

Van Houten Memorial Fund

Grant Application *[extract – institutional details not included]*

Requested amount

25,500

Type of support

Project / Program Support

Request/project title

Enhancing the Teaching of Writing through the Writing Fellows Program

Request summary

Describe specific purposes for which any grant funds awarded from this foundation will be used (e.g., specific equipment, overall project funding, etc.).

This field is limited to 150 words. The word limit will be validated when you proceed to the next page.

Our 2015-16 grant enabled us to provide writing support for students in 34 Writing Intensive courses, an increase from the 32 Van Houten Writing Fellows provided in 2014-15. We also added 24 Writing Fellows to our new First-Year Writing Seminar. In 2016-17, we will maintain the number of Van Houten Writing Fellows at 35 and continue the First-Year Fellows, providing a total of 60 Writing Fellows in courses across the curriculum from the first year through the intermediate- and upper- level. Fellows are selected by faculty and trained to provide in-class leadership during writing workshops; work one-on-one with student writers as needed; and conduct out-of-class writing workshops for students as they draft and revise formal papers, laboratory reports, multi-media presentations, collaborative projects, and works of fiction and drama. Fellows also research writing pedagogy, develop writing resources, and help design faculty development materials. Writing Fellows also receive CRLA training and Certification.

Common goals

Why do you believe a grant to your organization would further this foundation's mission and priorities of our foundation?

This field is limited to 150 words. The word limit will be validated when you proceed to the next page.

The Van Houten Fund supports education, the mission and "business" of Drew University. Skill in writing is a staple of a liberal arts education at Drew, and remains critical for graduate study, career success, and citizenship in a complex, globalized world. Our students come from a variety of educational backgrounds, and like students nationally, many lack the writing proficiency necessary for success. In 2014, employers told the Association of American Colleges and Universities that only 28% of college graduates possess the necessary written communication skills to succeed and most lack experience applying their skills in real-world settings ("Falling Short? College Learning and Career Success"). To counter that trend, Drew has made writing a central part of our academic program across all four years and within every major. Writing Fellows facilitate the development of writing excellence in their peers, while also gaining the opportunity to apply leadership and communication skills.

Program area served

Education

Population served

General Population - General/Unspecified

Age group served

Adults (18+ years)

Gender served

General/Unspecified

Demographics comments (optional)

Drew University's student population comes from almost every state in the US, with 5% of the students being international and 20% identifying themselves as African American or Hispanic. Drew is SAT optional with an average submitted SAT-verbal score of 560. Drew has an 85% retention rate.

Describe the objectives of the project or program to be funded.

This field is limited to 150 words. The word limit will be validated when you proceed to the next page.

1. Slightly increase the Writing Fellows program from 34 courses to 35 per year, serving approximately 700 students in 2016-17 (over a third of the undergraduate population);
2. Continue to scaffold and strengthen writing across the curriculum to help students complete college successfully, and, as graduates, begin careers or enter graduate, law, business, or medical school with strong, competitive writing skills;
3. Build on the new First Year Fellows program that expands classroom coaching into the first year, further reducing barriers to seeking writing and other assistance and making the writing curriculum fully vertical;
4. Continue to emphasize the importance of collaboration and peer-to-peer support by helping faculty integrate Writing Fellows and the Center for Writing Excellence into their courses and laboratories;
5. Continue to emphasize the centrality of writing at Drew by recognizing the writing skills of Writing Fellows and supporting the faculty as they deliver writing instruction.

Describe the implementation plan for the project or program. Include at least three specific actions your organization will take in order to achieve results.

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1. Two half-day training sessions for Writing Fellows introduce them to discipline-specific writing and information literacy skills. Weekly meetings throughout the semester build on this knowledge and develop course-specific strategies and understanding of the writing process;
2. All Writing Fellows receive CRLA (College Reading and Learning Association) training and certification, increasing their overall tutoring skills and providing professional certification and assessment;
3. Continued development of a "Best Practices" document and Tutoring Handbook written by Writing Fellows for faculty along with short YouTube videos for student writers that faculty can embed in online syllabi or use in class;
4. Continued support for faculty working with Writing Fellows in First-Year Writing Seminars and Writing-Intensive (WI) courses, including a three-day faculty development workshop at the beginning of the year (with a stipend for participation) and on-going faculty discussions on topics ranging from course development and assignment design to feedback and assessment.

Collaboration

Briefly describe any formal or informal collaborative ventures your organization has established (or will establish) with other entities serving similar purposes that may be relevant to this grant request.

