

Overview of the WA Program

The Writing Associates (WA) Program selects and educates students to be peer mentors of writing. WAs collaborate with students during all stages of the writing process and in various disciplines. The purpose of the program lies in the desire to teach the Writing Associates how to talk about writing with students from a variety of backgrounds in order to develop skills and the ethical intelligence necessary to function as citizen teachers after leaving the College. The program is comprised of 60+ Writing Associates and is led by a faculty director, four student coordinators, and an intern. The Writing Associates take English 1C during their first semester in the program where they learn about writing pedagogy and strategies for effective peer mentoring. The WAs contribute to the mission of the Writing Program through various opportunities: 1) Course WA Program, 2) The Writing Center, 3) Writing Associate Mentor (WAM) Program, 4) Speaking Associates (SPA) Program, 5) Campus outreach, and 6) Community Outreach.

The WA Program through its activities hopes to:

- work with student writers and speakers at all stages of the writing and presentation processes and in all disciplines.
- provide feedback and strategies designed to help student writers with the larger questions of structure, organization, style, and argument as well as the smaller issues of sentence clarity and grammar.
- talk with student writers about their writing and thinking process in order to develop the analytical skills, stylistic know-how, and confidence necessary for successful college writing.
- provide student writers with strategies that they can apply to their own writing and revision process.
- encourage revision by helping students create a plan of action for moving forward with a paper.
- serve as a resource for faculty teaching writing across the disciplines.
- act as a liaison between faculty and students by providing feedback to faculty on how students interpret assignments and feedback in a given course.

Components of the Program

WAs contribute to the mission of the Writing Program through various opportunities:

The Course WA Program

Each semester faculty from across the disciplines request a WA to be assigned to work with a particular course. The role of the Course WA is to provide an audience for student writing beyond the professor and to serve as an educated reader for students. During a WA conference the WA and student discuss the student's concerns with the paper and together work on a plan for revision. The WA also meets with the professor providing feedback on assignments and reporting challenges students may be experiencing with a particular area of writing. **In the fall of 2011, over 1285 Course WA conferences were held with 22 courses ranging from biology to**

philosophy.

The Writing Center

Operating 35+ hours per week, The Writing Center (Trotter 120) is a place for students to conference with a WA on their writing at any stage of the writing process and in any discipline. WAs working in the Center read and conference on different types of writing assigned in courses as well as grants and applications. Students can make appointments by dropping in during open hours or through our newly updated online scheduling system, which has expanded our traffic enormously. **The fall of 2011 was the busiest semester in Writing Center history. We held 777 conferences with 381 students, 25% of the student body. This was a 34% increase in conferences from last fall.**

The Speaking Associates (SPA) Program

The SPA Program is a pilot project of the WA Program. SPAs are WAs who are trained to help students with their presentations. SPAs work with students on the structure of their ideas and arguments, their oral delivery, and their visual aids. SPAs work with students in a variety of capacities, including preparing final presentations, leading seminar discussion, presenting research in progress, or pitching a grant proposal. **In 2011-2012, SPAs have worked with six classes, ranging from a studio art junior workshop to an honors biology seminar to a first-year English literature seminar on Jane Austen. Nine WAs are currently in the process of being cross-trained as SPAs.**

The Writing Associates Mentorship (WAM) Program

The WAM Program pairs WAs with students in a semester-long, one-on-one relationship focused on the writing process. Given the individualized support the WAM Program offers, each relationship is different. All WAM relationships, however, further the Writing Program's desire to meet the needs of a diverse community of learners and writers, focusing on all stages of the writing process and on writing concepts such as structure, argument, and clarity. This semester there are eight partnerships. They include work on senior theses, transitions to college writing, and writing for unfamiliar disciplines.

Community Service

WAs participate in a variety of community service projects. In volunteering with these programs, WAs have the opportunity to use and refine the skills they develop through training and experience. The program's current partnership with the College Access Center of Delaware County provides free college preparation services to high school students and adults. WAs work with high school students in the Road Map Program, creating and implementing a curriculum centered around helping students to produce essays while also developing their writing processes. On special days throughout the semester, WAs also work individually with students at the College Access Center on college and scholarship application essays.

