Writing Fellows Program

An Introduction for Prospective Writing Fellows



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University of Delaware Honors College

Table of Contents

OVERVIEW OF THE WRITING FELLOWS PROGRAM....3
MISSION STATEMENT....4
BECOMING A WRITING FELLOW....5
Application to the Writing Fellows Program....5
Training....5
Standard and Expanded Fellowships....5
Mentoring....5
Terms of service....6
DIFFERENT ASSIGNMENTS FOR WRITING FELLOWS....6
Honors Colloquia....6
Honors ENGL110....6
BENEFITS OF THE WRITING FELLOWS PROGRAM....6
Stipend....6
Campus Networking....6
Faculty Connections....7
Professional Development....7
DESCRIPTION OF HONORS ENGL316....8

Overview Of The Writing Fellows Program

Sponsored by the Honors College, the Writing Fellows Program offers students with outstanding academic records an important opportunity for professional development. Writing Fellows receive training that equips them to help other students with writing assignments in selected first-year Honors courses. They are awarded a financial stipend each semester that they serve in the program.

We invite applications from qualified students in *all majors*. Current Writing Fellows are majoring in a wide variety of subjects, including Animal Biosciences, Art History, Biological Sciences, Business Analytics, Cognitive Science, Communication, Computer Science, Criminal Justice, English, English Education, Environmental Engineering, Environmental Science, Fashion Design, French, Health Behavior Science, History, Human Physiology, Human Services, International Business, International Relations, Kinesiology, Marine Science, Marketing, Medical Diagnostics, Music Education, Neuroscience, Political Science, Pre-Veterinary Medicine, Psychology, Spanish Studies, Statistics, Three Languages, and Wildlife Ecology & Conservation. The typical Writing Fellow is a member of the Honors College with a GPA over 3.6, excellent communication skills, an interest in writing, the ability to work with a variety of students, and a commitment to service.

The Writing Fellows Program offers not only a valuable opportunity for professional development, but also a way to develop your writing skills, to work closely with faculty and students, and to experience the rewards of helping others. Recent Writing Fellows have studied law at the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard, Yale, NYU, UVA, USC, Georgetown, and William & Mary; medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, Georgetown (after completing a Fulbright at St. Andrews), Pitt, Emory, and Jefferson; medical anthropology at Oxford; computational social science at the University of Chicago; engineering at Harvard, Penn, and Pitt; publishing at Columbia; Sustainable International Development at Brandeis; environmental policy at the University of Sussex; biology at Princeton; architecture at Georgia Tech; neuroscience at the University of Florida; art therapy at Drexel; and music at Temple. Some have won Truman, Marshall, and Schwarzman scholarships; some have won Fulbrights to Germany, Spain, Denmark, Kosovo, and Malaysia. Others have served in the Peace Corps, Teach for America, AmeriCorps, the Center for Public Integrity, and Army Intelligence. And some have good jobs at University of California San Diego, Binghamton University, LONGi Solar, Coinbase, Protiviti, NBCUniversal, J.P. Morgan, Deloitte, ICG Commerce, Synchrogenix, and Razorfish.

Over three decades ago, UD Honors College students and faculty began to recognize the need for more attention to student writing, but no one wanted to take or teach another homogenized writing course. Responding to demands for more personalized, one-on-one writing assistance, the University Honors College launched the Writing Fellows Program in the mid-1980s.

Writing Fellows work closely with faculty to facilitate the writing component of all Honors colloquia and other selected courses. Fellowships are awarded to juniors and seniors who successfully complete Honors ENGL 316: Peer Tutoring and Advanced Composition.

The UHP Writing Fellows Program is based on two assumptions:

- Writing is a long process that generally involves prewriting activities such as brainstorming and outlining, drafting, and frequent revising.

- Writing instruction works best when students receive personalized, one-on-one attention to their individual writing needs.

Prior to 2001, Writing Fellows worked almost exclusively with first-year students in Honors colloquia. In the most traditional model, a Writing Fellow guided students through a single revision cycle for each of three different papers. Through written comments and 30-minute conferences, Writing Fellows responded to such issues as interpreting assignments, developing theses, gathering and presenting convincing evidence, organizing an argument, transitioning between ideas, and sometimes honing grammatical skills.

In 2001, the Writing Fellows Program doubled in size from almost 20 to nearly 40 Writing Fellows. Writing Fellows now assist over 700 students every year! As the program grew larger, its scope became more diverse. In addition to Honors colloquia, Fellows now work with selected sections of Honors ENGL 110.

