

STATEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENTAL PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

When one thinks of an English Department, he or she probably imagines groups of scholars gathered in a classroom to analyze works of literature. Utah State University has many such classes, with students exploring literary subject matter ranging from illustrated manuscripts to contemporary SLAM! poetry. Yet the pursuit of literacy—so central to the English Department’s mission—includes a much wider range of study. Inherent in all of our classes and programs is our goal of maximizing student literacy and learning. Snapshots of departmental activities illustrate our commitment to this goal, as English faculty and students work both on campus and elsewhere to serve the over 6,800 students we teach each year:

- In Dr. Jan Roush’s English 1710, students collect oral histories from local citizens, assuring that their cultural memories of events like the Depression Era or World War II will not be lost. These interviews will be added to the permanent collection in Merrill Library’s archives;
- In Ray B. West 101, senior Mike Huston makes progress on his two responsibilities for the day—applying to graduate school and revising the article he has co-written with Dr. Jennifer Sinor. He is only one of many students who partner with English professors in the scholarship of discovery and its publication;
- In Dr. Kathryn Fitzgerald’s English 4500, students who are learning to be secondary teachers partner with a Logan High School English class, receiving hands-on experience in the teaching techniques and skills they will soon use in their own classrooms;
- In Dr. Phebe Jensen’s Shakespeare class, students are involved in a lively discussion of *Measure for Measure*, as they prepare for the visit of Actors from the London Stage. The actors will also take their performances to students at Mountain Crest and Sky View high schools;
- In Hong Kong and Singapore, students post essays for their English 1010 classes onto Syllabase, a learning technology program invented in USU’s English Department. Sok-Leng Tan, their lead instructor in Logan, will help them to navigate language barriers, assisting them successful futures.
- In Preston, Idaho, USU graduate Lynda Hamblin’s Concurrent Enrollment students in English 1010 learn to think about audience by recasting essays for several different types of readers;
- In the TSC Sunburst Lounge, students step up to the microphone to participate in the second annual African American Read-In, an international celebration of literacy presented by the Black Student Union and the English Department;
- In the Writing Center, Dr. Paul Crumbley collaborates with undergraduate student Melissa Bowles to create a web site for the May Swenson Symposium, which will bring students and scholars together to investigate the work of our most famous English major, winner of the Bollingen Prize;
- In Bermuda, Holly O’Leary, a graduate student in the English Department’s online Technical Writing specialization, sits at her computer composing a message about the possible uses of digital training tools at the bank where she works. She will post the message to the online discussion forum in Dr. David Hailey’s English 6470 class. USU’s English Department was the first in the nation to offer this degree in a totally-online format;
- In Ray B. West 114, twenty of the brightest and best of our graduate students meet with Dr. Lynn Meeks and Dr. Brock Dethier to hone their skills in teaching our introductory writing courses, English 1010 and English 2010. There are 96 face-to-face sections of

these classes this semester alone. These Graduate Instructors routinely receive teaching evaluations above College and University norms, and undergo an extensive training/mentoring program. In 1010 and 2010, enrollment tops at 22, indicating this department's solid commitment to maximum literacy learning, which research shows cannot take place in large sections;

- In the office of *Western American Literature*, one of four departmentally based professional journals with a nationwide audience, seven students who will present their research on feminist topics at a regional Women's Studies conference in Pocatello work with Dr. Melody Graulich to ready their presentations and panels;
- In the Art Department, Dr. Charie Thralls shares ideas with representatives from seven curricular departments, assuring that the University's School of the Arts will provide maximum opportunities for our students.
- In Mt. Logan Middle School's English as a Second Language classroom, Dr. Andrea Tinnemeyer works with students whose home language is Spanish. These students, along with others at Logan High, have recently met author Helena Maria Viramontes, as a result of grants Dr. Tinnemeyer wrote to fund Viramontes' visit;
- In the Antarctic, Dr. Chris Cokinos (Whiting Award winner and author of *Hope Is the Thing with Feathers*) gathers data he will use as the basis for his next book. He will also share his findings with students at the Cache Valley Learning Center, with whom he has a nature-writing partnership.
- In a local theater, Dr. Brian McCuskey previews the subject for the next film review he will publish as a community service in the Logan *Herald Journal*, extending the department's commitment to literacy into the analysis of film.

