

## Annual Report on the First-year Writing Program, 2002-03

**Christy Desmet (Director of the First-year Writing Program)**

**Kathy Houff (Associate Director)**

**Deborah Church Miller (Assistant Director)**

**Jane Barroso (Secretary)**

The First-year Composition Committee (FYCC) met twice during the 2002-03 academic year. During this time, its members were Christy Desmet, Director of the First-year Writing Program, Chair; Michelle Ballif; Julie Barfield [graduate student member]; Bob Cummings [graduate student member]; Mike Hendrick; Kathy Houff [Associate Director]; Elizabeth Kraft; Don McCreary [ESL representative]; Mike Moran; David Payne [Director, Writing Center; Coordinator of Technological Resources; Multicultural representative].

During the 2002-03 academic year, the First-year Writing Program taught the following number of sections and students (broken down into Regular, ESOL, ON-LINE, and Oglethorpe House sections of English 1101, 1102, and 1102M).

### Regular Sections (sections/students)

|              | ENGL 1101       | ENGL 1102       | ENGL 1102M    |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Summer 2002  | 2/44            | 3/62            | 1/17          |
| Fall 20002   | 96/2029         | 41/882          | 18/371        |
| Spring 2003  | 15/302          | 74/1567         | 24/506        |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>113/2375</b> | <b>118/2511</b> | <b>43/894</b> |

### ESOL Sections (sections/students)

|             | ENGL 1101 | ENGL 1102 | ENGL 1102M |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Summer 2002 | 0/0       | 0/0       | 0/0        |
| Fall 2002   | 2/30      | 1/14      | 1/14       |
|             |           |           |            |

|              |      |      |      |
|--------------|------|------|------|
| Spring 2003  | 2/23 | 2/24 | 1/10 |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | 4/53 | 3/38 | 2/24 |

ESOL sections are limited to 15 students. The sections were taught by Paula Mellom (2 ENGL 1101 in Fall 2002; 1 ENGL 1101 in Spring); Signe Wegener (1 ENGL 1102 in Fall 2002; 2 ENGL 1102 in Spring 2003); Karen Bartlett (1 ENGL 1102M in Fall 2002; 1 ENGL 1102M in Spring 2003); and Matt Horton (1 ENGL 1101 in Spring 2003).

#### ON-LINE Sections (sections/students)

|              | ENGL 1101 | ENGL 1102 | ENGL 1102M |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Summer 2002  | 0/0       | 0/0       | 0/0        |
| Fall 2002    | 4/50      | 0/0       | 0/0        |
| Spring 2003  | 0/0       | 3/41      | 0/0        |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | 4/50      | 3/41      | 0/0        |

Like ESOL sections, ON-LINE sections of Freshman English are limited to 15 students. The ON-LINE classes were taught by Hollie White (2 ENGL 1101 in Fall 2002; 1 ENGL 1102 in Spring 2003); and Laura McGrath (2 ENGL 1101 in Fall 2002; 2 ENGL 1102 in Spring 2003).

#### First-year Composition in Oglethorpe House (sections/students)

|              | ENGL 1101 | ENGL 1102 | ENGL 1102M |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Summer 2002  | 0/0       | 0/0       | 0/0        |
| Fall 2002    | 2/26      | 0/0       | 0/0        |
| Spring 2003  | 0/0       | 3/37      | 0/0        |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | 2/26      | 3/37      | 0/0        |

Oglethorpe sections of First-year Composition are limited to 13 students. This year, Leigh Dillard taught 2 sections of ENGL 1101 in Oglethorpe during Fall semester and Angela Mitchell taught one section of ENGL 4830, "Writing for the World Wide Web." In Spring, Bob Cummings taught 2 sections of ENGL 1102 and Angela Mitchell taught one section of ENGL 1102.

#### Honors First-year Composition (sections/students)

|              | ENGL 1050H | ENGL 1060H |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Summer 2002  | 0/0        | 0/0        |
| Fall 2002    | 13/170     | 4/60       |
| Spring 2003  | 4/49       | 4/52       |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | 17/219     | 8/112      |

Honors First-year Composition classes are also limited to 15 students.

