

Citings

Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies Newsletter

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Faculty and Staff



SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

Department Moves Forward

Glen McClish

My principal goal for my first academic year in the DWRS (1999-2000) was, to put it simply, survival. This academic year (2000-2001), I've tried to articulate and pursue a more specific set of goals for the Department. Now that the year is nearly at an end, I'm pleased to report that we've achieved many from the list.

After many years of waiting, we've launched our Masters Program. Cezar Ornatowski, Melody Kilcrease, and the Graduate Committee are actively publicizing the Program, recruiting students, and planning curriculum.

Beginning in June, the Transfer Writing Assessment will be lengthened from thirty minutes to one hour. It is impossible to predict how the longer time will affect the TWA pass rate, but we can be confident that each student will now have a better opportunity to produce a passing response.

The Developmental Writing and ESL Programs have produced descriptions for two new courses designed specifically for transfer students

who do not pass the TWA. The proposals have been approved by CAL's Academic Planning Committee. If all goes well, the new courses will be in place for Fall 2002.

The Upper Division Writing Committee forwarded a new course description to CAL's Academic Planning Committee in Fall 2000. The new description should be in place for Fall 2002.

In Fall 2000, the Cyber Committee assessed the computer needs of lecturers and TAs and recommended modest upgrades in equipment and software. We have been able to act on some of these recommendations and hope to do more in 2001-2002.

Under the leadership of Chris Werry and Terry Williams, we have enhanced the DRWS's pedagogical technology. In particular, we have launched *LORE*, an on-line journal dedicated to rhetoric and composition, and have updated the departmental web site.

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Don Bush Honored at Open House



The Certificate Program in Technical and Scientific Writing held its Spring Open House on April 26th in Scripps Cottage. The event was in honor of Don Bush, who is retiring after teaching over ten years in the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies. Also in the evening, a panel of Certificate Program instructors discussed the current job market for technical and scientific writers.

Linn Bekins introduced Don Bush's longtime friend and colleague Carol Sweedler-Brown, who spoke briefly about Don's teaching history at SDSU, following his retirement from McDonnell-Douglas. Their warm friendship was evident as she reminded him of her irritation that he would never

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Papers Etc.

Marvelyn Rowe Bucky gave a presentation entitled "Successful Modeling Approaches in Academic Writing" at TESOL 2000 in Vancouver and one entitled "Successful Multimedia Lessons Which Enhance Student Learning" at CATESOL 2000 at Palomar College and TESOL 2001 in St. Louis.

Ann Johns made two presentations at the recent CATESOL (California Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) meeting in Ontario, CA, April 19-21: "Community-based Service Learning and First Year Composition Classes" and "Best Practices in Teaching Composition: Some Comments on Applications of Genre Theories."

Melody Kilcrease has been accepted to present a paper on using genre theory in a composition course at the Western States Composition Conference at ASU in Tempe Arizona in October.

Cezar Ornatowski presented "Rhetoric of Nation Building: New Research Perspectives in Discourse and the Public Sphere" at the Research Network Forum and "Composing (Un)Democratic Communities:

Teaching Writing as Rhetoric of Democracy" at the 52nd Annual Conference for College Composition and Communication in Denver on March 14th. Cezar is also going to be lecturing as Visiting Scholar at the Center for Rhetoric Studies at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, May 19-June 2, 2001.

Sara Wheaton presented a paper, "Ambivalent Images of Landholding and Management in Richard II," at a Graduate Conference at Cal State University, Los Angeles. She's also had another paper, "Idioms of Change: The Structuring of Cultural Identities through Language in Brian Friel's Translations," accepted for publication in the *Colby Quarterly* sometime in the 2001-02 cycle.

Sharon Young, Tracee Lee, and two other MFA students, **Ella Decastro** and **Christine Huynh**, presented at the Pacific Southwest Women's Studies Conference here on campus on April 21st. Their theme was "Gendered Ethnicities: Intimate Looks at the Asian Female Experience Through Poetry and History."

First RWS MA Grad Honored

DRWS hosted a goodbye gathering for Rene De los Santos on May 16th. Faculty, TAs, and graduate students wished Rene good luck and shared a few moments together.

Rene will be remembered for his many contributions to the department (the MA program, the TA program, Crisis Carnival), as well for being an all-around nice guy, and, it seems, the first graduate of the new MA Program in Rhetoric and Writing Studies (he has thus earned a place in departmental history).