These examples, drawn from the academic life of Utah State University's English Department, merely begin to illustrate the importance our faculty place on student learning, literacy, and achievement. Being an English student at USU is not solely a matter of reading a complex literary text and coming together to discuss it and formulate one's literary opinion—although that of course does occur. It also means collaborating with faculty and other students, wherever they are, to become more adept at communication; expanding one's creativity in an array of visual and print media; and stretching the limits of one's ability to analyze literature, to create poetry, to write proposals for one's company, to present the products of one's research, to teach literacy to one's secondary students—in short, to be articulate human beings whose lives are made richer by their facility with language as found in the multiplicity of texts and contexts that we encounter.

We as an English faculty are devoted to assisting our students in achieving this goal. In short, students find their literacy-learning experiences in English classrooms and programs enable them to read widely in a variety of texts, to think deeply, and to articulate their thinking. It is our pleasure to create the dynamic classes and programs, write the grants, invent the software, sponsor the conferences, and pursue whatever it takes to give our students opportunities they need—helping them to realize the full richness of human communication.

NARRATIVE ON DEPARTMENTAL EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

The following narrative illustrates how the English Department meets the five criteria identified by the Selection Committee as defining excellence in teaching and learning. This narrative is not exhaustive, but highlights initiatives and programs that exemplify to the criteria. Examples are drawn from 1998 to the present, with emphasis on the more recent years, and indicate a dynamic commitment to literacy and learning that systemically links English Department offerings.

Section 1. Commitment to Sustained Excellence in Teaching and Learning Documented Record of Excellence: At the heart of any effort to build a culture that values teaching and learning is a sense of responsibility for the students who are in our care. This responsibility manifests itself in the English Department's selection of excellent classes—all geared toward students' continuing growth—and in the quality of the faculty. We are aware of how much one faculty member can influence a single life, and are devoted to excellence in all areas of teaching, research, and service, as well as to the nurturing of student scholarship and achievement.

Department teachers have a **strong, sustained record of awards and grants**, indicating their own successes in the classroom and in their research. Departmental reward systems pay close attention to classroom performance, innovation, and improvements. Teaching awards for English faculty are spread across the department in all its programs (American Studies, Creative Writing, English Teaching, Folklore, Literary Studies, and Technical and Professional Communication). We would call attention to the great consistency with which our faculty have been recognized. The Appendix lists awards since 1998, from then-student Alan Freer's Robins Award as Teaching Assistant of the Year to Dr. Patricia Gantt's 2004 nomination as Utah State's Carnegie Professor of the Year.

The English Department has received several awards specifically for our **use of technology in instruction**. In 1999 we were recognized with the Outstanding Service Award from Independent and Distance Learning. The following year Dr. Christine Hult, one of our primary designers of online pedagogy, was named the University's Outstanding Faculty Member. In 2001 Christopher Okelberry, our chief technician, was the University's Outstanding Professional Employee. That same year the entire department received the first "Golden Mouse" Award for our contributions to Utah State's technological efforts.

Further, our faculty have received regular **curriculum enhancement grants**, an indication that faculty actively seek to increase their teaching resources and develop their pedagogical techniques. A list of these and other teaching-related grants is included in the Appendix. These consistent accomplishments evolve from a departmental reward system that substantially recognizes teaching. Annual merit review allocates one-third weight to instruction, and each faculty member is encouraged to submit a teaching performance memo outlining teaching accomplishments for the year to supplement review of student teaching evaluations.¹ A copy of the memo is included in the Appendix. This memo is intended both to describe good teaching practices and to give faculty members a chance to provide a full and clear picture of their teaching work.

Innovation: One of the best ways to sustain excellence in teaching and learning is to stimulate innovation. By constantly confronting the new, departments can continually assess their practices, choosing those which best serve their students' needs. For the Department of English, a longstanding engagement with computer technology has been an important stimulus in developing our teaching practices in both online and face-to-face environments.

Since the early 1980's, the department has actively studied the role of computers technology in writing instruction; and since the mid 1990's this study has become even more intense across the entire department as we explore the ways in which the Internet can be used to benefit student learning. In 1995, the department received a major grant from the State of Utah to develop the state's first online version of English 101 (now 1010). Working with Salt Lake Community College and Southern Utah University, we completed the project in a year, noting that the Web is a valuable resource not only for distance delivery, but also for students and teachers meeting face to face.