#### Totals

- The total number of sections for First-year Composition in 2002-03 (all varieties, excluding Honors

sections) was 295; the total number of students was 5986.

- The total number of ESOL sections of First-year Composition was 9; the total number of students was 115.
- The total number of sections of ON-LINE First-year Composition was 7; the total number of students was 91.
- The total number of sections of Oglethorpe House First-year Composition was 5; the total number of students was 63. Note that because of re-configuration of the lab, the Oglethorpe lab-classroom can now hold a maximum of only 13 students.
- The total number of sections of Honors First-year Composition was 25; the total number of students was 331.
- The total number of sections in First-year Composition (including Honors sections) was 320; the total number of students was 6380.
- The total number of first-semester composition students (ENGL 1101) was 2504; the total number of second-semester students (ENGL 1102, 1030, 1050H, 1060H) was 3876. Over the year, the total number of students served by the Program was therefore 6380. Wow!

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

- 21.09/22 in regular sections (95.6% occupancy rate in classes limited to 22 students);
- 12.8/15 in ESOL sections (85% occupancy rate in classes limited to 15 students). This number is a lower than last year but may be a bit misleading, as an uncounted number of students were moved to ESOL sections in the first four weeks of the semester. Thus, the teachers taught more students than this calculation, taken at the end of add-drop, indicates;
- 13/14 in ON-LINE sections (96% occupancy rate in classes limited to 14). This is the first time that the Program has trained a teacher explicitly for on-line teaching;
- 12.6/13 in Oglethorpe sections (97% occupancy rate in classes limited to 13 students);
- 13.24/15 students in Honors First-year Composition (88% occupancy rate in classes limited to 15 students).

Our "occupancy rates" remain strong, which is a good thing for a program whose funding is now based on performance-based budgeting. To retain our current level of funding, we need to fill every seat possible.

## Teacher Demographics

- 54 Teaching Assistants taught 150 sections of FYC (these numbers do not include Honors sections of FYC, T. A. units assigned to the Writing Center, for Computer Support, for sophomore support, for ENGL 3000 support, or for teaching sophomore sections, creative writing and upper-division classes).
- 1 tenured professor taught 1 section of FYC (exclusive of Honors courses).
- 34 instructors taught 145 sections of FYC (exclusive of Honors courses).

At first blush, it may look as though we hire an inordinate number of part-time instructors. In fact, of the 34 instructors hired last year by the First-year Writing Program and English Department, 11 held Ph.D. and 9 M.A. degrees from the University of Georgia. The rest have M.A., M.F.A., and Ph.D. degrees from nationally recognized universities. One is a retired professor from the Indiana university system. For various reasons, all have ties to Athens as a community.

## Program Development

### I. Administration and Program Supervision

**A. Office Events:** We are very happy to report a calm year in the First-year Writing Program office. We are also pleased to report that Deb Miller completed her Ph.D. degree. The title of Dr. Miller's dissertation is "Chiasmus in British Library Cotton Nero Manuscript A.x, Article 3." Jane Barroso had a short story published in *Still Point* and read a short story for the Sigma Tau Delta Undergraduate Conference. This year saw another visit from Andrea Lunsford, author of both our standard books for ENGL 1101. She talked in particular about *Everything's*

*an Argument with Readings*. We also had a visit from Nick Carbone of Bedford/St. Martin's to discuss using the

