

## CHAPTER 38.

# THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK: THE IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT OF WAC/WID IN A MULTI-CAMPUS U.S. URBAN UNIVERSITY

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*This profile will examine the ongoing WAC initiative at the City University of New York, the largest public urban higher education institution in the US and among the most diverse in students' language and cultural backgrounds. The essay provides an overview of WAC at CUNY's 23 campuses, including description of its unique Writing Fellows program, which employs PhD candidates from across disciplines. The authors give special focus to the implementation and impact of WAC principles and practices at two campuses: Hostos Community College, an urban, bilingual community college located in the south Bronx, one of New York City's poorest neighborhoods; and Hunter College, a senior college in mid-Manhattan with graduate programs and four professional graduate schools drawing students from throughout the City. As WAC Coordinators who were present at the inception of the now ten-year CUNY Initiative, we examine the insights gleaned from our experiences as well as the challenges and successes of this vast undertaking.*

The City University of New York is the largest urban public university system in the United States, with a mission to provide access to quality higher education for the full range of the city's inhabitants, regardless of income, gender, or ethnic background. It serves more than 480,000 students at 23 colleges and institutions in New York City, including 11 senior colleges, six community

colleges, the Macauley Honors College, the Graduate Center, and Graduate Schools of Journalism, Law, Professional Studies, and Public Health.

The university serves a diverse student body representing 205 countries, with African-American, white, and Hispanic undergraduates each comprising more than a quarter of the student body. According to CUNY statistics, 47% of undergraduates have a native language other than English, 41% work more than 20 hours a week, 63% attend school full time and 15% support children. Nearly 60% are female and 29% are 25 or older. Of first-time freshmen, 37% were born outside the US mainland and nearly 70% attended New York City public high schools.

It is against this background of an urban, multi-campus, diverse student body that CUNY sought to strengthen its students' writing proficiencies. Recognizing the vital role that writing plays both in a college education and in future academic and professional success, the CUNY Board of Trustees passed a resolution in 1999 establishing a CUNY-wide Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Initiative, which mandated that writing instruction be a University-wide responsibility and that writing proficiency become "a focus of the entire undergraduate curriculum" (<http://policy.cuny.edu/text/toc/btm/1999/01-25>). To bring its ambitious plan to fruition, the initiative was linked to a CUNY Writing Fellows Program, thereby placing CUNY doctoral students on each of the member campuses to assist in project execution.

This chapter will examine the breadth and depth of the CUNY-wide WAC Initiative by providing an overview of WAC at CUNY's campuses, followed by a special focus on the implementation and impact of WAC principles and practices at two campuses: Hostos Community College, an urban, bilingual community college located in the south Bronx, one of New York City's poorest neighborhoods; and Hunter College, a senior college in mid-Manhattan with graduate programs and four professional graduate schools drawing students from throughout the City. As WAC Coordinators who were present at the inception of the now ten-year CUNY Initiative, we examine the insights gleaned from our experiences as well as the challenges and successes of this vast undertaking.

## WAC AT CUNY

In order to contextualize the WAC and Writing in the Disciplines (WID) programs at Hostos and Hunter, a brief description of CUNY's WAC Initiative, drawn from campus WAC web sites, reveals what may be common to all as well as particular interests and accomplishments of each.

While each CUNY campus has developed its own WAC initiative responsive to its particular institutional needs, the CUNY Writing Fellow is common to all. These advanced CUNY Ph.D. students represent a range of disciplines and are assigned to each of the undergraduate campuses and the CUNY Law School. Their duties are as varied as the campuses and may include collaborating with faculty on curriculum and assignments; tutoring students to develop writing abilities; supporting student preparation for entrance and exit writing-related exams; conducting faculty development workshops; developing and maintaining WAC websites; and undertaking research into aspects of WAC at CUNY. (For a description of the Writing Fellowship program and links to Fellow job descriptions, see <http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/ue/wac.html>.)

This reliance on graduate PhD students rather than traditional undergraduate writing fellows, mentors, or associates is a unique aspect of the CUNY WAC Initiative that allows for greater flexibility in how Writing Fellows serve a program—while at the same time presenting new challenges and profound pedagogical shifts for both faculty and Fellows. The Writing Fellow/faculty collaborations have had a singular transformative effect on pedagogy and the future of the profession, by providing a professional development model for others engaged in similar academic initiatives (Hirsch & Fabrizio, 2010).

