

Annual Report on the Freshman English Program, 2000-01

Christy Desmet (Director of Freshman English)

Kathy Houff (Assistant Director of Freshman English)

Mary Carney (Assistant Director of Freshman English, Spring 2001)

Jane Barroso (Secretary)

The Freshman English Committee (FEC) met twice during the 2000-01 academic year. During this time, its members were Christy Desmet (Chair), Kathy Houff (Secretary), Michael G. Moran, Michael Hendrick, David Payne, David Gants, Don McCreary, Michelle Ballif, and T. A. Representatives Keith O'Neill and Alexis Hart.

During the 2000-01 academic year, the Freshman English (FE) Program taught the following number of sections and students (broken down into Regular, International, ON-LINE, and Oglethorpe House sections of English 1101, 1102, and 1030).

Regular Sections (sections/students)

	ENGL 1101	ENGL 1102	ENGL 1030
Summer 2000	3/48	3/62	1/21
Fall 2000	100/2011	37/795	13/283
Spring 2001	19/375	91/1594	25/511
TOTAL	122/2434	131/2451	39/815

International Sections (sections/students)

--	--	--	--

	ENGL 1101	ENGL 1102	ENGL 1030
Summer 2000	0/0	0/0	0/0
Fall 2000	1/18	1/12	1/5
Spring 2001	2/26	1/5	1/10
TOTAL	3/44	2/17	2/15

International classes are limited to 15 students, although there was an accidental overload (18 students) in the ENGL 1101 class Fall semester.

ON-LINE Sections (sections/students)

	ENGL 1101	ENGL 1102	ENGL 1030
Summer 2000	0/0	0/0	0/0
Fall 2000	3/42	0/0	0/0
Spring 2001	0/0	4/57	0/0
TOTAL	3/42	4/57	0/0

Note that this is the first year the Annual Report has separated ON-LINE from regular courses in our accounting.

(Hence, there will be some discrepancies between what is defined as a "regular" section between the Annual Reports of 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 and a discrepancy in student numbers.) Like International sections, ON-LINE sections of Freshman English are limited to 15 students. Note as well the very high occupancy rate of students in ON-LINE sections.

Freshman English in Oglethorpe House (sections/students)

	ENGL 1101	ENGL 1102	ENGL 1030
Summer 2000	0/0	0/0	0/0
Fall 2001	0/0	1/12	1/13
Spring 2001	0/0	1/14	1/14
TOTAL	0/0	2/26	2/27

Oglethorpe sections of Freshman English are limited to 14 students. Note that the Oglethorpe sections fill easily. Some of this success must be attributed to the teachers (Angela Mitchell and Jennifer Griffith); teachers are

selected carefully for this assignment. Some of this success could also be attributed to the small class size. Some may be attributed as well to the "special" surroundings. Angela Mitchell reports, anecdotally, that although her students were assigned to a "regular" classroom in Park Hall which was always available to them, they regularly elected to meet in the Oglethorpe computer classroom, instead. Part of the appeal seems to lie in the convenience for dorm-dwellers, some of it in the relatively informal and writing-centered nature of the computer-lab classroom. Our only problem with the Oglethorpe classes was the fact that the lab was still being renovated for the first four weeks of the semester, so that the classes met for that time in their regular, Park Hall classrooms.

Honors Freshman English (sections/students)

	ENGL 1050H	ENGL 1060H
Summer 2000	0/0	0/0
Fall 2001	6/92	5/73
Spring 2001	4/58	2/31
TOTAL	10/150	7/104

This is the first time that we have included statistics for Honors classes in the Freshman English Annual Report. Although Honors Freshman English classes are funded through a different budget than are the regular Freshman English classes, what happens with the Honors Program has a material effect on Freshman English. In years when Honors funds a large number of 1050H/1060H classes, we can expect the population of regular Freshman English classes to diminish accordingly. Were the Honors Program to scale back the number of Freshman classes that it offers through the English Department, we might expect the numbers of students in regular sections of Freshman English to increase proportionately. Furthermore, ENGL 1050H and 1060H classes staffed with graduate students, postdoctoral Instructors, and other Instructors are supervised through the Freshman English Office. Thus, we feel it important to include in our Annual Report relevant statistics about this arm of the composition program.