Writing Fellows today also employ a greater variety of tutoring activities. Trained at every stage of the writing process and prepared to read a growing repertory of literary genres, Writing Fellows assist students with brainstorming topics, research and reference, original creative works like sonnets or plays, multimodal projects, and strategic planning for oral debates.

The Writing Fellows are eager to serve the Honors College community in the current academic year.

Mission Statement

The UHP Writing Fellows are a dedicated group of undergraduate Honors College students who assist their peers with developing and improving writing skills. Central to our mission is the belief that writing is a process. As such, Writing Fellows continually strive to learn new and creative ways of writing and tutoring, while also respecting the individual approaches students and professors employ in their own work.

The goal of the Writing Fellows is to develop better writers, not better papers. They believe that the peer relationship creates an opportunity for strong improvements in writing. To establish this more personalized approach to conferencing, each Writing Fellow meets with students outside of the classroom on an individual basis.

Writing Fellows use a variety of practices to help students with their writing, depending on the stage of the writing process and the needs of the student and professor. They help students interpret assignments and brainstorm their ideas. They assist students in revising their drafts, tackling such areas as thesis, thesis development, organization, voice, tone, style, use of sources, proper documentation, etc. Finally, at the other end of the writing process, they provide fine-tuned tips on polishing near-final drafts, using a variety of stylistic techniques.

In short, by commenting on students' papers, meeting with students individually, and generally being accessible during all stages of writing, Writing Fellows help to ensure that each stage of the writing process plays its full role in creating a final, well-written composition.

Becoming A Writing Fellow

Application to the Writing Fellows Program

Admission to the Writing Fellows Program is competitive. With the help of current Writing Fellows, the Coordinator conducts an annual campus-wide search for prospective Writing Fellows each fall. Writing Fellows are selected according to their grade point average, interpersonal skill, background in writing and tutoring, and interest in helping other students. In addition to the general search for potential Writing Fellows, the Coordinator solicits nominations of well-qualified candidates from faculty members and Writing Fellows. Prospective Writing Fellows apply in their sophomore or junior year, and if chosen, typically serve until they graduate.

Training

Successful applicants enroll in Honors ENGL 316 Peer Tutoring and Advanced Composition, an advanced composition course with a focus on responding to writing at the college level. Students receive training in peer tutoring through the study of composition theory, hands-on experience with peer editing and conferencing, and several writing projects. The course prepares students to tutor peers at many stages of the writing process. In addition, they learn how to meet the many different needs of students on writing projects typically used in the academic world: exposition, analysis, argumentation, and research.

Students who complete this course with a B+ or higher are invited to serve as Writing Fellows in the fall. Writing Fellows are normally expected to hold fellowships through graduation, though accommodations are made to provide time off for student teaching, a senior thesis, or a semester abroad. ENGL 316 fulfills the College of Arts & Science second writing requirement only for students who currently have 60 earned credit hours or more.

Standard and Expanded Fellowships

The Writing Fellows Program offers Writing Fellows a choice of two different fellowships. Standard Fellowships require roughly 30 hours of work over the semester. This fellowship is based upon the workload of a Writing Fellow working with one half of the students in a typical Honors colloquium. In this scenario, the Writing Fellow spends half an hour making comments on each student's paper and half an hour meeting with the student in conference. This cycle is repeated three times during a semester, once for each of the colloquium's written assignments. This yields a total of 30 hours.

Expanded Fellowships require roughly 60 hours of work over the semester. This Fellowship's workload is based upon the time required for a Writing Fellow to work with all of the students in a colloquium.

Mentoring

Students in ENGL 316 are assigned a Writing Fellow mentor, who guides them in the Writing Fellows Program and serves as a tutor for selected ENGL 316 writing assignments. Mentors are asked to meet informally with their mentee, discuss revisions of three writing assignments, attend at least one Writing Fellows Program meeting together, arrange for the mentee to observe them in tutoring sessions, and observe their mentee in tutoring sessions.

In the Writing Fellows Program, mentors should strive for three main goals: to introduce mentees into a friendly circle of Writing Fellows, to teach mentees what tutoring is really like, and to help

mentees become better writers. Ideally, the process will be a two-way street, and friends can be made along the way.

Terms of service

All students who are accepted for the Writing Fellows Program are expected to begin tutoring the semester ***after*** taking ENGL 316. (To clarify: ENGL 316 is offered in the spring semester; new Writing Fellows are expected to have an assignment during the following fall semester. In other words, you cannot do study abroad during the semester after taking ENGL 316.) Students who take ENGL316 as sophomores are expected to tutor for at least three semesters; those who take ENGL316 as juniors are expected to tutor for two semesters.

