

Annual Report on the Freshman English Program, 2001-02

Christy Desmet (Director of Freshman English)

Kathy Houff (Assistant Director of Freshman English)

Deborah Church Miller (Assistant Director of Freshman English)

Jane Barroso (Secretary)

The Freshman English Committee (FEC) met three times during the 2001-02 academic year. During this time, its members were Christy Desmet (Director of Freshman English and Chair); Michelle Ballif (faculty); Karen Bartlett (lecturer, representing ESOL and Multicultural FE); Kris Boudreau (faculty); Mike Hendrick (Assistant to the Head); Matt Horton (graduate student); Kathy Houff (Assistant Director of Freshman English); Richard Menke (faculty); Angela Mitchell (graduate student); Mike Moran (faculty); and David Payne (Director, Writing Center and Coordinator of Technological Resources).

During the 2001-02 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 2001	4/68	3/60	1/20
Fall 20001	92/2003	38/823	17/366
Spring 2002	19/414	73/1536	24/492
TOTAL	114/2470	114/2419	42/878

International Sections (sections/students)

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	ENGL 1101	ENGL 1102	ENGL 1030
Summer 2001	0/0	0/0	0/0
Fall 2001	2/28	1/14	1/15
Spring 2002	1/14	1/14	2/28
TOTAL	3/42	2/28	3/43

International classes are limited to 15 students; this year, we did a much better job of filling the classes than we did last fiscal year. Every ESOL class ran at or near to capacity. The sections were taught by Karen Bartlett (1 ENGL 1030 in Spring); Matt Horton (1 ENGL 1101 in Fall); Paula Mellom (2 ENGL 1101 in the Fall, 1 ENGL 1102 in the Spring); and Signe Wegener (1 ENGL 1030 in Fall, 1 ENGL 1030 in Spring).

ON-LINE Sections (sections/students)

	ENGL 1101	ENGL 1102	ENGL 1030
Summer 2001	0/0	0/0	0/0
Fall 2001	5/71	0/0	0/0
Spring 2002	0/0	3/45	0/0
TOTAL	5/71	3/45	0/0

Like International sections, ON-LINE sections of Freshman English are limited to 15 students. Note as well the generally high occupancy rate of students in ON-LINE sections. The ON-LINE classes were taught by Bob Cummings (2 ENGL 1101 in the Fall, 2 ENGL 1102 in the Spring; Alexis Hart (1 ENGL 1101: "Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students" in Fall); and Laura McGrath (2 ENGL 1101 in Fall, 1 ENGL 1102 in Spring).

Freshman English in Oglethorpe House (sections/students)

	ENGL 1101	ENGL 1102	ENGL 1030
Summer 2001	0/0	0/0	0/0
Fall 2001	2/28	0/0	0/0
Spring 2002	0/0	2/28	0/0
TOTAL	2/28	2/28	0/0

Oglethorpe sections of Freshman English are limited to 14 students and fill easily. This year, Angela Mitchell taught 2 sections of ENGL 1101 in Oglethorpe during Fall semester and Jane Gatewood taught two sections of

ENGL 1102 in Spring.

Honors Freshman English (sections/students)

	ENGL 1050H	ENGL 1060H
Summer 2001	0/0	0/0
Fall 2002	9/147	3/43
Spring 2002	4/42	3/41
TOTAL	13/189	6/84

Honors Freshman English courses are also limited to 15 students.

Totals

- The total number of sections for Freshman English in 2001-2002 (all varieties, excluding Honors sections) was 290; the total number of students was 6052. We offered 20 fewer sections than in 2000-01 and served 324 more students than in 2000-01.
- The total number of International Sections of Freshman English was 8; the total number of students was 113. We offered 1 more section of International FE than in 2000-01 and served 76 more students than in 2000-01.
- The total number of sections of ON-LINE Freshman English was 8; the total number of students was 116. We offered the same number of sections of ON-LINE Freshman English as in 2000-01 and served 18 more students than in 2000-01.
- The total number of sections of Oglethorpe House Freshman English was 4; the total number of students was 56. We offered the same number of sections of Oglethorpe House Freshman English as in 2000-01 and served 3 more students than in 2000-01.
- The total number of sections of Honors Freshman English was 17; the total number of students was 189. We offered one fewer section of Honors Freshman English than in 2000-01 and served 12 more students than in 2000-01.
- The total number of sections in Freshman English (including Honors sections) was 307; the total number of students was 6303.
- The total number of first-semester composition students (ENGL 1101) was 2611; the total number of second-semester students (ENGL 1102, 1030, 1050H, 1060H) was 3692.