CUNY WAC programs' pedagogical underpinnings derive from a broad range of theorists and compositionists who view writing as a mode of communication and as a heuristic: a means of analyzing, understanding, and assimilating course material. They rely on a number of bibliographic sources, with many using John Bean's *Engaging Ideas* as a primary faculty development text. The Brooklyn College WAC Bibliography (<http://bcwac.wordpress.com>) is representative of the principles undergirding WAC at CUNY.

In essence, WAC programs at CUNY are a variation on a theme. Most campus WAC programs are coordinated with General Education or Coordinated Undergraduate Education (CUE) Initiatives. Almost all rely on Writing Fellow/faculty collaborations to assist faculty in integrating writing into their courses, develop and certify Writing Intensive (WI) courses, and provide opportunities for professional development. Programs are supervised by one or more WAC Coordinators from a number of disciplines (most frequently from the English department); the Coordinators attend monthly meetings with the University Dean for Undergraduate Education. Exchange of ideas, creation of University-wide Fellows' professional development activities, and collaboration on communal efforts such as assessment are functions of these meetings.

Program undertakings are also determined by local circumstances. For example, Baruch College, the university's "business school," situates WAC within its Bernard L. Schwartz Communication Institute and has focused on develop-

ing instructional media such as weblogs and wikis. Most senior colleges, including Lehman, Brooklyn, and John Jay, support the development of Writing in the Disciplines (WID) with the aim of customizing WAC practices to the needs of specific disciplines. At the CUNY Law School, Writing Fellows helped create and staff the Writing Center and work with post-baccalaureate professional students in presenting legal writing. LaGuardia Community College works extensively with electronic (e-) portfolios and quantitative writing assessment. Most programs engage in WAC research. Of particular interest to compositionists is the work done at Medgar Evers College. Drawing on James Britton's seminal *The Development of Writing Abilities*, Medgar Evers undertook a full-year research survey of writing at the college resulting in "WAC: A College Snapshot," in *Urban Education*, January, 2003. The CUNY site, <http://www.cuny.edu/wac> has links to all campus WAC sites as well as a report, *Writing Across the Curriculum at CUNY: A Ten Year Review*, which provides further programmatic details on WAC activities, WI requirements, and governance structures at each campus.

### **WAC AT HOSTOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE: STRENGTHENING UNDERGRADUATE WRITING PROFICIENCIES**

Hostos Community College is an urban, bilingual college of 5,000 students established in 1968 to serve the needs of New York City's impoverished South Bronx community. Its mission is to provide educational opportunities for first and second-generation Hispanics, African Americans, and other New York City residents who have encountered significant barriers to education. Its student population is diverse and poor, with the largest numbers coming from the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Central and South America. Nearly 99% receive some form of financial aid. In addition to offering a rich liberal arts curriculum and career programs, Hostos, as the university's only bilingual college, permits English-language learners to enroll in Spanish-language college-level courses as they gain proficiency in English. Fifty-five percent of freshmen require developmental composition and 43% require developmental reading courses, thus posing particular challenges for a college implementing a WAC program.

While the college attracts many students to its two-year terminal-degree career programs, the majority plan on transferring to a four-year institution. Campus writing efforts focus on developing student ability to read and write proficiently in a variety of disciplines and genres including the changing forms

of twenty-first century literacies such as blogs, wikis, and social networking sites. The College seeks to validate and draw on the diverse languages and dialects spoken by its students, including English-language learners (ELLs), students speaking Black Vernacular English (BVE), and Generation 1.5 language-learners. Recognizing that students must be adept in standard academic English if they are to succeed, the WAC program works with faculty to seek ways to reconcile students' language strengths and deficits. In accordance with its bilingual mission, the WAC Initiative also reaches out to faculty teaching courses in Spanish, so that these faculty are part of the campus-wide process of developing effective teaching practices, and so that students in these classes can further their Spanish-language writing skills and utilize principles of "writing-to-learn."

### WRITING AT HOSTOS

The Hostos WAC Initiative reflects the university-wide philosophy that writing ability can only be developed through extensive writing practice across a broad range of academic experiences and that writing itself is a way of enhancing student comprehension of course material. WAC is situated throughout the college, encompassing developmental programs, ESL, liberal arts, the allied health professions, and dual degree Programs. Writing is encouraged at all levels of a student's academic experience: (1) generally throughout the curriculum, and (2) in specially designed "writing intensive" (WI) courses.

