

— From the Center —

The Newsletter of the William L. Adams Center for Writing

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Center Celebrates Twentieth Anniversary

The fall semester of 2008 marks the twentieth anniversary for the William L. Adams Center for Writing. To celebrate this milestone, the center will host a reception on Thursday, September 18, from 2 to 4 p.m., in the ballroom of the University Union. Light refreshments will be served. Those wishing to attend the reception should RSVP by sending an email to r.vann@tcu.edu or by calling 817-257-7221 no later than Thursday, September 11.

Representatives of the North Texas Writing Centers Association, many members of the TCU faculty, and current and former writing center tutors and staff plan to attend the event and hear the keynote address by Professor Michele Eodice, current president of the International Writing Centers Association and Director of the Writing Center and Writing Across the Curriculum at the University of Oklahoma. Dr. Eodice, who is co-author of *The Everyday Writing Center: A Community of Practice* (Utah State University Press, 2007) will deliver an address concerning the ways in which writing centers assist and shape the institutions with which they are associated. Eodice is the recipient of the 2006 National Conference on Peer Tutoring award for distinguished leadership in promoting the collaborative learning practices of peer tutors in writing.

The TCU writing center opened on August 1, 1988, after the Union Pacific Foundation pledged \$240,000 toward its creation. The CEO of Union Pacific, William L. Adams, a legendary oil man and geologist, was a supporter of numerous civic, corporate, and philanthropic causes, and, via the creation of the writing center, he sought to improve the writing of students interested in business careers. In 1993, the center received a new name—the William L. Adams Center for Writing—in honor of his commitment to the center and to the development of student writing.

The center has had three directors in its twenty-year history: Christina Murphy (1988 to 1996), Jeanette Harris (1997-2002), and Steve Sherwood (2002-2008). Five professional staff members work with the director. In addition to their work with students in the center, the center's instructional staff members teach courses in writing and literature in the department of English.

From 1988 through 2002, the center's consultants provided an average of 3,500 tutorials a year. In recent years, the center has seen steady growth, providing a record 5,801 tutorials during the 2007-2008 school year. In 2006, the center expanded its mission by creating the graduate writing center. The graduate center works with graduate students and faculty from all disciplines on long projects such as articles, theses, dissertations, and books.

In addition to teaching and consulting with student and faculty writers, the center's staff members have a proud tradition of scholarship and creative activity, having published eight books and numerous essays, short stories, poems, and articles. Dave Kuhne, associate director of the center, has served as editor of *descant*, TCU's nationally acclaimed literary journal, since 2000. Twenty years after its creation, the TCU William L. Adams Center for Writing has become one of the leading writing centers in the nation.

Center Can Assist with Many Writing Projects

- Essays and research papers
- Summaries and abstracts
- Proposals
- Recommendation reports
- Case studies / lab reports
- Presentations and speeches
- Letters of application and résumés
- Professional and business letters
- Theses and dissertations
- Creative and personal writing projects
- Public documents

About the Center

The Center for Writing is a place where students can talk openly about writing with someone who is non-judgmental but informed. It is staffed by writing specialists who offer one-on-one conferences about writing in all disciplines. A specific piece of writing or an assignment usually serves as the focus of the conference; however, staff members will review a specific aspect of writing such as essay exams, documentation, punctuation, or usage. Writing center staff members will also provide reviews for students planning to take the Grammar, Spelling, and Punctuation Exam administered by the Department of Journalism. The main writing center, located in suite 244 of the URC, is open from 8 a.m. till 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Students can make appointments on-line, by calling 257-7221, or they may simply come to the center, where they will be accommodated on a first-come, first-served basis. Students can also obtain help at the library writing center adjacent to the Information Commons in the Mary Coats Burnett Library. The library center is open Monday through Friday from 2 to 5 p.m. and Sunday through Thursday from 6 p.m. till 9 p.m. Students can make appointments at the library center either on-line or by calling 257-6520. The on-line writing lab, or OWL, is yet another way that students can get assistance from the writing center. Established in the fall of 1998, the OWL continues to grow in popularity. The OWL allows students to submit papers electronically for review by a consultant. Students can access the OWL by visiting <http://www.wrt.tcu.edu>, where they will find specific instructions for using the OWL under the link titled "On-line Writing Help."

Center Plans Workshops

The Center for Writing will conduct a series of workshops during the coming year. These workshops will address specific issues related to writing and the evaluation of writing. Unless otherwise noted, all workshops will last about an hour and will be conducted in the Center for Writing (URC Room 245).