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On CHS Inc. headquarters Daylight and the "Young" In Fall 2000, Daylight's senior management and employees the "Young" were not only a diverse group, but also a diverse group. They were a mix of men and women, and they were a mix of different backgrounds. They were a mix of different ages, and they were a mix of different ethnicities. They were a mix of different religions, and they were a mix of different sexual orientations. They were a mix of different abilities, and they were a mix of different languages. They were a mix of different cultures, and they were a mix of different values. They were a mix of different beliefs, and they were a mix of different opinions. They were a mix of different interests, and they were a mix of different hobbies. They were a mix of different passions, and they were a mix of different dreams. They were a mix of different hopes, and they were a mix of different fears. They were a mix of different joys, and they were a mix of different sorrows. They were a mix of different loves, and they were a mix of different hates. They were a mix of different friends, and they were a mix of different enemies. They were a mix of different family members, and they were a mix of different strangers. They were a mix of different neighbors, and they were a mix of different acquaintances. They were a mix of different colleagues, and they were a mix of different competitors. They were a mix of different customers, and they were a mix of different suppliers. They were a mix of different partners, and they were a mix of different adversaries. They were a mix of different allies, and they were a mix of different opponents. They were a mix of different friends, and they were a mix of different enemies. They were a mix of different family members, and they were a mix of different strangers. They were a mix of different neighbors, and they were a mix of different acquaintances. They were a mix of different colleagues, and they were a mix of different competitors. They were a mix of different customers, and they were a mix of different suppliers. They were a mix of different partners, and they were a mix of different adversaries. They were a mix of different allies, and they were a mix of different opponents.

to a 4. Due to financial pressures affecting the higher administration, that plan is indefinitely on hold. Thus, for AY 2002-03 the *FYC Handbook* says that students with either an AP 3 or 4 exempt ENGL 1101 with three hours of credit. It is worth remembering not only that the AP score of 3, according to the standards set by the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, represents "C" work at the college level, but also that 20-25% of the students who exempt ENGL 1101 with an AP score of 3 earn a "C" in First-year Composition. This is below the percentage for the rest of the population, although that population satisfies the ENGL 1101 requirement in many different ways. To conclude, what is "acceptable" work for the institution is not always acceptable work for those who want to retain HOPE. Changes have also been made in Placement (see discussion below).

**E. First-year Composition Placement:** As interim Provost and then as Provost, Arnette Mace made streamlining English and Math Placement a priority for his administration. An ad hoc committee-chaired by Rebecca White (interim VP for Instruction) and including Christy Desmet (FYWP), Denise Mewborn (Math Education), Ed Azoff (Math), Hugh Ruppensburg (A&S), Sherrie Nist (Academic Enhancement) and others-met throughout Spring Semester. The committee concluded that for English Placement, students with an SAT Verbal score of 580 or lower who do not post other scores for exemption, as listed in the *FYC Handbook*, would take the English Placement test. Those who placed in Academic Enhancement would be required to take UNIV 1115, which unlike its predecessor ACAE 0099 carries graduation credit and is covered by HOPE; the remainder of this group and all students with an SAT Verbal score of 590 or higher would be placed in ENGL 1101, unless they posted scores from other approved tests that would exempt them from either ENGL 1101 or both ENGL 1101 and 1102. Students with SAT scores of 580 and below can also take the English Placement test voluntarily with an eye to earning exemption and credit for ENGL 1101. There were some problems with this plan that the committee discussed, but they were considered to be capable of being addressed satisfactorily. In the end, however, the problems proved insuperable. In particular, Regents policy forbids requiring any coursework below the 1000- level. The Provost and VP White announced to the Heads of English and Math plus the College of Arts and Sciences that all placement in Academic Enhancement would be advisory rather than compulsory. The Ad Hoc Committee had finished its work and was not involved in this phase of the deliberations. It remains to be seen what will be the fallout from this policy change; virtually no large Research 1 universities use voluntary placement and UGA does not have the resources-especially during the summer-that would be necessary to truly counsel a body of 200 students about the state of their writing samples. In June 2003, Sherrie Nist and Julie Segrest (from Academic Assistance) and Christy Desmet (from English) offered a brief orientation to the new placement procedures to College of Arts and Sciences Advisors that was sponsored by Ann Crowther. Provisions have also been made to allow students to "drop back" through a section change, and therefore without penalty, from ENGL 1101 to UNIV 1115 during the first three weeks of the semester.