Teachers and technicians in the department created a delivery system called SyllaBase that could quickly and easily be made available for instruction to all departmental faculty and students. Above all, we wanted a system designed by teachers for teachers, so it would be built around sound classroom procedures. By Fall 1998 the system was in place, and we were using it to deliver our master's degree in technical writing (the first online degree in this discipline in the country). Since 2000, SyllaBase has served over 16,000 students in 22 countries. It has been the subject of a Case Study by Microsoft,ⁱⁱ numerous articles and presentations by the department's faculty,ⁱⁱⁱ and continuing research by graduate students.^{iv}

This online effort has given faculty and students enormous flexibility in teaching and learning in both their face-to-face classes and their online classes. Each faculty member in the department has SyllaBase available on his or her desktop to be used for everything from delivering courses at a distance to simply posting a syllabus. Instructors have used it in face-to-face classes to sustain class discussions between meetings, to permit students to share documents or conduct discussion in groups outside class, to integrate online resources into class activities, and to manage homework assignments. One teacher used the online classroom to mentor student-teachers who were working with second-language learners, while another used the chat capabilities to interview live the author of a memoir the class was studying.

SyllaBase was constructed to facilitate the creation of learning communities (whether in distance or in hybrid courses) so that students can take active parts in the construction of their own learning experiences. Consequently, students do not simply read lectures or other material online; instead they actively engage in course work through threaded discussion, file sharing, discussion forums, e-mail, and bulletin boards, so that contact with the instructor is as great if not greater than in a face-to-face class. By the same token, students using the Writing Center have the option of meeting tutors face to face or of holding a real-time chat to go over their papers. **Our graduate instructors leave the department with experience in online instruction, which is very valuable for them in seeking job placement; our undergraduate students leave the program familiar with how online delivery can supplement instruction and be a credible source for information.** Over the coming years, we will continue to work to find new ways of using online technology to make teaching more flexible, attractive, and—most of all—effective for both teachers and students.

Section 2. Ongoing Assessment and Improvement of Teaching and Learning Quality

The English Department's assessment program addresses the full scope of its teaching responsibilities at all levels, from its on-campus, online and concurrent enrollment classes fulfilling the Communications Literacy University Studies requirement to majors in all four of its emphasis areas. Assessment has been part of the department's culture since the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges mandated such procedures in their 1997 review. By 1999, in the Director of University Assessment's response to the 1997 accreditation review, the department was highlighted as a model for its assessment practices: "One need look no further [for quality assessment practices] than, for example, the very thorough practices of the English Department or of the Department of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, which are models to other departments."⁵

Ongoing Assessment of General Education Courses: Communications Literacy. Under the direction of Professor Lynn Meeks and Assistant Professor Brock Dethier, Director and Associate Director, respectively, of the Writing Program, The English Department has developed the most comprehensive assessment of General Education offerings on campus. Committed to the professional development of Graduate Instructors, Professors Meeks and Dethier personally visit each graduate instructor once per semester to observe their teaching and mentor them toward excellence. During their first year, graduate instructors are required to videotape a class they teach for feedback and mentoring from Professor Meeks and their graduate instructor peers. In addition, Meeks and Dethier have established a peer review system by which experienced graduate instructors, selected as Writing Program assistant directors, continue to observe, monitor and mentor graduate instructors' teaching throughout their careers on campus. These monitoring and assessment practices are exemplary on a national scale as well as a local.

English 1010 is also taught both online and through concurrent enrollment in area high schools. The online instructors have all successfully taught English 1010 for at least one year on campus and receive special training in online teaching before being eligible to teach an online course. The English Department has hired a part time associate, Donna McEvoy, to visit concurrent enrollment classes in the schools for monitoring and assessment purposes. She observes each class at least once per semester and reports her observations in writing to Dr. Meeks and to the Division of Continuing Education. Continued employment is dependent on positive evaluations gathered through these various means. The General Education Committee meets each spring to review instructor's/lecturers' records and make decisions regarding continued employment.

The Writing Program participated in the first phase of the Regents' mandated assessment of educational value added by General Education courses during Spring semester 2001. The longitudinal study of the effects of composition instruction at USU shows students achieving substantial growth in all literacy abilities from the time they entered English 1010 until when they completed English 2010. In short, our program is working!

Ongoing Assessment of General Education Courses: Breadth and Depth Courses: Instructors and lecturers are hired on the basis of successful teaching records, either in our own department or at other institutions. Each year, they must be observed at least once to continue to build a record of successful teaching. In addition, General Education instructors are working to develop more comprehensive measures of effectiveness, including exit surveys and interviews. Several instructors incorporated these methods into their courses as early as Spring 2002. (See the Department's Assessment page on its website: <http://websites.usu.edu/English>.)

