote, "It…gave me an idea of how intensive the writing courses here at U of M might be." And a first-year writing instructor reported that the new DSP "has already served as an important instructional tool….We're all benefiting from its evolution." In partnership with instructors of First-Year Writing Requirement courses, we hope to reinforce the crucial link between assessment and instruction.

The SWC Research Team

The SWC Research Team welcomes Anne Porter, a doctoral student in the Joint Program in English and Education (JPEE). She joins Tim Green, also of JPEE, now in his second year as a Graduate Research Assistant (GSRA) at Sweetland for the 2009-2010 Academic Year. Under the direction of Sweetland Director Anne Ruggles Gere, and in consultation with Associate Director Naomi Silver, Department Administrator Colleen LaPere, and Student Services Administrator Patrick Manning, Tim, Anne, and Laura Aull (GSRA 2008-2009) are focusing on research that will enhance the courses and services offered by Sweetland, while at the same time developing projects that advance contemporary conversations in the field of composition.

Colleen LaPere and **Patrick Manning**
received the
LSA Outstanding Team Award
for all they did to make
the DSP implementation go smoothly.

Congratulations,
Colleen and Patrick!

Patrick Manning, Tim Green, Colleen LaPere, Naomi Silver, and Anne Gere. Not pictured: Anne Porter.

The DSP & LSA Advising

The advisors in the Newnan LSA Academic Advising Center have greeted the modified Directed Self-Placement with great enthusiasm. The exercise of having the students read a challenging document and write an essay about the issues involved in the article provided them with a good introduction to the level of performance that would be expected of them in their college classes. In my own work with new students, I found that the particulars of the assignment provided me with illustrations of the college-level writing experience; when I discussed the aspects of the college writing process with students, it helped them feel more comfortable with their self-placement. Those students who had weaker writing preparation were less prone to disagree with the placement recommendation than in previous years, because they could see what new level of performance they needed to achieve. That made it easier to understand why taking the "Transition to College Writing" class before taking a First-Year Writing Requirement (FYWR) class would be a real benefit to them. In the past, I had to conduct these conversations in generalities and, so, the impact of the discussions were less effective in helping set the context for college-level writing. I found that, generally, the students I talked to during this summer's orientation programs were more prepared to take seriously the idea of building strong skills in writing.

—**Virginia Reese**
Associate Director, Newnan LSA Academic Advising Center

5

SWC 100 PROVIDES TRANSITION TO COLLEGE WRITING

6

Since its origin in 1978 as the English Composition Board, the Sweetland Writing Center has offered a writing course that emphasizes an intensive one-on-one approach to teaching writing. In the last year, Anne Ruggles Gere assembled a committee to rethink multiple dimensions of SWC 100: Writing Practicum.

Chief among these dimensions was the increase in course credit hours from two to three. The three credit hour denomination better represents the writing and work required for a course intended, as this one is, to develop students' confidence with writing and to prepare them for the type of writing most often assigned and valued in university classes. The three credits also fits better with a "normal" student schedule consisting of 15 or 18 credits. Students meet in class two hours a week, and the out-of-class work includes regular one-on-one meetings with the course instructor. While writing instructors traditionally give written feedback to their students, SWC 100 instructors also give oral feedback, the idea being that the face-to-face interactions are more effective and enduring in communicating instruction in the strategies and conventions of academic rhetoric.

The committee suggested two other notable changes. One is that student's revised work would be presented in the form of an electronic portfolio, allowing students an opportunity to incorporate visual elements and even video along with their written texts. Moreover the electronic portfolio, modeled on the lines of Michigan's MPortfolio, enables students to reflect and take a critical look at themselves as writers and learners. For the first time this summer, the course included an undergraduate Course Assistant in each section, who provides yet another opportunity for young writers to interact with a mentor regarding writing purposes and strategies. The CAs are upper level students, most of whom have completed the Sweetland Writing Center courses in peer tutoring, and their position as peers gives them insight into their younger classmates that instructors do not always possess.

