

Newsletter

FALL 2012

from the Director

It has been another busy year at Sweetland, with several new initiatives and continuing solid performance from our traditional programs. **Peer tutoring** is one of our long-standing programs, and under the leadership of faculty member Lila Naydan peer tutors are receiving even more sustained training and professional development. The **Dissertation Writing Institute** is celebrating its tenth anniversary, and as we look back on having helped 178 students complete dissertations since 2003, we are seeking additional ways to support even more students. Our **Dissertation Writing Groups**, initiated last year, are one step in this direction, and Louis Cicciarelli, the leader of the DWI for the past ten years, has played a leadership role in establishing these groups. Sweetland is very grateful to Rackham Graduate School for providing funding for both of these programs.

Our first cohort of **Minors in Writing** will graduate in May, and we are planning to celebrate with a display of the electronic portfolios they have developed over the past two years. Another celebration in the spring will honor winners of the prizes for **Excellence in First-Year Writing** and **Excellence in Upper-Level Writing**. Winners of these annual competitions receive a cash award, and their work appears in books published by Sweetland each year.

Research on student writing continues to be a significant part of our work. Our study of the Upper-Level Writing Requirement (ULWR), a requirement established in 1978, has generated a great deal of information that will enable faculty to think about the most effective ways to implement this work in the coming decades. This study also suggests ways that Sweetland can serve more students. One example is the finding that some transfer students encounter challenges in courses that fulfill the Upper-Level Writing Requirement, so Sweetland is now offering **Writing 350**, a one-credit course that provides support to students taking ULWR courses. Another Sweetland research project focuses specifically on introductory science courses. Preliminary findings suggest that when writing is integrated into these courses students learn more about chemistry and physics.

The following pages provide additional information about these and our many other programs.

Enjoy.

—Anne Ruggles Gere

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Sweetland Center for Writing

1310 North Quad
734.764.0429
sweetlandinfo@umich.edu
www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland

Writing Workshop (by appointment)

1310 North Quad
Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri.: 9am-5pm
Wednesday: 9am-12:30pm & 2:30-5pm
Make an appointment online:
tinyurl.com/SweetlandWritingWorkshop

Peer Tutoring Centers (walk-in)

G219 Angell Hall
Sunday-Thursday: 7-11pm
Monday & Wednesday: 12-5pm
Tues., Thurs., Fri.: 12-3pm

1136 Undergraduate Library
Sunday-Thursday: 7-10pm

Lloyd Hall Scholars Program
1059 Alice Lloyd Hall
Sunday-Wednesday: 7-11pm

B454 Duderstadt Center
Sunday-Wednesday: 7-10pm

Online Writing Lab (OWL)

tinyurl.com/OnlineWritingLabs

DISSERTATION WRITING INSTITUTE CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY



Workshop meeting of Louis Cicciarelli's 2012 Dissertation Writing Institute Group

Today, I am an associate professor with tenure at The University of Montana. I have published several articles from my dissertation and I have completed a manuscript. I have become a more mature writer. Completing my dissertation with the right guidance and with a very supportive community at the DWI has allowed me to be where I am today. As the graduate advisor of my program, I use what I have learned at Michigan to advise students.

—DWI 2005 participant



Paul Barron's Spring 2012 Dissertation Writing Institute Group

Ten years ago

Sweetland and the Rackham Graduate School collaborated to establish an innovative program designed to support graduate students during the process of writing their dissertations. Since 2003, the Dissertation Writing Institute has helped 178 students from multiple areas (68% humanities, 28% social sciences, 4% natural sciences) complete their dissertations.

To apply, students must have achieved candidacy, have completed at least one chapter of the dissertation, have a clear plan for writing during the Institute, and have faculty support. During the institute students have offices of their own where they must spend a minimum of six hours per day, they meet at least once a week with an Institute leader to discuss their progress, and they share a section of their dissertation with the whole group in a workshop session.

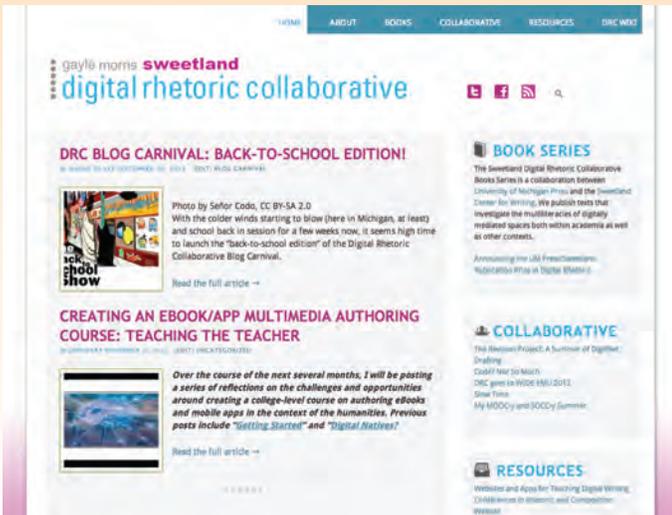
Louis Cicciarelli, a faculty member at Sweetland, has served as leader of the Institute since its inception. In 2008, when the number of participants was increased from 12 to 24, Louis was joined by Paul Barron, another member of the Sweetland faculty. Together, Louis and Paul have inspired, challenged, and guided graduate student writers during each seven-week Institute.

One indication of the success of this model is the high completion rate of DWI participants. Over 88% of them complete their dissertations within 11 months of finishing the Institute. This is significantly higher than the completion rate for all graduate students. Another mark of success is provided by the changes in participants' writing behaviors. In surveys and interviews, they report that they are more able to set productivity goals for themselves, that they feel more confident about their writing abilities, and that they understand the nature of writing more fully. Success is also evident in the fact that most participants produce at least 50 pages of new writing during the Institute.