Ongoing Assessment of Majors: The annual assessment procedure for majors in all of our areas of emphasis consists of three parts: an assessment meeting of the curriculum committee, a written report on assessment, and the collection of student portfolios or examples of representative work prepared by the students in their senior-level capstone course. Faculty meet each fall to review portfolios or representative examples, to prepare a report, and to plan and implement needed changes. Each program also posts specific competencies and objectives for its curriculum; these are used as the measure by which the assessment is conducted. We have also done innovative work in collecting electronic portfolios so students can save their cumulative writings for review at the capstone level.^v

It should be noted that twelve of our major courses have passed the rigorous standards of the Communication Intensive Subcommittee to be approved as Communication Intensive courses. The Subcommittee review is a form of assessment itself, and recognizes the course's commitment to teaching writing, rather than merely requiring it.

Career Tracking of Former Students: We are currently gathering data on the post-graduation experiences of our alumni and will assess our curriculum in light of those experiences. We are building a file of responses that now goes back to 1990. To our knowledge, no other English

department has conducted a longitudinal study of the places where English majors actually work or how they use the skills they acquired in the major. With questions like, “Describe your current job status” and “Did majoring in English help you get your current job?” we are learning about the variety of job experiences encountered by English graduates. We plan to use their information to make our curriculum as responsive as possible to the demands of the workplace.

Effectiveness of Assessment: Besides the excellence demonstrated by the Communications Literacy courses in the Regents’ Statewide Assessment (mentioned above), educational improvements have been made across the department as a result of assessment. Since completely redesigning our curriculum with the transition to semesters in 1998, a number of modifications have been made in light of assessment information. For example, due to student comments, in Literary Studies we have added more literary history, and we have modified English 2100 (our introductory literary theory course). We are currently working on improving the distribution of literary theory across more courses, and we are holding a series of brown bag lunches devoted to familiarizing students with the faculty’s wide-ranging research interests. In Professional and Technical Communication, we have introduced material on ethics in technical communication, an issue students raised in their assessments. In English Teaching, we added a substantial professional component to the capstone course to better meet student needs and to better articulate with Secondary Education. Finally, in the Communications Literacy courses, English 1010 and 2010, we have worked to lower the class enrollments and to eliminate backlogs in 1010 in response to student assessments. Despite the complexities and financial cost of keeping our Communications Literacy courses capped at 22 and our other courses capped at 35, English Department faculty are committed to providing the relatively small, hands-on classes that research—and our students’ evaluations—indicate serve learning best.

Section 3. Faculty Development for Teaching

Experts acknowledge that excellence in teaching and learning cannot be achieved without support and development for teachers. However, because English Department faculty vary widely by rank and experience, as well as from the lack of a common location, they present a distinct challenge. Although it is the department’s responsibility to ensure that all teachers receive the support and development they need to work effectively, we need to handle various groups quite differently. Tenure-line faculty, for example, are mentored and supported by their promotion/tenure committees, and their record is very good, as indicated by student evaluations and by awards and recognition (see Appendix and the discussion under “Commitment to Sustained Excellence in Teaching and Learning”). But tenure-line faculty represent only a portion of the department’s teaching faculty, and we would like to call attention to several initiatives the department has undertaken to address the needs of faculty members who are sometimes marginalized or ignored.

Class Size Matters : The English Department is one of the largest on campus with a faculty of 100. Of those, 30 are tenure track; the rest of the faculty are graduate instructors, lecturers, adjunct and visiting professors who primarily teach the “back bone” of University Studies courses. The English Department is committed to providing these courses, because it not only believes in communication literacy, it also believes that each department has a charge to provide University Studies courses as a University service. Approximately 6,000 USU students take English 1010, 2010, and 1030 each year from the English Department. These students are taught in over 240 sections both face-to-face and on-line, and another 1000 students complete English 1010, 2010, and 1030 at branch campuses or in high school concurrent enrollment courses. The English Department is also committed to keeping enrollment in composition courses to 22 students per section and no more than 35 in literature classes.

Faculty Development for Graduate Instructors Who Teach English 1010, 2010, and 1030.