The development of WI courses that provide opportunities for both formal and informal writing has been a key component of WAC at Hostos. Students must complete two WI sections prior to graduation. (See <http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/wac> for a description of WI criteria and policies.) Having no such courses at the start of the University Initiative in 1999, the college currently offers 80 WI sections representing a wide range of disciplines and levels. Unlike senior colleges, which usually require that WI courses be upper-level, Hostos and some other community colleges permit students at the developmental English-level to enroll in selected WIs; these allow for early exposure to more complex writing tasks. Preferring to rely largely on full-time faculty, each department and academic program offers WI sections taught by the faculty who created them. WI sections are deemed highly valuable for their introduction to WID and for providing greater assurance that faculty are prepared to deal with WAC issues such as "covering the curriculum," "handling the paper load," and balancing the writing/multiple-choice testing requirements of accreditation agencies.

Yet from the outset the program's philosophy has been that students are best served when writing is not compartmentalized into WI sections and that

opportunities for writing should be prevalent in all course offerings. The WAC Initiative encourages all faculty to collaborate with Writing Fellows to embed writing and reading into course work.

The amount and type of student writing varies by discipline. Along with electives, the English Department offers courses in developmental writing and freshman composition, and through collaboration with WAC is exploring ways of refining these courses to provide foundations for writing in other disciplines. Students are expected to write not only essays and research papers; through WI sections in certain disciplines they are exposed to such genres as lab reports in the sciences, lesson plans and observations in early childhood education, field reports and interviews in psychology and sociology, theater reviews in drama, and case studies in business and nursing. In addition, students may keep journals or logs and engage in other informal, non-graded writing activities.

As on most CUNY campuses, much of the success of developing WI sections, as well as incorporating WAC principles and practices, is the result of close collaborations between faculty and Writing Fellows. Hostos Writing Fellow responsibilities reflect the many seamless, and oftentimes unforeseen, ways in which Writing Fellows support the growth of student literacies and faculty receptiveness to changing pedagogies. Their influence extends beyond their work with individual faculty and reaches into areas including program assessment, workshops for students and faculty, and podcasts and library workshops on topics such as the research paper and avoiding plagiarism

A strength of any program is its ability to accommodate shifting priorities. The recognition of the pedagogical connections between reading and writing led to the Initiative's evolution from a Writing Across the Curriculum project to one that encompasses reading as well. As a result, in 2005 the program took on the in-house title of Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum (WRAC), resulting in even-greater curricular revisions.

Over the past ten years, the Hostos WAC project has sought to connect writing and reading with teaching and learning, and to develop a cadre of faculty from a variety of disciplines who are familiar and comfortable with principles of language-across-the-curriculum. Yet it came as no surprise that with the university's emphasis on high-stakes testing for exit from remediation, English Department faculty initially felt the greatest responsibility for improving student writing.

Faculty attitudes began to shift dramatically with the creation of the CUNY Proficiency Exam (CPE) in 2001. Its mandate as a community college graduation requirement (or movement from General Education to the major in the senior colleges) resulted in campus-wide recognition that the exam's emphasis on reading and writing across disciplines reflected sound pedagogical practice—

and that all departments were accountable for student success. Though the CPE was discontinued by the university's Board of Trustees in November 2010, the notion of broad faculty responsibility for student writing frames much of our work. The implications of the removal of this exam are yet to be determined.

At Hostos, funding for WAC activities derives from the college's allocation of the university's budget for Coordinated Undergraduate Education (CUE). Though funding for WAC is mandated in principle by CUE, each college may now determine the actual amounts given to WAC programs. In the face of city and state budget crises, the college's CUE allocation continues to diminish—including funding for WAC. Class size for WI sections, originally capped at 25, grows each semester with 27-28 students the current norm. The college provides funding for stipends for faculty engaged in WAC work (which have decreased from an average of \$1,500-2,000 for a year's work to \$500-1,000), for professional development and reassigned time for the two WAC Coordinators. The two-course WI requirement for graduation remains in effect, with waivers requiring approval by the WAC Coordinators. Administrative support is also reflected in support for campus-wide WAC activities such as Hostos involvement in National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) National Day on Writing in 2009 and 2010, events which drew huge campus participation. (See <http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/wac> or YouTube for a video on our "Walls of Writing.")

