This report focuses on the work of the FYS Committee from May 15, 2013 through April 28, 2014. The Committee met several times in May 2013 to complete the selection process for the 2013 FYS Student Conference and to participate in the selection of a new FYS Coordinator. During this 2013-14 academic year, the FYS Committee devoted much of its time to the design and execution of a full program review. A complete report of this program review is attached to this end-of-the-year report. Beyond the tasks associated with designing and completing the program review, the FYS Committee also completed the following work:

1. Approved 19 FYS course proposals

The FYS Committee received twenty-one course proposals, five were revised and resubmitted before being approved, two were withdrawn after consultation with the faculty and twelve were accepted without revision. Thirteen proposals came from faculty who are new to the FYS program. They will be participating in the May 2014 FYS Institute. The proposals that were accepted are as follows:

“Mindfulness, Intimacy and the Law,” submitted by Shari Motro*, Law School
“Lived Religion: Acting out Faith,” submitted by Liz Sheehan, SPCS
“Defining the American Dream through the Music and Lyrics of Bruce Springsteen” submitted by Mike Leopold*, Chemistry
“Crime and Punishment in Russian Fiction and Film,” submitted by David Brandenberger*, History
“Collecting the Past: Museums and the Writing of History,” submitted by Tze Loo*, History
“Baseball in Film and Literature,” submitted by Robert Kenzer, History
“The Pious and the Profane,” submitted by David Routt*, History
“What are Universities For?” submitted by Nicole Sackley*, History
“The City of Seville,” submitted by Aurora Hermidez-Ruiz*, LAIS
“Blaming it on Rio: Brazil, Samba, and Carnaval,” submitted by Dixon Abreu*, LAIS
“Opera in the World,” submitted by Linda Fairtile, Music/Boatwright Library
“Crime, Justice, and the Law,” submitted by Richard Dagger*, Political Science
“Politics of Communism” submitted by Aleksandra Sznadja-Lee*, Political Science
“Buckwheat and Caviar: The Sustainable Planet in Russian Science and Literature,” Yvonne Howell, Modern Literatures and Cultures
“Science, Pseudo-Science and Anti-Science,” submitted by Jack Singal*, Physics
“The Psychology of Drugs,” submitted by Laura Knouse*, Psychology
“Skeptics and Eccentrics,” submitted by Jane Geaney, Religious Studies
“Rewriting the Bible,” submitted by Stephanie Cobb, Religious Studies

*indicates new FYS faculty member

This year, the FYS Committee looked carefully to see that all proposals addressed the writing requirements for FYS, more specifically that they included details about the type of writing assignments and the number of assigned pages of writing. In some cases where
proposals did not address these requirements, they were returned to faculty with requests to elaborate and provide more detail on stated questions about the writing assignments. In other cases, faculty were reminded of the twenty-page requirement and were encouraged to think about assigning a series of short essays with drafts and required revisions.

2. Reviewed two sets of applications for FYS Fellows

The FYS Committee reviewed the applications for the 2013-14 FYS Fellows for 2013-14 and a subcommittee reviewed another set of applications for the 2014-15 FYS Fellows who will be participating in the pilot program.

The 2013-14 FYS Fellows, Kristin Bezio, Olivier Delers, Martin Sulzer-Reichel and Carol Summers, met regularly with the FYS Coordinator as a learning community throughout the year. Each fellow led a seminar in the spring semester where they presented their work in progress and discussed innovations and modifications in their teaching.

A sub-committee (Mavis Brown, Mary Tate and Andy Litteral) met with the FYS Coordinator to review the thirteen submissions for the 2014-15 FYS Fellows. Ten faculty were selected to participate in a pilot program next year as part of the second phase of the program review. The 2014-15 FYS faculty fellows are:

- Tim Barney (Rhetoric and Communication)
- Kristin Bezio (Jepson School of Leadership Studies)
- Linda Bolam (Biology)
- Cindy Bukach (Psychology)
- Abigail Cheever (English)
- Linda Fairtile (Boatwright Music Library)
- Sylvia Gale (Center for Civic Engagement)
- Gary Radice (Biology)
- Tom Shields (School of Professional and Continuing Studies)
- Jonathan Wight (Robins School of Business)

3. Reviewed 19 submissions for the 2013 FYS Student Conference

In mid-May 2013, the FYS Committee continued their work to read and select some of the best student work in an FYS course over the 2012-13 year. The Committee reviewed nineteen student papers submitted for the John Rilling Prize and for participation in the FYS Student Conference. The Committee was asked to 1) read and rank order the writing competition submissions based upon a common set of criteria, and 2) review the conference submissions (this is an up-or-down vote). The FYS Coordinator, then Libby Gruner, advised the Committee to review each paper based upon a set of criteria. While there were many good papers that were selected for the FYS Student Conference, the Committee felt that none of the papers merited the John Rilling Prize. The Committee agreed that more submissions should be encouraged by faculty, and that students should be allowed to work with their FYS instructor to revise their papers before submitting them for consideration for the Rilling Prize. This change was made in the following year’s call for submissions.

On September 27, 2014 the second annual FYS Student conference took place in the International Center Commons. Four sessions were held, led by eight student participants in five different FYS sections. One panel included a theatrical presentation of an FYS project that dramatized a fictionalized trial based upon actual events researched by a student in the FYS course, “The Criminal Brain” taught by Cindy Bukach.

On May 14, 2014, the FYS Committee will meet to review submissions for the 2014 Student Conference. The deadline for submissions is Friday, May 9th.