Totals

- The total number of sections for Freshman English in 2000-2001 (excluding Honors sections) was 310; the total number of students was 5728.
- The total number of sections of ON-LINE Freshman English was 7; the total number of students was 99.
- The total number of sections of Oglethorpe House Freshman English was 4; the total number of students was 53.
- The total number of sections of Honors Freshman English was 17; the total number of students was 264.
- The total number of sections in Freshman English (including Honors sections) was 327; the total number of students was 6182.
- The total number of first-semester composition students (ENGL 1101) was 2520; the total number of second-semester students (ENGL 1102, 1030, 1050H, 1060H) was 3662.

The average number of students per section during the year was:

- 19.52/22 in regular sections (88.7% occupancy rate in classes limited to 22 students);
- 10.9/15 in international sections (72.4% occupancy rate in classes limited to 15 students);
- 14/15 in ON-LINE sections (94.3% occupancy rate in classes limited to 14);
- 12.29/14 in Oglethorpe (94.7% occupancy rate in classes limited to 14 students);
- 254/255 students in Honors Freshman English (99.6% occupancy rate in classes limited to 15 students).

The combined average for *all classes of Freshman English* (except for Honors sections) was 19.12 students per class. We have computed this last number in the traditional way across all sections, but the average is obviously skewed by rather low numbers in the International Sections. Our efforts to place students correctly in the International sections are hampered by a number of factors: the students' awareness of class availability, their willingness to self-identify as ESL students, and their ability to sign up for ESL sections. In the absence of a staff member specifically assigned to recruit/sign up ESL students, we are less efficient at registering students early. (At one point, a teacher in the department was designated to deal with ESL students. Since there was no course release or salary linked to this assignment, however, the burden for registering ESL students devolved on the Freshman Office in general, in particular on the Secretary.) Thus, the relatively low numbers of enrollment in International sections has largely to do with the inherent difficulties of identifying and registering students suitable for these special sections and the students' unwillingness to register early for these classes. (Many arrive in the week before the beginning of a semester or even after the start of the semester, at the behest of their teachers, to sign for classes in International Freshman English. Sometimes, we have been required to cancel International classes that do not show a strong enrollment rather early in August.)

Teacher Demographics

- 69 Teaching Assistants taught 203 sections of FE (these numbers do not include T. A. units assigned to the Writing Center, for Computer Support, for sophomore support, for ENGL 3000 support, or for teaching sophomore sections).
- Two tenured or tenure-track professors taught Freshman English classes. Bill Provost taught one section of ENGL 1102; Don McCreary taught 2 sections of ENGL 1102 (ESL).
- A total of 35 instructors taught 101 sections of FE this year.

Program Development

I. Administration and Program Supervision

A. Office Events: In the first few weeks of Fall 2000, Kathy Houff was on maternity leave and for parts of Fall 2000 Christy was on full sick leave. We are immensely grateful to Paul Quick and Sam Prestridge for conducting the T. A. Orientation in August 2000 and to Dr. Michael Moran for substituting for Christy as Freshman English Director while she had chemotherapy and a bone-marrow transplant.

For the first time in Spring 2001, we began to keep a regular accounting of all problems that came to our office. In Spring semester, we dealt with 36 substantial problems of various kinds (ranging from student complaints about teachers, teacher problems with students, suspected plagiarism, accommodation issues for disabled students). This number does not include approximately a dozen incidents that were not recorded and any of the problems that Christy dealt with by e-mail. We will keep even better track of this aspect of our office duties next year. The increase of traffic of all kinds in the Freshman English Office since the semester conversion indicates the need for another office member to help with the daily work of the office, beyond such larger issues as the schedule, curriculum, and teacher training, which are the responsibility of the Director and Assistant Director.