## AGENT FOR CHANGE

After a decade, the WAC Initiative has become increasingly integrated into the life of the college, fostering campus-wide dialogues on writing/reading and learning and becoming an agent for change as it encourages teachers to reflect upon their teaching practices and reshape pedagogies. The success and growth of the Initiative may be traced to its ever expanding role in strengthening undergraduate education by working closely with other college programs.

The English Department and the Department of Language and Cognition hold frequent course-level meetings to discuss student literacies and work closely with the Writing Center (WC). Writing Fellows often attend these meetings to provide an interdisciplinary perspective. Through WAC collaboration, plans are underway to provide greater integration of the WC with courses throughout the curriculum, and Fellows are providing workshops for WC tutors in elements of WID. Overall, the WAC Initiative encourages frequent dialogue among faculty to explore ways of fostering student growth as writers and readers by: (1) offering regularly scheduled professional development workshops



throughout the academic year (on topics similar to those described at Hunter below) including ones for junior, adjunct, and evening faculty; (2) meeting with the WAC Advisory Committee composed of Department Chairs to determine WAC policies; (3) over-seeing the ad-hoc WI faculty Task-Force, which meets with colleagues who have designed WI syllabi to review and recommend them for WI designation; and (4) joining faculty in presenting WI syllabi to the college-wide Curriculum Committee for official WI designation. All of these avenues have resulted in conversations about writing that move beyond the English Department and beyond complaints about student writing to more fruitful discussions about effectively addressing these concerns.

## VISION AND REVISION

In reviewing the past ten years of WAC at Hostos, there are moments of pride and also dismay. We have learned a great deal about what makes a successful WAC Initiative. Foremost is faculty support. Our model has been bottom-up and relies on working with interested faculty, an ever-widening circle over the decade. The WI requirement is viewed as an enrollment booster for WI classes; this results in greater faculty participation. We have created structures to institutionalize our work, including the WAC Advisory Committee and our insistence on going through college governance procedures on policies such as the conceptual frameworks of WIs and the graduation requirement. The congeniality of the WI Task-Force provides an environment conducive to open discussion of pedagogy and has led to much thoughtful conversation and assignment revision. Our experience indicates that many faculty are no more enthused than students about revising their work, and they benefit greatly from this non-judgmental opportunity to present their work to interested colleagues.

In addition to providing numerous avenues for faculty input and dialogue, the Hostos WAC Initiative also owes much of its success to its high visibility on campus through its integration with numerous campus agencies and initiatives including General Education, freshman composition, the library, workshops for mandated CUNY exams, professional development, the Writing Center, Freshman Academies, and College Now, a program for high school students taking college courses. In addition, publicizing our work through our website, videos, podcasts, manuals, and a newsletter, "From the Writing Desk," have contributed to the program's strength and viability.

The project also undertakes yearly formative and summative assessments by distributing and analyzing qualitative survey instruments to students and



faculty and triangulating these with Writing Fellow assessments. These findings, shared with faculty and administrators, consistently reveal high satisfaction and perceived improvements in student writing as a result of enrollment in WI sections. The higher CPE pass rates for those taking WI sections have also provided quantitative support for the Initiative. All of these factors have resulted in college-wide authority and support for our work and have enabled us to avoid the “WAC-police” label too often assigned to WAC programs.

### **GROWING PAINS**

Our great success with WI sections over the past ten years reminds us of the need to insure their vitality. Though faculty must attend professional development sessions and collaborate with a Writing Fellow for a section to receive WI designation, it is not easy to determine what happens over time as faculty teach the same WI year after year. Many CUNY campuses are grappling with how to maintain the integrity of these sections and insure that they still reflect WAC principles and practices such as opportunity for revision and informal “writing-to-learn” activities. Changes in pedagogy are hard-won, and student assessments indicate that in some WI sections there is not that much writing after all—with some faculty reverting to non-scaffolded, plagiarism prone, end-of-semester research papers as the primary writing activity. The WAC Coordinators are currently consulting with Chairs and Coordinators, the WAC Advisory Committee, and WI faculty to institute procedures to monitor the implementation of these sections over a period of time. Any recommendations will reflect broad faculty input and will go through college governance procedures. In this way we continue to insure that new requirements are faculty generated rather than imposed top-down and that the WAC Initiative maintains the faculty support crucial to its success.