Ample one-to-one interaction, regular peer and instructor feedback, and a healthy dose of critical reflection contribute to SWC 100: Transition to College Writing.

REVISION & REFLECTION: E-PORTFOLIOS ENGAGE NEW AUDIENCES

In all fifteen sections of SWC 100: Transition to College Writing this fall, teachers and writers are experimenting with e-portfolios, which involves uploading class work to a web-based platform and arranging them, together with related images, into a personal web site. Like a paper portfolio assembled at the end of a course, the e-portfolio allows the writer to bring together the best of his or her work, sometimes alongside drafts

that show how the essays progressed, and it allows students to reflect on their writing as they introduce each piece to their online audience.

Reflective writing is, in fact, key to the e-portfolio, and the structure of the portfolio gives instructors a place to center the reflective writing many were already incorporating in their courses. As students reflect on their writing, they can come to deeper understandings of their own process, and of the place of class assignments in their larger learning trajectory. The public or semi-public nature of the online portfolio also helps students reflect on their growing body of work by helping them to envision audience in very specific ways. Students can choose who they want to share their e-portfolio with, outside the confines of the class, and if they are using CTools, they have the added benefit of retaining portfolio access long after they graduate.

Faculty members are trying out the e-portfolio capacity available through CTools, as well as other free online tools like Wordpress and Posterous. Because writers are often composing in other mediums along with text, the e-portfolio lets students show off videos or podcasts in addition to their written work, and gives instructors another way to teach visual rhetoric as well. Ideally, the e-portfolios students begin in Transition to College Writing will become places they can store, present, and reflect on writing for subsequent classes, as well as for jobs, student organizations, volunteer work, and other experiences.

Samuel
Fretenborough's
E- Portfolio

Search this site

Home
The Growth of Writing
Infancy in College Writing
Adolescence in Writing
Sitemap
Recent site activity

Home

My name is Samuel James Fretenborough. I am currently a freshmen attending the University of Michigan and plan on studying for Pre-Med. I attended Croswell-Lexington High School in Croswell, Michigan.

In addition to school work, I was very active in the community and on varsity sports teams. To begin with, I was a varsity wrestler for four years and captain my senior year , winning several tournaments and ranking eighth in my regional division. I also played varsity soccer for four years and was captain for my senior year, also winning several tournaments and was very close to winning districts.

In addition to sports, i was also an active member of the Croswell-Lexington Conservation Club. Our organization planned several community outreach programs, participated in community clean up, and taught key ideas on being conservation-oriented to the local elementary school. My community involvement also stretched to coaching and volunteer refereeing for the local American Youth Soccer Organization as well as the Annual Little Kids Wrestling Tournament. I would referee for AYSO right after soccer practice twice a week.

COURSE ASSISTANTS SERVE AS MODELS & MENTORS

In her book *Teaching One-to-One* Muriel Harris writes about the dynamics of "showing" where tutors decode writing prompts for beginning writers. In "showing," tutors offer their own interpretations of teachers' assignments as a means of "bring[ing] alive for the student a writing process or strategy that has seemed shrouded in the mystery of textbook descriptions." Demystifying academic discourse and its accompanying expectations is the primary mandate of writing teachers in SWC 100: Transition to College Writing. Students enter the course with a range of issues: little experience in writing, anxiety about academic writing, trouble articulating their own virtues/shortcomings as writers, and just plain culture shock.

This summer, Sweetland formalized participation of Course Assistants in SWC 100 and to spearhead this charge, I selected Ian Wilhite, a peer writing tutor and my former SWC 300 student, and Christine Barrera, herself a former SWC 100 student — both experienced writers, UM seniors, and conscientious peers. For Ian and Christine, "showing" meant unpacking the coded expectations of my assignments – words that are meant to prompt analysis but that often paralyze: "assess," "explore," "analyze," "engage," "develop," "support," "synthesize," "argue," and so on. "Showing" in this context, means that these Course Assistants did a lot of careful listening and reading – reading our class texts along with the students, unpacking my assignment prompts and written draft responses, and negotiating over their meanings with the students, all of whom were less than a month out of high school. Ian and Christine did more than assist – they modeled good student impulses and behavior, from the ambitious (leading class discussion and running writing workshop) to the perfunctory (bringing the book to class); and they taught students how to recognize their own writing tendencies, good and bad, and how to ask the best questions of me, their classmates and themselves.