Specific topics and workshop dates will be announced on the center's website:

<<http://www.wrt.tcu.edu>>.

Creative Writing Contests for TCU Students

Since the early 1990s, the Department of English and the Center for Writing have jointly coordinated and conducted TCU's annual creative writing contests. This year, Center for Writing staff members will assist the Department of English with the administration of the writing contests and program. More than twenty contests are open to TCU students, including contests for prose, poetry, fiction, and drama. A complete list of contests and details about submissions will be available in the Department of English and in the Center for Writing in late September. The winners of these contests receive nearly \$4,000 in prizes, and selections from the winning entries will be published in the 2009 Creative Writing Publication. Please remind your students of these opportunities to publish and to be recognized for their writing.

Publications and Professional Activities

Staff members continue to be active in a number of international, national, state, and regional organizations. Steve Sherwood, director of the Center, will continue to serve as At-Large Representative to the Executive Board of the International Writing Centers Association through 2010. Sherwood recently placed an article in *Writing Lab Newsletter*, and he will make a presentation at the 2009 International Writing Centers Conference. Billie Hara will chair a panel at the South Atlantic MLA conference, and she will present a paper on the value of two semester "stretch" composition courses at this year's Conference on College Composition and Communication. Dave Kuhne, whose article, "The Literary Big Country, Just How Big Is It?" appeared in a recent issue of the *Concho River Review*, continues his duties as editor of *descant*. Kuhne was one of the editors for the recently published *descant: Fifty Years*, an anthology of the best work published in the journal since its creation in 1956. *descant: Fifty Years*, published by TCU Press, is available at local book stores or from Amazon.com.

Statement of Ethics

In order to assist students in a fair manner, the writing center has

adopted the following statement of ethics:

A text should reflect the student's own work and efforts; thus, consultants do not write any portion of a student's paper.

Consultants do not proofread what a student has written.

Consultants do not guarantee a particular grade or even suggest what grade a student is likely to receive on an assignment.

Consultants do not criticize an instructor's assignment.

Consultants do not assist students with exams or final portfolios.

On-line Appointment Process is Successful

Last year, in an effort to make appointment scheduling easier for students, the center initiated an on-line appointment procedure. Students may make their own appointments by visiting the Adams Center for Writing website: <<http://www.wrt.tcu.edu/>>.

The site prompts first-time users to register and then asks students for their email addresses and passwords. The center's secure server allows students to view the available tutorial times. The schedule describes the special interests and skills of the consultants and indicates which tutors are available at specific times, and students may then make an appointment for help with a writing project. Of course, students, faculty, and staff may continue to call the center at 7221 to make an appointment or simply come to the center and meet with an available tutor.

Center Teams up with Brite and Neeley

In order to better deal with the increasing numbers of students from the Neely School of Business and the Brite Divinity School, the Center for Writing has partnered with these schools to provide tutoring in specific disciplines. Beginning in the spring of 2008, the center and the Neeley School of Business opened a writing center annex in the business school to specifically aid business students with their writing projects and reports. Beginning this fall, Brite Divinity School will also have a dedicated writing tutor. The business and divinity school writing tutors have been trained by Dr. Sherwood, director of the writing center, and the costs of

employing the tutors are shared by the center and the business and divinity schools.

Peer Writing Consultants

The Center for Writing is especially proud of its staff of peer writing consultants. These are outstanding student writers who are recommended for their jobs by faculty members familiar with their writing. Those chosen to work as peer writing consultants attend a series of training sessions designed to help them assist other students with writing projects. If you have outstanding student writers in your classes who may like to work at the Center for Writing, please have them call 257-7221. The center is pleased to introduce the peer tutors for 2008-2009:

Liz Behnisch—sophomore English major

Nick Boerner—sophomore accounting major

Kevin Bradley—graduate student at Brite Divinity

Matt Bridges—graduate student at Brite Divinity

John Burkett—graduate student in English

Amy Hermanson—graduate student in English

Sarah Jewell—graduate student in English

Amy Johnson—graduate student in English

Lillian Knezek—graduate student in English

Nikita Ostrovsky—senior finance and accounting major

Meghan Roe—graduate student in English

Stephanie Scott—junior English major

Rubertha Taylor—graduate student at Brite Divinity

Kelli Trapnell—sophomore writing major

Peter Williams—B.A. in English, minor in art history