With high pass rates on the university’s CPE and ever-improving scores on the ACT reading and writing exams needed to exit remediation, the college would seem poised to have achieved many of its goals regarding student writing. There is a campus culture that acknowledges the value of writing and reading across the curriculum, as well as qualitative and quantitative measures demonstrating faculty and student satisfaction with WI sections. There are also increased opportunities for reading and writing in non-WI sections. Professional development sessions are well-attended, and campus participation in WAC events is broad and enthusiastic. Yet it would be impossible to conclude that our work is completed and that we are satisfied with student writing/reading proficiencies. Inexperienced readers and writers, our students still demonstrate a lack of ease and expertise in accessing difficult texts and demonstrating their

comprehension and knowledge through writing. As our section on Hunter College indicates, student proficiency issues are by no means fully resolved upon admission to the four-year college. Upon transfer, many still struggle with senior college coursework and its greater expectations of writing and reading proficiencies. We have made great strides and have laid the foundation for a vast overhaul in how the teaching of writing is conceived and practiced at Hostos, but our work has only just begun.

## WAC AT HUNTER COLLEGE

On every CUNY campus, in every WAC program, there are impressive examples of Fellows' success in managing this unique and challenging position and making a difference in the delivery of higher education's most prized outcomes: pedagogical and curricular change, and student success. The exemplary successes of the WAC program at Hunter (<http://rwc.hunter.cuny.edu/wac/index.html>), one of CUNY's senior colleges, are due primarily to the Writing Fellows.

Hunter College, located in three campuses in Manhattan, is the largest college in the City University system, drawing over 21,000 students from all five of the city's boroughs and beyond. The college is one of seven CUNY institutions offering undergraduate and graduate degrees; it houses professional schools of Education, Health Professions, Nursing, and Social Work, as well as research centers specializing in genetics, gerontology, and Puerto Rican studies.

Founded in 1870 and for much of its history a women's college, Hunter shares the City University's mission: to provide academic opportunities for all of the City's students. And it therefore shares the challenges of the country's major institutions of public higher education: maintaining standards of learning across a large and varied curriculum for a large and diverse student population, and maintaining standards of instruction among a large (in Hunter's case nearly 1,700) and varied faculty, a substantial percentage of whom are part-time staff. Since the majority of courses in Hunter's curriculum require writing from a student body that comes from well over a hundred different linguistic backgrounds and exhibits a wide range of fluency in the English language and experience in writing academic prose; and since the instructors of those courses are from dozens of disciplines, often with limited experience assigning and assessing student writing, and less experience analyzing those assignments and assessments, the challenges to our Writing Across the Curriculum program are, as at Hostos, unsurprisingly large, diverse, and daunting.

## “SIGNIFICANT WRITING”

Hunter College has had a WAC program since 2000, and required writing intensive courses—called “Significant Writing” courses—since 2003. While most CUNY campuses certify writing intensive courses or faculty, Hunter does not, and therefore cannot require faculty development. The Significant Writing, or “W” course, requirements legislated by the College Senate are minimal: at least 50% of the grade must be based on written work; writing due dates must allow for “faculty feedback” on student writing; Freshman Composition must be at least a co-requisite; and the course must be offered on a regular basis. Given these requirements and the historical role of departments at the college in determining curriculum, individual departments—often individual instructors—determine the content of and pedagogy practiced in W-designated courses. There is no interdisciplinary WAC Committee, and the program has no basis from which to claim any college-wide authority. One consequence of this policy is that there is no set cap for enrollment in “W” courses, and while the optimal number of students in a writing-intensive course is debatable, such courses at Hunter can have up to 90 students per instructor. And while most of the over 900 sections of the roughly 200 Significant Writing courses offered in a standard semester are taught by experienced staff, many are taught by new and often inexperienced instructors. It is not uncommon that, given registration and hiring deadlines, instructors are placed in “W” courses without a clear idea of what that designation means, or indeed that they are teaching a writing-intensive course. To say nothing of courses throughout the curriculum that require student writing though they are not W-designated.