Graduate Instructors (GIs) are mentored by the Director of the Writing Program, Dr. Lynn Meeks, and the Director of Advanced Composition, Dr. Brock Dethier, along with their three assistants who

are advanced graduate instructors or lecturers (and who are released from teaching for one class to act as mentors to their peers.) Their mentoring includes the following:

- The Writing Program Web Site is constantly updated with the latest information that an applicant for a graduate instructor position might need. The site outlines the curriculum of English 1010, books and materials, philosophy, goals and objectives, and the English 1010 curriculum for the coming year, and serves as a constant resource for GIs.
- As soon as GIs sign a contract, they receive the books and materials from which they will teach so that they will be prepared before they arrive on campus.
- GIs arrive on campus a week early for 45 hours of specialized training in rhetoric and composition and classroom management which includes: Initial training on assessment and evaluation, peer group workshops, process writing pedagogy, and surviving the first week of school; University and English Department policies and procedures on plagiarism, disciplinary action, grievance procedures, and FERPA; Training in the prevention of sexual harassment; Orientation to tutoring in the Writing Center; Instructions on writing addenda to the universal English 1010 syllabus and keeping accurate student records; and Student/Teacher rights and responsibilities.
- GIs enroll in English 6820, "Practicum in Teaching Writing" which meets five hours a week to ensure that the graduate instructors have an opportunity to thoroughly discuss theory, practice, and demonstrate their teaching skills.

At the end of their first year, **GIs who teach English 1010 have received over 145 hours of instruction in the theory and practice of teaching writing.** This in part accounts for their outstanding teaching scores that for the past 9 years have been at or above the University average of 5.0 and 5.1. These teaching scores are even more impressive because many English 1010 students report on teaching evaluations that they initially had little interest in English 1010 and took it only because it was required. Student comments such as the following are not uncommon: I have dreaded English all my life, but I looked forward to every class," "For the first time in my life, I feel confident about my writing." Or "I hope you give Mr. Smith a raise."

By the end of their second and third years, the graduate instructors who are selected to teach English 2010 receive the following additional staff development:

- They are observed a minimum of four times each year by the Director of Advanced Composition, Brock Dethier, and his assistant, followed by individual conferences.
- The second- and third-year GIs meet every other week both fall and spring semesters to continue their staff development as they teach English 2010.
- Truly outstanding third-year graduate instructors or instructors may be selected by the literary studies or technical writing faculty to teach certain lower division courses under the direct supervision of tenure-track faculty. Staff development for these courses is done on a one-to-one basis through classroom observation and conferences.

Faculty Development for Concurrent Enrollment Teachers of English 1010: The English Department works with outstanding high school teachers to deliver the English 1010 curriculum to concurrent enrollment sites from southern Idaho to Ogden. The department encourages high school teachers to attend the week-long fall orientation workshop for graduate instructors and to attend a two-day workshop in the spring. Donna McEvoy, the English Department's Concurrent Enrollment Coordinator, visits concurrent enrollment classrooms each trimester, meeting with high school teachers and students, monitoring the curriculum, and class size, and helping teachers address problems associated with offering college-level reading and writing in a high school environment. A measure of the success of the English Department's concurrent enrollment program is that Principal Ed Jensen of Ogden High School, because of his positive experiences with English 1010 concurrent enrollment at Mountain Crest High School, immediately requested that USU English Department provide English 1010 concurrent enrollment curriculum and oversight to Ogden High School.

Faculty Development for Teachers and Students in International Programs: Programs abroad in main land China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan are staffed and overseen by Robin Parent and Sok-Leng Tan, a native speaker of Chinese. Both Ms. Parent and Ms. Tan were GIs in the English Department, have been trained in English Department teaching pedagogy, and have successfully taught on our campus. Their expertise is helping undergraduates master English 1010 and 2010.

Faculty Development for New Tenure -Track Faculty: New tenure-track faculty are immediately connected with colleagues who guide and support them through the tenure and post-tenure review process. New faculty are quickly assigned a tenure and promotion committee whose responsibility it is to be their professional advisor, advocate, and protector through the tenure and promotion process. To further ensure new faculty's success in research and publication, they receive 50 per cent more travel money than tenured faculty. Non-tenured faculty are also granted a semester of pre-tenure research leave which allows them to concentrate on finishing books and articles for publication prior to applying for promotion to associate professor. To acquaint new faculty with our online classroom, Syllabase, additional workshops are provided whether through the FACT center or through special tutorials offered by Joe Kaili, the English Department's technical supervisor, who also teaches new faculty how to use the English Department's "Smart Classroom," Ray B. West 214.

