

## Getting the Most Out of Working with a Learning Commons Writing Fellow

Dear Colleagues:

I write you with a few guidelines to ensure that you get the greatest possible benefit out of the Learning Commons' Writing Fellows program. On that note, please bear in mind the following:

For the program to work, attendance at all three meetings with the writing fellow must be mandatory for all students in your course, rather than optional or otherwise limited. This may sound arbitrary, but in the actual event this requirement proves essential to all of your students' success with peer-supported revision. If certain students are allowed to "opt out" of their tutoring session, this creates an air of remediation around those students who do meet with the writing fellow for your course. And from here, the chain of consequences becomes obvious: revision and "paper talk" (about the student's research and assertions) come to seem remedial as well.

And as the writing fellow is paid to tutor three essays, the temptation for students to miss – or not to schedule – appointments is tripled. So we ask for your diligent assistance in making sure that every one of your students comes to appreciate the benefits of revision-based writing in your class by attending all three rounds of tutor meetings.

You will assuredly be happier for this upon reading your students' essays!

Also, please remember that Writing Fellows are college students (mostly sophomores) and nowise similar in role or training to Teaching Assistants. They cannot grade, assist you in grading, or correct any student essays. Rather, Writing Fellows are trained to offer a new set of eyes on student drafts and to revisit those decisions that merit revision, in order to bring out the best that can be thought and said in the student's essay.

If you have a special method of grading, or you desire that students write special kinds of papers, this is for the best. Our fellows benefit from communication with you concerning your goals and expectations, and they will be happy to assist you in prompting students to highlight those elements of writing that you prize (e.g., comparative method, explicit announcement of thesis, the synthesis of ideas, inquiry-based research, etc.).

Thanks for your consideration of these best practices, and should you have any questions, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss them with you online or in person.

In the mean time, I wish you continued success with your class.

My Bests,

Director of the Learning Commons Jim Keller