Testimonies from former participants show that the effects of the Dissertation Writing Institute extend far into the future, shaping the ways Institute alumni approach their own scholarly writing, the ways they teach, and the ways they work with their own graduate students.

Announcing the Digital

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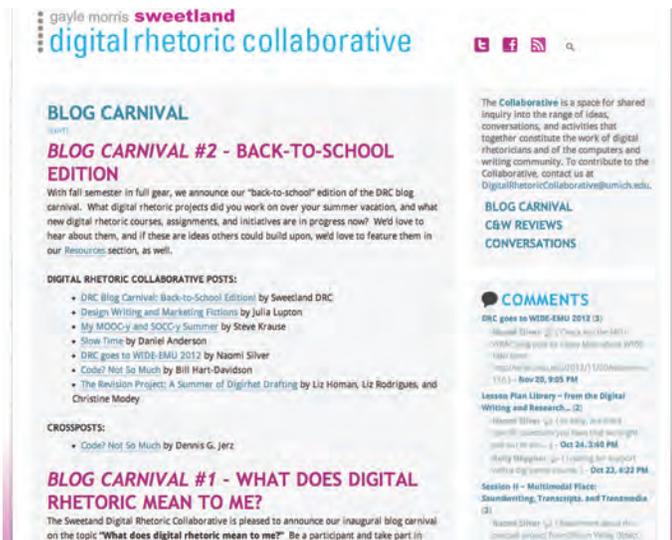
But this is where this project – the Sweetland Digital Rhetoric Collaborative – comes in: it’s a way to bring together a number of disciplines and scholars and their work that isn’t limited to the time-bound form of the book. It is an instantiation of the ethos of digital rhetoric – the formation of a habitual gathering place for a specific community of rhetors.

Doug Eyman, “On Digital Rhetoric,” Blog Post, *DRC*, May 16, 2012

In May, Sweetland joined up with the University of Michigan Press and MPublishing to launch the Sweetland Digital Rhetoric Collaborative (DRC), an initiative by and for the digital rhetoric community. What is digital rhetoric, you ask? Well, you can learn more about it in the DRC’s inaugural and widely-read blog carnival, “What does digital rhetoric mean to me?” In brief, though, it is an area of research and teaching that straddles rhetoric and composition, computers and writing, and the digital humanities. Digital rhetoricians study the ways that digital technology affects writing and communication practices, as well as the social, aesthetic, and political contexts where these interactions occur; they teach multimodal forms of writing that ask students to incorporate sound, visual images, video, or other digital media into their compositions; and they create these forms of writing themselves, as “born digital” webtexts or digitally enhanced alphabetic texts.

You can view examples of all of this and more on the Digital Rhetoric Collaborative’s community web space. There you’ll find information about all of the things we do.

The DRC book series and annual book prize — the open-access Book Series publishes born digital and digitally enhanced texts of scholarship and pedagogy that engage with a range of topics and questions in the field of digital rhetoric. Our eight-member advisory board brings together leaders in the field who assist in selecting the winner of our annual \$5000 prize for best book published by the Series. Stay tuned for the announcement of our first prizewinner!



Rhetoric Collaborative

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Our collaborative web space & resource

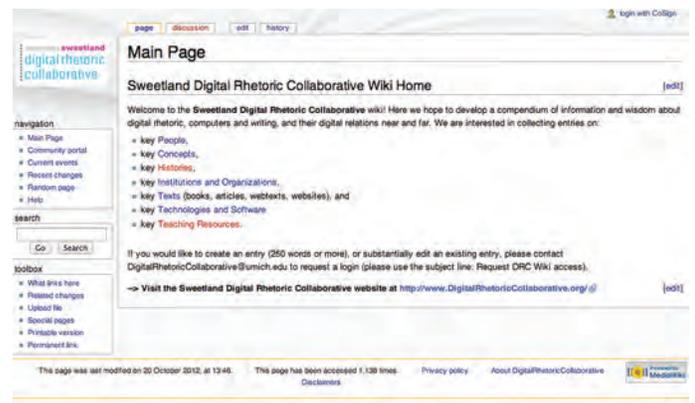
clearinghouse — the Collaborative provides a space for unfolding conversations in the field around important events, questions, and controversies. We curate a regular blog carnival on a range of topics, publish reviews of sessions at the annual Computers and Writing conference, and much more. Whether it's a new course assignment, an archive, or a webmap, our Resources clearinghouse gathers materials of use to teachers and researchers in digital rhetoric. See what's available and post yours!

The DRC wiki — the DRC Wiki aims to create a compendium of information and wisdom about digital rhetoric. The wiki's entries focus on key people, institutions and organizations, concepts, histories, texts, technology and software, and teaching resources – all developed by the digital rhetoric community. Individuals are welcome to contribute entries, and classes with digital rhetoric components are encouraged to use the wiki to practice public, multimodal authoring.

To see the Collaborative in action — and to contribute, publish, and participate — visit www.DigitalRhetoricCollaborative.org. Questions? Contact us at DigitalRhetoricCollaborative@umich.edu.

...electronic publishing should not merely aim to port the printed page directly to the web (even in searchable form), but should, rather, investigate new publication practices that take advantage of the capacities for rich multimedia and networked communication that the Internet offers.

Tara McPherson, "Scaling Vectors: Thoughts on the Future of Scholarly Communication" *Journal of Electronic Publishing* 13.2 (Fall 2010)

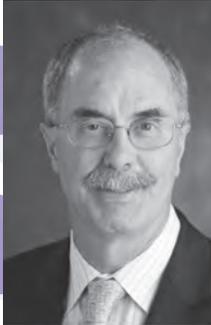


New media scholarship—online scholarship that uses modes such as audio, video, images, and/or animation in addition to written text to make meaning—is fairly new in composition studies (and other fields), which might cause readers to misinterpret these texts as too artistic to satisfy scholarly conventions. I suggest, however, that new media scholarship has a necessary aesthetic component because of its designed, multimodal elements, and because these multiple modes can be read in conjunction with written text to form the text's meaning.

