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RWU's Writing Program Earns National Award for Excellence

National Council of Teachers of English recognizes Department of Writing Studies, Rhetoric and Composition with 2016 Certificate of Excellence among universities and colleges across the nation



Last year's annual Celebration of Writing, an event that showcases students' work in the Department of Writing Studies, Rhetoric and Composition.

April 7, 2016 | Nadine M. Hapst '16

BRISTOL, R.I. – The Roger Williams University Department of Writing Studies, Rhetoric and Composition has earned the 2016 Conference on College Composition and Communication Writing Program Certificate of Excellence Award from the National Council of Teachers of English.

One of only two universities in the nation to capture this year's award, RWU's writing studies program received this national distinction for programming that imaginatively addresses the needs and opportunities of students and instructors, and offers exemplary ongoing professional development for faculty members. The other recipient is Oakland University's major in writing and rhetoric program.

It is the first national award for the department of writing studies, rhetoric and composition, which features comprehensive programming that integrates nationwide best practices for student learning, according to Professor and Writing Program Coordinator Jennifer Campbell. Many of these best

practices positively impact student learning through teacher-guided and self-guided inquiry and critical analysis, Campbell says, including the process of developing “conceptual outcomes.”

“This practice reminds students to ask questions – it doesn’t tell students exactly how to do one particular thing,” Campbell says. “We created ‘conceptual outcomes’ that allow students to ask a set of questions that can be applied to anything. For example, one of our outcomes is ‘Discourse Community Awareness’ in which we teach students to ask questions about what discourse communities they are joining and what kind of writing needs to be done in order to successfully join that community and become an expert within in it.”

Another conceptual outcome is “metacognition,” which Campbell says cultivates a deeper examination of the student’s thought process: “We ask students to think about their thinking, so that they can make that thinking serve them in any situation.”

The RWU Department of Writing, Rhetoric and Composition will receive the national award at the 2016 College Composition and Communication Convention in Houston, Texas, on April 8.