

WRITING RESOURCES FOR TEACHING: A BLACKBOARD SITE

Writing in the Disciplines Faculty Learning Community | 2016-2017

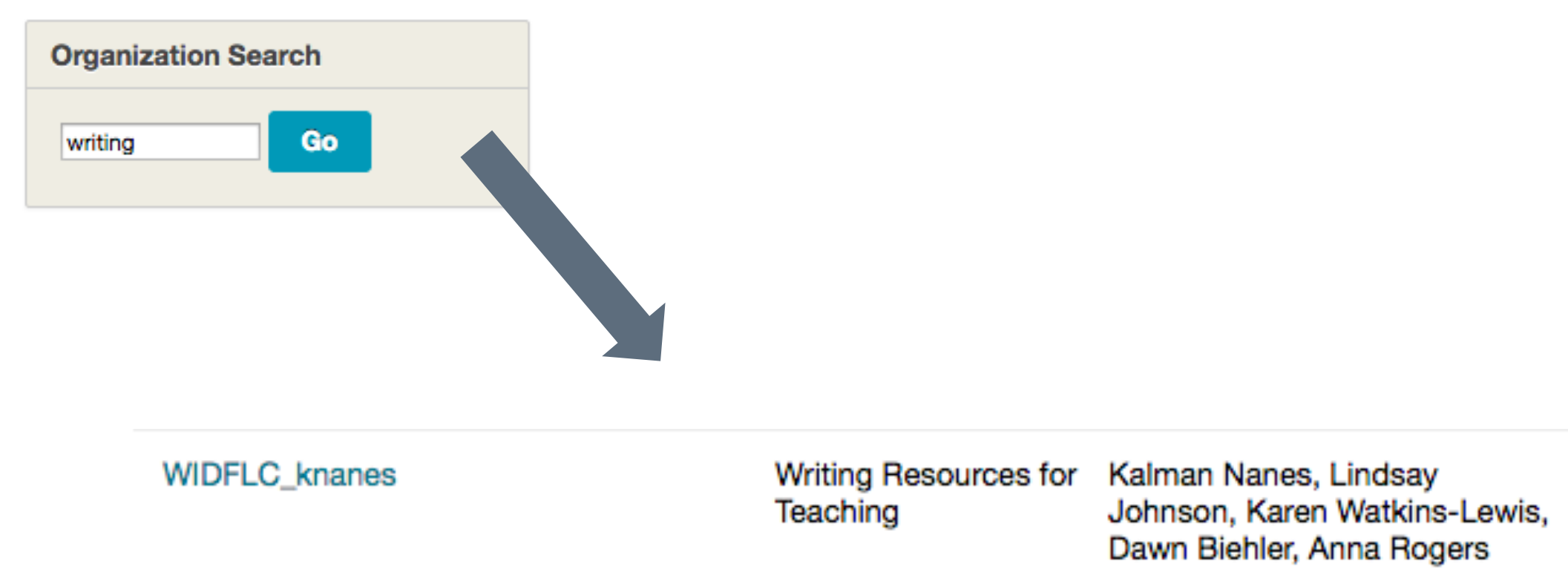
Dr. Dawn Biehler, Department of Geography and Environmental Systems | Dr. Lindsay Johnson, Department of Music | Dr. Kal Nanes, Department of Mathematics and Statistics | Dr. Paige Rogers, Department of English | Dr. Karen Watkins-Lewis, Department of Psychology