Cheryl Ball, "Show, Not Tell: The Value of New Media Scholarship" *Computers and Composition* 21 (2004)

Arthur F. Thurnau Professors on Writing

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Thurnau Professor of Mathematics
and U of M Provost
Phil Hanlon

The most powerful way to learn something is to teach it to someone else. To the extent that you have students at tables teaching each other, they're going to be benefiting from that. The concern inexperienced instructors have is that you can't cover as much material this way. Of course, what I really believe is that it's what sticks with students that's important. You can fill them full of a lot of material, but if it's just in and out of their heads quickly, that's not of much value. It's better to have less that sticks than a lot that doesn't stick.



Thurnau Professor of English Language
and Literature
Anne Curzan

Students do the best writing when they believe that they're telling you something new that you haven't heard before, because that's what we all want to write. We want to write because we want to tell people something. The best assignments are when we give students opportunities to tell us things that we don't know or that help us see something in a new way.

I don't know if it's easier with my field [of English linguistics] or not, but it feels very easy in my field to sit down with a student and say, "Go look at how this is happening in the language. Go learn about the history of this word or this construction and tell us about it." The language is always changing. There's always new stuff for them to learn and share.

SWEETLAND FELLOWS SEMINAR

The Fellows Seminar brings together Faculty (Senior Fellows) and graduate student instructors (Junior Fellows) from multiple disciplines who share a commitment to integrating writing in their courses. Fellows will: confer with local and national visiting speakers, learn ways of helping students become better writers, discuss concerns about teaching in the age of the Internet, learn how to integrate writing in their courses, and examine approaches to incorporating writing across the disciplines. The application deadline for Winter 2014 is Friday, March 1, 2013. More information can be found at our website: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/forinstructors/fellowsseminar>

in the Disciplines



Thurnau Professor of Education
Carla O'Connor

I make sense of things through my writing. When I put pen to paper, I am never fully sure where I am going or how I will get there but through the act of writing I come to figure that out. I try to explain this process to students—that writing is partly an intellectual process. It's not just a reporting process. Part of what I am trying to convey to my students is that things can get really messy as you work to think through your writing. I have had to work through that messiness in my own writing practice.



Thurnau Professor of Philosophy
Elizabeth Anderson

Writing is absolutely integral to my courses. There are a decent number of students who are really great on their feet, but discussion is often where you just make a one-off point. Putting it all together in a paper, which is more integrated and sustained, is a challenge. It's not making debater's points or even smart debater's points, but building an argument, something that could be carried forward in different directions or applied to new areas. It's the capacity for sustained development of an idea.



Thurnau Professor of Public Policy
Barry Rabe

I love those moments where students have gone as far as they possibly can with a paper. Then, even before they get my feedback, they think about it differently based on what someone has actually said in class. So I really see this increasingly strong link between written communication and oral communication. I could hermetically seal myself and write academic papers, but when I go to certain conferences, I put myself in the firing line. You get peer review feedback, and you hopefully come out with radically new ideas.

2013 SWEETLAND FELLOWS

Senior Fellows: **Rolf Bouma**, Program in the Environment; **Abigail Celis**, Romance Languages; **Anne Ruggles Gere**, Sweetland; **Dana Nichols**, Sweetland; **Selena Smith**, Earth & Environmental Sciences; **Melanie Yergeau**, English Language and Literature

Junior Fellows: **Jessica Getman**, Musicology; **Katy Goldey**, Biopsychology; **Rafe Kinsey**, Mathematics; **Richard Pierre**, Comparative Literature; **Joshua Shipper**, Political Science; **Jason Zurawski**, Near Eastern Studies

What's New

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*UM Peer Tutors at
2012 Northeast
Writing Centers
Association
Conference*



It's been an exciting year for the Sweetland Center for Writing's Peer Tutors! Conference participation, online tutoring initiatives, and celebrations of writers and writing have helped make Sweetland one of the greatest resources for undergraduates on UM's campus.

in Peer Tutoring

Sweetland faculty and tutors presented writing center research at regional conferences:

- Faculty member Lila Naydan and tutors Jackie Kauza, Josh Kim, Blake Obi, and Laura Torp presented “Shticks, Ruts, and Addictions: Replaying and Rebuilding in the Writing Center” at the 2012 Northeast Writing Centers Association Conference (NEWCA) at St. John’s University in New York City. They invited participants to reinvent their everyday approaches by cultivating genuine curiosity about the writers with whom they work.
- Kim and Naydan collaborated with Jody Cardinal (SUNY Old Westbury) and Barkley Heuser (Stony Brook) to present “Do as I Say, Not as I Do: Administrator vs. Tutor Speak and the Problem of Creating Writing Center Change” at NEWCA 2012. They fostered discussion about how administrators in writing centers use both directive and non-directive approaches to train tutors.
- For the 2012 Michigan Writing Centers Association Conference, held at Michigan State, Naydan and tutors Nick Bodanyi, Logan Corey, and David Li presented “Quality Blogging in the Writing Center.” They discussed teachers’ expectations for blogs and invited writing center practitioners to discuss challenges they face in tutoring bloggers. Corey observed that presenting and participating in MWCA 2012 helped her “recharge” as a tutor: “It’s times like these that remind me how amazing the community of peer tutors truly is, both as a resource and as a home base.”

Innovations in online tutoring have made Sweetland peer tutors’ services more accessible. Tutors collaborated with UM staff and faculty to redesign the **Online Writing Lab (OWL)** and the **Synchronous Online Writing Lab (SyncOWL)**. Both now operate using collaborative Google technology.

