

## **Graduate Dissertation Writing Group**

After many years of hoping to host a graduate cluster or group, ICS was pleased to welcome the new Graduate Dissertation Writing Group to its ranks. This interdisciplinary writing group seeks to bring together graduate students from various disciplines with the intention of providing assistance and feedback to those students as they write their dissertation proposals and begin to draft chapters. The cluster was facilitated by Radhika Gajjala of Communication Studies.

The group's members included: Precious Yamaguchi (Communication Studies), Brett Billman (Communication Studies), Melissa Altman (ACS), Aisha McGriff (ACS), Kelly MacDonald (ACS), Anca Birzescu (Communication Studies), Samara Anarbaeva (Communication Studies), Franklin Yartey (Communication Studies), and Radhika Gajjala (Communication Studies [faculty facilitator]).

Each member had the opportunity to share a version of their dissertation topic, proposal, or potential chapter(s) with the group, and the discussions that followed led to many productive changes in those pieces. This process of peer review, supplemented with the guidance of Radhika Gajjala, a faculty member with considerable experience serving on dissertation committees, gave the group members a chance to polish their ideas and proposals or chapters in advance of their formal defense. Additionally, members in the early stages of the proposal process were able to learn from the experience of those further along, enhancing the formulation of their ideas and generating the promise of excellent proposals to come.

The great success experienced by the group this year suggests a bright future for this new group, and the gifted lineup of new and continuing graduate students invited to participate in the 2009-10 academic year will follow in the footsteps of the inaugural group.