OVERVIEW

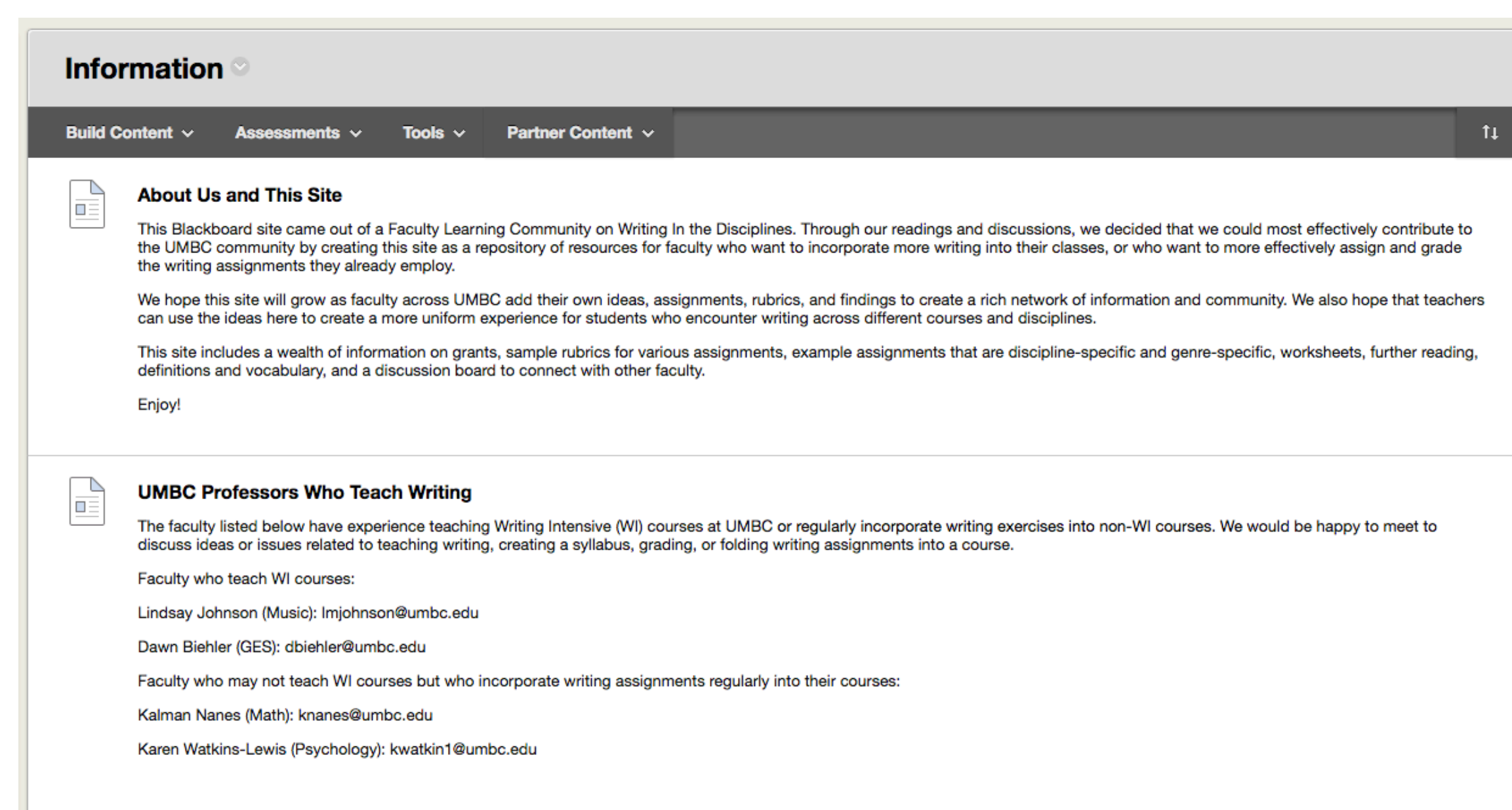
This presentation is an outcome of the Writing in the Disciplines Faculty Learning Community (FLC) which was brought together by UMBC's Faculty Development Center in the 2016-2017 academic year. An FLC is a dedicated group of faculty who meet periodically throughout the year to deeply explore an aspect of teaching or scholarship, with the aim of both building a community amongst the participants, and having an impact on those participants' practices.

The Writing in the Disciplines FLC spent the year exploring issues related to how we teach Writing in the Disciplines, across many disparate fields of study. Despite representing departments across the humanities and sciences, the participants were able to find a lot of common ground and help each other in framing the challenges that we face in teaching our majors how to write. As a group project, we decided to create a website that could act as a clearinghouse of information for other faculty who teach courses that wrestle with these issues.

This website, **Writing Resources for Teaching** (formerly WID FLC), is hosted on Blackboard. To find it, navigate to Blackboard and click the "All Courses" tab. Go to Organization Search and search for "writing." You should be able to find the site with the Organization ID "WIDFLC_knanes" and the title "Writing Resources for Teaching."