Different Assignments For Writing Fellows

Honors Colloquia

The traditional role for a Writing Fellow is assisting Honors colloquia. Such classes are usually composed of 22 Honors students. They are taught by some of the most talented faculty on campus, and focus on a variety of interdisciplinary subjects.

Standard Fellowships involve working with about ten students. The Writing Fellow should expect to spend about half of an hour reviewing each student's paper and another half hour meeting with the student. This process usually takes place three times a semester, corresponding with three assigned class papers. Expanded Fellowships involve working with an entire colloquium (20 students).

Honors ENGL 110

Some Writing Fellows are assigned to Honors ENGL 110 classes. Such classes are usually composed of 22 Honors students. Standard Fellowships involve working with eleven students. The Writing Fellow should expect to spend about half of an hour reviewing each student's paper and another half hour meeting with the student. Expanded Fellowships involve working with an entire class (22 students).

Benefits Of The Writing Fellows Program

Stipend

The Writing Fellowship provides a paid stipend. Writing Fellows on standard fellowships serve 30 hours during the semester and are paid $750. Writing Fellows on expanded fellowships serve 60 hours during the semester and are paid $1,500. Payments are made in regular installments during the semester.

Campus Networking

The Writing Fellows form a close intellectual community. They are drawn to becoming Writing Fellows because of common intellectual interests, which often serve as the basis for friendship and working relationships. Here is what some current Writing Fellows have to say about their peers:

- "The biggest 'perk' of being a Writing Fellow for me is the community feel. I enjoy the other Writing Fellows. I know we are all a group of interesting, intelligent, fun people and I like recognizing familiar faces all over campus."
- "I'm good friends with a lot of the Writing Fellows and I feel a lot of camaraderie with them all."
- "I like all the other Writing Fellows and have always had a good time with them."
- "It actually helps with your own writing. Beneficial for all majors. Also teaches you how to communicate on a one-to-one level, and how to individualize your tutoring methods. Gives you confidence as you figure out creative ways to handle situations that may at first be frustrating or unfamiliar."
- "… the benefit of making you an effective communicator, better problem-solver, and overall more well-rounded person. Even if you do not intend to go into a field that directly involves writing, you still need to be able to communicate your thoughts (written or spoken) effectively. "
- "Being a Writing Fellow is rewarding in two different ways. One is that you are able to help other students improve their writing and feel more confident about their papers and themselves as writers. The second is that being a Writing Fellow helps you become more rounded as a person -- you become skilled at finding the central idea in a paper, you become an effective communicator, and you learn how to advise someone while still giving them control."

Faculty Connections

Writing Fellows often find that they make valuable connections with faculty members. Faculty often help Writing Fellows find research opportunities, jobs, and summer internships. Other Writing Fellows choose to work with a faculty member whose class they have taken in the past to maintain and deepen their relationship.

Professional Development

The specialized training that Writing Fellows receive in ENGL 316 is a marketable commodity, as are the skills and experience gained by fellowing. Writing Fellows can include this information on resumes and applications for graduate and professional school.

In addition to the experience gained directly by fellowing, many Writing Fellows participate in regional and national conferences where they attend workshops and network with professionals in the field. Recent Writing Fellows can attest to these benefits:

- "The biggest perk of being a Writing Fellow is being able to put it on my resume and getting a job as a result."
- "I felt really empowered after presenting the results of my research at the National Conference of Peer Tutoring in Writing."

Description Of Honors Engl 316

ENGL316 (Peer Tutoring and Advanced Composition) is a course designed to teach students the skills necessary to become Writing Fellows. The most recent course description is below:

> ENGL 316 is an advanced composition course with a focus on responding to writing at the college level. Students will receive training in peer tutoring through the study of composition theory, hands-on experience with peer editing and conferencing, and several writing projects. The course will prepare students to tutor peers at many stages of the writing process. In addition, they will learn how to meet the many different needs of students on writing projects typically used in the academic world: exposition, analysis, argumentation, and research. Students who complete this course with a B+ or higher will have the option of working as peer tutors in the Honors College Writing Fellows Program next year.
>
> ENGL 316 satisfies the Arts & Science Second Writing Requirement for students with junior or senior status. Combined with a semester's service as a Writing Fellow, the course also satisfies the Discovery Learning Requirement.

Enrollment is limited to students who have already been selected through the interview process, and is designed to be taken before the student begins duty as a Writing Fellow. The course requires 3 essays and 2 research papers. For each assignment, students will have an opportunity to practice peer tutoring skills by holding conferences with classmates. In addition to assignments, students will examine, critically analyze, and discuss professional works in relation to their effective use of writing techniques. Each student will also be assigned a current Writing Fellow as a Mentor.