—Matthew Kelley
SWC 100 Instructor

As a new Course Assistant, I needed to be aware of the subtle changes in tutoring pedagogy that would help me best guide the students in my section and best complement their instructor, Matt Kelley. The most apparent change was the total time available to interact with the students. As a tutor, I used to have to make an initial intake of the student's skills, assessment of the assignment, and recommendation for short and longer term writing goals all fit into a single 30-minute session, which was usually my sole interaction with the student. No longer constrained by these parameters, where the first impression has to be the best impression, I was able to adjust to the students' changing needs. Some students required a directive approach during the start of a paper, yet in the following meeting benefited most from a minimalist approach where my dialogue was often in the form of questions. More time also allowed a peer bond to be fully established. I became a needed expert on the college environment. The students immediately recognized a shift in pedagogy from a high school focus on more descriptive writing to a collegiate focus on analysis, so I provided council on how to make the transition in all academic courses, not just their writing courses.

A more subtle change in the tutoring approach required me to create a toolbox. Included in my toolbox was a protocol for addressing questions such as "How do I make a conclusion that doesn't resemble an annotated list of my major arguments?" or "Where's the balance between formal writing and a paper that reads like a book report?" I was able to tailor these tools for each student, helping them to articulate and identify their own problems, and giving them a vocabulary to approach future revision. This shift was pivotal in their development of an analytical frame of mind that could transcend the goals of this single classroom.

—Ian Wilhite
SWC 100 Course Assistant

Summer 2009 CAs: Alejandro Valtierra, Ian Wilhite, Ian Hsu, Katie Field, Johannes Widmalm-Delphonse, Christine Barrera, and Alex Davidson. Not pictured: Sarah Hughes.

During the past year, Sweetland has undertaken a number of initiatives designed to foster **new media writing**. This section describes several of them, including: SWC 200: Writing in New Media, a course that prepares students to write in a variety of media; SyncOWL, an **online tutorial service** that operates in real time; the new **SWC blog**, an evolving and interactive source of information about Sweetland's work; and the introduction of **laptops** in Writing Workshop. Together these innovations will help prepare undergraduates for writing in the 21st century.
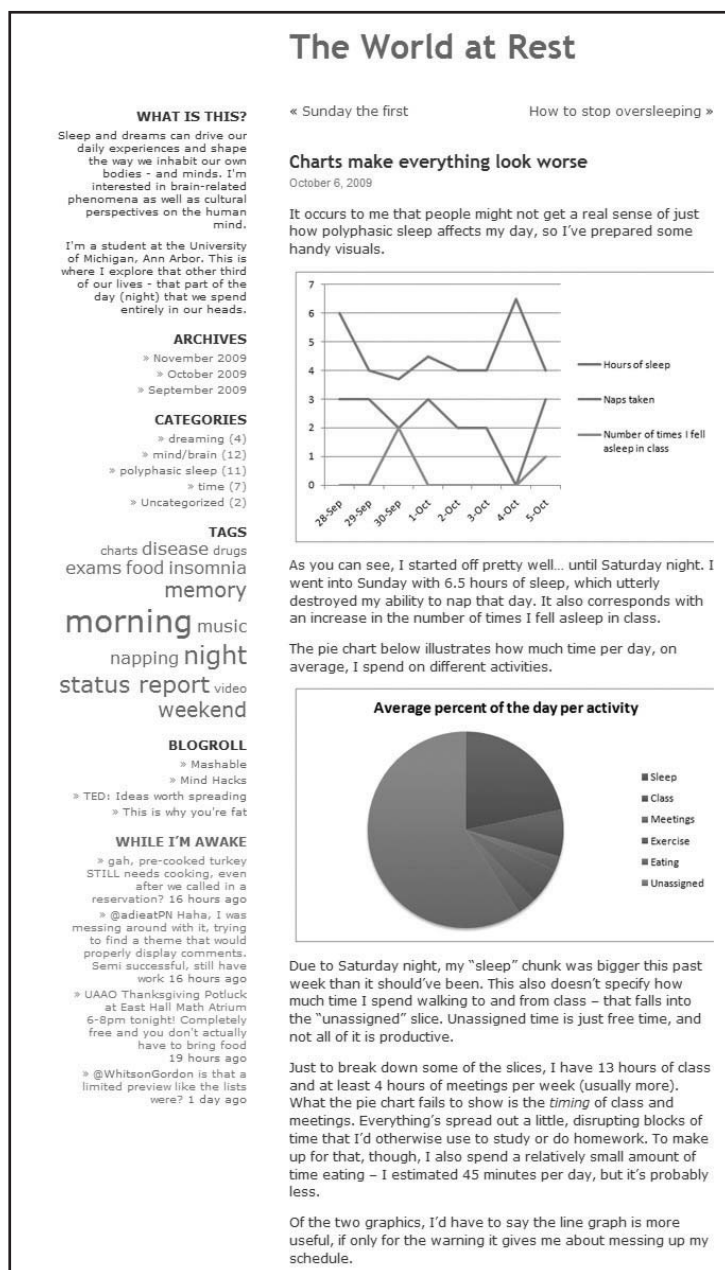
SWC 200: NEW MEDIA WRITING