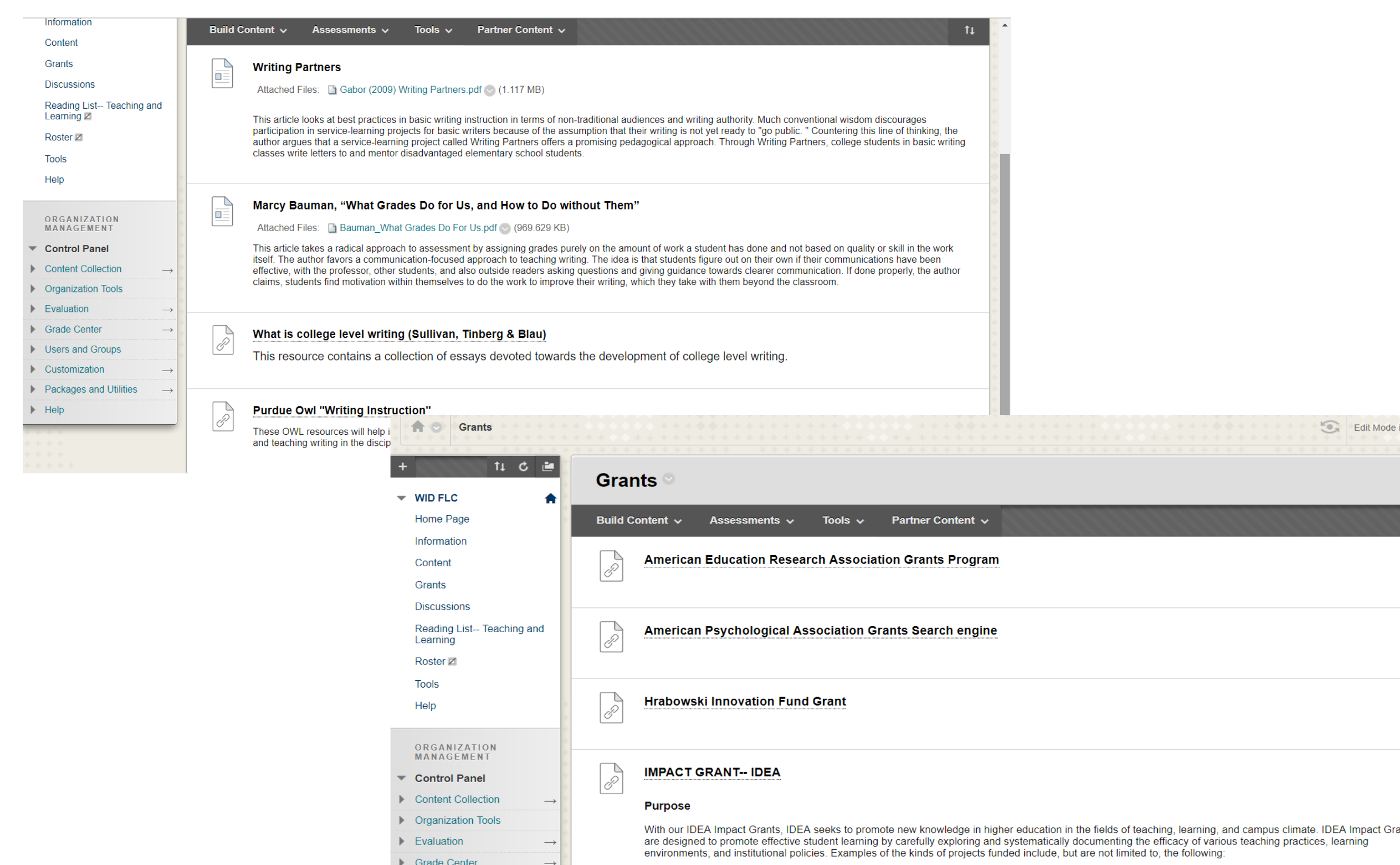


Explore what our site has to offer!



LITERATURE RESOURCES

The "Reading Library" tab contains resources on college level writing development and assessment. This section includes articles on writing instruction, unconventional grading techniques, and assignments that can be applied across a variety of disciplines.



The "Grants" section contains information on funding resources available to all faculty, without the requirement of lab space. The current list includes both general and discipline specific grants.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Along with providing content resources for writing in the disciplines and peer-reviewed literature to help us learn from the research about writing instruction, we also hope to use the Blackboard site to build community among UMBC professors who use writing in their courses. Several features of the site address this aim.

- We encourage members of the site to use the Forums feature in the "Discussion" tab to ask questions and address problems about writing in the disciplines.
- We have begun a Wiki (in the "Content" tab) where members can hone our writing instruction terminology, so that we can be consistent in the way we communicate to students about writing. For example, we want to sent consistent messages to students about what is "revision" versus "editing."
- In the "Information" tab we have begun a list of instructors who incorporate writing in their courses and who are willing to serve as resource people for others considering doing so. Feel free to add your own name to this list. A full list of members is also available under "Users and Groups."