4. Participated in selection of new FYS Coordinator in May 2013
The search for a new FYS Coordinator began once Libby Gruner (FYS Coordinator from Fall 2010 through Spring 2013) announced she was leaving to take a position in the A&S Dean’s Office in April 2013. The Provost met with the FYS Committee and reviewed the job description and the selection process for the FYS Coordinator. The Provost announced the open position to the entire UR faculty. The Committee received applications, met with the two applicants and sent its recommendations to the Provost. The Provost selected Sydney Watts in the History Department for the three-year term which began July 1, 2013.

5. Set policy on classroom visits from student groups
The FYS Committee received petitions from two students groups, the Honor Council and a student environmental awareness group, to visit every FYS section to give 10 to 20-minute presentations. The Committee respectfully declined their petitions to use precious class time for special training sessions and informational sessions for these student groups. We recommended that student groups request such class visits to individual faculty, but the FYS Committee and the Coordinator would not require FYS faculty to give class time to special student groups. The Committee set a policy against student groups using FYS as a channel through which basic information and training is done. Information about the Honor Council is made available to FYS students at Orientation and through various other means (website, flyers, faculty discussions of plagiarism, syllabi). Other student groups may work with FYS faculty on an individual basis to make presentations or provide special sessions for FYS students.

6. Reviewed the FYS Workshop offerings
The FYS Committee reviewed the fall and spring FYS workshop offerings (listed below). These workshops, designed by the FYS Coordinator, led by current FYS faculty, liaison librarians and UR staff, focus on current topics that are salient to new and experienced teachers in the program. Many thanks go out to the FYS Faculty and staff who prepared excellent presentations. While the CTLT participates in offering “FYS Approved” workshops, the FYS Committee will, in the future, formalize the approval of additional workshops from the CTLT.

FALL 2013 Workshops
“Working with ESL students: Cultural Differences and the writing process”
Krittika Onsanit, Joe Essid and Nuray Grove.
“Leading Fruitful Discussions”
Tom Mullen, Carol Summers, and Linda Hobgood
“Orienting Freshman to the College Seminar”
Tom Bonfiglio, John Pagan, Marcia Whitehead, and Roger Mancastroppa
“Rethinking the Research Assignment for FYS”
Sylvia Gale, Dan Palazollo, Carol Wittig and Lynda Kachurek
“Responding to Student Writing”
Workshop for FYS Instructors on writing expectations and grading norms

SPRING 2014 Workshops
“Working with Assessment Rubrics in Course Design”
Dorothy Holland, Linda Hobgood, and Ashley Patterson (IFX)
“Forging Ties Outside the Seminar Room using CBL and Experiential Learning”
Kristin Bezio, Terry Dolson, and Lucia Anderson
“Writing Fellows for First Year Seminars: Best Practices”
Joe Essid and Senior FYS Writing Consultants
“Undergraduate Research in the First Year: Thinking, Not Just Finding”
6. Designed, executed, and presented initial results of a full program review

The FYS Committee met every two to three weeks throughout the fall and spring semesters to discuss the plans for the review, design some of the instruments used in the review, and deliberate on the plans for the program in light of the results of the review.

In August 2013, the FYS Committee began its work by expanding the original program review to include outside evaluators’ on-site visit in November, 2013, a student survey, and a faculty survey. In the fall and early spring semesters, five FYS sub-committees focused on different aspects of the review: 1) faculty training in summer institute and workshops, 2) student evaluations of FYS courses, 3) faculty credentials and recruitment across the University, 4) to draft a student questionnaire, 5) to design a FYS faculty survey.

Two Outside Evaluators came to campus November 20-22, 2013, during which time the FYS Committee members met with these evaluators for individual and group meetings. Their report, submitted on January 15, 2014, became the focus of the Committee’s discussion and informed much of the Committee’s final report.

Members of the FYS Committee and the FYS Coordinator delivered oral reports on the status of the program review to the FYS Faculty on December 11, 2013 and April 10, 2014. A formal presentation was given to the Academic and Enrollment Management Committee of the Board of Trustees on April 24, 2014. A complete written report of the program review was submitted to the UR Board of Trustees and is included as an appendix to this report.

Concluding Remarks
The FYS Committee did exceptional work this year. Members brought careful thought and fair assessment to the review of proposals and the deliberation of FYS policies on faculty training, writing and reading expectations, as well as the role of the Committee to review and make changes to the program. As new to the position of FYS Coordinator, I am especially appreciate of the good will of FYS Committee members and the spirit of shared purpose that was evident throughout the year. I would also note the time and dedication of all members of the committee as they worked tirelessly to improve the quality of the first year seminars. Their respectful deliberation brought us to agreement on a range of challenging issues, some which continue to face the program as it moves from the first phase of implementation into the next phase of refinement, more particularly, toward establishing clearer and more coherent set of shared learning goals for first year students and a shared consensus about the common writing expectations for faculty.

Respectfully submitted by Sydney Watts, FYS Coordinator

2013-14 FYS Committee Members

- Don Forsythe – Fall (Jepson)
- Al Goethals (Jepson)
- Gary McDowell – Spring (Jepson)
- Mary Tate (Law)
- Eric Nielson (SPCS)
- Paul Clikeman (Business)
- Andy Litteral (Business)
- Mavis Brown (Education)
- Ted Bunn (Physics)
- Joanna Drell (History)
- Ray Hilliard (English)
- Eric Yellin (History)
- Sydney Watts (History), Chair
- Terry Price (Jepson)