B. Part-Time Additional Assistant Director: Due to an enrollment shortfall in Spring, we were able to welcome Mary Carney as a part-time Assistant Director of Freshman English for the Spring semester. Mary participated fully in all of the regular work of the FE Office. In the hectic early weeks of the semester, Mary helped make sure that students who had been reassigned to different classes (to help balance enrollments this term) were in the appropriate classes. She helped in the collection of lab-fee cards and with the grade reports for first-year teachers. She met with students (usually about scheduling conflicts, absences, and problems they were

having with their instructors), and she met with T. A.'s (usually about problem students, typically either students with excessive absences, personality problems, or possible plagiarism cases) throughout the semester. She helped revise both the 1102 syllabus and the Directory for T. A.'s. She worked on the Grade Roll report and the T. A. evaluation report. She helped advise students and collect materials for transfer credit problems. She handled questions about our independent study courses and helped schedule campus visits for potential incoming freshmen. She helped keep our office linked to the CAI support staff (by meeting with T. A.'s who had computer questions and by generating office memoranda to the CAI support staff.) She spoke with book representatives and fielded questions from potential graduate students about our program. She contacted advisors about student athletes who were having attendance problems. As a non-teaching administrator, she helped keep the office staffed during times when the other administrators could not be there. Finally, she updated the Freshman English website and the on-line version of the *Freshman English Handbook*. She began to work on updating the Big Book of lesson plans put together some years ago by ambitious Teaching Assistants. We have been blessed by Mary's talents and work ethic and have much appreciated her help.

C. Freshman English Technology Coordinator: In Spring 2001, the FE Program devoted one unit of Computer Support to making Ron Balthazor Freshman English Technology Coordinator. The duties for this position are two-fold. The Coordinator assists the Director in assuring the smooth functioning of the Computer-support team in conducting computer orientations for Freshman classes and supporting the labs throughout the semester on an hourly basis. The Coordinator also functions as mentor and trainer for ON-LINE teachers of Freshman Composition. Duties include training teachers in using the tools necessary for ON-LINE instruction (MOO, WebCT, bulletin boards, and others), learning new tools, and updating the old. Since our work is much heavier in the Fall (all 157 sections or thereabouts of FE need the computer-orientation sessions), we are not able to designate a supervisor for the Computer-support team in Fall. That job falls to the Freshman English Director, which causes some problems since Fall is also the time when the Director and Assistant Director observe classes and review the graded papers of new Teaching Assistants.

D. Freshman English Handbook: This year, following debate on the topic that has gone on for many years, the Freshman English Committee voted to raise the AP score needed to exempt ENGL 1101 with credit from a 3 to a 4. No other changes were made to the *Freshman English Handbook*. This change will take effect for students entering the University of Georgia in Fall 2002 and so is not recorded in this year's *Freshman English Handbook*.

II. Curricular Development

A. Apprentices and Fall Orientation: In 2000-01, the FE Program trained a total of 11 apprentices: 4 in Summer 2000, 3 in Fall 2000, and 4 in Spring 2001. Last year we trained 26 apprentices; the drop in numbers for this year may have to do with the small size of the incoming M. A. class. As the number of Ph.D. students entering the department drops, we have been able to offer Teaching Assistantships to M.A. students in their second year. We think that the Program needs to reassess the workload and rewards for teachers who voluntarily take on apprentices. Fall orientation was conducted by Sam Prestridge and Paul Quick (see Office Events, above.)

B. English 6911, Composition Pedagogy Practicum: Last year, the Graduate Committee voted to turn the one-hour practicum for new teachers into a full three-hour course that is part of the Teaching Assistants' regular course load. This Fall Kathy Houff and Christy Desmet taught the inaugural version of this class, which seems

to have been successful. One highlight was a visit from John Clifford, one of the editors of our new ENGL 1102 textbook, *Making Literature Matter*. Clifford conducted a very useful conversation about teaching from the text and about teaching writing with literature in general. The class web site can be found at: <http://virtual.park.uga.edu/cdesmet/class/engl6911/> .

