Announcing the publication of the 2010 edition of *Writing the University*

The Faculty Senate Reading and Writing Subcommittee is pleased to announce the publication of the 2010 edition of *Writing the University*, an online journal of undergraduate writing across disciplines at Sacramento State (www.csus.edu/wac/journal). The journal includes student writing from the natural sciences, engineering, the social sciences, the humanities and composition courses. Each piece of student writing includes a cover letter from the student and the faculty sponsor, and many of the pieces include rough drafts as well as final drafts.

Please consider submitting a piece of student writing from one of your Spring 2010 courses for the 2011 edition of *Writing the University*: We encourage submissions of writing in any genre (critical analysis, book review, lab report, case study, etc.) from students in courses in any discipline (natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, etc.). A faculty sponsor is required for each submission.

**Submission criteria:**

- Original work from a Sacramento State undergraduate course in the 2010 calendar year (Spring, Winter, Summer, or Fall 2010)
- Any genre of work from any discipline is accepted: critical analysis, book review, lab report, case study, etc.
- One-page letter of introduction and description of the assignment from a faculty sponsor
- One-page cover letter written by the student describing his or her writing process
- 2,500 word maximum

**Submission Guidelines**

To submit, please email the following as Word or RTF file attachments to wac@csus.edu with the subject line “journal submission”:

- A final draft of the work with the author’s name and e-mail, the course name and number, and the instructor’s name and e-mail
- A rough draft or drafts if available
- A brief cover letter written by the student describing his or her writing process
- A brief letter of introduction from a faculty sponsor that includes a description of the assignment and an explanation of why the piece is an effective example of writing in the discipline

**Submission deadline: Dec. 20, 2010**
The New Graduate GWAR: Writing to Learn

by Fiona Glade, GWAR Coordinator

A new Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) specifically for graduate students will be implemented Fall 2010, following from the changes to the undergraduate GWAR that have been in place for this academic year. Designed to provide several options by which programs and departments can allow their graduate students to meet this CSU system-wide requirement, the new Graduate GWAR will support instruction for graduate writers as they engage in the discipline-specific kinds of research and writing tasks of their own fields.

Beginning August 2010, there will be three methods by which graduate students may begin the two-step GWAR process:

(a) meet an equivalency standard upon entry to the university, or
(b) earn a grade of B or higher in a Graduate Writing Intensive (GWI) course in the graduate program in which they are enrolled, or
(c) take the Writing Placement for Graduate Students (WPG), a timed essay examination.

Students who do not meet one of the equivalency standards upon admission must select one of two options. One option is the WPG, a timed essay examination, in which writers will be asked to compose two essays after reading a selection of brief texts that represents a variety of genres, such as graphs, charts, tables, bullet lists and scholarly prose.

The purpose of this placement test is for paid, trained faculty readers to identify writers who need additional writing help in order to succeed in graduate-level work. Students who do need additional help will receive a placement that requires them to take a GWI course. These courses may be offered in the students’ own programs as well as in the English department. The WPG will be offered twice each year, shortly before the beginning of each semester. Students must complete the WPG and/or the GWI course before they may advance to candidacy. Finally, in the new system, the graduate GWAR requirement ultimately is met through completion of the graduate program requirements.

In addition to giving students a range of choices by which to meet this requirement, the new graduate GWAR delivers other benefits. Most important, it promotes graduate students’ success by incorporating discipline-specific writing instruction so that writers can not only get relevant help, but also get it when it will be most useful—before they advance to candidacy. Second, the revised program supports graduate programs that aim to incorporate GWI instruction into their own curricula. This means that many of the reading, research, and writing tasks that you already assign in seminars can readily be formalized such that your existing courses will meet GWI guidelines (see guidelines on the following page).

The new [Graduate GWAR] shifts the focus for demonstrating writing proficiency to the holistic graduate experience while also acknowledging the need for graduate students to show that they are proficient writers prior to engaging in their culminating experience. Moreover, [it] also holds graduate students to a higher standard of writing proficiency than the campus policy for undergraduate students.

Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement for Graduate Students Proposal — approved by the Faculty Senate in Fall 2009.
The GWIs enhance disciplinary course content by using a “writing to learn” approach. This means that people’s knowledge can increase if they write, because the act of writing itself helps people clarify their thoughts. This approach can be effective through precisely the types of assignments that many faculty are accustomed to requiring as they work to immerse new graduate students in disciplinary ways of thinking and writing. In moving students towards becoming professional or scholarly participants in those discourses, we may frequently ask them, for instance, to read and write disciplinary texts, to engage in peer review, and to practice revising and editing their own work, whether that work be informal logs, laboratory reports, book reviews, annotated bibliographies, case studies, critical responses or abstracts.

The GWAR Coordinator and the WAC Coordinator will assist any department or program that elects to identify a current 2-or 3-unit course, revise a current course, or even create a new course to allow their students to meet the graduate GWAR within their own program. Alternatively, students who receive a WPG placement indicating that they need additional coursework may enroll in English 220W, offered through the College of Continuing Education.

**GWI Course Guidelines**

1. The course should immerse graduate students in the discourse of their disciplines: genres, literacies, stylistic conventions, etc.
2. The course learning goals must include the four GWI general learning goals.
3. Students must write a minimum of 5,000 words or 20 double-spaced pages of discourse. At least one assignment must be a minimum of 5-pages or 1,250 words.
4. Writing assignments must be spread out over the entire semester.
5. At least 60 percent of the course grade will come from instructors’ assessments of student writing.
6. Assessment of student writing should focus primarily on critical thinking, synthesis and organization.
7. The course must consist of a minimum of 3 upper division units or a minimum of 2 graduate level units and must be designed primarily to meet the needs of graduate students.
8. Each section should have no more than 30 students.
9. The course should include a range of assignments, both informal and formal, in the types of genres typical in the discipline: for example, a research paper, proposal, critical response, annotated bibliography, abstract, case study, laboratory report, etc.
10. Formal assignments should include multiple drafts with revision based on feedback from peers and the instructor.

Writing to learn, a technique, which is not new and has proven adaptable to different learning styles and situations, is adaptable to all disciplines. It is a method that ensures students’ awareness of the concepts underlying the topics being discussed and discourages the viewing of material as an agglomeration of disembodied facts and formulae to be learned.

*Writing to Learn:* Judith Kalman and Calvin Kalman
Summary of the 2009 Writing Across the Curriculum Program Annual Report

WAC Mission Statement

The primary goal of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) is to assist colleges, departments and individual faculty members with all aspects of the teaching of reading and writing in their disciplines, including designing reading and writing assignments, responding to student writing, designing writing assessment and using writing to improve critical thinking. WAC collaborates with other faculty development and support programs on campus and provides outreach to high schools and community colleges. WAC supports student writers through the University Writing Center, which provides one-to-one reading and writing tutoring for undergraduate and graduate students in any discipline.

WAC activities and resources

- Spring bi-weekly faculty development seminar
- Summer full-day WAC retreat
- Campus-wide workshops
- WAC website: www.csus.edu/wac (6,884 visitors in 2009)
- WAC Newsletter
- Writing the University online undergraduate writing journal: www.csus.edu/wac/journal
- Sac State Student Writing Handbook (required in all ENGL20 and ENGL109 courses)

University Writing Center activities

- University Writing Center website: www.csus.edu/writingcenter (7,305 visitors in 2009)
- 4,814 tutoring sessions from 56 different departments in 2009
- Tutored 1,333 students in 2009

Number of Faculty and Students Served in 2009

Number of faculty served by WAC:

- Workshops: 55 participants
- Faculty Development Retreat: 25 participants

Total number of faculty served by WAC: 80 faculty members

Number of students served by WAC:

- Classroom workshops: 145 students
- University Writing Center tutoring: 1,333 students

Total number of students served by WAC: 1,478 students