23 March 2011

Lindsey Ives:

Welcome! I'm Lindsey Ives and this is Brittany Kelley. We are the co-chairs of this symposium. Thank you for taking time out of your schedules during this busy time in the semester to join us for this important conversation.

For this, the first of what we hope will be many Working With Writers symposia, we are very excited to be joined by Tiffany Rousculp, Professor at Salt Lake Community College and founder of the SLCC Community Writing Center. We hope you can make it this afternoon for her keynote speech, entitled “I have No Idea; Let’s Figure It Out”: Rhetoric, Collaboration and a New View of Expertise" followed after lunch by a keynote workshop entitled, "Finding Assets, Taking Steps: Building Successful Partnerships across Discourses,” and to the other exciting presentations and workshops that will take place over the next three days.

I introduced myself as co-chair of this symposium because I am listed as such on the program, but the title of chair really belongs solely to Brittany. It is because of her hard work over the last year that Working With Writers became a reality.

This event began as a suggestion during a conversation that Brittany and I had over coffee at the beginning of last semester. She had just moved into the position of Multilingual Writing Mentor for the Core Writing Program, an amorphous position that had only been created the previous year. As the first Multilingual Writing Mentor, I was charged with bringing the needs and abilities of multilingual students in composition classes to the foreground of professional conversations among Core Writing instructors. The purpose of our meeting that day was to brainstorm ways in which Brittany could continue that conversation.

We agreed that if one of our goals as Core Writing instructors is to help students strategize ways to communicate effectively in their various academic and professional discourse communities, we needed to build stronger ties with instructors across the disciplines. Such relationships would help us to better understand what aspects of student writing are most important in classes outside of the English department. They would help us to communicate with our students about the expectations that their future instructors will likely have for their written work. They would help UNM graduate students and instructors across the disciplines learn from each other and share ideas about how to better serve our students, multilingual as well as monolingual.
In order to begin building these relationships, we discussed hosting a small, low-key conversation for graduate students and Teaching Assistants focusing on writing, with an emphasis on working with multilingual students. Given Dr. Michelle Kells's knack for putting on exciting and inspiring conferences, she was the first person we went to for advice on how to proceed. To our good fortune she decided to help us with our project, and it grew from a low-key discussion to a two-day event, all the better for building the relationships we sought.

In our initial discussion about expanding the conference, we discussed the work that would be involved and deliberated whether or not to take it on. Although I really wanted it to happen, I had other things on my plate. "I don't want to be in charge of this," I said, "I have to study for my comprehensive exams." So Brittany thought it over for a few days and decided to take on the challenge. After helping to recruit a committed team to organize the conference, I went into hibernation under a pile of books, and she hit the ground running.

The result of Brittany's efforts is what you see today, as well as a second annual Working With Writers conference already in the works for next year. Our keynote speaker for Working With Writers 2012 will be internationally renowned second-language writing scholar Paul Matsuda. So stay tuned for details on that, or if you're interested in helping to organize that conference please see me.

**Brittany Kelley:**

Thank you, Lindsey, and good morning, everyone. It’s so wonderful to see you all here; I have to say, I have been so excited for today to come. I know that both today, tomorrow, and Friday, we will be doing a lot of great work, and we will be forging relationships that will last for years to come. So thank you for being a part of this symposium!

As Lindsey shared with you, this whole thing started with a conversation in a coffee shop. At the time, I had no idea what a “symposium” would entail, I just knew that some conversations needed to be happening. During one of the initial meetings with my steering committee, I realized that I should probably have *some* kind of format for these conversations. After much discussion, it was decided that we wanted to create an environment of co-learners; we wanted an environment where interaction and *real* discussion were not only encouraged, but formed the foundation of the symposium’s goals. This symposium has always been about forging relationships, starting conversations, and mutual learning and respect; therefore, we have designed a format that consists of workshops and round-table discussions.

All of that being said, here’s today’s game plan:

Each workshop facilitator will have up to 30 minutes to present their findings, goals, and approaches; then 15 minutes will be dedicated to discussion, questions, and comments. Each round-table facilitator will have from 10 to 15 minutes to present the context for their session, which will then be followed by an interactive question/answer session.
Each facilitator should provide a brief self-introduction: including your affiliation, field of interest, community work, and areas of activism or research.

We have some time keepers today, to help keep us on schedule, but there is a good deal of flexibility between sessions.

If you have any questions about the events for today or tomorrow, please ask me.

Before I close, I’d like to take a moment to thank all of those people without whom this would never have been possible. So, a big thank you goes out from both Lindsey and myself to our Program Chair, Dr. Michelle Kells, to our Writing Across Communities Events Coordinator, Erin Penner, and, of course, the Working With Writers team: Cathy Arellano of CNM, Evan Ashworth of CAPS, Beth Leahy, Bunni Oguntolu, and Mellisa Huffman of the Department of English, and Valerie Sartor of LLSS and CELAC. We’d also like to extend additional thanks to Nora Nixon with CNM for attending planning meetings and helping Cathy Arellano with CNM logistics; and to Hallee Kells for her patience and enthusiasm in helping us to put together a flyer design and helping us to make connections with the Office of the Dean of Students; We’d also like to thank Bunmi Oguntolu and her intercession 219 class for helping us with beautiful promotional material design. And, of course, we thank all of our presenters. Thank you for helping to make this such a great symposium! I hope you will enjoy it!