Tutors developed exciting, community-based events for the 2012 National Day on Writing, sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English

- **Turning the Tables: Students Grade Faculty Writing.** UM faculty members Bruce Conforth, Mika LaVaque-Manty, Ellen Muehlberger, Christine Modey, and Tim McKay wrote essays for their students to evaluate. Faculty got to remember their student experiences while students got to experience the challenges of evaluating writing.
- **Social Media Contests.** Tutors held flash-fiction writing contests on Facebook and Twitter.
- **UM + HS Meet-Up.** Tutors invited local high school teachers and students from Skyline, Huron, and Pioneer High Schools to talk about writing centers. Fishbowl observations of tutorials and question-and-answer sessions helped those in attendance develop strategies for starting and developing programs in peer tutoring in writing.



2012 Michigan Writing Centers Association Conference



2012 National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing

A Look at the Upper-Level

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In 1978 the faculty of LSA established the Upper-Level Writing Requirement (ULWR) “to teach students to recognize and master the writing conventions of their chosen concentration.” UM has the distinction of instituting the first such writing-in-the-disciplines program in the country, as one of the original charges of the Sweetland Center for Writing (then called the English Composition Board).

As part of the ongoing review of all College requirements, Sweetland was asked to gather information about the current implementation of the ULWR. It was a welcome assignment because it provided an opportunity to learn from the strengths of the past 30 years in order to bring the program forward to meet student and faculty needs in the 21st century. We took a multipronged approach to this assessment, collecting quantitative and qualitative data from a range of sources (see text box, p. 11). Our research has revealed a robust program populated by faculty deeply committed to teaching writing in their disciplines and students who report gains in their ability successfully and confidently to deploy a range of disciplinary writing strategies. At the same time, the study uncovered areas of change in academic disciplines, writing instruction, student trajectories, and new technologies, which suggest areas for improvement.

The [writing-in-the-disciplines] movement [...] had its beginnings in a conviction: writing belongs in all courses in every discipline. [...] There is little doubt, of course, that students best learn the specialized conventions, standards, and processes of writing in their chosen fields when they do so in the context of their own majors, in their discipline-based courses. [...] But other advantages to such a model soon appear. [...] Many faculty who have newly incorporated writing into their courses find that students become more active learners, more thoughtful readers, and more engaged participants in class as a result of putting their knowledge, uncertainties, speculations, and intellectual connections into words on a page.

—Chris M. Anson, *The WAC Casebook*, 2002

Here is a snapshot of what we learned:

Student experience:

- Between 2005 and 2010, 54% of LSA students completed the ULWR in their area of concentration, with students reporting multiple concentrations and interdisciplinary programs of study as one set of explanations behind their choices.
- Most students said ULWR courses improved their writing, but many indicated they expected more writing directed toward their professional goals, and less focus on generic goals of clarity and concision.
- Student performance in ULWR courses is good, with the average ULWR grade for 2002-2011 being 3.46. However, we discovered a differential for certain populations, with transfer students averaging 3.06 and international students averaging 3.29.

Faculty experience:

- Between 2006 and 2011, 31% of ULWR courses offered were taught by tenure-track faculty without GSIs, 42% were taught by lecturers or other non-tenure-track faculty with and without GSIs, and 27% were taught by tenure-track faculty and GSIs.
- Faculty express deep interest in student writing, but report obstacles in teaching ULWR courses related to the heavy workload of responding to student writing, competing course demands of balancing disciplinary content with writing instruction, and an often small departmental corps of ULWR instructors with whom to collaborate.
- GSI experiences vary within and between departments, depending upon the level of communication they share with the course's primary instructor, the support networks that exist with other GSIs in their department or the course, and the opportunities they are given for shaping writing instruction.

Upper-Level Writing Requirement

Writing instruction in ULWR courses:

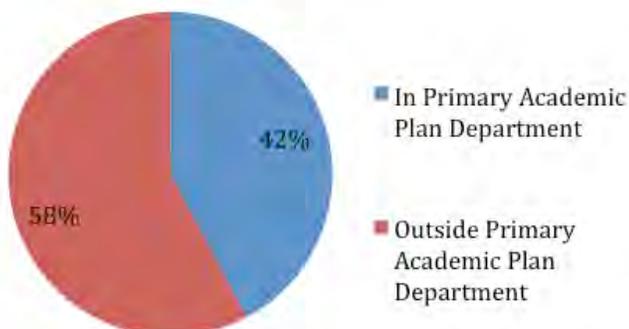
- Our analysis of ULWR syllabi and course proposals from 1978 to 2010 showed that while the number of ULWR courses offered has increased substantially (from 41 to 139 per term), the amount of required writing in these courses remains fairly constant at about 25 pages.
- At the same time, writing revision has become increasingly important, as has the use of peer response and collaborative writing.
- The use of digital forms of writing, such as blogs, podcasts, and even PowerPoint, is quite low in ULWR courses, with 64% of faculty in our survey reporting using no new media at all. As a result, we see a growing divide between student use of new media writing in their daily lives and their experiences in ULWR courses

In addition to substantially deepening our understanding of the ways upper-level writing in the disciplines is taught on our campus, this investigation has had the effect of strengthening our connections to individual departments across campus and reinvigorating a campus-wide discussion of the aims and means of the ULWR. Our report on the ULWR is designed to generate widespread conversation on campus with the goal of modifying a program that has distinguished UM for a long time in order to support the needs of advanced undergraduate writers for the next thirty years, and beyond.