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

- 21.33/22 in regular sections (96.95% occupancy rate in classes limited to 22 students);
- 14.1/15 in international sections (94% occupancy rate in classes limited to 15 students);
- 14.5/15 in ON-LINE sections (96.7% occupancy rate in classes limited to 15);
- 14/14 in Oglethorpe sections (100% occupancy rate in classes limited to 14 students);
- 14.53/15 students in Honors Freshman English (96.8% occupancy rate in classes limited to 15 students).

Occupancy rates for FE seats are significantly higher this year than even last year, and in fact could hardly be any better. In Spring 2001, the FE Program budget for 2001-02 was cut by 50 sections by the College of Arts and Sciences; we gained back 10 sections over the summer. As expected, the increase in student population, coupled with the loss of sections, has caused tension amongst the students. We did our best to "sell" the sections scheduled for very early and late in the day, and the occupancy rates suggest that we did a good job. However, we also received a number of intense phone calls from students and parents who felt that they had to have a class at a specific hour. Although this is an unscientific sampling, our office estimates that during the last two weeks

before the start of school, we received 200 phone calls concerning the one remaining ESOL (POD) seat left at 10:10 MWF. In running the "specialized" sections of FE at a consistent level, we continue to honor commitments to the international students, the Dean's Office, and the VP for Instruction, but honoring these commitments means that the burden of adjustment falls disproportionately on the "regular" FE sections. This means that the student "crunch" affects most strongly those sections taught largely by the most beleaguered teachers (part-time instructors) and the least experienced (first-semester ENGL 1101 teachers). We remain convinced that, because of our reduced resources, we are not serving our entire population of students who need FE classes (see also the discussion under Program Assessment). We think it a shame that many native students may be receiving their writing instruction at other institutions simply because we cannot offer an adequate number of sections.

Teacher Demographics

- 92 Teaching Assistants taught 161 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).
- 2 tenured or tenure-track professors taught a total of 2 Freshman English classes (exclusive of Honors courses). (Don McCreary taught 1030 in Summer 2001; Christy Desmet taught ENGL 1101 for Freshman College in Summer 2001.)
- A total of 59 instructors taught 127 sections of FE this year.

At first blush, it may look as though we hire an inordinate number of part-time instructors. In fact, of the 39 instructors hired last year by the FE program and English Department, 24 held Ph.D. or M.A. degrees from the University of Georgia. Of this group, eight have some sort of external tie to the university community (family connections, a part-time job at UGA, long-standing residency in the community, etc.); 1 will enter the Ph.D. program in English here next Fall. 12 instructors in this first group of 24 are UGA Ph.D.'s who are actively searching elsewhere for permanent, tenure-track positions. The second group of part-time instructors received their degrees (M.A., MFA, and Ph.D) at institutions other than UGA. The 15 instructors in this group all have ties to the community or have come to UGA with partners. So perhaps we do hire too many instructors and undoubtedly, some of these instructors would prefer different working arrangements. In general, we draw on community folk and try to offer an adequate number of courses to those teachers who do not receive health benefits from another source. The current budget cuts definitely threaten our ability to meet the benefits needs of all teachers. Based on class visits by administrators and student evaluations, we think that the group of new instructors hired this past year have proved to be particularly effective teachers.

Program Development

I. Administration and Program Supervision

A. Office Events: We are very happy to report that no unpleasant events took place in the office this year. We are also pleased to report that Kathy completed her Ph.D. degree in November 2001; the title of Dr. Houff's dissertation is "Majestic: A Novel." In Fall, we also had a visit to the program from Andrea Lunsford, author of all three of our standard books for ENGL 1101. She talked in a thoughtful and humorous way about teaching and led a very useful discussion of how to use *The Presence of Others* in class. Bedford/St. Martin's provided refreshment.

This year, we continued to monitor the number and kind of administrative problems handled by the FE office. In Fall 2001, 67 extensive problems and complaints were addressed and documented; in Spring 2002, 38 complaints and problems were recorded, for a total of 105 situations throughout the year that demanded a

significant number of woman-hours. The problems range from student and instructor illness to student complaints about teachers, teacher complaints about students, grade concerns, identification of learning disabilities, athletic schedules, plagiarism and academic dishonesty, student absenteeism, harassment of female teachers, and other kinds of disruptive and inappropriate behavior. The FE program also provided practical, emotional, and programmatic support for both teachers and students in difficult situations. In a late-breaking decision, following Dr. Holbrook's request that we re-name our student population by year, we will henceforth be identified as the First-Year Writing Program.

