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Writing in Fashion: An Exploratory Case Study Examining Fashion Faculty Use of Writing and the Transmission of Industry Specific Genres

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WRITING IN FASHION: AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY

EXAMINING FASHION FACULTY USE OF WRITING AND

THE TRANSMISSION OF INDUSTRY SPECIFIC GENRES

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Elizabeth Sara Whitehead

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

August 2015

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

School of Graduate Studies and Research

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We hereby approve the dissertation of

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Title: Writing in Fashion: An Exploratory Case Study Examining Fashion Faculty Use of Writing and the Transmission of Industry Specific Genres

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This dissertation explored the ways faculty report that they use writing in their fashion education courses at a publically funded post-secondary institution. This project also examined faculty beliefs about how writing will equip fashion students for their careers in the professional world. In order to accomplish these research goals, the researcher used a qualitative, single case study methodological approach. Multiple forms of data were collected and analyzed including focus group interviews, in-depth follow-up interviews, and course documents.

Relevant literature for the project was drawn from the areas of genre theory, Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), Writing in the Disciplines (WID), professional writing, and fashion writing. These areas were supported by genre theory, which provided the theoretical framework for the project. This study described what a particular group of fashion merchandising professors do when they teach writing, and it examined the genres they use in teaching as well as how they say they are using these genres. Study results indicate that writing is an important component in preparing students for their entry into the workforce. Writing is used by faculty as a learning tool, as a way to develop critical thinking skills, and through varied assignment types intended to develop student skills and subject matter knowledge. Study results also indicate the transmission of industry specific genres takes place through faculty who gained professional industry experience then

became professors in a fashion merchandising program. These faculty members transfer

genre specific conventions to their students, preparing them for the workforce.