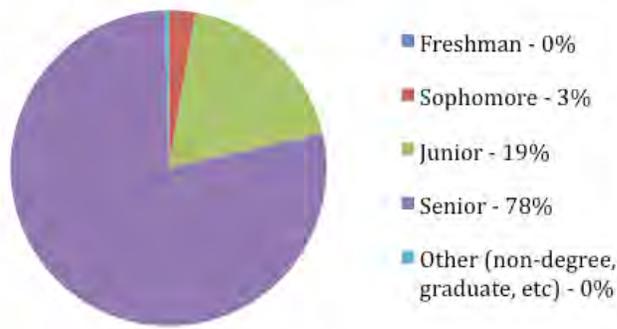
Sources of Data for Sweetland Review of the Upper-Level Writing Requirement:

- Institutional data about Upper-Level Writing Requirement (ULWR) courses from the years 2005 to 2011, used to create numerical portraits of each department's Upper-Level Writing Requirement offerings
- Meetings with representatives of the 33 departments offering Upper-Level Writing Requirement (ULWR) courses to discuss their numerical portraits, 2010-2011
- Analysis of 620 Upper-Level Writing Requirement (ULWR) course syllabi from 1978-2011
- Survey responses from 1700 students enrolled in ULWR courses and 250 ULWR instructors and GSIs, 2010-2012
- Divisionally representative focus groups with 13 ULWR students (in two groups), 8 ULWR GSIs, and 6 ULWR faculty, conducted by CRLT in 2011
- Divisionally representative interviews with 12 ULWR students, 6 ULWR GSIs, and 6 ULWR faculty, 2011-2012

Across LSA between W05-W10, students completed the ULWR as follows:



Across LSA between W05-W10, students enrolled in ULWR courses as follows:



Meet Our New Faculty and Staff

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Sarah Allison recently finished her Ph.D. in English at Stanford University, where she was an instructor in the Program in Writing and Rhetoric and a Teaching Fellow in the Introduction to the Humanities program. Sarah started teaching writing at U-M in June with the Summer Bridge Program, and is currently teaching Writing 100, as well as a course on *Pride and Prejudice* and film adaptation in the English Department Writing Program. Her research focuses on the intersection of ethics and style in the Victorian period.

Molly Bancroft earned her M.A. degree from Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in Media Studies, where her thesis focused on local indie rock scenes and labels in the context of a shifting global entertainment industry. Molly's eclectic background includes many years as leader of a successful touring rock band, as a songwriter with numerous TV placements and awards, and more recently, as a #1 Billboard charting vocalist and songwriter in collaborations with notable international DJs. However, she has also had many interesting "day jobs" at non-profit centers, newspapers, and in higher education, including stints at MIT Media Lab, UNC-Chapel Hill, and Emory University. Lastly, with a background in writing PR and advertising campaigns, Molly taught "Media Writing," as a GSI in the Journalism School at UWM during her Master's program.

Molly joined the Sweetland staff in July as the Undergraduate Program Coordinator, and is excited to be part of the inspiring efforts of the Center, as well as having the opportunity to explore the vibrant UM community.

Scott Beal earned his MFA in 1996 from the University of Michigan, where he taught first-year writing for the English department and the English Composition Board in the late 1990s. He has since taught poetry and fiction workshops at the Neutral Zone and 826michigan and served as a writer-in-the-schools for Dzanc Books in Ann Arbor and for InsideOut Literary Arts in Detroit. In 2011 he co-authored *Underneath: The Archaeological Approach to Creative Writing* with Jeff Kass (Red Beard Press).

Tricia Khleif received her MFA in fiction from the University of Michigan in 2011 and is working on a novel about politics, music, and family life in Syria. In her previous life, she studied French and Arabic literature, worked as an Arabic translator and archivist, performed and recorded with a folk-rock band in Washington, DC, and taught English (and English-through-karaoke) in Damascus, Syria. She is excited to join the Sweetland faculty.



Sarah Allison, Tricia Khleif, Scott Beal, Molly Bancroft, Elizabeth Gramm.

Elizabeth Gramm spent her formative years in Wisconsin. She received a BA in Environmental Studies from Vassar College and an MFA in poetry at the University of Michigan. Following a Zell Fellowship year at U of M, she taught first-year writing in the English Department Writing Program; she spent last year teaching English language and American culture in a small city in eastern Turkey. She no longer has daily access to the Black Sea, but she is very happy to be back in Ann Arbor.



Simone Sessolo earned his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at the University of Texas at Austin, where he was a University Continuing Fellow for the academic year 2011/12. There, he also served as a tutor and consultant supervisor at the Undergraduate Writing Center, and as the assistant editor of *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*. Simone's research investigates violence as a cultural phenomenon and a rhetorical act in contemporary literatures and cultures. At Sweetland, Simone particularly likes training new peer tutors in his Writing 300 class.



Aaron Valdez was born and raised in Houston, Texas. He received his BS in Radio, TV, and Film from the University of Texas in 1998. Since then he has worked in public radio, commercial video production, public access television, and as a commercial video editor. He most recently worked as an Instructional Technology Consultant at the ISS Media Center at UM.

Aaron is also an acclaimed film and video artist whose work has screened internationally. He is considered one of the founding fathers of internet video remix culture. Over the years he has also created and been involved with organizations that embrace and promote personal storytelling and DIY filmmaking, experimental film, as well as home movie preservation. Aaron joined the Sweetland staff in December as Communications Coordinator.