Rene received his BA from the Department of English and Comparative Literature at SDSU. He is currently finishing a thesis on the rhetoric of the debates surrounding the establishment of standard time in the United States, with Cezar Ornatowski as chair.

He leaves us to pursue a Ph.D. at UC Santa Barbara in Rhetoric and Technology. He is also going to teach writing to engineers at UCSB. Best of luck, Rene!

2001 Crisis Carnival Planned

The 2001 Crisis Carnival Graduate Student Conference is scheduled for October 19-20, 2001. The theme of this year's conference is "Humanities and the Culture of Technology."

The organizers are inviting Donna Haraway to be featured guest speaker. The conference is shaping up as especially exciting. Please submit papers, creative works, performance pieces, or other work relevant to the conference theme to Michael Williams.

The organizing committee also welcomes volunteers to serve as readers and to help out with other details of preparing the conference. Get involved! For more information, contact Michael at dasein@home.com. Also, check out the newly revamped web site at <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/c3/>



DRWS faculty members were on hand to answer questions at the annual Spring Book Fair on April 25th in Scripps Cottage. Representatives from ten publishing firms and Aztec Shops hosted the event.

Open House

teach more than one class a semester. After Professor Sweedler-Brown's comments, Don took the floor and talked about his experience as a technical writer and as a technical writing instructor. He emphasized the importance of good editing in professional writing. Don has written three books and numerous articles, and he continues to write "The Friendly Editor" in the *STC Intercom*. Following Don's remarks, Linn presented him with an engraved mantel clock in honor of his service in the Department and the Certificate Program.

A panel of instructors in the Certificate Program, including Cezar Ornatowski, Linn Bekins, Don Bush, and Susie Hosie, participated in a discussion on "The Current Job

Assistant Director Needed

Cezar Ornatowski, DRWS Director of the new MA Program in Rhetoric and Writing Studies, is looking for an Assistant to help with recruitment and administration of the program.

All lecturers are eligible to apply. The Assistant receives 3 units of assigned time as compensation. Please apply by writing a letter of interest to Cezar by June 15, 2001.

Congratulations!

Marvelyn Rowe Bucky was recently appointed to the position of Editor for the International Black Professionals and Friends of TESOL (IBPFT) Caucus. She served as co-editor last year.

Cynthia Fillmore, whose field is medieval literature, was accepted into the PhD programs at Fordham, UC Riverside, U of Oregon, and U of New Mexico. She accepted the offer from UNM.

Jane E. Hindman has been promoted to Associate Professor with Tenure beginning September 2001.

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Market for Technical Communicators" later in the evening. Members of the audience, students, technical writers, faculty, and staff members, contributed to the discussion with questions and insightful comments and observations. Marilyn Morgan moderated the panel discussion. The Open House was funded by an IRA grant.

New Format for Aug Conference

This fall's DRWS teaching conference will feature workshops for parallel teaching groups to finalize their syllabus designs and discuss their reading selections. The luncheon this year will take place on the first day of the conference, Tuesday, August 28, as a welcome event for us all.

Speakers from Student Services and the Ombudsmen's office will discuss issues related to problems with students. There will also be sessions addressing the Upper Division Writing Test, the SDSU student policy document, and course grading and evaluation. The week's activities will culminate in a party on Thursday evening. All of these sessions will be built around the usual orientation and training sessions that each program offers during the week.

Melody Kilcrease was awarded a grant by the Center for Teaching and Learning for research into using genre theory in a composition course.

RWS MA student **Suzanne Weedman-Smith** gave birth to a 7 pound, 4.6 ounce baby boy, Kellen Maxwell Laborn Smith, on May 4th.

Sara Wheaton has accepted a Pre-Doctoral Humanities Fellowship at the University of California Irvine, where she is planning to pursue a PhD in Early Modern Studies beginning in the fall of 2001.

Tutors Needed

Michael Underwood

Writing tutor applications for Fall 2001 are available in the DRWS office, NH 227. We will have 40 to 60 positions available. New tutors start at \$8.31 an hour with returning tutors earning \$9.00 to \$10.00 an hour. Working as a writing tutor is excellent experience for those graduate students seeking to become Teaching Associates with DRWS.

For those of you teaching the lower division courses and if you know of any students that would make excellent tutors, please let them know about this opportunity and encourage them to apply. I have recently hired some great tutors from RWS 200 courses.