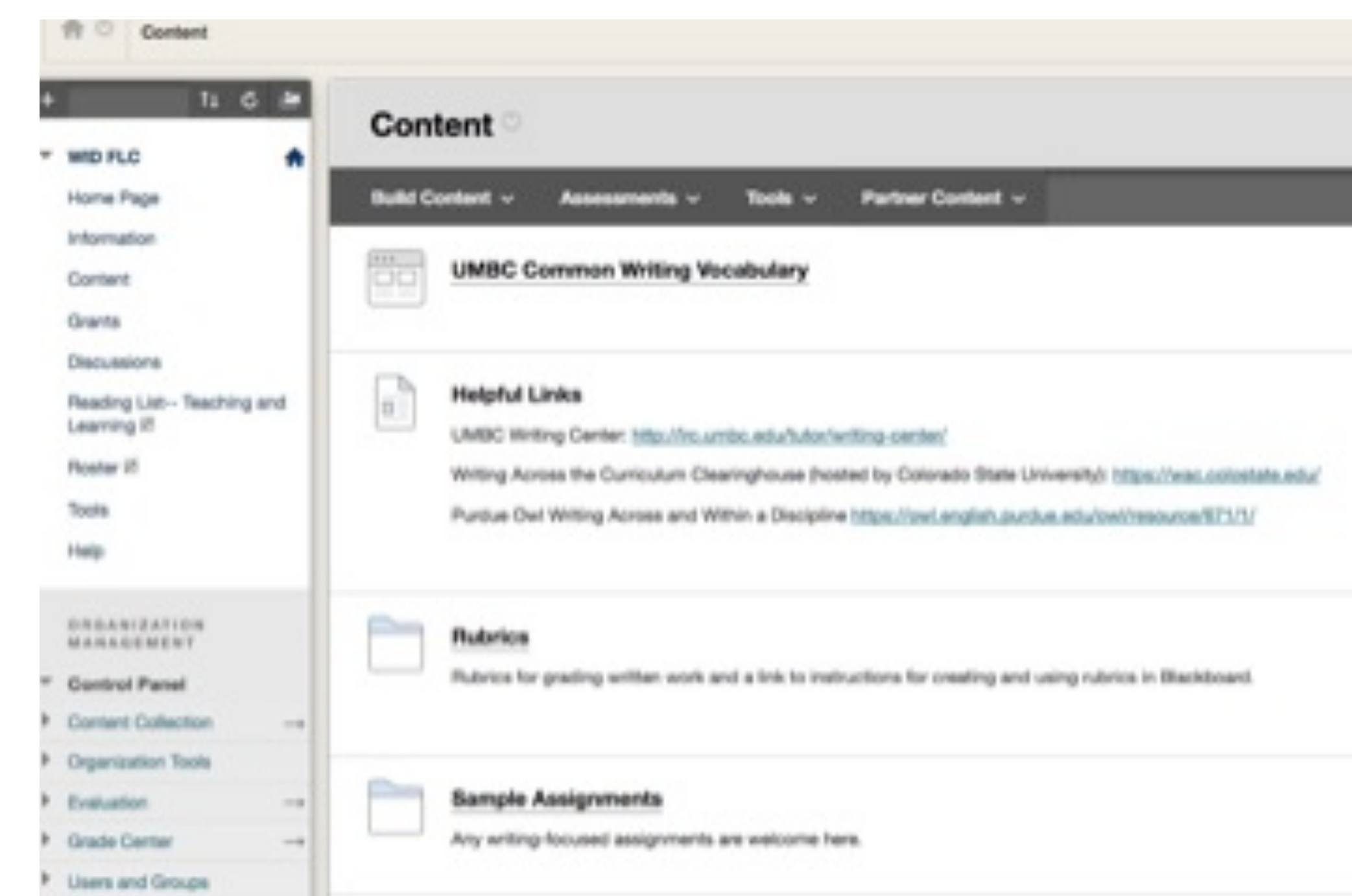
If you are an instructor who uses writing in your courses or would like to include more writing, we welcome you to join our community!

CLASSROOM CONTENT

The "Content" tab presents a variety of materials that can be helpful to instructors seeking to incorporate more writing into their courses or to improve the way they teach writing, whether or not they teach writing-intensive courses.

Community members can share and find:

- Sample assignments for several different genres of writing and several different disciplines.
- A variety of sample rubrics, including an introduction to different types of rubrics, and instructions for entering rubrics into Blackboard, which facilitates grading and tracking students' progress over time and even across a department.
- In-class writing activities, which research shows to be a helpful way of engaging with and better learning course content.
- Syllabi for writing-intensive courses.



In the "Sample Assignments" folder, we have also created a folder where we can post examples of writing assignments that ask students write for a broader audience. Some research indicates that writing assignments designed to be read by an audience besides the instructor has benefits such as heightening students' motivation, along with creating positive university-community partnerships. Such assignments can range from pen-pal letters to K-12 students, to instruction manuals for business clients, to consultancy reports for public agencies or activist groups, to letters to newspaper editors, to blog posts. See the "Reading Library" tab for articles that make the case for these types of assignments.

We share general best-practices tips for incorporating writing into courses.