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## Meadow Brook Writing Project continues to grow

By **Dawn Pauli**, contributing writer

This year's crop of teachers in the **Meadow Brook Writing Project** (MBWP) summer institute are sharpening their pencils and getting ready for a month-long session to learn how to improve student writing.

This is OU's fourth invitational summer institute, part of the National Writing Project, a network of 176 sites nationwide dedicated to improving writing, literacy and teaching in schools K through 16.

"It's a great opportunity for teachers to support each other and share their innovative ideas and practices," said Ron Sudol, director of the Meadow Brook Writing Project and associate provost of the Office of Academic Affairs. "They can use these ideas in the classroom."

Twenty-two teachers, who teach all grades from elementary through college from school districts throughout Detroit and the metropolitan area, will attend this year's institute, which runs June 28 through July 23.

"This is nearly double the number of teachers we had from last year," Sudol said. "We accepted 80 percent of the applicants. By applying and writing the application essay, the teachers indicate they are willing to give up nearly half of their summer vacation to participate with us. The very act of making a serious application demonstrates the kind of professional dedication we are looking for in fellows of the Meadow Brook Writing Project."

Most participants are language arts teachers, but there is one computer and technology teacher.

"The writing project strongly advocates writing in all disciplines and welcomes teachers from across the curriculum," Sudol said.

The **Meadow Brook Writing Project** is a partnership between OU and local schools including Detroit Public Schools, Macomb County schools, Oakland Community College and the Public School Academies of Oakland University. The MBWP is a site of the National Writing Project and is affiliated with its Urban Sites Network.

"We want to enable teachers to establish themselves in their own schools and school districts as experts and authorities on writing and writing pedagogy," Sudol said. "We want them to be able to assume positions of leadership and to influence in a positive way the teaching and assessment of writing. Their expertise should be recognized as being on a par with that of reading specialists. Every school has a reading specialist. Very few have a writing specialist."

Participants are admitted as graduate students at Oakland University and will be eligible for four graduate credits from OU in addition to being certified as teacher consultants.

The institute is supported by a grant from the National Writing Project, which provides 50 percent matching funds to cover graduate student tuition. The \$537 balance is usually paid by the participant's home institution as an investment in professional development. In addition, each participant will receive a stipend of \$500 from the Meadow Brook Writing Project in recognition of their professional development efforts.

"The Meadow Brook Writing Project's philosophy doesn't have any set formulas or quick-fixes," Sudol said. "We believe teachers are the key to improving education, and the best teachers of teachers are other teachers."

The institute leaders are Mary Cox and Kathleen Reddy-Butkovich. Cox, co-director of the Meadow Brook Writing Project, teaches at Martin Luther King High School in Detroit, where her students routinely score well above the state average on the MEAP. She is a fellow of the former Detroit Writing Project and has occupied leadership roles in the state and national councils of teachers of English.

Reddy-Butkovich, associate director of the MBWP, teaches at Tonda Elementary School in Canton Township and is a fellow of the Meadow Brook Writing Project 2001 Summer Invitational Institute.

Additional leadership will be provided by Catherine Haar, a writing project co-director and instructor at Oakland University. She has participated in the writing project since its inception.

MBWP's technology liaison is Marshall Kitchens, assistant professor of rhetoric, who helps participants stay abreast of developments in computer technology that affect writing and the teaching of writing.

Sudol has worked extensively with teachers and school districts on student writing and is a developer of the MEAP in writing. He also works with the Educational Testing Service and the College Board as a consultant on language arts matters. Sudol currently chairs the English Committee of The College Board, which is overseeing the addition of a writing section on the new SAT exam.

OU also supports other writing programs, including a two-week institute for middle school teachers in Detroit in August and a course for new teachers in Detroit, through a grant from the National Writing Project Corporation. OU also has another grant enabling a group of teachers in Macomb County to study the teaching of reading.

For more information, visit the **Meadow Brook Writing Project** Web site, or contact Sudol at (248) 370-2191 or [sudol@oakland.edu](mailto:sudol@oakland.edu), Cox at (313) 824-4778, or Reddy-Butkovich at (248) 540-7963.

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