

# *Sweetland*

GAYLE MORRIS SWEETLAND WRITING CENTER

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## **Overview of Sweetland Writing Center Programs**

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The Gayle Morris Sweetland Writing Center, funded by a generous gift from John Sweetland (UM BA 1958, MA 1959) in memory of his late wife, was dedicated on November 19, 1997. The Center has the mission of invigorating writing in the disciplines—from the first year through the dissertation. We bring together tenure-track faculty, lecturers, graduate students, and undergraduate peer counselors to discuss composition pedagogy, theory, and practice. We do not, however, see writing as separate from our individual disciplines. Rather, we see the Center as embodying the important principle of writing throughout the curriculum, for writing is a crucial part of analytic thinking, a necessary skill for all LS&A undergraduates and graduates in every year they are here. Writing is a vital part of academic work in all disciplines and one of the most powerful ways of bringing students into those disciplines.

The Sweetland Writing Center has a two-fold agenda: to be the provider of a renovated lower-division curriculum that includes essay writing as a normal part of courses; to be a center for the advanced study of writing, writing pedagogies, and the new technology as related to writing. Locally, it reaches out to individual departments by assisting with the writing component in specific courses. In addition to staffing its Writing Workshop—a drop-in facility open to all students—it is developing a resource center to provide instructional aids and modules on writing for specific courses. Toward these ends, we feel the Center must focus on the following elements, designed to create a climate in which writing is seen as a priority throughout the College: faculty and graduate student development, undergraduate student support, curricular programs, and external relations.

### • **Faculty Development**

#### • Sweetland Fellows Seminar

The Sweetland Writing Center Fellows Seminar brings together committed faculty and graduate student instructors from across LS&A for sustained, advanced study of writing and writing pedagogy. The Seminar meets weekly for one term a year; local and national experts in writing visit the Fellows, working with them as a group as well as individually. To date, faculty and graduate students from a number of departments have participated in the Seminar: Anthropology, Biology, Chemistry, Education, English, the English Composition Board, History, Linguis-

tics, Mathematics, Psychology, and Psychology and Women's Studies. Faculty Fellows are released from one course in order to participate. The Seminar facilitates positive, focused attention on the writing needs of undergraduates. Faculty Fellows, chosen for their commitment to undergraduate teaching and leadership ability, ensure the development of department-based writing throughout the curriculum. The Seminar in this way builds a long-term cohort of "writing leaders" among faculty across LS&A. After participating in the Seminar, Fellows teach writing-intensive courses based on their disciplinary expertise.

- **Fellows' Annual Dinner**

Present and former Fellows are invited to an annual dinner, which is an occasion for communication about writing initiatives and innovations across the College. A visiting scholar delivers a keynote address.

- **Fellows' Events**

Resources are set aside for Fellows' use after they finish the Seminar so that they may continue to develop writing pedagogy. Faculty Fellows have a budget available for organizing events (a lunch, symposium, or public lecture) that facilitate discussion of writing in their departments or in the College. The Seminar seeks in this way to develop leadership within the disciplines. The most recent project was a Symposium on Writing in the Sciences.

- **May Seminars**

Two-week seminars will be offered in May for faculty interested in working with a group on particular topics in writing pedagogy: Writing and the First-Year Collegiate Seminar, GSI Roles and the Upper-Level Writing Requirement.

- **Visiting Scholars Program**

Scholars with expertise in writing pedagogy are brought to campus to work on writing initiatives with programs, departments, and individuals.

- **Collaboration with the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching**

An annual \$6,000 grant is available through the Faculty Development Fund for the enhancement of writing instruction in the College. This grant results from collaboration between the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching and the Sweetland Writing Center. Faculty are encouraged to apply for support in making innovations in writing-intensive courses, adding writing components to first- and second-year courses, enhancing the writing requirements of large lecture courses, and improving graduate students' roles in writing instruction.

- **Graduate Student Support and Development**

- **Sweetland Fellows Seminar**

Graduate Fellows, selected competitively from a wide range of disciplines, work with faculty in the Seminar. Teaching writing involves different skills from teaching one's field of expertise, and the Graduate Fellows gain a competitive edge in their job market as well as a broader professional preparation than they would otherwise receive. Graduate Fellows are given a stipend for the term of their participation in the Seminar; the following term they teach a first-year writing course focused on their discipline.

- **ECB 993**

A course for GSIs assigned for the first time to upper-level writing in the disciplines, ECB 993 guides GSIs through the work of writing assignments, commenting on student work, organizing peer critiques, grading, and holding conferences with students.

- **Sweetland Consultants**

Graduate Fellows are invited to become Sweetland Consultants, working in their home departments to enhance and support writing instruction; as our local experts, they collaborate with faculty to improve writing in the disciplines. The most recent project was a collaboration between a Graduate Fellow and a Faculty Fellow to enhance the writing element of a large introductory psychology course.

- **Undergraduate Support**

- **Writing Workshop**

The Writing Workshop offers half-hour appointments to students enrolled in LS&A courses who wish to work on their writing in a tutorial setting. Writing Workshop Instructors coordinate some tutoring sessions with particular courses, such as English 124 and English 125, which fulfill the first-year writing requirement.

- **Peer Tutoring Program**

Peer Tutoring courses (ECB 300, 301) guide undergraduates to develop expertise with writing so that they are prepared to tutor their peers, and peer tutors in ECB 301 are available after hours in the computing center.

- **On-line Writing Lab**

Some peer tutors are assigned to monitor the OWL and respond on-line to student work and queries.

- **Gayle Morris Sweetland Fellowship in Drama Writing**

Talented undergraduates in Film and Video Studies enter a competition for one annual summer stipend to enable the recipient to complete work on a full-length screenplay.

- **Curricular Programs**

- **Assessment of Incoming Students' Writing**

- **First-Year Writing Program (courses fulfilling first-year writing requirement)**

- **Second-Year Writing Program**

- **Advanced Writing in the Disciplines Program (courses fulfilling upper-level writing requirement)**

- **Lloyd Hall Writing Project**

Lloyd Hall Scholars Program and the Sweetland Writing Center collaborate to invent and support a writing-intensive lower-division curriculum; a five-year study of writing at UM will be based in Lloyd Hall.

- **eNotebook**

eNotebook is a web-based, integrated (“one stop”) virtual class environment designed to foster writing and teaching with writing in the disciplines.

- **External Relations**

- **Mackenzie High School/UM Collaboration**

The Mackenzie High School Collaboration began in 1985 and focuses on curriculum development so that Mackenzie students will be more likely to compete successfully to enter UM.

- **April Institute for High Schools**

Teams from UM’s top feeder high schools in the state are invited to a one-day symposium on writing in high schools and in the first year at UM, as well as writing in the disciplines.

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