C. Learning Communities and Human Genome Freshman Composition: In 2000-01, the Freshman English Program participated in a rather elaborate Learning Communities sequence on the Human Genome. Jonathan Arnold spearheaded the science portion of this project and Celeste Condit generally organized the pedagogical side of the project. (The Human Genome Project website can be found at: <http://www.ornl.gov/hgmis/> .) Christy Desmet participated in the planning and designed (with Alexis Hart) a freshman composition class for the human genome sequence. Alexis Hart taught the class as an ENGL 1050H ("Writing about the Human Genome Project"). A description of the course, its goals, and its syllabus can be found at: <http://virtual.park.uga.edu/cdesmet/class/engl1050/description.htm> . Alexis Hart's class web site is available at: <http://webct.uga.edu/public/ENGL1050HDH/index.html>. A login name and password can be obtained from Christy Desmet (cdesmet@english.uga.edu) . The students' web presentations for this class were particularly impressive. Alexis herself made a presentation on the class and her pedagogy at the Unicoi Conference this spring. She was the only graduate student to participate in the conference.

D. Teaching in the Dorms (Oglethorpe House): The Freshman English Program continues to participate in the Vice President for Instruction's initiative for teaching in the dorms. We ran four sections of Freshman English in the Oglethorpe House Computer-Lab Classroom during 2000-01. In the Fall, Angela Mitchell taught "Rhetorics of Technology," an "in-house" version of the Collaborative Campus ENGL 1102 course that was piloted in Spring 2000. Jennifer Griffith taught ENGL 1030. Jennifer Griffith taught one section of ENGL 1030 and Angela Mitchell taught one section of ENGL 1102 in Oglethorpe during Spring semester. In Spring, the classes spent the first few weeks of the semester in Park Hall, as the dorm was being renovated. UCNS has taken over the job of maintaining the lab, and the instructors teaching in this space report that the lab is generally in good order and that UCNS responds promptly and pleasantly to pleas for help. Students still seem to like this class setting. Angela Mitchell reports, for instance, that students prefer Oglethorpe to their Park Hall classroom. Ron Balthazor also taught one section of ENGL 4830, Writing for the World Wide Web, in Oglethorpe.

E. Freshman English ON-LINE: Starting in summer quarter of 1997, the Freshman English Program began teaching ON-LINE sections of ENGL 1101, 1102, and 1030. We continued to offer ON-LINE sections during Fall Semester 2000 and Spring Semester 2001. Three sections of ENGL 1101 ON-LINE were offered during Fall semester 2000; they were taught by Ron Balthazor, Jennifer Kellog, and Matt Kozusko. In Spring 2001, four sections of ENGL 1102 ON-LINE were offered; they were taught by Ron Balthazor, Sandra Hoover, and Matt Kozusko (2 sections). Evaluations for the on-line classes continue to improve. The scores for 2000-2001 were very impressive. Most notable is the fact that students praise their teachers and class without making any negative comment on the technology. Many students said that their teachers worked with them intensively on a one-to-one basis and that the teachers were able to create a sense of class community on-line.

Our pool of ON-LINE teachers remains rather volatile. All of the original teachers who worked on the initial grant with David Gants and Michelle Ballif (1997-99) have gone on to other jobs. In 2000-01, two of this year's four ON-LINE teachers will leave the program for other jobs and one has been awarded a Dissertation Fellowship for next year. In our program, we have recognized the need to devote resources for pro-active and on-going training of ON-LINE Instructors. In Spring semester, therefore, we devoted one unit of Computer Support to make Ron Balthazor Freshman English Technology Coordinator (see above).

Besides supervising the Computer-support program in all of its activities, Ron functioned (both semesters) as a mentor and trainer of ON-LINE composition teachers. Sam Prestridge, Sandra Hoover, and Alexis Hart were

In Spring 2001, we had extra computer-support in the person of Mark Murphree, for a total of seven persons. This allowed us to have computer-support assistants work one-on-one with new Teaching Assistants and to work on revamping the web-based orientation. The new orientation will reflect practical changes in university computing and will add new materials on research tools designed to help teachers incorporate research assignments into their pedagogy. (Relevant materials can be found at <http://virtual.park.uga.edu/engcomp/> .) Greg Timmons is organizing the new orientation, which should be ready for Fall 2001 classes.

For Fall 2000, computer-support personnel included Angela Mitchell, Stephanie Gordon, Leslie Petty, Wendy Kurant, Alexis Hart, and Keith O'Neill. Keith O'Neill acted generously as supervisor in Dr. Desmet's absence. In Spring 2001, computer-support personnel included Greg Timmons, Ron Balthazor, Michael Crowley, Alexis Hart, Julie Barfield, Dan Shaw, and Mark Murphree. Ron Balthazor was supervisor of the team.