Campus Outreach

Campus outreach represents a core value of the WA Program to develop collaborative thinking in scholastic settings. Therefore, in addition to providing feedback on writing and presentations, the WA Program plans events to foster conversation within the Swarthmore community on

writing and rhetoric. Such events include bringing speakers to campus, hosting student/faculty dialogues, facilitating writing workshops throughout the semester and campus write-ins during finals, and organizing faculty panels. Outreach extends to alums through Facebook, an open house during Garnet and Alumni Weekends, and reunion events such as WAlumni Weekend hosted in the spring of 2010.

Who's Who in the Program

Program Director

The program director is a faculty member who has the responsibility of overseeing the WA Program as well as other aspects of the college's writing program. In relation to the WA Program, she supervises and mentors all staff. The program director also oversees the Course WA Program by making WA assignments, helping faculty implement the WA Program into their courses, and serving as a resource for WAs. Overall, the program director serves as a liaison between the administration, faculty, WAs, and student body on issues of writing within the curriculum.

Writing Program Intern

The intern is the only professional staff member of the program besides the director. He or she is responsible for working with a group of student coordinators and the WA Program Director on many aspects of the program. The intern supervises and works on program projects, oversees program databases, maintains the program's budget and payroll, updates resources for aiding students with their writing, works with students on their writing, and serves as receptionist for the Writing Center one night a week.

Outreach Coordinator

The Outreach Coordinator is a WA who oversees the Program's involvement in community outreach with the College Access Center. In conjunction with the leadership team at the Access Center, the WA Program Director, and participating WAs, the Outreach Coordinator designs and maintains programs to work with high schoolers both one-on-one and in a weekly classroom context. Additionally, the Outreach Coordinator serves as a liaison between the leadership team of the WA Program and both the WAs and the broader campus community in order to assess how the WA Program can best support a Swarthmore education. He or she works with the leadership team to organize workshops, plan faculty panels, and schedule speakers.

Speaking Associates Program Coordinator

The Speaking Associates Coordinator is a WA who organizes the SPA program. Speaking Associates seek to empower students to express their research and arguments persuasively in formal settings inside and outside their respective disciplines. SPAs supplement the efforts of professors to socialize students to be active participants in their disciplines by working through the medium of oral communication. SPAs conference with students on all types of presentations and at all stages of the process—from practicing final presentations, preparing and organizing a presentation, to leading seminar discussions. SPAs help students to assess their audience and to strategize how to allocate content between speech, visual aids, and handouts. They also provide a

space for students to surmount personal habits and anxieties they routinely face as public speakers. As the SPA program will continue its pilot project status in 2012-13, the SPA Coordinator will contribute to solidifying the direction of the program.

Writing Associates Mentor Program Coordinator

The WAM Coordinator is a WA who organizes the WAM program. The WAM Program pairs Writing Associates with students in semester-long, one-on-one relationships focused on the writing process. WAMs can help support students with senior theses, writing in a specific discipline, challenges in revision, or other issues related to process. All WAM relationships, however, further the Writing Program's desire to meet the needs of a diverse community of learners and writers, focusing on all stages of the writing process and on writing concepts such as structure, argument, and clarity.

Writing Center Scheduling Coordinator

The Scheduling Coordinator is a WA who oversees scheduling for the Writing Center. All scheduling is done through the online program AppGarden. Scheduling includes scheduling shifts for WAs and WAITs, scheduling shift swaps for WAs who miss shifts, and scheduling conferences for individual students or classes required to use the center. Additionally, the Scheduling Coordinator observes the traffic patterns of the center (both on a weekly basis and in an extensive bi-annual report) to insure that WAs are available when needed. The Scheduling Coordinator is also in charge of monitoring the online scheduling system to prevent glitches and communicating with ITS to fix problems with AppGarden.