B. Assistant Director and Technology Coordinator for FE: This year, we were able to have Deborah Church Miller as a second Assistant Director of FE for 20 hours per week. Deb's duties involved helping to keep the FE Office open and staffed; dealing with the FE problems described above and with regular business involving Admissions and the Registrar; evaluating transfer credits; observing classes, reviewing graded papers of new Teaching Assistants and Instructors, and writing letters documenting both kinds of evaluation; reviewing and summarizing student evaluations of teachers; scheduling class visits for potential students and their parents; substituting for sick teachers; writing memos and communiques of all kinds; helping with the development of Program syllabi and with the endless process of collecting lab-fee cards. Most important and most time-consuming, Deb supervised the Computer-Support Teaching Assistants or "Frogs." She planned the beginning-of-year computer-lab orientations, trained the Frogs, supervised their daily work, and orchestrated the Computer-Support schedule. She planned and organized the administration of on-line evaluations (no mean feat), arranged for a visit from the technology folk at Bedford/St. Martin as part of the EngComp Markup Project (see below) and is very much involved with the implementation of EMMA (see below) in the pilot classes for 2002-03. With the ever-increasing size of the student body, the increasing complexity of the FE Program, and the increased use of technology in the program, the addition of a second Assistant Director has been a high priority.

C. CAI in Freshman English and the "Frogs": In Fall 2001, the 6-member computer-support group (Deb Miller, Julie Barfield, Dan Shaw, Keith O'Neill, and Mike Crowley) decided unanimously that their official departmental name would be "The Frogs." In our department, hardware and system issues are handled by bugs@parallel.park.uga.edu. By this logic, the folks who deal with software, human error, and other issues of this kind became the "Frogs." Their e-mail address is frogs@parallel.park.uga.edu. In Fall semester, the Frogs taught 158 orientation classes, of 50-75 minutes each, over a 2 week period, orienting the entire FE class to our labs and to computers-and-writing resources that would be useful for their writing classes. In addition to orienting students to lab "rules" and specific protocols for using our lab's hardware and software, they introduced Freshman English Teachers and students to both the old and new Freshman Orientation web sites. The new "Computers and Writing" orientation web site, designed by last year's support group to acquaint users with useful writing and research tools, revises significantly the basic Windows and Word Processing tutorial ("Computer Skills") that the FE Program had used since 1998-99. The new site covers information on Online use of UGA catalogs, data bases, and reference materials (GIL and Galileo), online Grammar and Editorial helps (including specific directions for formatting and documenting UGA Freshman English papers), the use of Arches, and a general bibliography (<http://www.english.uga.edu/engcomp/orientation/update2/>).

The Spring 2002 team of 5 (Deb, Julie, Mike, Keith, and Robin Warren) taught 45 orientation sessions (all sections of ENGL 1101 + requested sections of ENGL 1030 and ENGL 1102). In addition, for each semester the Frogs provided technical classroom support for 147 computer lab class hours/week (3 rooms x 49 open hours) and were available on request for pedagogical support. In Spring 2002, the Frogs also supervised the instruction and administration of our department's newly developed "Online Teacher Evaluations," shepherding over 2000 Freshmen in and out of two computer labs during the last week of class, while maintaining an Open Lab for pedagogical use. This process went smoothly, and on-line evaluations for FE will become the norm for next year and after.

D. Freshman English Handbook: In 2000, 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. Once again, we held the new standard in abeyance. Thus, for 2002-03, a 3 on the AP English class will exempt students from ENGL 1101. After a two-year delay due to budgetary reasons, we think it time that the

new standard be implemented. The only other changes to the *Freshman English Handbook* were small and editorial, designed to make the FE website and *Handbook* consistent with one another.

II. Curricular Development

A. Apprentices and Fall Orientation: In 2001-02, the FE Program trained a total of 25 apprentices: 3 in Summer 2001, 14 in Fall 2001, and 8 in Spring 2002. Fall Orientation went off without a hitch this year, and the members of that orientation continued to work with one another in ENGL 6910/6911, the Composition Pedagogy Practicum. Christy Desmet taught that class in Fall 2002.

B. Learning Communities and the Human Genome ENGL 1050: In 2000-01 and 2001-02, the Freshman English Program participated in a rather elaborate "Learning Communities" sequence on the Human Genome. For the last two years, Alexis Hart has done a splendid job of teaching the composition component of this course cluster. Her class web site for "Writing about the Human Genome Project" can be found at http://parallel.park.uga.edu/~hart/1050H/1050H_home.htm.