New media technologies like blogs, Twitter, and Facebook have revolutionized the way we read and write, allowing more people than ever to add their voices to the public sphere. The Sweetland Writing Center has responded to this changing landscape by developing SWC 200: New Media Writing. This course engages students where they do much of their writing—online—and asks them to evaluate the rhetorical effects of multimodal writing, in which photography, audio, video, and text combine to convey the writer's message.

SWC 200 was launched in Fall 2008. What was initially a one-section offering has grown in popularity and diversity; as of Fall 2009, twenty sections have been taught on a variety of topics. From courses dealing with viral videos to Google maps, each incarnation of SWC 200 challenges students to think critically about new media while teaching them valuable skills in digital composition.

A number of SWC 200 topics have been offered repeatedly. One such course, Visual Science: Writing and Presenting PowerPoint, provides instruction on the rhetorical uses of technology in presenting science research. Instructor Alan Hogg says, "Students forget that a presentation is fundamentally about persuading an audience to accept a point of view. PowerPoint is often used as a crutch, but a summary of talking points can't substitute for a well-thought-out presentation. In this course, students get a chance to try out psychology-based presentation strategies, discuss how well they worked, and then incorporate the successes into a final presentation."

The topic New Media for Non-Profits has also proved popular. In this course, instructor Christine Modey asks students to partner with a local non-profit to "think through the organization's new media strategy and consider how various new media can help an organization reach its audience and promote its mission." According to Modey, the course "not only enables local non-profits to tap into the power of new media, but also allows students a glimpse into how non-profits operate." In Winter 2010, New Media for Non-Profits will be repeated with Charlotte Boulay as instructor.

In response to student interest in emergent new media, Sweetland will debut a number of SWC 200 topics in Winter 2010. Danielle LaVaque-Manty will teach a course in video games and the rhetoric of persuasion, while Raymond McDaniel is offering a section in web comics. These innovative topics signal the robustness of new media writing as well as Sweetland's commitment to addressing student literacy in all its forms.