## THE USUAL SUSPECTS

Under these circumstances, the WAC program at Hunter has, over its first ten years, offered instructors of all courses, particularly targeting “W” courses, a menu of services and professional development opportunities, including workshop series and brown-bag lunches on academic writing-related issues such as assignment design, rubric development, and managing sentence-level problems in student writing; a one-day college conference and a college-wide roundtable on Writing in the Disciplines; consultation with departments and individual instructors on departmental and course-related writing issues; in-class workshops on specific writing assignments in conjunction with the college’s Reading/Writing Center, as well as supplemental in-Center workshops on disciplinary and assignment-specific adaptations of the academic writing process; participation in interdisciplinary focus groups and departmental consultation on program

and course assessment; and orientations for students on disciplinary writing and for faculty on standardized writing tests, specifically the now discontinued CPE, and on the foundations of academic writing as presented in Expository Writing, the college's Freshman Composition course.

The program offers faculty stipends for participating in professional development events, but the hourly rates are limited, leading to the welcome participation by part-time instructors and a core of Hunter faculty dedicated to progressive pedagogy, who have by now become "the usual suspects." The incorporation of funding for WAC in the university's Coordinated Undergraduate Education (CUE) Initiatives budget and therefore in the college's CUE budget has led to other responsibilities and opportunities for Hunter's program. Since the inception of CUE, the WAC program has supported and participated in college initiatives, including a Learning Communities pilot in the Freshman Block program, an e-portfolio pilot in Freshman Composition, a study and proposal for reorganization of the General Education Requirement (GER), and a diagnostic essay and Reading/Writing Center referral pilot in GER gateway "W" courses in History and Political Science.

### THE WRITING FELLOWS

But by far the most transforming and enduring effects on course and curriculum design, classroom pedagogy, and student learning are those attributable to the work of the CUNY Writing Fellows. As discussed earlier, Fellows' roles differ from campus to campus, but generally, at Hunter and elsewhere, they provide consultation on WAC best practices to faculty and, in some, cases, tutorial services to students. Three narratives from the Writing Fellows Program at Hunter College give ample evidence of the capacity and potency of this model.

In 2001, a Writing Fellow PhD candidate in American Literature was assigned, upon request, to the Urban Public Health (UPH) Department in the Hunter College School of Health Sciences. The Fellow, working with the Department's Community Health Education (COMHE) program, well outside his field of academic expertise, would make a profound change in that program's curriculum. Besides offering tutorial services, he introduced COMHE faculty to low-stakes writing assignments, e.g., responses to readings, weekly letters, article summaries/analyses, and reading logs, leading to changes in their syllabi, the incorporation of peer critiquing and library workshops on informational literacy skills in their classes, and the scaffolding of higher-stakes assignments. Impressed with the changes effected in their individual courses, the UPH faculty asked the Fellow in his second year to help organize a study of

their students' writing, leading to the development of shared writing goals, a rubric, the norming, led by the Writing Fellow, of senior UPH faculty using the assessment model, and the scoring of sample papers. After the experience, and in consultation with the Fellow, UPH professors re-conceptualized the undergraduate course of study in the COMHE Program, ultimately adding a course with a focus on research to the required curriculum, which then offered a more comprehensive, progressive approach to writing in the discipline. So the outcome of working with a Writing Fellow for the Urban Public Health Department was not just the introduction of WAC pedagogy and course adaptation, but programmatic change.

Humanities 110: Map of Knowledge is one of the college's "jumbo" courses, with enrollments often over 200 students. As taught for the last decade by a professor in the Philosophy Department, the course focuses on current issues in social policy and academia, takes a debate structure, and includes a number of critical writing assignments. Through the efforts of four different Writing Fellows, the development of the course and its writing component over three-quarters of that decade is an example of the ongoing refinement and improvement possible in a pedagogical model, even for a "jumbo" course. The first Fellow, from CUNY's graduate English Department, helped the professor clarify the grading criteria for the written debate reports and present them clearly in the assignments, and introduced a syllabus-busting "mock debate" format, in which class time was dedicated to student debate on a topic, to model break-out debates among the rest of the class. The Fellow also led an in-class workshop based on the reports submitted in the mock debate to demonstrate the features and quality of writing required. After her two-year appointment, a second Fellow, from Urban Education, was assigned to work with the course. In her service as a Fellow, she helped refine the criteria for writing assessment through norming sessions among the course's teaching assistants and the development of a rubric based on the refinements; added a critique element as well as a revision process to the debate report assignment, with workshop and tutoring support adapted to the new assignment design; and aligned documentation requirements for the class's research paper with the style (MLA) required in Freshman Composition (which is often taught in tandem with sections of Humanities 110 in the college's Freshman Block Program). A third Fellow, studying Environmental Psychology, continued this work while loading all the information and support materials onto the newly-developed course website. The current Fellow, another Urban Education student, is piloting a model for integrating the course's writing component with the features and goals of Freshman Composition, creating a team-led interdisciplinary series of workshops for students taking both courses. In the eight years a Writing Fellow has been assigned to

Map of Knowledge, this large-enrollment course has become more student-centered and participatory, its assignments more process-oriented and supportive, its assessment models clearer and more consistently applied, the course itself more interdisciplinary and integrated into the curriculum.