Maintaining an Atmosphere of Collegiality and Respect Allows All Faculty to Develop: The English Department is noted for its collegiality. Department members are eager for their colleagues to achieve. The Monday Night Writing Group is an example. Writers wishing to share drafts of their latest article, story, or poem meet once a month in one another's homes. There are numerous opportunities for new faculty to join this writing group or other such departmental groups devoted only to poetry or nature writing. In all these writing groups, faculty have an opportunity to work with senior colleagues to share their ideas whether in a writing group or in regularly scheduled meetings. New faculty are immediately offered opportunities for leadership as chairs of curriculum committees or as participants in hiring committees. For example, Dr. Palavi Rastogi has taken the leadership role in planning events for the British and Commonwealth Studies group. Dr. Kelli Cargile Cook worked with colleague Nancy O'Rourke to sponsor the Council on Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication held on the USU Campus. Every year our faculty members, with mentoring from colleagues, win competitive New Faculty Research Grants. A full listing is in the Appendix. The English Department is a supportive team ranging from first-year graduate instructors just beginning to teach to tenured professors with almost 40 years of classroom experience. Regardless of their level of experience, the approximately 112 English faculty have one goal: **to maximize student learning.**

Section 4. Provision of Resources for Students

The department has undertaken several projects during the last five years intended to give students challenging, job-related experience as well as new perspectives on their classroom learning.

Students learn through off-campus internships. The department currently employs a quarter-time associate who sets up undergraduate and graduate internships. Typically, the department helps secure 30 internships for students per year, at locations ranging from the Cache Chamber of Commerce to *The New Yorker Magazine* to the Utah League of Credit Unions.^{vi} Three recent successes are Taylor Menlove, a senior in the Literary Studies program, who recently completed an internship in the office of Senator Orin G. Hatch; Ted Finch, a Professional/Technical Writing major, who has an internship with Sandia National Laboratories working on software documentation; and Melissa Young, an English minor who interned with the U.S. Department of State at the U.S. Embassy in London. These students not only gain valuable work experience, but they also bring back insights and observations that enrich their classroom work.

Students learn media through internships with faculty. The English Department has a tradition of pioneering the application of new media to communication and instruction. Extending this tradition, six undergraduate interns have been working with the English Department's Dr. David Hailey in his Interactive Media Research Laboratory to develop online courses for Continuing Education. The students have been learning techniques in videotaping, digitizing video, multimedia design, and training design and implementation. Like the interns who work outside the department, all of these students gain credible work experience while developing skills that can be applied to their classroom studies. The IMRL facility is also available to students by appointment with Dr. Hailey if they want to learn advanced multimedia software not available in the department's main computer laboratory.

Students taking English classes on document usability have the opportunity to work in the Usability Research and Evaluation Laboratory, which is directed by English Department professor Mark Zachry: < <http://usability.usu.edu/>>. Students use UREL facilities to carry out class projects and to work on their own research on the matter of making documents more effective for their intended users. While registered for usability classes at Utah State, students are able to schedule the lab for use as necessary to work on their assignments. Like the IMRL facility, UREL may also be scheduled for use by students to learn specific skills outside the context of a class.

Students learn editorial skills by working on the department's journals. For many English majors, writing and editing are compelling interests, and the department has developed an ongoing program that enables students to work as staff members on our various publications and related projects. Currently, the department publishes four journals, each of which supports one or more students in editorial capacities. *Western American Literature* employs two editorial fellows and one book review fellow through joint funding with the department, Western Literature Association, and the Marie Eccles Caine Foundation.^{vii} *Western Folklore* employs one editorial assistant funded jointly between the department and the Mountain West Center. *Isotope: A Journal of Literary Nature and Science Writing* employs 3-5 interns supported by the department and by the Utah Arts Council. *Scribendi*, an annual collection of winning entries in the Creative Writing Contest, currently supports two interns, who are funded by the department and by ASUSU.

Students become better communicators by working as peer tutors in the Writing Center. The department's Writing Center serves students across the campus as a place where they can discuss drafts and receive advice about their writing. For instance, the Center plays an important role in helping education majors prepare for the Skills Proficiency Test. It also helps the undergraduate and graduate student tutors who constitute most of its staff. It offers the undergraduate tutors a chance to improve their interpersonal skills and develop their own writing abilities through tutoring, while the graduates, who are also employed as Graduate Instructors, learn from their Writing Center experience how to conduct better one-on-one conferences with students. By tutoring, these students contribute to the department's ongoing commitment to promotion of literacy across the campus. The Center also promotes student scholarship: Several undergraduate and graduate Writing Center tutors will present papers at the Rocky Mountain Peer Tutoring Conference, to be hosted by USU in March, 2004.