Clockwise from left: Arthur Wang's The World at Rest*, and Shay Spaniola's* FOTO quotidiana*, created in Charlotte Boulay's SWC 200: The Rhetoric of Blogging; and Jordan Stoewsand-Kryscio's* A New Story of Frank Lloyd Wright*, created in Christopher Schmidt's SWC 200: Rewriting the World with Google Maps.*

FOTO quotidiana
Shay Spaniola's Photo a Day

{Saturday} Nature Photograph
November 3, 2009

I took this photograph during the summer when I spent time in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. I traveled to East Africa to document avoidable blindness in disability hospitals for the Clinton Global Initiative. For the first two weeks, my film permit fell through so I had time to explore the beaches and wildlife. This photograph is from a Safari that my driver took me on. A rather sketchy safari, in an small, cramped van.. but it was an amazing experience. I always come back to this photograph because I love the stand still nature of the tree with the circle of motion surrounding the frame.

SpaniolaPhoto

http://static.photo.net/attachments/bboard/00K/00Kv0v-36235984.jpg 19 hours ago

new tumble blog!
http://beatstrugs.tumblr.com/
inspirational quotes, stories and photographs Group project for my umich blogging course 1 week ago

http://www.kuperblog.com
Awesome photographer! Check her out. 2 weeks ago

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A NEW STORY OF FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

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Frank Lloyd Wright in Michigan

It comes as no surprise that Frank Lloyd Wright had a significant impact on the architecture of Michigan. The midwest states always held a place in Wright's heart; he romanticized them as the heart of American culture. He first began doing work in Michigan while working out of Chicago, but it would go on to become an enduring part of his career. Not well known for any one particular style of Wright's, Michigan contains a diverse number of his homes spread all across the state. Some of the most excellent examples of his Usonian homes can be found in Kalamazoo and Okemos, and needless to say, his Prairie Style was also used throughout the state.

FACEBOOK & BLOGS @ SWC!

Become a fan on Facebook! Read our blog!
Get updates on workshops, seminars, writing tips, and
all things Sweetland at **www.lsa.umich.edu/swc**.

WIRED WORKSHOP

Students making an appointment this semester to visit the Sweetland Writing Workshop will have encountered something new: our appointment process has moved online! Sweetland has adopted WC Online, a scheduling tool designed specifically for writing centers, with a number of key features like waiting lists and automatic email updates.

In conjunction with this move online, the Sweetland Writing Center now allows students to bring in their papers or projects on their laptops, in addition to a hard copy. To ensure a smooth transition to this new laptop era, Sweetland has adopted a range of guidelines to address issues raised by this new practice, such as student ownership and academic honesty.

Specifically, students will be asked to save a new version of their file before beginning work on it in a Writing Workshop session, so they can always return to the earlier draft. When a laptop is brought to a session, it will be placed between the instructor and the student, so both will have equal access to the text; and instructor interventions in the text will take the form of actions such as scrolling and highlighting, rather than actual typing. We believe these simple guidelines will go a long way toward protecting student voice and ownership, as well as the paper's integrity.

And how have laptops changed Writing Workshop practice? So far this semester, instructors report sessions with increased interactivity and students taking more initiative to focus the conversation. Instructors and students are also experimenting with Word tools: some instructors have found it helpful to ask students to highlight different modes of language (e.g., claims, evidence, analysis) in different colors to visualize the balance among them more easily; other instructors are encouraging students to copy and paste the first sentences of each paragraph into a new document where they can more clearly see their paper's logic and organization.

To make a "Wired" Writing Workshop appointment, visit our website at **www.lsa.umich.edu/swc**.

SWEETLAND PILOTS
SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE WRITING LAB

In November, the SyncOWL Pilot was officially launched, making available an online writing tutorial service through which undergraduates can connect with a Peer Tutor to receive feedback on their writing in real-time. This is accomplished via easy-to-use web applications such as Google Docs and Tinychat, which allow the student and tutor to simultaneously see and edit a paper while communicating via text-chat, audio, and/or video.

The development of the SyncOWL began in Fall 2008 in SWC 301 with Naomi Silver. It was here that a small group of 301 students began thinking about the implications of a service that combines the convenience of the asynchronous OWL with the benefits of face-to-face conversations. This past summer, as SWC's first interns, Nicole Premo and Lindsay Nieman took these preliminary ideas and turned them into a functioning synchronous OWL pilot, aptly named the SyncOWL.