In 2007, Hunter's department of Instructional Computing and Information Technology (ICIT) reorganized and in the process ceased being able to provide workshops in MLA documentation to Freshman Composition classes, a service they had offered for years. ICIT asked the college's Reading/Writing Center and the WAC Program to collaborate on an on-line MLA tutorial that could substitute for the discontinued workshops. A Writing Fellow from Psychology was recruited to the project, and quickly became its manager, creating most of the content, contributing to the design, consulting on the contractors hired for the software training and the staff hired to build the tutorial, and organizing what would become a collaboration unique in the history of the college, between ICIT, the Library, the WAC Program, and the Reading/Writing Center, with beta-testing by instructors of Freshman Composition in the English Department. The result is a tutorial that is hosted on the Library web site ([http://library.hunter.cuny.edu/tutorials/mla/mla\\_tutorial.html](http://library.hunter.cuny.edu/tutorials/mla/mla_tutorial.html)), is on all Freshman Composition course management sites, has been accepted into the prestigious ALA/ACRL Instruction Section's Peer-Reviewed Instructional Materials Online (PRIMO) project, and has become a model for future college on-line development projects. Not only was the Fellow successful in creating a viable alternative to the ICIT MLA workshops, she was instrumental in the development of a nationally recognized on-line learning platform, one that is now linked to dozens of academic websites across the country, and in creating an interdisciplinary, interdepartmental collaboration uncommon in our powerfully departmental institution.

Without the Writing Fellows Program, Hunter's WAC Program would appear desultory in its successes, which, while not inconsiderable, occur discontinuously here and there throughout, as opposed to consistently across, the curriculum.

## CONCLUSION

While Hunter and Hostos are representative of WAC at CUNY and portray the tensions inherent in reframing conversations about writing, they are not necessarily the definitive CUNY senior or community college WAC experience. Each CUNY campus has its own model—with varying degrees of faculty participation, administrative support, and student success.

A 2007 poll of CUNY WAC Coordinators identified a number of common challenges. Primary were budget-related issues including faculty stipends, re-assigned time for coordinators, the loosening of WI enrollment caps, the reliance on part-time staff with little WAC experience, and the difficulty in offering enough courses for students to meet WI requirements. Other concerns centered on institutionalizing WAC. Almost all campuses have a WI graduation requirement, and most certify WAC faculty or courses. Yet WAC experience is not a major factor in tenure or promotion decisions, in effect de-incentivizing participation.

There are also potential obstacles to the continuity of WAC programs brought on by CUNY policy changes that might dilute the highly successful Writing Fellows program. Beginning in 2011, a Writing Fellow's time on campus decreases from two years to one. Considering the time it takes to educate Fellows about WAC/WID and prepare them for their complicated, sensitive work with faculty, this reduction of time threatens the quality of all CUNY WAC programs.

The growth and continuity of WAC at CUNY over the last decade was made possible by the considerable talent in the field, available at CUNY, by virtue of the university's size and its history as a leader in the development of writing instruction and, of course, CUNY funding. With many of CUNY's acknowledged experts in Rhetoric and Composition and WAC retiring or leaving the position of WAC Coordinator, will the next generation of WAC directors be able to sustain growth and preserve what has been achieved?

Though these challenges cloud the future, some offer opportunities: the advent of CUE has given WAC programs greater visibility and influence in the development of General Education programs and professional development. There is ample evidence that changes made in the curricular incorporation of writing, reading, and WAC pedagogy will endure. The greatest promise lies in the fact that coordinators of WAC programs at Baruch, Hostos, Brooklyn College, and the City College of New York, among others, are former Writing Fellows, and that another generation of CUNY WAC practitioners, mentored by the experienced leaders in the field who helped build WAC at CUNY, will proceed to mentor the next generation and take WAC best practice to its next stage of evolution both in CUNY and beyond.

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