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1. Drew's Writing Program is a member of the Association of Small Liberal Arts College Writing Programs (SLAC-WPA), which provides formal and informal space (through an annual conference and a listserv) for member institutions with Writing Fellow Programs to share strategies, develop and test assessment models, and develop shared outcomes and best practice guidelines;
2. Drew's Director of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) has served as a consultant to other institutions as they developed Writing Intensive courses and Writing Across the Curriculum programs supported by Writing Fellows;
3. A paper co-authored by Drew's Director of WAC and five Writing Fellows describing what Drew faculty have learned from Writing Fellows was presented at the annual meeting of the International Writing Across the Curriculum Association in June 2014;
4. In May and December 2015, Drew joined 94 institutions from 6 countries in the International Day of Writing, facilitated by Drew Writing Fellows.

Project background

If this grant request relates to an ongoing project or program, how long has the project or program been operating?

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In May 2011, the Van Houten Memorial Fund granted \$15,000 to expand a Writing Fellows pilot program. Due to staffing changes, classroom placement of the 16 Van Houten Writing Fellows was delayed until spring 2013 following installation of the current Director, Dr. Sandra Jamieson. In 2013, the Fellows coached 353 students in Writing Intensive courses across seven disciplines, including 21 economically- and educationally-challenged New Jersey students in the Educational Opportunity Scholars Summer-enrichment program. The program continues to grow thanks to a generous increase in funding to \$20,000 in 2014-15, which allowed us to support 623 students in 32 WI classes. In 2015-16, 34 Van Houten Writing Fellows were embedded in 30 WI classes and 6 WI labs (eight in STEM disciplines, ten in the social sciences, four in business studies, and the remaining fourteen in the Arts, Languages, and Humanities), serving 647 students, approximately 40 percent of the undergraduate population.

Start date

If a grant is awarded, when does your organization anticipate being able to begin using the funds for the requested purpose?

05/04/2016

End date

If a grant is awarded, when would the requested funds likely be exhausted?

05/03/2017

Timeline

Provide any other relevant dates relating to the project or program for which grant funds would be used

Beginning in Summer 2016, a grant from the Van Houten Memorial Fund will be used to support Writing Fellows for 35 classes and labs during the summer, fall, and spring semesters of the 2016-17 academic year; support two international Days of Writing (December 2016 and May 2017); and add to the Drew contribution to support faculty development workshops for faculty working with Writing Fellows in this program and the expanded First-Year Writing Seminar program in mid-May 2016, ensuring a consistent language and approach across programs and courses, which both scaffolds and reinforces student learning and increases retention and writing excellence for all students.

Project finances

Project budget total (U.S. dollars)

(Format example: \$50,000)

\$83,634 (\$25,000 from the Van Houten Memorial Fund).

Project budget detail

Provide a concise budget for the project listing major expense categories

| ITEM | Van Houten | Drew | Total |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| A. Expanded Writing Fellows Staffing | | | |
| Writing Fellows – 35 Fellows @ \$500 per class +benefits at 9.03 percent | 17,655 | 0 | 17,655 |
| Faculty Sponsors for WAC Fellows – 35 faculty @ \$250 each + benefits @ 32.8 percent | 7,100 | 4,184 | 11,284 |
| Resources for International Day of Writing (Fall & Spring) | 245 | 283 | 528 |
| Faculty development workshop, stipend for faculty (both Van Houten and First-Year Writing Seminar faculty) - 60 faculty @ \$500 each | 0 | 30,000 | 30,000 |
| B. Expanded First-Year Writing Fellows and Ongoing Program Support | | | |
| Writing Fellows for First-year writing – 35 Fellows @ \$500 per class + benefits at 9.03 percent | 0 | 17,655 | 17,655 |
| Course release for Director of WAC @ \$4,000 + benefits @ 32.8 percent | 0 | 5,312 | 5,312 |
| Resources & books for training @ \$20 per Writing Fellow (35 Fellows) | 0 | 700 | 700 |
| Administration, copying, (\$250 per semester) | 0 | 500 | 500 |
| Total Project Budget: | | | 83,634 |
| Total Provided by Drew: | | 58,634 | |
| Total Requested from Van Houten Memorial Fund | 25,000 | | |

Other project funding

List other sources that may fund this project. Include other pending grant requests, providing entity name, amount requested, and current status of each. If these sources do not fully fund the project, what other sources of funding will your organization pursue?

Drew University institutional funds

Organization details -- [financial statements etc. not included in this extract]