With Sweetland's existing variety of well-used services and its seemingly endless bustle of activity, some may question the wisdom of adding another student service. Just as writing consultants can be heard throughout the center urging their students to consider audience, a similar response applies here. An integral part of any writing center's sustainability is continually evolving services to meet the changing needs of those the center serves. The SyncOWL attempts to do just this by virtually connecting Sweetland (both literally and figuratively) to a largely plugged-in undergraduate population who has been so well-trained in the uses of technology that instant messaging and document-sharing platforms seem perhaps more intuitive than traditional face-to-face conferences.

Because the SyncOWL format could potentially influence the conceptualization of student-tutor interaction, data collection mechanisms have been strategically built into the pilot. In addition to recording all sessions, students complete intake forms and post-session evaluations where they are asked both multiple choice and open-ended questions. SyncOWL tutors also complete a post-session evaluation and have been asked to give comprehensive feedback on the session itself and how the format shaped their tutoring practice. Later in the semester, students and tutors will be asked to participate in several focus groups.

SyncOWL tutor Amy Fingerle conferences with a student using Tinychat and Google Docs.

During Winter 2010, the SyncOWL team — Associate Director Naomi Silver, Peer Tutor Program Coordinator Carrie Luke, and the Interns — will study how synchronous tutoring sessions mirror and differentiate from traditional face-to-face sessions, and determine the specific questions, practices, and problems inherent in synchronous tutoring in writing. Inherent in the pilot is the belief that a synchronous online writing tutorial is not a logistical stand-in for face-to-face tutoring, but a wholly different interaction fraught with its own power dynamics, benefits, and challenges. Phrased differently, one goal of the research is to problematize the often-held notion that face-to-face tutoring is an ideal to which all other formats should aspire by empirically supporting an ideological shift away from the assumption students would choose to meet face-to-face fif they were able. To this end, Sweetland offers the SyncOWL as one of the many options students may select from its menu of writing services. To make a SyncOWL appointment, visit **www.sitemaker.umich.edu/swcwritinghelp**.

2009 SWEETLAND FELLOWS

Senior Fellows: Ingrid Hendy, Geological Science; **Danielle LaVaque-Manty**, Sweetland Writing Center; **Mika LaVaque-Manty**, Political Science and Philosophy; **Timothy McKay**, Physics & Astronomy; **Megan Sweeney**, English Language & Literature and CAAS.

Junior Fellows: Ross Bowling, History; **James Draper**, Communication Studies; **Ben Gunsberg**, English & Education; **Dina Guth**, Classical Studies; **Catherine Hammond Mullalond**, Communication Studies; **Jennifer Solheim**, Romance Languages & Literature; **Kharis Templeman**, Political Science; **Joel Vaughan**, Statistics.

Faculty and graduate students interested in integrating writing instruction into their teaching may apply to participate in the **Sweetland Fellows Seminar**. The Seminar meets weekly and provides opportunities for sustained and lively conversation with colleagues and visiting scholars who share a commitment to teaching writing. The schedule for the Seminar has recently changed: instead of meeting in the fall semester, as it has done for many years, the Seminar will meet in the winter semester, beginning in **Winter 2011**. Applications for this next Seminar will be available in January 2010. For more information, visit our website or contact **Laura Schuyler** at **schuyler@umich.edu**.

Paul Barron presented "Reviewing the Essentials" in September as part of the Sweetland-Rackham workshop series for graduate students. In October, he sat on a SWC writers' panel at Lloyd Hall and read from his novel *Dandelions*, and he guest-taught a class in writing stories at the School of Art and Design.