Submit to LORE

Chris Werry

Matt Copeland, Matt Costello, and I would like to invite you to consider contributing a piece of writing to the next issue of *LORE*. *LORE* is an online journal produced by the department. The address is: <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/drwswebb/lore/lore.html>.

We are interested in publishing work that is representative of the broad range of pedagogic and scholarly activities carried out within the department. This includes papers, review essays, work on teaching strategies and practices, creative writing, reviews of books/software/web sites, position papers and interviews.

The journal will publish short, informal pieces, works in progress, as well as longer, more polished works. We would also like you to think about sending examples of good student writing from the classes you teach.

We'd like to start publishing some of the better pieces of student work out there. In the longer term we hope that this may act as an incentive to our students, and also be a resource for teachers to use.

Print submissions should be sent to Chris Werry, 230 Nasatir Hall. Electronic submissions should be emailed to: lore@lists.sdsu.edu and can be in Word, HTML, RTF or WordPerfect.

Pedagogy Corner

The Multifaceted Uses of Direct Quotations

A well-chosen quote relevant to a current discussion of an essay can be used in a variety of ways as a teaching tool. Consider the possibilities:

- to provoke interest and curiosity at the beginning of a class
- to provide a prompt for a journal entry, an in-class essay, or a test
- to link themes of different essays together for class discussion or group work
- to begin an outside source essay, a long essay, or even a thesis.

Here is a quote that has worked well for me. "Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

While on the subject, let me recommend *The Macmillan Dictionary of Quotations* as an excellent source of quotes on a variety of subjects; it is organized alphabetically by author and theme.

Department

We are in the process of completing official job descriptions for all administrative duties in the DRWS that carry assigned time.

Two DRWS lectures have been awarded "range elevation." The new range elevation policy is designed to recognize temporary faculty who are excellent teachers and who contribute significantly to the department, college, university, or community.

The Lower Division Writing Program has made great progress with revision of RWS 100 and 200. An emphasis on argumentation has been the focus of retreats, workshops, and study groups.

Under the leadership of Julie Williams, Candace Boeck, and Richard Boyd, the DRWS continues to develop its assessment goals and strategies. Julie and Candace have been particularly focused at the departmental level; Richard has concentrated on RWS 200 and more generally at the level of General Education.

Slowly, we've been increasing workloads

On Writing

One day I was sitting in a waiting room, waiting for my car to be fixed, a place where one can meet anyone and where one can evaluate that endless treasure trove of essays. A gentleman sitting across from me asked me what I was doing. At first I was prompted to say that I didn't know but stifled that amusing thought. Then I told him what I taught.

Much to my surprise, he mentioned that he was writing a book about baseball and wondered if I had recently assigned my students to read Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*. He had used that book in college a couple of decades ago and found the "little book," as it is sometimes called, to be an invaluable aid. I asked him what he did for a living. He told me he was a lawyer.

Since I did not usually mentally link the succinctness advocated by Strunk and White to lawyers' speeches or writings, I was impressed. After all, if dancers and golfers can

emulate writers, why can't lawyers? Perhaps almost everyone is a writer - if one can breathe, one can write! Yet being skilful reminds me of the inscription on a board game - "Takes a few minutes to learn - takes a lifetime to master."

One might complete that idea with the following: Takes a lifetime to both learn and master!

Albert S. Moorin

Video Available

DRWS now has a video of Jerry Stadmiller's presentation last semester to RWS200 students studying the Vietnam unit in Negotiating Difference.

Jerry, a Vietnam veteran, discusses the 60s, the war, his serious injury, and his perspective today. To reserve and/or check out the video to use in your classes, please see Jo Serrano.

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for lecturers who want more classes. This process, it seems to me, relates to the more general goal of improving job stability for lecturers.

Along with these accomplishments, I must note a couple of goals that are yet unmet. We were unable to complete our search for a tenure-track specialist in advanced composition. I blame not our co-chairs, Jane Robinett and Richard Boyd (who did a wonderful job managing the pool of candidates), but an extremely competitive job market. We hope to complete the search next year.

We have not made official progress with lowering enrollments in undergraduate courses. However, by reducing "unmet demand" for writing courses, enrollments fell in many sections through the year.

These are the goals that I have emphasized during the 2000-2001 academic year. I hope to generate and tackle a similar set for 2001-2002. I would very much appreciate your input in this ongoing process.

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