UNDERGRADUATE WRITING PRIZES

Sweetland Prize for Outstanding Writing Portfolio From WRITING 100: **Jiatu Liu**, "Untitled" (nominated by Gina Brandolino); from WRITING 100, **Clarissa Ortiz**, "Untitled" (nominated by Gina Brandolino)

Matt Kelley Prize for Excellence in First-Year Writing From HIST 195: **Sarah Leddon**, "The Public Woman's Guide to Getting By" (nominated by Sara Lampert); from GTBOOKS 191: **Margaret Scholten**, "Fate and Transition" (nominated by Sayan Bhattacharyya)

Sweetland Prize for Excellence in Upper-Level Writing (sciences) From ENVIRON 320: **Neil Gable**, "News Feature" (nominated by Emilia Askari); from EARTH 431: **Naomi Lewandowski**, "Human Impacts on Ecosystems: Comparing the Removal of the Gray Wolf (*Canis Lupus*) to the Introduction of Invasive Water Hyacinths (*Eichornia Crassipes*)" (nominated by Selena Smith)

Sweetland Prize for Excellence in Upper-Level Writing (social sciences) From ECON/PHIL 408: **Christian Keil**, "Newcomb's Problem and Expected Utility" (nominated by Frank Thompson); from POLSCI 381: **Seth Soderborg**, "The Effects of Conditional Cash Transfer Payments on Voter Support for the Partido dos Trabalhadores" (nominated by Rob Salmond)

Sweetland Prize for Excellence in Upper-Level Writing (humanities) From HIST 399: **Aaron Bekemeyer**, "Bringing the Revolution Home or Fulfilling the Law?" (nominated by John Carson); from ENGLISH 325: **Ryan Pavel**, "The Gun" (nominated by Alex Ralph)

Sweetland Writing Prize website:

www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/writingrequirements/writingprizes



Winners of the Sweetland Prize for Excellence in Upper-Level Writing



Winners of the Matt Kelley Prize for Excellence in First-Year Writing and faculty nominators

EXCELLING IN UPPER-LEVEL WRITING

One of the things Sweetland's review of the Upper-Level Writing Requirement revealed is that the grades of transfer students in ULWR courses are lower (3.06 vs. 3.46) than those of continuing students. This, combined with anecdotal reports of transfer students feeling overwhelmed by writing demands at UM and/or under-prepared for meeting writing requirements, led Sweetland to investigate how the Center might support transfer students.

After investigating the path followed by most transfer students and the resources available to them, Sweetland determined that it would be most helpful to offer a one-credit course that students can take prior to or while they are taking an ULWR course. **Writing 350**, offered for the first time in Fall Semester 2012, and taught by Louis Cicciarelli, one of the course developers, addresses the writing challenges students are experiencing and prepares them to participate in regular writing workshops both within and beyond the course. Here is the response of one student to the course:

My name is Sarah Stark and I am a new transfer student this semester at the University of Michigan. I transferred as a junior from Oakland University and I am studying secondary education with a focus in Spanish and history. I made the decision to take Writing 350 for several reasons. I have not been required to write many papers outside of the

Spanish language over the past few semesters, and I was nervous about what kind of writing would be required in my history and education courses. Coming to the University of Michigan can be intimidating, so I also took this class to get a better grasp on the expectations of upper-level writing at Michigan, and what to expect in future semesters.

So far this semester I have taken refuge in the Writing 350 course. It provides an open environment, giving students the opportunity to share their Michigan experiences and build on writing techniques pertaining to each student's own field of study. Not only are we able to focus on academic aspects of the University, but our weekly Insider Reports encourage students to share tips about the Ann Arbor lifestyle, including great places to eat, study, find academic resources, and relax. We are currently in the process of creating templates for good writing in various disciplines. I am looking forward to the presentations of these templates and learning the key expectations of different types of writing. I encourage students to take this course as I have found it to be an excellent resource in becoming acclimated to the University of Michigan inside and outside of the classroom.

INTEGRATING WRITING INTO GENERAL CHEMISTRY: A STUDY

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Nationwide, 50% of the students who enter college saying they will major in science, technology, engineering or math (STEM areas) move into another area of study. At the same time, PhD programs in many STEM areas must recruit internationally in order to find enough qualified applicants. Some research suggests that improving instruction in introductory science courses, particularly those that function as “gateway” courses, can increase the percentage of students who major in STEM areas.

With support from the Keck Foundation, Sweetland is conducting a study that will contribute to knowledge of this issue. Drawing on a body of research which shows that writing about a given subject increases learning in that area, this project has developed a process for integrating writing into Chemistry 130, the general chemistry course taken by many first-year students. Anne Ruggles Gere, Sweetland’s director, and Ginger Shultz, an instructor in the Department of Chemistry, are collaborating on this study, and their approach employs the Structured Study Group (SSG) model developed by Brian Coppola, a chemistry professor.

To prepare for this study Sweetland faculty members developed, in response to topics identified by colleagues in chemistry, writing assignments that ask students to explain key chemistry concepts to multiple audiences. For example, one assignment asks students to explain to a manufacturer of cellphone batteries how oxidation-reduction chemistry can help it produce a more effective battery. Another asks students to explain C.P. Snow’s summary of the three laws of thermodynamics (1. You cannot win; 2. You cannot break even; 3. You cannot get out of the game) to a friend who isn’t studying chemistry.

Students in Chemistry 130 volunteer to join small SSGs that are led by upper-division students in chemistry. Students in these small groups write regularly in response to assignments like the ones described above, and students who complete the semester-long group work receive an Honors designation on their course grade. The SSG leaders meet regularly with the study leaders to plan meetings, discuss assignments, and evaluate writing.

Each of the students in the SSG groups has completed a pre-test that included measures of writing ability and knowledge of chemistry, and these students will complete a post-test covering the same material. This information, combined with data about students’ pre-college background, performance in the course, and subsequent decisions about an area of concentration, will add to our understanding of whether and how writing can improve instruction in gateway STEM courses.



Tim Hedges is the winner of the 2012 Undergraduate English Association Distinguished Teaching Award.

This award is to recognize outstanding teaching by a faculty member and is voted on solely by undergraduate students.



Laura Schuyler is a winner of the Fall 2012 LSA Staff Spotlight Award.

This award celebrates the dedication and exemplary performance of individuals and work groups that deserve special recognition for their contribution to the successful operation of the College.