David Payne reports that for the three FE labs, we have bought with lab-fee money a Dell GX110 pentium 3s, a Sharp NV6X projector, and 3 high-speed HP 8100 24 ppm printers. The labs will be upgraded again this summer, going to a Windows 2000 Pro operating system, a new Dell PowerEdge server. Windows 2000 Word, Internet Explorer 5, etc.

G. Collaborative Campus Developments: In the Fall, Angela Mitchell taught an "in-house" version of the Spring 2000 Distance Hypertext class, entitled "Rhetorics of Technology," which involved synchronous communication and collaborative hypertext projects among members of the class (rather than with members of the same class at other institutions). Angela reports that the experience was successful, although we need to examine further the data from this class. The course web site is available at: http://www.arches.uga.edu/~amitchel/rhet_tech.html .

Christy Desmet, Laura McGrath, and Angela Mitchell made three presentations based on their teaching of and research on the Collaborative Campus class of Spring 2000 (a project conducted in collaboration with Lissa Attaway-Holloway of Georgia Tech and Patsy Worrall of Gainesville College). They also published a version of their findings. (See FE Scholarship, below.)

H. T. A. Mentor: Paul Quick served as a T. A. mentor for 2000-01. In addition to running the T. A. orientation summer workshop for the FE Program in the absence of both Kathy Houff and Christy Desmet, throughout the year Paul observed T. A.'s in the classroom, helped teachers with apprentices, and consulted on the grading of

papers, generally acting as a basement liaison for the FE program. He discussed Philosophy of Teaching Statements with T. A.'s involved in a job search this year. For the T. A. Mentor program itself, Paul and Molly Crumpton presented one of the bimonthly T. A. Mentor sessions about incorporating writing into other courses. That presentation will be repeated OISD's G. R. S. E. courses in the Fall.

I. Freshman College: In Summer 2000, the FE Program continues to participate in Freshman College, with Christy Desmet slated to teach ENGL 1101 in Summer 2001. When the class web site becomes available, it will be found at: <http://virtual.park.uga.edu/cdesmet/class/ENGL1101FC> .

J. Experimental courses: Teaching Assistants with several years of experience are encouraged to develop their own courses, based around their interests. In Fall 2000, Monica Smith offered an experimental ENGL 1101, Contemporary American Feminism, and Angela Mitchell offered an experimental ENGL 1102, Rhetorics of Technology. In Spring 2001, April Nixon offered an experimental ENGL 1102, Contemporary British Popular Literature.

III. FE Scholarship

A. Presentations:

Desmet, Christy, Laura McGrath, and Angela Mitchell. "Not an Electronic Melting Pot: Collaborative Hypertext Writing Across Three Composition Programs." A session of three papers presented to the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Denver, March 2001.

--. "Collaborative Campus Project: Rhetoric, Technology, and Classroom Re-Composition" (with Lissa Hollway-Attaway and Patsy Worrall). ALLC/ACH Conference, Glasgow, July 2000.

--. "Hypertext from a Distance: New Ways of Writing, New Ways of Talking in Freshman English." A panel of three papers presented at the Computers and Writing 2000 Conference, Fort Worth, May 2000.

Desmet, Christy, Kathy Houff, and Sam Prestridge. "Three Teachers and a Computer: Learning to Teach with Technology in a Large Composition Program." A session of two papers presented at the Computers and Writing 2000 Conference, Fort Worth, May 2000.

Desmet, Christy and Kathy Houff. "Mainstreaming Computer Instruction in a Large Freshman Composition Program." Writing Programs Administrators' Breakfast (poster presentation), Conference on College Composition and Communication, Minneapolis, April 2000.

Hart, Alexis. "Citizen Readers, Not Citizen Rhetors: The Consequences of Privileging Reading over Writing in a Composition Classroom." Emory Spring Colloquium on Rhetoric, Atlanta, March 2000.