The English Department also sponsors several opportunities for students to experience literary works and scholarship not just as things to be read and studied in silence but as events to be seen and heard, as the following three examples illustrate:

Through the Speaker Series, students learn about current research and hear published creative writers read. The department has sought to enhance the cultural environment for learning. For instance, since Spring 2001, we have conducted a Speaker Series, a monthly forum that has brought together students, faculty, and community members in an event where English department faculty members have presented their current research in an accessible way and where distinguished visitors

have been invited to speak and read from their work. The series has been extremely successful, often drawing audiences of several hundred. Faculty have given presentations on everything from Joan of Arc to the rise of the Western film to using music in the English classroom. Guests have included such distinguished writers and poets as Barry Lopez, PattiAnn Rogers, and Robert Hass. Students have opportunities to ask questions at the end of each of these presentations. Through the series students encounter new ideas, gain fresh perspectives on their classroom work, and see art and ideas as part of a wider community context.

***Synecdoche* involves students in live performances of literary works for Utah Public Radio.** The English Department sponsors *Synecdoche*, a quarterly event at which students from Theater Arts and faculty from various departments read literary works before a live audience of students, faculty, and members of the public. The readings are taped and later broadcast on KUSU radio station.

Actors from the London Stage visit English classes. For several years, Dr. Phebe Jensen, the department's Shakespeare specialist, has arranged for the group, Actors from the London Stage, to come to campus, put on performances of Shakespeare's plays, and visit English classes to work directly with students. Students discuss issues of stagecraft and performance with these actors and participate in dramatic readings of excerpts from the plays.

By offering students opportunities for internships, editorial work on department journals, tutoring at the Writing Center, and participation in live presentations of literary and scholarly work, the department promotes active, experiential learning—a vital complement to the learning that students achieve through reading and writing class assignments.

Section 5. Linking Discovery, Creative Activity, and Engagement with Teaching and Learning for the Benefit of Students

The department commits itself each year to mentoring and supporting students as they present their work in a variety of venues, including campus events, community events, and professional conferences. These events are publicized on the department website. Virtually every area of the department is involved in helping students develop this climactic experience of their education. Below are some examples drawn from the last few years illustrating the kind of discovery and engagement activities our students have undertaken.

Graduate students present research at conferences. In Fall 2002, six graduates in literature presented papers at the annual meeting of the Western Literature Association, sponsored jointly by the department and the Graduate Student Senate. The papers were drawn initially from class work, but each student's project was individually mentored by Dr. Melody Graulich. Prior to the conference students critiqued one another's papers at a mini-conference held on campus.^{viii} Students in Dr. Pallavi Rastogi's English 6330 seminar in Fall 2003 presented papers in a mini-conference on the theme of "Imagining India" through literature. The conference was open to the public and attracted students and faculty from across the University.

Undergraduates present research in local and national forums. Dr. Jennifer Sinor enjoys success in encouraging her writing students to participate in undergraduate research projects. In January 2003, one of her students presented her project on the history of the Knitting Mills of Logan to legislators at Posters on the Hill, one of only two students representing the humanities. In March, two of her students presented their work at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research.

Folklore undergraduates collect 9/11 narratives. In the aftermath of September 11, Dr. Jeannie Thomas had her undergraduate folklore class (English/History 3700) undertake the project of collecting oral narratives concerning the impact of the event on the students' families and friends. The students collected approximately 50 interviews, which went into the Library of Congress's 9/11

Collection. Included in these interviews were 21 with Pentagon police officers who were in the Pentagon during the terrorist attacks. Thus, her students, as part of their class work, had the opportunity to contribute to the community's permanent cultural and historical record.

Technical writing students create course projects for actual clients. In Fall 2001, Dr. Kelli Cargile-Cook organized her English 5410 (Interactive Media) around individualized course projects undertaken for actual clients. The projects included multimedia products developed for Utah State's Academic Resource Center, Special Collections Preservation Department, and the Intermountain Herbarium. Students also created multimedia projects for the American West Heritage Center and Convergys. Several students have marketed their projects commercially since completing them.

English Education students learn to participate as professionals through joining the USU student chapter of National Council of Teachers of English. As students in the Capstone Course in Teaching English, they learn to organize and host a professional conference held in April of each year. They also write papers to present at the conference, which is attended by all English Education students and faculty, as well as nearby teachers. As officers in SNCTE, they participate in service projects, organize membership drives, work with local schools, and participate in fund raising.

Students in the Literary Studies track can belong to Sigma Tau Delta, a national honor society. The local chapter of this national organization involves students in activities similar to those of SNCTE. They also stage a series of events throughout the year, including the annual "Poe in the Dark" event, at which faculty members read selections from the work of Edgar Allen Poe and other writers appropriate to the Halloween season. The event is open to the public.