Meet our Graduate Student Research Assistants

Sarah Swofford



This summer, **Lizzie Hutton** began work at Sweetland as a Graduate Student Research Assistant. A second-year doctoral student in the Joint Program in English and Education, Lizzie is particularly interested in approaches to reading and literature in the undergraduate writing classroom. She is also thrilled to be back at Sweetland, where she was a long-time writing instructor before deciding to switch gears and pursue her Ph.D. Working with Lizzie are Sweetland’s two returning GSRA’s, **Christie Toth** and **Sarah Swofford**, fourth and third year doctoral students also in the Joint Program for English and Education. With financial support from Rackham and Sweetland, Christie completed two summer courses in survey methodology at the Institute for Social Research, contributing to Sweetland’s continuing interest in rigorous research methods. Now maintaining her Sweetland duties from afar, Christie is spending the fall term in the Southwest, collecting data for her dissertation research on tribal college writing pedagogy. Sarah’s interests center on how language ideologies affect the transitions of rural southern students from high school to college writing courses. Her recent Sweetland work has been particularly focused on the Upper-Level Writing Requirement study and an ongoing investigation of the effects of writing instruction in science courses. Sweetland’s research team also continues work on a number of other studies analyzing undergraduate student writing experiences at the University, ranging from first-year writing to disciplinary writing to the experiences of incoming transfer students.

Lizzie Hutton



FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Sarah Allison presented a paper titled "Terms of Engagement: Polemical Style in Victorian Fiction" at the American Comparative Literature Association in March. A pamphlet she co-authored with other members of the Stanford Literary Lab was republished in the Winter 2012 issue of *n+1*.

Julie Babcock was nominated for a Pushcart Prize and a BEN Prize for Excellence in Teaching. This fall, she is teaching a course entitled "Creative Arts and Community" for the Michigan Community Scholars Program that situates writing within interdisciplinary fieldwork. Her poetry was accepted or appeared in *Plume, Bateau, The Bakery, Gargoyle, The Journal, Sou'wester, and Slipstream*.

Scott Beal performed his poems in six states and had poems published or forthcoming in the online journals *The Collagist, Poemeleon, and the museum of americana*, and in the 826Michigan anthology *What to Read in the Mitten*. His poetry manuscript was a finalist in 2012 for the Lena-Miles Wever Todd Poetry Prize from Pleiades Press and the ABZ Press first book prize.

Gina Brandolino co-edited with Nate Smith (Central Michigan University) a special issue of the journal *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture*, to be released in March. This special issue includes nine articles on the topic of "Teaching Medieval Literature Off the Grid," exploring a diverse range of pedagogical approaches and specific strategies for including non-canonical medieval literary texts in the classroom. Brandolino's article, "Teaching Innocent's Legacy: Middle English Texts for Commoners," is included in the issue. She will deliver a brownbag lecture at Indiana University titled "After Ballantine: Academic Jobs on and off the Tenure Track." This past summer she mentored two students for the Summer Research Opportunity Program (SROP), which serves students under-represented in academia, offering them mentoring and other assistance as they consider pursuing graduate degrees.

Elizabeth Gramm spent the last year connecting with Turkish students, celebrating Kurban Bayram among the fairy chimneys of Cappadocia, ringing in the new year in Istanbul, and experiencing springtime amidst the ruins of the ancient Armenian capital, Ani, enjoying the food and about a million cups of very strong sweet tea. Gramm's poem "The Sound of It, Spring" was published in *Boston Review* and subsequently reprinted in *Poetry Daily* and a playbill for the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center. Her discussion of Louise Bogan's poem "Medusa" was featured in *Poetry Daily's* Poetry Month Picks.

Tim Hedges received the 2012 Undergraduate English Association Distinguished Teaching Award. His story "Civil Twilight" appeared in the 2013 *Pushcart Prize Anthology*, and his poems appeared in the spring issue of the *Emerson Review*. In connection with the Pushcart Prize, he was awarded a fellowship by the Jentel Artist Residency Program in Wyoming. Most importantly, in September, he and his wife welcomed their second son, Milo.

T Hetzel held a gallery event with her "Composing with Images" class in North Quad called "How We See It: Michigan Revealed," featuring photo essays, short video essays, and other visual artifacts. Her Lloyd Hall Scholars Program 230 class created masks and characters to become "surrealist brigades," marching in the April Festivals parade. This coming winter Hetzel will attend the Association of Writers & Writing Programs in Boston as part of a panel titled "Creative Convergences: Integrating the Arts and Technology in the Writing Classroom." She recently spoke with Pulitzer Prize winner and former Poet Laureate Philip Levine as host for "Living Writers" on WCBN FM.

Jamie Jones completed a Summer Faculty Institute on the topic of "The American Maritime People" in Mystic, Connecticut. Summer Faculty Institutes are funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and bring together scholars at different stages in their careers to advance their research and participate in a seminar. She also published an article in *The New York Times Online*, titled "The Navy's Stone Fleet," that describes an episode in Civil War history.

Dave Karczynski received the 2012 Robert Traver Award for outdoor writing. His essays have recently appeared in *Fly Rod & Reel* and *The Flyfish Journal*.

Tricia Khleif recently completed a Zell Postgraduate Fellowship in Creative Writing for 2011-2012 and received a MacDowell Colony Fellowship for the summer of 2012.

Shelley Manis had two reviews of edited collections published: on Baz Kershaw and Helen Nicholson's Research Methods in *Theatre and Performance* (in the current issue of *Theatre Topics*), and on Steven Cohan's *The Sound of Musicals* (in *The Quarterly Review of Film and Video*). Her essay "Cain's Grave, Ground Zero, and 'History's Unmarked Grave of Discarded Lies': The Question of Hospitality to the Other in *Homebody/Kabul*" will appear in the fall 2012 edition of *The Journal of American Theater and Drama*.