**F. ENGL 1102M:** At the time of semester conversion, the Regents forbade the use of the "M" suffix to indicate multicultural composition courses. This rule caused confusion and heartache for students attempting to transfer to other system schools that did not offer multicultural composition. One day, as if by magic, ENGL 1030, Multicultural Composition and Literature, was transformed into ENGL 1102M.

## II. Curricular Development

**A. Apprentices and Fall Orientation:** In 2002-03, the FYC Program trained a total of 21 apprentices: 5 in Summer 2001, 19 in Fall 2001, and 7 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. Kathy Houff taught that class in Fall 2002.

**B. Learning Communities and the Human Genome ENGL 1050:** Developed by Alexis Hart, this course was taught by Department Head Nelson Hilton in Spring 2003. This has been a fruitful collaboration. Not only did Nelson develop and pilot the commenting function in EMMA, but he also co-authored an essay with Jonathan Arnold for *Nature* ("Revelations from a Bead Mould," *Nature* 422. 24 [April 2003], 821-22).

**C. Teaching in the Dorms (Oglethorpe House):** The First-year Writing Program continues to participate in the Vice President for Instruction's initiative for teaching in the dorms. We ran 6 writing classes in the Oglethorpe

House Computer-Lab Classroom during 2002-03. In Fall, Leigh Dillard used EMMA for her ENGL 1101 course and Angela Mitchell used EMMA for her ENGL 4830, "Writing for the World Wide Web" class. In Spring, both Angela Mitchell and Bob Cummings used EMMA in the computer-lab classroom, teaching two courses apiece.

**D. First-year Composition 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 2002-03. In addition, the Deans' Forum Technology Theme Team (T<sup>3</sup>), 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 FYC classes taught in the English Department during Fall 2001 and Spring 2002. 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. Since that time, an essay co-authored by Christy Desmet, Bob Cummings, and Alexis Hart has been accepted for an anthology of essays on distance education; William Finlay and Christy Desmet have also completed a second essay.

**E. EMMA: Electronic Markup and Management Application.** This is the second year in the development of this computers and writing project. The EMMA Working Group developed a set of DTD's for use in FYC, "Writing for the World Wide Web," ENGL 3K, and the Human Genome Project. In Fall, ten classes piloted the application, and in Spring semester, we concentrated on incorporating EMMA more thoroughly into the writing process, expanding the range of classes that use EMMA, on constructing student writing portfolios, and on developing the application's functionality. Hollie White's online edition of Anna Barbauld's *Hymns in Prose* (Dir: Elizabeth Kraft) is the first UGA thesis produced with EMMA. Almost all of the technical problems we experienced with the editor jEdit have now been resolved, and EMMA is now truly functional both as an XML editor and as a word processor. As part of her dissertation research, Angela Mitchell (with some help from Christy Desmet) conducted an ethnographic study of EMMA in the classroom. In total, the group also gave six presentations about EMMA on campus, within the state, and at national conferences. Plans for next year include developing a set of DTD's for analyzing Shakespeare's plays (a project supported by Christy Desmet's appointment as a Senior Teaching Fellow), incorporating EMMA more thoroughly into ENGL 3K, and incorporating and understanding of XML principles as part of the FY writing process. In Summer 2003, Ron Balthazor is working on a comprehensive EMMA orientation package and on the task of adapting EMMA to on-line instruction. In the next academic year, we also plan to concentrate on EMMA's archiving function to develop a large database of FYC essays for assessment.

**F. Grammar Workshops:** In discussion with the Writing Center, we decided that FYC instructors would benefit from periodic grammar "refreshers." Gay McCommons and Kathy Houff offered two very successful seminars in Spring semester that addressed teaching methods for dealing with the major sentence errors.