Gina Brandolino participated in a panel discussion, "Pedagogy in Medieval Studies: Making the Transition from Student to Teacher," at the Medieval Academy of America's annual convention in March. In May, she co-organized a panel discussion, "Teaching off the Grid: The Promise and Perils of Using Non-Canonical Texts in the Classroom" for the 2009 International Medieval Congress in Kalamazoo, MI, and also presented a paper titled "Teaching Practically and Expansively in the Early English Historical Survey Course."

Louis Cicciarelli presented "Mentoring for the Dissertation" with Stiliana Milkova at the Provost's Seminar on Teaching, and "Pulling Together the Dissertation" for The Alliances for Graduate Education Academic Writing Conference, both in May.

George Cooper received funds from the Michigan Community Scholars Program to improve his teaching of English 125 for MCSP students.

Delia DeCourcy won the 2009 David and Linda Moscow Prize for Excellence in Teaching Composition.

Judy Dyer published two book chapters in 2009: "Migration, National Identity and the Reallocation of Forms" in *Language and Identities*, and "Centering Writing: How the English Language Institute and the Sweetland Writing Center Make Writing Central for ESL Students at the University of Michigan" with Sweetland colleague Christine Modey in *Before and After the Tutorial: Writing Centers and Institutional Relationships*. She also presented at the 5th Conference on Intercultural Rhetoric and Discourse at UM in June, and was awarded a grant from the William Davidson Institute at UM to work with University of Mentouri in Constantine, Algeria.

Helen Fox wrote a "Revised Edition" of her book *When Race Breaks Out*, which was released in October.

Tim Green presented his research into genre-based pedagogy and Generation 1.5 writers at the 4Cs conference in San Francisco in March. In November, he presented related work on Generation 1.5 writers and admissions essays at the 2009 NCTE convention in Philadelphia.

Alan Hogg co-edited *The Changing Environment of Northern Michigan: A Century of Science and Nature at the University of Michigan Biological Station*, released in November, and published an article about bio-innovation in the Fall issue of *BioMatters*. He also represented SWC at an *Encyclopedia of Life* workshop, encouraging writing about biology by undergraduates.

Lizzie Hutton was nominated for the 2009 *Best New Poets Anthology*, and was a finalist for the New Letters Non Fiction contest. Her poem "Rose Gold and Poppies" was chosen by Mark Doty as this year's winner of the Wabash Prize in Poetry from the *Sycamore Review*. Her poems also appeared in the Winter edition of *Interim*.

Perry Janes won a Hopwood Undergraduate Poetry Award in April. In October, he gave a reading at 1923 in Hamtramck, and his poem "Nikola Tesla on Emptiness" will appear in *Salt Hill 24* in December.

Matt Kelley presented "'The Flag Upside Down': Robert Frank's *Pull My Daisy* and Kerouac's *The Beat Generation*" at the American Literature Association Conference, and he was invited to speak at the John Steinbeck Society Annual Meeting, where he presented "*Ladies Home Journal* and *A Russian Journal*: Containment as Instruction in Steinbeck's America," both in Boston in May.

Carrie Luke's poem "Willow Run Village, 1945" was nominated for the 2009 *Best New Poets Anthology*, and included in *Searchlight Soul*, a five-movement piece arranged by William Bolcom and performed by the UM Men's Glee Club in November. She was also a featured poet in *Ekphrastic Extravaganza*, part of the UMMA's re-opening celebration, and she collaborated with Sweetland colleague Naomi Silver and undergraduate interns Lindsay Nieman and Nicole Premo on an article that appeared in the Fall 2009 issue of *Praxis* on Professionalization and the Writing Center.

Patrick Manning presented "The Crisis of Double Consciousness and the Communist Party in Lloyd Brown's *Iron City*" at the Michigan College English Association Conference at Eastern Michigan University in October.

Raymond McDaniel won the 2009 Ben Prize for achieving a high level of excellence in the writing classroom.

Jennifer Metsker was a featured poet in "Video Tour: A Poet's Path Through the Museum of Art," which appeared in the University of Michigan Museum of Art online magazine in Fall 2009. This year, she also published poems in *Gulf Coast*, *Sycamore Review*, and *The Cimarron Review*.

