First Year Seminar Transfer Policy

By Paulette Marty

At its September meeting General Education Council approved a new policy that waives the First Year Seminar policy for transfer students who enter Appalachian with at least 30 s.h. at least one year after high school graduation. The Office of General Education drafted the policy in response to feedback from Chairs and other campus constituents who expressed the opinion that most transfer students already possess the academic skills that First Year Seminar helps develop and, therefore, the course is redundant for these students. The policy will move through the University College curriculum approval process and, if approved, will be considered by AP&P in December. If AP&P grants final approval to the policy, it will go into effect in Fall 2012. If AP&P grants final approval to the policy, it will go into effect in Fall 2012. In keeping with this effective date, all transfer students who have entered or will enter the university prior to Fall 2012 will be required to take First Year Seminar and all those who enter in Fall 2012 or after will have the requirement waived. Eligible students will have a 0-hr placeholder course added to their record of transfer work which will serve as an equivalent to UCO 1200 for purposes of major declaration and enrollment in any course which requires UCO 1200 or equivalent as a pre- or co-requisite. To find more information on General Education Council’s past meetings or view the agenda for the upcoming meeting on October 21, visit: http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/general-education-council.

Cultivating Musical Expression

By Meira Shuman

For many individuals with no music experience, taking a course entitled “Cultivating Creative Expression through Music” could be unnerving. This course is included in the Cultivating Creative Expression Theme within the Aesthetic Perspective because it encourages students to explore the creative process and the connection it has with cognitive, psychological, emotional, bodily/kinesthetic, aesthetic, and social development. Dr. Liz Rose’s open and supportive teaching style empowers students from all backgrounds to fearlessly experiment with musical expression. Her students are comfortable in front of a peer audience who respond with classroom mantras like, “You’re great” and “No wrong notes” at the finish of every performance. Learning to accept one’s imperfections in the learning process is a skill that these students will carry throughout their college career. From writing papers to conducting research, students must develop the confidence to overcome obstacles and succeed.

Appalachian State University gained recognition at the 2011 Symposium on Music Teacher Education (SMTE) when Dr. Rose presented about the successes and challenges of shifting elementary education music courses into a new General Education Framework that focuses on 21st century learning goals. Her presentation included a performance by… (continued on page 2)
Cultivating Musical Expression (con't)

(continued from page 1) ...four students which evolved from their end-of-semester assignment. For their 5-10 minute multi-media presentation on a social justice issue, Jennifer Evans, Rachel Goodman, Desiree Morris and Lacey Bean created a slideshow about the “Invisible Children” soldiers in Uganda and accompanied it with live music. This piece meant so much to them that they were eager to share it with the larger audience at the SMTE conference. In the minutes before their performance, Dr. Rose fortified her students with the words, “Relax into your beauty.” And they did, resulting in a moving performance which brought the audience to tears and showed how powerful a simple college assignment can become.

We all have to eat, and eating is a key component of our relationship to nature. Students explore this relationship in Dr. Tim Silver’s First Year Seminar course “Nature and Human Nature.” In the past, humans were more aware of the connection between their diet and the natural world. In our society today, we often don’t think about the fact that the shrink-wrapped meat in the freezer section of the grocery store used to be a living, breathing animal. Students in Dr. Silver’s course learn about the origins of their food through a major research project in which they choose 3-5 ingredients in Pop Tarts and trace them back to their source. In the process, they learn how to do research and utilize library resources like journals and databases. This assignment helps students understand the importance of informing their opinions with empirical evidence and better equips them to be responsible members of the academic community. It also introduces them to the research process, which Dr. Silver says "is like pulling a vine out of the ground: it is a never-ending process of discovery."

Dr. Liz Rose and her students at the 2011 Symposium on Music Teacher Education

"Research is like pulling a vine out of the ground: it is a never-ending process of discovery."

Pop Tart Research Project
By Meira Shuman

Dr. Rose credits some of her success to the support of the General Education Program and its new 21st century learning goals. Dr. Rose explains: “Music classes have traditionally been focused on the acquisition of musical skills. However, with the broader Aesthetic Perspective’s goal of teaching creative process, we are providing students with the necessary framework to successfully engage with our radically changing culture. The arts become a tool for inspiring imagination which in turn allows the student to approach challenges in a more receptive manner.”

For more information about Dr. Liz Rose and her course MUS2022, contact her at rosese@appstate.edu.
Supporting Writing Across the Curriculum

By Meira Shuman

Appalachian State University’s Writing Across the Curriculum program (WAC) works with Composition and WID faculty to support writing at all levels of undergraduate education. Our campus’ Vertical Writing Model [Fig. A] prepares undergraduate students for the future, beginning with developing basic writing skills and ending with a capstone of advanced writing abilities. This is no small feat, and other universities are taking notice.

Recently, Nedra Reynolds, Professor of Writing and Rhetoric at the University of Rhode Island, wrote a glowing review about ASU’s WAC in Bedford Bits, a weblog providing teaching ideas for instructors. Reynolds says that her visit to ASU made her realize that, “Other people and other programs are one of the most important resources that we as writing teachers have... The Appalachian State model serves all students, at all levels, and thus might be a better option for many campuses than designing a curriculum only for students with a declared interest in writing.” Reynolds’ remarks can be found here: http://blogs.bedfordstmartins.com/bits/professional-development/professional-development-workshops.

Dr. Georgia Rhoades, Director of Writing Across the Curriculum, explains that WAC “is a far more complex program than it might first appear,” as the program hosts a regional conference for community college writing faculty, support veterans and a women’s writing groups, and bring scholars such as Nancy Sommers, Kathy Yancey, and Eileen Schell to ASU for workshops. Rhoades and consultants have presented workshops and collaborated with colleges to develop WAC courses. Most recently they have presented at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Council of Writing Program Administrators, European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing, Association of American Colleges and Universities, Two-Year College Association, and at the International WAC Conference. They have consulted with Bakersfield Community College, Craven Community College, Coastal Community College, Wilkes CC, and Forsyth CC, with the goal of sparking WAC conversations between faculty.

To learn more about WAC, contact Georgia Rhoades at rhodesgd@appstate.edu or check out their website: http://www.wac.appstate.edu/. On their site you will find the informative video WAC Presents: A Guide for Student Writing at ASU. “The purpose of this film,” says Rhoades, “is to help students understand how writing fits into their program of undergraduate study at Appalachian.” Whatever their major, whether it be mathematics, geography or English, Writing Across the Curriculum hopes to support faculty in helping students become lifelong writers.

“The Appalachian State model serves all students, at all levels.”

Vertical Writing Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gateway Skills - Writing in the university through development of skills and voice</th>
<th>Intermediate Skills – Writing in the discipline</th>
<th>Advanced Skills - Writing in the Discipline/Capstone in Major</th>
<th>Portfolio/ePortfolio: Compiled over academic career as resource for further education or career investment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First year: Introductory course with research component in collaboration with information literacy program</td>
<td>Second year: Writing course focusing on reinforcement of skills in new, multiple WAC contexts with information literacy component</td>
<td>Third year: Writing in the major at entry level with information literacy component.</td>
<td>Fourth year: Capstone: Writing in the major at advanced level, to be designed by majors, with information literacy component</td>
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Fig. A: The vertical writing model was designed to give students continued support for writing during their careers at Appalachian, with writing experience each year, and a structure to archive writing for both students and the university.

This newsletter is published by the Office of General Education (Meira Shuman, editor). If you have suggestions or questions, please contact Dr. Paulette Marty, Director of General Education, at martyjw@appstate.edu.