



Saturday, March 17, 2001

## News Item from the Oakland University Web Site

Some of Metro Detroit's best writing teachers will meet at OU this summer to hone their skills and enhance their teaching practices by participating in the Meadow Brook Writing Project.

OU is one of 170 sites selected to be part of the National Writing Project, a professional development program for teachers looking to improve student writing. Partners in the Meadow Brook Writing Project include Detroit Public Schools, OU's Public School Academies, Oakland Community College, the Pontiac School District and the Macomb Intermediate School District.

Twenty writing teachers, grades K-16, will be invited to participate in the project, which runs from July 5-31. OU received a \$20,000 grant from the NWP to help cover the cost of tuition.

The teachers involved will have an opportunity to support each other and develop ideas and practices about writing to take back to the classroom, said Ron Sudol, project co-chair and professor of rhetoric at OU.

"The purpose is to bring really good writing teachers together and give them an opportunity to take a look at what they're doing. During the summer, a teacher needs to get re-energized - to work out their ideas, critique and connect with theory."

In addition to developing teaching skills and reflecting on their own writing practices, each of the teachers will develop a demonstration project to share with their colleagues, participate in reading enquiry groups and stimulate conversation about writing across grade levels and curriculums.

"The teachers we bring in will all be highly motivated professionals," Sudol said. "The project won't advocate any 'quick fix' remedies to writing problems. What we've found is that the most effective method of professional development is to have one teacher work with another. What we want to do is have teachers themselves interact, develop programs, then put them into practice."

Participating teachers are eligible for 12 continuing education units or four graduation credits and certification as a Teacher Consultant to those in their school or district.

"The function of the project is to make a connection with the community," Sudol said. "The teachers will take their writing and teaching practices developed in the project and integrate them into their schools. By doing so, they will establish a connection with their students. They'll also serve as writing experts to their fellow instructors. All of this will help establish OU as a center for intellectual scholarly writing."

Sudol said the experience also is reinvigorating for the teachers themselves. "Anyone who's been involved in the writing project says the same thing -- that it has changed their lives," he said. "It's almost like a revival experience for them when they learn of similar teaching experiences from their colleagues. It's very positive and encouraging."

### SUMMARY

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