WAIT Mentor

A WAIT Mentor is an experienced WA who is selected to serve as support for incoming WAs. WAIT Mentors meet one on one with a few WAITs to guide them through the feedback and conferencing of Course WA papers. WAIT Mentors work directly with English 1C by coming into the class to facilitate workshops around different aspects of WAing. Overall, the WAIT Mentor is an additional resource for WAITs as they go through the gateway course.

Writing Associate Mentor (WAM)

The Writing Associates Mentorship Program pairs Writing Associates with students in semester long, one-on-one relationships focused on the writing process. As an extension of the Writing Program, the WAM program serves to help students in ways that cannot be met with the Writing Center, Speaking Associates Program, or Writing Associates assigned to specific classes. Given the individualized support the WAM Program offers, each relationship is different. WAMs can help support students with senior theses, writing in a specific discipline, challenges in revision, or other issues related to process. All WAM relationships, however, further the Writing Program's desire to meet the needs of a diverse community of learners and writers, focusing on all stages of the writing process and on writing concepts such as structure, argument, and clarity. WAITs are welcome to serve as WAMs during their first semester in the program.

Speaking Associates (SPA)

Speaking Associates are WAs who are specially trained to help with presentations and other oral communication assignments. They can help students structure the ideas and arguments of a presentation as well as provide feedback on students' public speaking and visual aids. SPAs are

prepared to help students overcome issues in public speaking. 2012-13 is the second year of the pilot program. WAITs can volunteer for this additional training beginning in the spring after they take English 1C.

WA Fellowship Program

The Writing Associates Fellowship Program selects and educates students to be peer mentors of writing. WAs collaborate with students during all stages of the writing process and in various disciplines. They work in conjunction with courses, and they staff the Writing Center during weekday evenings. The purpose of the program lies in the desire to teach the Writing Associates how to talk about writing with students from a variety of backgrounds in order to develop skills and the ethical intelligence necessary to function as citizen teachers after leaving the College.

By participating in the WA Program students will learn how to:

- Assess academic writing on different levels including argumentation, logic, grammar, and audience.
- Craft and disseminate both written and oral feedback that is constructive and supportive.
- Develop a reflective practice so they continue to learn and develop as peer mentors.
- Apply learned pedagogy in written commentary on papers and in conferences with students.
- Interact with a variety of students including English Language Learners, students with learning differences, and students with underdeveloped writing processes.
- Mentor each other as they raise questions, observe, and share best practices.
- Question their assumptions about writing and writers.
- Listen actively in order to respond effectively to the individual needs of students.
- Develop an ethical process by contemplating such issues as confidentiality, time management, and power dynamics within the peer mentoring situation.

By participating in the WA Fellowship Program students will need to participate in the following:

Gateway Course: *During their first semester, WAs will receive a full Humanities course credit in lieu of a stipend.*

- Complete all the requirements of English 001C, which is taught as a seminar during the Fall semester on a CR/NC basis. Continuation in the WA Program is dependent upon a student's overall engagement and development throughout English 1C.
- Work three shifts in the Writing Center over the course of the Fall semester. These Writing Center shifts will be paid on an hourly basis at top pay scale.

Course WAing: *WAs will receive a stipend when assigned to a course.*

- Work with up to 15 student writers in an assigned course, offering comments on several rounds of papers and conferencing with every student during each round in order to create a revision plan.
- Maintain communication with professor about class needs and expectations, providing feedback about different writing assignments and the assessment of these assignments.
- Submit an end-of-semester paper reflecting on the semester and establishing new goals.
- Understand that Course WA positions will be assigned based on availability.

Writing Center: *WAs will be paid hourly for work in the Writing Center.*

- Work a weekly 2.5-hour shift for **one** semester each year.
- Submit a reflection piece at the conclusion of each shift.

Administrative

- Attend a start-up session once a semester.
- Meet with the program director at least once a semester to discuss goals, feedback, and reappointment in the program.