

Indiana University of Pennsylvania



Writing Across the Curriculum

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Teach. Write.  
*Teach Writing.*

**The Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program provides support for faculty universitywide in implementing writing into their courses.**

**The program aims to create and sustain a community of writers at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.**

**If you have questions about WAC, please contact Bryna Siegel Finer at [brynasf@iup.edu](mailto:brynasf@iup.edu).**

## Writing Across the Curriculum celebrates National Day on Writing

In celebration of this year's National Day on Writing theme, #WriteMyCommunity, the Writing Across the Curriculum program teamed up with the IUP Writing Center to offer IUP the opportunity to send someone a hand-written card of appreciation on Monday, October 20, 2014.

By the end of the day-long celebration, about 30 students, alumni, and faculty had submitted messages of appreciation through an online form. Writing Center and Writing Across the Curriculum staff hand-wrote, mailed, and delivered the cards.

A few notes of gratitude stuck out to the WAC and Writing Center staff:

A student wrote to a professor, "Thanks for being an inspiring professor. Writing in your class was a journey of learning, discovering, and transforming."

A professor recognized a coworker's dedication: "Thanks so much for all that you do for the department and your students. You have been a great leader, wonderful colleague, and friend."

Established in 2009 by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the National Day on Writing celebrates composition in all forms—from stories, poems, and letters to text messages, videos, and audio recordings—and demonstrates how writing is a vital part of our everyday lives.



## Writing Across the Curriculum

### Siegel Finer to review for new Writing Across the Curriculum blog

Bryna Siegel Finer, director of IUP Writing Across the Curriculum, has been asked to serve as a reviewer for a new blog, *The Writing Campus*, edited by George Mason University.

The blog will post original blind-reviewed content and reflag interesting news pieces and pedagogical insights from other online resources.

In coming years, it aims to be known as one of the go-to sites for online content related to work in Writing Across the Curriculum: resources for faculty, questions of theory and practice, and reflections on our classroom practices in and across disciplines.

George Mason University has consistently been ranked as one of the top ten WAC programs in the country by US News and World Report.

Visit <http://thewritingcampus.com> to read the Writing Campus blog.

## Learn more: Attend a WAC workshop or Teaching Circle

### Faculty Workshops

Each workshop is presented twice, so you can choose which offering fits your schedule.

#### Introduction to Writing-to-Learn Pedagogy

*Tuesday, February 10, 11:00-11:50 a.m. and Wednesday, February 11, 12:20-1:10 p.m., in the Writing Center (218 Eicher Hall)*

Learn how to give your students more practice with writing without taking up too much class time to do it.

#### Teaching and Grading Writing in Larger Classes

*Wednesday, March 4, 2:30-3:20 p.m. and Thursday, March 5, 9:30-10:20 a.m., in the Writing Center (218 Eicher Hall)*

Learn how to help your large classes (50 or more students) process course content through quick writing tasks.

#### Essay Exams: Writing Prompts for Student Success

*Tuesday, April 7, 2:00-2:50 p.m., and Wednesday, April 8, 10:10-11:00 a.m.*

Guest presenter Dr. Rachel Sternfeld (Department of Political Science) will co-direct this workshop on creating better essay exam prompts and writing assignments.

### Teaching Circle

The Writing Across the Curriculum Teaching Circle is a group of faculty from all disciplines at the university. We discuss issues related to the teaching of writing in our courses. Anyone is welcome to attend a meeting at any time.

All Teaching Circle meetings are held from 2:15-3:15 p.m. in Nicholson Library (112 Leonard) on the following dates:

February 10  
March 3

March 31  
April 28



Dr. Bryna Siegel Finer, right, led a workshop on Strategies for Efficient Grading in October. Pictured from left: Dr. Heather Powers (English) and Dr. Pao Hsiao (Food and Nutrition).

The IUP Departments of Food & Nutrition and Mathematics are currently working with the Writing Across the Curriculum program to develop Customized Writing Plans (CWPs) for majors in their department tracks.

CWPs are designed to make visible how writing is situated throughout a curriculum and can help faculty in any department to create a more meaningful relationship between the content they teach and the writing they assign. A CWP can help with assessment, accreditation, and five-year department reviews, as well as provide research and scholarship opportunities for faculty who are interested in how students write in their disciplines.