Raymond McDaniel published his third book of poetry, *Special Powers and Abilities* (Coffee House Press), and had work anthologized in *The New American Poetry of Engagement* (McFarland). He participated in a panel discussion at the Associated Writing Programs annual conference in Chicago about long-form online criticism and the critical persona. He developed a new media course that focuses on the history and technique of remix, and also helped develop the standards for the Capstone course for the Sweetland Minor in Writing.

Jennifer Metsker presented a paper at the Conference on College Composition and Communication titled "What Does Writing Look Like? Process as Product in Eportfolios."

Christine Modey and her Michigan Community Scholars Program English 125 class collaborated on a cookbook with Detroit non-profit Neighbors Building Brightmoor and Art & Design students from Professor Hannah Smotrich's Detroit Connections: Design Collaboration class. The cookbook was published in June 2012. This semester, the class is working with the Ann Arbor Farmers Market to develop the Farmers Market Oral History Project.

Lila Naydan held a Sweetland Senior Fellowship in 2012. She collaborated with undergraduate peer tutors, graduate students, and faculty to present at the 2012 Northeast Writing Centers Association Conference and at the 2012 Michigan Writing Centers Association Conference. *LIT: Literature Interpretation Theory* published her article, "Apocalyptic Cycles in Don DeLillo's *Underworld*."

Dana Nichols has a forthcoming review essay in *Academe: Magazine of the AAUP* on composition history entitled, "Composition in the Sixties: What History Has to Teach Us About Writing Instruction Today."

Simone Sessolo organized the panel "The Violence of Economics and the Economics of Violence" at the American Comparative Literature Association in March, where he also presented a paper. This year he edited the special section "The Logic of Violence" in *The E3W Review of Books*, where he also published a review of Willem Schinkel's *Aspects of Violence: A Critical Theory* (2010). His most recent article, "An Epic of Riots: The Multitude as Hero in Handsworth Songs," is forthcoming in *The Journal of Popular Culture*.

Carol Tell collaborated with Lizzie Hutton, T Hetzel, Rebecca Manery, and Jennifer Metzker on a panel, "Creative Convergences: Integrating the Arts and Technology in the Writing Classroom," accepted for presentation at the Association of Writers & Writing Programs' 2013 Conference. She organized a variety of events celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Pilot Program/ Lloyd Hall Scholars Program, including a panel discussion on Michigan Learning Communities, October 2012.

SWEETLAND BULLETIN BOARD

FOR MORE SWEETLAND NEWS BULLETINS, PLEASE VISIT: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/aboutus/news>

Try Sweetland's Synchronous Online Writing Lab (syncOWL)!

Sweetland Peer Tutors offer synchronous online tutoring through the SyncOWL:

- Get support for your writing, no matter your location
- Experience virtual, walk-in tutoring using Google+ Hangouts
- Share a view of your paper & video chat with a peer tutor

To find out more and to get instructions on how to submit your paper, go to gplus.to/sweetlandsyncowl.

How I Write

FEBRUARY 12TH & MARCH 12TH / 6:30PM / 2435 NO

How I Write is a monthly speaker series featuring local authors, academics and community members discussing their successes and struggles with the writing process. All events are free, open to the public, and conclude with informal discussion and Q&A. Past speakers include: science writer Thomas Hager; Evans Young, Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education; Oran Hesterman, author of *Fair Food Network*; and Ann Arbor slam poet Jeff Kass.

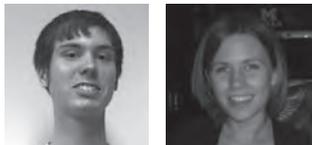
A note from Sweetland's Summer Interns

Interning at Sweetland provided us with the opportunity to develop professionally in an extremely supportive setting. Our projects were meaningful and challenging, and allowed us to be creative in shaping them. We feel that the work we completed over the summer provides a real benefit to the Sweetland community and the students we serve.

A major component of the internship involved rethinking Sweetland's digital presence. Taking advantage of the Google apps now available to the University of Michigan, we redesigned the Online Writing Lab (OWL) and the Synchronous Online Writing Lab (SyncOWL) to streamline everyone's experience and avoid the technical glitches the old systems presented. The SyncOWL is now a convenient "walk-in" service powered by Google+. Wherever they may be, students can chat with a SyncOWL tutor on duty, then connect over video and share a view of their paper. These virtual options will make our friendly and professional Sweetland tutors available to a greater audience.

We had access to an archive of select audio recordings of past tutorials and from these made several podcasts, which anyone will be able to listen to from Sweetland's website. The podcasts range in topic from tutoring unfamiliar genres to social justice in the writing center.

We also represented Sweetland's peer tutoring services at a number of events and set up the social media and faculty writing events for the National Day on Writing. We hope to have left many resources that future peer tutors and interns can use and build on.



Drake Misk and Rachel Seltz

We're thankful for a great experience as the 2012 interns and would like to especially thank Naomi, Colleen, Lila, Teri, Laura, Molly, T, Chase Masters, Diana Perpich, and Scott Williams, all of whom helped us accomplish all we were able to accomplish.

Upper-Level Writing Course Proposal Workshop

FEBRUARY 15TH, 2013 / 10AM-12PM
1313 NORTH QUAD

The Sweetland Center for Writing will host a faculty workshop for any faculty members who are proposing courses for the Upper-Level Writing Requirement (ULWR). At this hands-on workshop, participants will receive feedback on their proposals, meet with experienced ULWR faculty, learn about available ULWR instructor resources and support, and explore best practices in the teaching of writing in the disciplines.

Workshop on Teaching Collaborative Writing

FEBRUARY 21ST, 2013 / 2-4PM
1013 PALMER COMMONS

During this workshop, co-sponsored by CRLT, experienced faculty will share the innovative ways they incorporate collaborative writing in their classes. Participants will discuss logistical and pedagogical considerations as they discover how collaborating can help students develop as writers. Resources on how to structure and assess collaboration will be provided.