B. Publications:

Desmet, Christy. "Reading the Web as fetish." *Computers and Composition* 18 (2001): 55-72.

Desmet, Christy, Laura McGrath, and Angela Mitchell. "Hypertext from a Distance: New Ways of Writing, New Ways of Talking in Freshman English: One Institution's Perspective." *Kairos: A Journal for Teachers of Writing*

in *Webbed Environments* 6.1 (Spring 2001). Available on-line: <http://129.118.38.138/kairos/default.htm> . (Kairos is a refereed on-line journal.)

Moran, Michael G., and Michelle Ballif, eds. *Twentieth-Century Rhetorics and Rhetoricians: Critical Studies and Sources*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2000. (Includes essays by Michael G. Moran, Michelle Ballif, Christy Desmet, Kathy Houff, and Russ Greer.)

IV. Assessment: In FY 1998-99, The FE Program was asked by VPAA Jim Fletcher to study the department's placement procedures for Freshman English. This study is ongoing. We have been tracking the number of students who receive D's and F's and the reasons for their performance; we have also been tracking the numbers and reasons for student W's and WF's.

A. D's and F's: In Fall 2000, there were 23 D's and 18 F's (out of a total of 3089 students). Reasons include editing failures; editing failure on the final; failure to use the Writing Center resources when suggested by the teacher; failure to turn in papers; failure to take the final exam; failure to participate in class activities; excessive absences; and failure to attend student-teacher conferences. In Spring 2001, there were 30 D's and 19 F's (out of a total of 2480 students). Reasons include poor concentration in class; sloppy work; poor grammar skills, diction, and syntax; plagiarism; failure to turn in work; failure to show up for the final exam; editing failures on papers and final exams; family problems, but did not contact the teacher; need for Academic Assistance but student could not drop class and maintain HOPE.

B. W's and WF's: In Fall 2000, there were 94 W's and 14 WF's. Most of the withdrawals were initiated by students for medical reasons, family problems, low class average and fear of losing HOPE, incomplete and missing assignments, excessive absences and failing grades. Some students did not show up for class after the first few weeks of the semester but never contacted their teachers. In Spring 2001, there were 115 W's and 11 WF's. Most were student-initiated because of illness, family problems, time and schedule conflicts with other classes, outside jobs, fear of losing HOPE, LD/DS problems, excessive absences, athletic schedules, lost contact lenses, and mysterious disappearances.

This evidence, admittedly anecdotal, suggests that students are being placed correctly in Freshman English. There are a few that do not seem ready for the class in which they are placed, but far more fail because of life problems and work habits. A very small number of students, about 4%, fail to complete the Freshman English courses over the year.

C. Regents' Exam: In 2000-01, 85 native students who took their ENGL 1101 at UGA failed the Regents' exam; 85 students who fulfilled the ENGL 1101 requirement by other means failed the Regents'; 12 students who exempted ENGL (category K) failed the exam. Native students who take their ENGL 1101 at UGA still pass the Regents' at a higher rate than do transfer students. The 12 exemptions who failed the Regents' are a puzzling number.

T. A. Awards and Activities

The following seven Teaching Assistants were nominated by the Department for the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Awards given by the Office of Instructional Support and Development: Michael Crowley, Rebecca DeHaas, Stephanie Gordon, Wendy Kurant, Kathryn Locey, April Nixon, and Mary Wearn. All of our nominees received the award. Paul Quick was nominated for, and awarded, the Excellence in Teaching Award. For the fourth year in a row, an English Department T. A. has received this award, which is the highest teaching honor

given to UGA Teaching Assistants. Rebecca DeHaas has been awarded a T. A. mentor position from OISD for 2001-2002.

Student Events

The Barnett Award winners for this year are Sarah Winchell, "The Ever-Changing Culture of Country Music" (ENGL 1101, Kyle Reynolds) and Genna Miller Walters, "Joyce's 'Araby' and Updike's 'A & P': A Culture Hostile to Romance" (ENGL 1102, Beth Ann Way). There were no submissions for ENGL 1030. These essays will be printed in the 2001-02 *Freshman English Handbook*. Past and present Barnett Award essays are also available on the *Freshman English Handbook* website.