Anne Porter presented three conference papers this year: "What is (or could be) global literacy?" at the Expanding Literacy Studies Conference at Ohio State University in April; "The Rhetoric of U.S. Environmentalists on Immigration" at Making Meaning: Rhetoric in Real World Spaces at UM in September; and "Dilemmas of Feminist Critique" at the Feminisms and Rhetorics conference at Michigan State University in October.

Alex Ralph won the 2009 Ben Prize for achieving a high level of excellence in the writing classroom.

Christopher Schmidt's PhD dissertation was awarded the Paul Monette Prize for Best Dissertation in Gay and Lesbian Studies at the Graduate Center, CUNY; a chapter from it was also awarded the Graduate Student Essay Prize from CUNY's Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies. *Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies* published his essay on James Schuyler in a special issue on waste. His creative nonfiction appeared in the anthologies *Best Gay Stories* and *My Diva* (University of Wisconsin Press). In September, he was interviewed by T Hetzel for *Living Writers* on WCBN-FM, Ann Arbor.

Naomi Silver presented research from the first year of a three-year project to study metacognitive strategies in upper-level writing courses at the CCCC Research Network Forum in San Francisco and for EMU's Scholarship of Teaching and Learning series in March; at a Teagle Foundation conference at Duke in June; and at the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning annual conference at IU-Bloomington in October. She also collaborated with Sweetland colleague Carrie Luke and undergraduate interns Lindsay Nieman and Nicole Premo on an article that appeared in the Fall 2009 issue of *Praxis* on Professionalization and the Writing Center.

North Quad will be a showcase for the study of media and information in a digital environment.

Although hard hats, safety glasses and sturdy shoes are now required for tours of the building, Sweetland will move into North Quad in the summer of 2010, joining the School of Information, Communication Studies, Screen Arts and Culture, and the Language Resource Center in this new facility. Designed as a residential and academic complex, North Quad will be a showcase for the study of media and information in a digital environment. In moving out of Angell, Sweetland will, of course, leave behind traditions, but the promise of a technologically-rich environment at the heart of what promises to be a new center for student life is inviting.

This past summer included planning meetings for many aspects of Sweetland's new residence. Decisions about furniture and color schemes, technological support for instruction, and allocations of space have been frequent topics of conversation. Important as all these are, it has been especially interesting to engage in collaborative planning with colleagues from the other units that will move to North Quad. In particular, the common space formerly known as the Image Café has been the focus of many discussions as representatives from all the units explore ways to develop common programming and affirm the resources that each brings to our new space.

A rendering of the North Quad complex, looking northeast.

SWC 200: Writing in New Media will generate student products that can be displayed effectively in North Quad's common spaces. And the electronic portfolios created by students in SWC 100 will include digital texts that provide opportunities for students to reflect on their own writing and for students to develop their understanding of audience by making their texts available to multiple readers on the Web.

LSA Facilities Manager Susan Monroe, SWC Director Anne Gere, and SWC Associate Director Naomi Silver tour the North Quad construction site in June.

2009 SWEETLAND PRIZES FOR EXCELLENCE IN FIRST-YEAR WRITING

The Sweetland Writing Center invites first-year writing instructors to nominate excellent student writing. Sweetland will offer **four prizes**, two for **best essays** of 2,500 words or fewer from any 2009 course that fulfilled the LS&A First-Year Writing Requirement, and two for **outstanding student portfolios** from any SWC 100: Transition to College Writing course taught in 2009. **Two prizes** of **$150** will be awarded **in each category**.

To nominate a student, please send their name, uniqname, essay or portfolio title, and a copy of the writing assignment to **swcwritingprize@umich.edu** by **January 15, 2010**. Instructors may nominate up to two papers or portfolios. Nominated students will be contacted at the end of January and will be asked to submit their materials electronically. Winners will be announced in March. Please direct questions to **Matt Kelley** at **kmkelley@umich.edu**.