Students in Professional and Technical Writing form a local STC chapter. Mentored by faculty member Nancy O'Rourke, students in Technical and Professional Writing have formed an active chapter of the Society for Technical Communication, an international organization. In this chapter they elect officers, organize professional and social events, and write a newsletter, *Synopsis*. Competing against newsletters from all STC chapters (not just student chapters), *Synopsis* was selected for a Merit Award. The chapter also conducts workshops for students and act as judges in the annual STC competition for online documents. The chapter received a Pacesetter Award, given to STC chapters showing special initiative in promoting the society's mission. Involvement with STC gives students a professional identity, helps introduce them to the technical communication culture they are preparing to join, and provides valuable networking opportunities.

Undergraduate creates websites for campus groups. Students often have the opportunity to put their computer skills to use on campus. Melissa Bowles, an undergraduate in English, has designed and maintains two websites. The first is for USU's Women and Gender Studies Program <http://www.usu.edu/womenstu/>, while the second, prepared in collaboration with Drs. Paul Crumbley and Patricia Gantt, is for the 2004 May Swenson Symposium: <http://www.usu.edu/mayswenson/>.

Students participate in an annual Creative Writing Contest. Cooperating with ASUSU and the Honors Program, the department sponsors an annual contest open to students across the university. They often work with faculty mentors to develop their projects. When prizes are awarded, the winning students give a public reading; for many of them, this is the first public presentation of their writing. Winning entries are also published in *Scribendi*, a student magazine. For some students, this is their first appearance in print.^{ix} Further, one of the four annual *Synecdoche* events (see under Section 4 above) is devoted to readings from the most recent *Scribendi* publication, so students have the chance to hear their work read over National Public Radio.

Conclusion

In *The Courage to Teach* (1998), Parker J. Palmer describes what teaching is like when palpable, dynamic learning takes place in the classroom: “I am a teacher at heart, and there are moments in the classroom when I can hardly hold the joy. When my students and I discover uncharted territory to explore, when the pathway out of a thicket opens up before us, when our experience is illuminated by the lightning-life of the mind—then teaching is the finest work I know” (1). Such excitement is what those of us who teach in USU’s English Department seek. Excellence in teaching and learning, after all, can only be achieved when a department values it as the top priority; when the faculty create offerings that are rigorous, professional, and humane; and when the entire teaching team commits its time, energy, and resources to carrying out programs that will best serve student learning. This is a demanding goal, but one which the Department of English constantly works to accomplish.

Endnotes

ⁱ Merit review procedures are described at <http://websites.usu.edu/english/Document/index.asp?Parent=719>.

ⁱⁱ See the Case Study at <http://3gb.com/Document/index.asp?Parent=2671>.

ⁱⁱⁱ A full listing of faculty publications on teaching and learning is in the Appendix. Some pertinent examples include: David Hailey and Christine Hult, “Virtual English at Utah State University: A Five-Year Journey,” *Computers and Composition Online* (May 2000); Keith Grant-Davie, David Hailey, and Christine Hult, “Online Horror Stories Worthy of Halloween: A Collection of Problems and Solutions.” *Computers and Composition Journal: Special Issue on Distance Learning 18.4* (2001): 387-397; and Christine Hult and Lynn Meeks, “Preparing College Teachers of Writing to Teach in a Web-Based Classroom: History, Theoretical Base, Web-Base, and Current Practice.” *Preparing College Teachers of Writing: Histories, Theories, Programs, and Practices*. Ed. Betty Pytlik and Sarah Liggett. New York: Oxford UP, 2002, pp. 184-193.

^{iv} Examples of recent master’s theses and doctoral dissertations include: Donna Rigby, “Courseware Design and the Creation of Community in the Online Writing Classroom: ‘Is There a Professor in This Process?’” (2003); Robert Whittaker, “Rhetoric and Pedagogy of Online Teaching” (2003); Sylvia Newman, “Threads of Online Teaching Success: A Case Study of English Online” (2003); and Jim Rogers (Ph.D. candidate, Instructional Technology, 2004), “Side-swiping” Writing: Activity Theory as a Critical Lens to Investigate Online Learning.

^{vi} For a full list of internships together with pertinent descriptive material about the internship program, see <http://websites.usu.edu/english/Document/index.asp?Parent=553>.

^{vii} The work of the *Western American Literature* fellows is described at <http://websites.usu.edu/english/Document/index.asp?Parent=2561>.

^{viii} Their preparation is described more fully at <http://websites.usu.edu/english/Document/index.asp?Parent=2411>.

^{ix} For examples from 2003-2004 contests, see <http://websites.usu.edu/english/Document/index.asp?Parent=576>.