

WRAD

Writing and Reading across Disciplines, Discourses, and Divides

Undergraduate Studies UN 215

Core Commitments Project

“What is written without effort is in general read without pleasure.”

Attributed to Samuel Johnson in "Anecdotes by William Seward, F.R.S." in *Johnsonian Miscellanies* (1897) vol. II, p.309, edited by George Birkbeck Hill

A new and developing initiative, the WRAD project will engage faculty and students in activities and discussion directed toward identifying literacy challenges—along with their sources—then developing ways of responding to them that will deepen and strengthen students’ skills and improve their performances with text—as both readers and writers.

Paralleling a number of programs, WRAD is working to develop integrative collaboration with them. This Request for Proposals is directed toward developing such a collaborative effort with the ongoing **Core Commitments Project**. The Core Commitments Personal and Social Responsibility Initiative connects CSU Northridge to a community of faculty, advisers, and students across the country under the aegis of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) who seek to “revitalize the academy’s role in fostering students’ development of personal and social responsibility.”

http://www.aacu.org/core_commitments/index.cfm

What connects the **WRAD** and the **Core Commitments Project** is that critical reading, guided discussion, and reasoned writing—both areas of active engagement for WRAD—provide a natural context in which students may develop principles of personal and social responsibility within the curriculum of a range of disciplines. This context is especially valuable for courses where these values may frequently appear difficult to integrate into the usual subject matter.

WRAD, therefore, in collaboration with the CSUN Core Commitments Team is offering **ten (10) fellowships of \$1,000 each** to faculty who seek to make connections in their courses with the goals of **Core Commitments** through student writing projects. The focus is to provide ways of measuring our students’ understanding of a selected set of principles that are part of this initiative’s strategic goals, even as we are encouraging them to use the exercise(s) of reading, writing, and talking about them as vehicles for both learning and expression.

What does the project entail?

1. Creating a reading and writing assignment which contributes to student development specifically in the areas of personal and social responsibility emphasized by Core Commitments. See <http://www.csun.edu/corecommitments> for details.

[Such an assignment may capitalize on the readings that are part of the multiple first year courses focusing on reading and writing that students take (including those that are part of the Freshman (AFYE) Common Reading Program). It may also be woven into Upper Division GE classes, or into particular “gateway” or “capstone” courses in specific majors];

2. Developing of a clear and explicit rubric for evaluating both student performance on the assignment and student development in the direction of the target forms of personal and social responsibility so that outcome data can be collected, shared, and analyzed;

3. Meeting together with other Fellows, with the Core Commitments Team, and the WRAD Director twice during the Fellowship semester:

- a. First to discuss the potential assignment
- b. Finally to discuss the outcome of the assignment and possible future steps

Consultation with WRAD and Core Commitments faculty will be available throughout the semester.

4. Administering the assignment and guiding students through its steps. To document this work, Core Commitment Fellows will keep a reflective journal to record their experiences. Such a journal will provide not only such documentation, but it should also provide insights that will contribute to our discussion of challenges and successes, and, ultimately, our collective compiling of best practices.

The proposal for a Core Commitments WRAD Faculty Fellowship will include:

- a. The specified course into which the assignment will fit and how it will fit;
- b. The motivation for using such an assignment in the class (including goals for the assignment);
- c. A sketch of the nature of the assignment, including the choice of one of the general topic areas which have been recent focus areas of the Core Commitments Program:
 - i. Our relationship as students to the economic community (including the topic of debt, debt management, and related issues);
 - ii. Academic honesty and integrity—what constitutes these and their role in any educational experience;
 - iii. Our individual and collective roles in responding to the issue(s) of climate change;
 - iv. Guided reflection on the electoral process and students' relationship(s) to it. [Students' reflection, class discussion, and prompts will, of course, come after the November election]

Note: Awardees will receive a timeline that will ask for a draft of the assignment prior to the first meeting of the Fellowship semester for distribution of assignment drafts to all Fellows before the first meeting, to allow for comments from other Fellows and the Core Commitments Project team at the first meeting.