C. 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 2001-02. Vincent Gangl of the former UCNS has done an excellent job of keeping the lab classroom in good order. In Fall 2001, Angela Mitchell taught 2 classes in "What is an Argument?" (<http://virtual.park.uga.edu/~amitchel/1101-01.htm>); in Spring 2002, Jane Gatewood taught two sections of ENGL 1102 in Oglethorpe House.

D. 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 2001 and Spring Semester 2002. In Fall 2001, Alexis Hart taught an online version of her class in "Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students"; Bob Cummings taught 2 sections of ENGL 1101 online (<http://www.english.uga.edu/~cummings/1101online/1101onlinehome.html>); and Laura McGrath taught 2 sections of ENGL 1101 online. In Spring semester, Bob Cummings taught 2 sections of a special ENGL 1102 course, "Land Use and American Literature" (<http://www.english.uga.edu/~cummings/1102online/1102onlinehome.html>); and Laura McGrath taught 1 section of ENGL 1102 online.

In addition, the Deans' Forum Technology Theme Team (T³), which consisted of Christy Desmet, William Finlay, Mike Hannafin, Tal Guy, and John Langone, conducted an assessment study of on-line education across the Colleges of Arts and Sciences and Education. As part of this study, we looked at on-line FE classes taught in the English Department during Fall 2001 and Spring 2002. In Fall, William Finlay conducted focus groups and teacher interviews. In Spring, a survey was administered to the 3 online classes and to 6 regular classes that met at the same days and times. Somewhat to our surprise, we found that the students in on-line sections rated their satisfaction--defined in terms of flexibility, instructor responsiveness, class interactions, and the development of critical thinking skills--more highly than did the students of "regular" classes, although there was no significant difference between student evaluations of the teachers. A version of the presentation made by T³ at the Deans' Forum retreat in May and further development of the project in the presentation made by Bob Cummings, Christy Desmet, and Alexis Hart at the Computers and Writing conference in May are available at: http://www.english.uga.edu/cdesmet/C_and_W_2002a/ This study will continue.

E. Freshman College: In Summer 2001 Christy Desmet taught a section of ENGL 1101 for Freshman College. The class web site is available at: <http://virtual.park.uga.edu/cdesmet/class/freshmancollege2001/home.html>. FE is not participating in Freshman College for Summer 2002.

F. EngComp Markup and EMMA: This year inaugurates a whole new phase of Computers and Writing pedagogy in FE. With a USG Learning Technologies grant ("EngComp Markup: Comprehensive Re-engineering

of English Composition, Major Activities, and Student Services by means of Markup and Computer-Mediated Composition," Nelson Hilton PI), a group was formed to create pedagogical uses for XML (Extensible Markup Language) in the First-Year Writing Program. (The members of this group, who took David Gants's ENGL 8850 class, were: Ron Balthazor, Bob Cummings, Christy Desmet, David Gants, Alexis Hart, Nelson Hilton, Matthew Horton, Bill Kretzschmar, Angela Mitchell, Haritha Muthyala, David Payne, Karen Place, Eric Rochester, and Hollie White. Wendell Pietz served as our outside consultant.) Throughout the semester, we all learned the basic skills necessary for creating XML documents and accompanying Style Sheets. This process took about half the semester. Then, using the Departmental Grading Rubric as a guide, we thought about and talked through the process of creating a series of staged and sequenced DTD's (Document Type Definition) to allow students, peer reviewers and editors, and teachers to archive, mark up, revise, and "publish" writing in FE classes. As the client EMMA (English Management and Markup Application) was being developed, we constructed a workshop using EMMA based on Richard A. Lanham's *Revising Prose* that was given to 20 voluntary students from Christy Desmet, Alexis Hart, Angela Mitchell, and Robin Warren's ENGL 3K, "Introduction to English Studies," class. At the end of the semester, the group developed other exercises for EMMA that were based on the existing Computer Lab Lesson plans attached to the Department Syllabus for ENGL 1101. In May 2002, Nelson Hilton, Ron Balthazor, and Christy Desmet ran a 4-day workshop, "EngComp Markup: XML for the English Department" (http://www.english.uga.edu/cdesmet/EngComp_Markup/), for interested faculty and Teaching Assistants.

G. T. A. Mentors: Rebecca DeHaas served as a T. A. mentor for 2001-02. For next year, Alexis Hart and Julie Barfield will be our T. A. Mentors. We look forward to their help with the technological end of the FE Program.

H. Experimental courses: Teaching Assistants with several years of experience are encouraged to develop their own courses, based around their interests. Alexis Hart taught 2 sections of "Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students" (one on-line and one regular). Angela Pfile taught an ENGL 1102 class centered around Arthurian Literature.