“We are committed to ensuring that graduates from our department have all of the skills to be leaders in their careers,” said Dr. Rita Johnson, chair of the Department of Food & Nutrition. “Being able to write well is a key component of their current and future success. We want our students to feel that they can approach writing tasks with confidence now and in the future.”

The Food & Nutrition CWP will demonstrate how writing is currently taught in major courses, address gaps in curriculum, and ensure that students get practice writing throughout their four years in order to meet writing challenges in advanced courses and in their career fields.

As the first department to develop a plan through WAC, Food & Nutrition is serving as a model for the rest of IUP in its commitment to improving students' communication skills and increasing their potential for career success.

Following on the heels of the Department of Food & Nutrition, the Mathematics Department's goal is to ensure that students who graduate with a major in one of their programs are prepared for writing in their chosen fields.

“We realize that many of our courses

Kimberly Jones, MS, RD, LDN, a registered dietitian and wellness coach at South Hills Market District Giant Eagle, Pittsburgh, is a graduate of IUP's Food & Nutrition master's program.



## Customized Writing Plans foster better writing skills in Food & Nutrition, Mathematics

are preparing students to use numerical skills, but we want them to be strong communicators as well,” said Edel Reilly, assistant chair of the Department of Mathematics. “Creating a writing plan for our department will help us to

their colleagues, so they know if their assignments are scaffolded. I'm thrilled that departments like Mathematics and Food & Nutrition have decided to take on this important work. Most students don't expect to write in

**“Creating a writing plan for our department will help us to determine where we can add more writing practice into our courses and how we can help students prepare for the job market and their careers.”**

**Dr. Edel Reilly, Department of Mathematics**

determine where we can add more writing practice into our courses and how we can help students prepare for the job market and their careers.”

WAC director Bryna Siegel Finer explained, “All departments should want to develop a CWP. It makes faculty aware of the sorts of writing tasks that are assigned in the courses taught by

courses that privilege numbers and science. The CWPs will help faculty create a culture among students in all of their majors that accepts and understands the importance of writing and communication skills.”

For information on creating a Customized Writing Plan in your department, contact [brynasf@iup.edu](mailto:brynasf@iup.edu).



## Science writing expert Reynolds leads Fall 2014 Writing Across the Curriculum colloquium

Julie Reynolds, associate professor of biology at Duke University, came to IUP for a Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) colloquium from September 17 to 18, 2014.

Sponsored by the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics (CNSM) and the Liberal Studies Program, Reynolds addressed the university public on Wednesday with her talk, "Myths, Challenges, and a Big Idea," which focused on the concept of student writing as an iterative process.

Reynolds also presented results from her research with student science writers on using rubrics and peer review.

The next day, she presented four workshops for CNSM faculty and students in the biology education program on how to teach students to use peer review, as well as how to use strategies to more efficiently grade student writing. Faculty also had a chance to meet informally with Reynolds at a reception at the Artists Hand on Thursday afternoon.

"I am very excited that David (Pistole, Biology) and Dean Snavelly (CSNM) wanted to bring a consultant to IUP, and I'm glad I could help them do that," said Bryna Siegel Finer, director of IUP Writing Across the Curriculum. "They organized a very effective and specialized program for their faculty."

Currently, all students at IUP take two writing courses in English, as well as two writing intensive courses in their major. But many departments, including Mathematics and Food & Nutrition, which are currently participating in a WAC pilot program, realize that if they want their students to be more prepared and successful in their chosen careers, they need to write more across their majors.

According to Dean Snavelly, "Writing intensively in one or two courses isn't enough. I feel that we can find ways to use writing in many classes to help



*Submitted Photo*

students learn science and math. Perhaps faculty in our college could be leaders in that initiative."

In a survey of faculty who attended the workshop given at the end of the Fall semester, 100 percent of respondents indicated they made changes to the way they teach writing in their courses, or they plan to change the way they teach writing this spring.

Colleges or departments interested in hosting a colloquium for their faculty should contact Bryna Siegel Finer at [brynasf@iup.edu](mailto:brynasf@iup.edu).

### Connect with IUP Writing Across the Curriculum

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