**G. Tutoring:** This year, tutoring became much more diverse and dispersed than it has been in the past. Not only do the Writing Center tutors work with FYC students, in their usual well-documented manner, but Academic Enhancement has been operating a drop-in tutoring service in Milledge Hall. In addition, both Academic Enhancement and the Writing Center offered drop-in tutoring in the dorms. This was causing both confusion and concern among instructors, as they often could not tell who actually was tutoring their students and what had transpired in those sessions. Christy Desmet and Kathy Houff met with Sherrie Nist, Gay McCommons and tutors from Academic Enhancement to construct a common referral sheet that would put student, tutor, and teacher into appropriate communication with one another. The FYC committee agreed as well that a statement about tutoring should be included in next year's *FYC Handbook*.

Furthermore, after extensive discussions between the First-year Writing Program and the Athletic Department, Sam Prestridge has developed and run successfully an Athletic Tutoring Center designed as a separate tutoring service for student-athletes that, at the same time, maintains both communication and an appropriate separation between the Athletic Program and FYC. Sam trained a splendid set of tutors, largely M.A. students from our department, and Virginia Stephens and Kristen Iskandrian conducted a human subjects study that they submitted as a successful paper for ENGL 6880, Composition Theory and Pedagogy.

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**IV. Assessment:** In AY 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 2002

- W: 4
- WF: 2
- D's and F's: 4

#### Fall 2002

- W: 105
- WF: 10
- D's and F's: 37

#### Spring 2003

- W: 103
- WF: 11

- **WM: (Military Withdrawal) 2**
- **D's and F's: 51**

The withdrawal rate for FYC is 3.7%; the rate of unsuccessful performance (D or F) is 1.44%. We ask for teacher narratives detailing the reasons behind each and every failure and withdrawal. 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 late in the semester. This evidence, admittedly anecdotal, suggests that students are being placed correctly in First-year Composition. Mostly, students failed or withdrew from their writing courses because of life problems, work habits, and other personal situations. There may be a slight increase in the number of students who drop after the first essay because of grades and the desire to maintain HOPE. Considering the fact that many teachers construct their grading systems to reward improvement on later essays and the fact that the departmental final exam counts for approximately 1/3 of any student's final grade, this move to drop a composition class after the first paper may prove to be simply a waste of HOPE funds. In fact, a huge majority of students succeed in ENGL 1101 and 1102, which the Director thinks is a healthy situation for an Area A "Essential Skills" requirement. There were far fewer drops of either the W or WF kind in 2002-03 than in 2001-02, which also seems to be a healthy trend.

## **T. A. Awards and Activities**

Alexis Hart was nominated for, and awarded, the Excellence in Teaching Award. For the seventh year in a row, an English Department T. A. has received this award, which is the highest teaching honor given to UGA Teaching Assistants and is generally awarded to no more than five Teaching Assistants across the university. Alexis, who has been a leader within the Graduate and First-year Writing Programs and did much to improve ENGL 3K, "Introduction to English Studies," implemented the ENGL 1050H course in "Writing about the Human Genome Project" and has also been instrumental in the development of the department's own *EMMA* (Electronic Markup and Management Application). Monica Smith and Billie Bennett have been awarded T. A. mentor positions from OISD for 2003-2004. Angela Mitchell won the *Kairos/Lore* T.A.-Adjunct Award for Excellence in Teaching Writing with Computers, which was awarded during the Computers and Writing Conference at Purdue University in May 2003. Angela won for her ENGL 4830, "Writing for the World Wide Web" course. This marks the second year in a row that a UGA Teaching Assistant has won the *Kairos/Lore* Award for Teaching. 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): Billie Bennett, Melissa Crowe, Matt Horton, Lew Klatt, Laura McGrath, Monica Smith, and Robin Warren. All of our nominees received the award, and we are very proud of them.

## **Student Events**

The Donald E. Barnett Awards for 2002-03 are: ENGL 1101, Alex DeNadai, "How to Be An Honest Cheater" (Instructor - Judy Iakovou); ENGL 1102, Erinn Rowe, "No Small Parts, Only Small Actors" (Instructor - Rebecca DeHaas); and ENGL 1102M, Diane Beavers, "The Impact of Catholicism on the Act of Making Chippewa Love Medicine" (Instructor - Sian Griffiths).