III. FE Scholarship

Presentations:

Desmet, Christy. "Technology in Slow Motion: "Dramatism in the Computers and Writing Classroom." Computers and Writing, Illinois State University, Normal, IL, May 2002. Available online: http://www.english.uga.edu/cdesmet/C_and_W_2002/

--, Robert Cummings, and Alexis Hart. "Who is the (Institutional) Subject of On-Line Education?" Computers and Writing, Illinois State University, Normal, IL, May 2002. Available online: http://www.english.uga.edu/cdesmet/C_and_W_2002a/

Hart, Alexis. "Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric: The Three R's of Civic Education." Conference on College Composition and Communication, Chicago, March 2002.

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.

Summer 2001

A. W/WF's: 16

Out of a total of 143 students. The drop rate is 11.2%. The failure/passing but unacceptable rate is 4.2%.

Fall 2001

A. W/WF's: 144

B. D's and F's: 40

Out of a total of 3,348 students. The drop rate is 4.3%. The failure/passing but unacceptable rate is 1.2%.

Spring 2002

A. W/WF's: 160

B. D's and F's: 35

Out of a total of 2,571 students. The drop rate is 6.22%. The failure/passing but unacceptable rate is 1.36%.

As in past years, 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, or disappeared after a late in the semester breaks. A few failed on the basis of the final exam. This evidence, admittedly anecdotal, suggests that students are being placed correctly in Freshman English. The teachers of some students who failed in Spring 2002 expressed surprise that they had passed ENGL 1101, but we do not know when and where these students did take ENGL 1101. Mostly, students failed their writing courses because of life problems and work habits.

This year, a bit of research by Kathy Houff uncovered another potential problem. In Spring 2002, among 27 students who had received either a D or F in ENGL 1101 for Fall 2001: 6 retook the course in Spring 2002; 10 were not enrolled in English at the University of Georgia (of this group, in Fall 4 had received an F, six students a D); 6 were not enrolled at UGA at all; and 5 had gone on to enroll in 1102/1030. Although students are entitled to enroll in ENGL 1102/1030 with a grade of D, they cannot graduate from UGA without a C in 1101 and a combined average of C in 1101/1102 or 1030. Second, this "snapshot" of the program suggests that first-year students who do not perform well in FE during Fall semester may avoid English altogether at this institution, although research in Rhetoric and Composition suggests that continuity in instruction and frequency of writing are important to students' improvement in these classes. These numbers suggest that many students who do not perform satisfactorily in ENGL 1101 at UGA in their first semester apparently choose an option other than retaking and conquering that course. This possibility worries the FE Program.

T. A. Awards and Activities

This year, Paul Quick received the Patricia Cross Future Leader Award, which is given through the American Association for Higher Education. Alexis Hart won the Kairos/Lore Adjunct Award for Excellence in Teaching Writing with Computers, which was awarded during the Computers and Writing Conference, Illinois State University, Normal, IL in May 2002. Both of these are high honors on a national scale. The following Teaching Assistants were nominated by the Department for the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Awards given by the Office of Instructional Support and Development (OISD): Julie Ann Barfield, Brad Edwards, Colleen Donovan, Alexis Hart, Sandy Hughes, and Angela Mitchell. All of our nominees received the award. Molly Crumpton was nominated for, and awarded, the Excellence in Teaching Award. For the fifth year in a row, an English Department T. A. has received this award, which is the highest teaching honor given to UGA Teaching Assistants. Molly, whose teaching talents range from Freshman Composition through multi-cultural literature, has also been, for a long time, the English Department's own Ms. Mentor, and we are grateful for all her help. Alexis Hart and Julie Barfield have been awarded T. A. mentor positions from OISD for 2002-2003.

Student Events

The Barnett Award winners for this year are: for ENGL 1101, Mark J. Dial, "Lunch is What Spaceships Do . . ." (Instructor: Jane Gatewood); for ENGL 1102, Bonnie Sillay, "Life's Not a Paragraph" (Instructor: Angela Mitchell); and for ENGL 1030, Kerry McCaughan, "The Combined Use of Poetry and Prose in Janice Mirikitani's 'Spoils of War'" (Instructor: Liz Vasconelos). These essays will be printed in the 2002-03 *Freshman English Handbook*. Past and present Barnett Award essays are also available on the *Freshman English Handbook* website. Mark's teacher reports that he "thinks outside of the box"; Bonnie Sillay is now an English major who took ENGL 3K with Angela Mitchell and Christy Desmet; and Kerry McCaughan is the second excellent student of Liz Vasconelos to win the essay award for ENGL 1030.