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Upcoming Dates

WPA Holiday Party at MLA, Chicago.
December 27, 8:30-10:00 p.m.

WPA Breakfast at CCCC.
Thursday, April 13, 2000. 7:00 a.m.

WPA Summer Workshop, U North
Carolina-Charlotte, July 9-13, 2000.
WPA Summer Conference,
Charlotte. July 13-16, 2000..

"Composition in the 21st Century:
Rereading the Past, Rewriting the
Future," October 5-7, 2001. Miami
University, Ohio.

Report on the 1999 WPA Summer Workshop and Conference

Issue group discussions, interspersed among plenary sessions and panel presentations, culminated in a number of initiatives for WPA at the 1999 Summer Workshop and Conference. Approximately 140 WPA's gathered near the banks of the Wabash July 15-18 for the conference, with twenty nine attending the workshop July 11-15. Both figures exceeded the average, with the workshop attendance second only to last year's meeting in Tucson. Irwin Weiser and Shirley Rose headed local arrangements and joined Christine Farris and Doug Hesse, chair, as the program committee. Purdue hosted the events.

Workshop

The Workshop, co-led by Marty Townsend and Doug Hesse, examined perennial WPA concerns about faculty development, assessment, and tenure/promotion, but discussions of nontenure-line faculty issues, writing across the institution, and tight resources had considerable urgency. In addition to rigorous intellectual exchanges at Harry's Chocolate Shop and establishments surrounding the Lafayette square, the group enjoyed an evening picnic at Janice Lauer's house in the woods.

Conference

A plenary talk by Caryn McTighe Musil, Vice President of AAC&U's Education and Diversity

Initiative, opened the Conference, followed the next morning with a presentation by Chuck Schuster, whose customary humor and uncooperative power point program reassured the group that he hadn't gone entirely to the dark side of deaning. Wendy Bishop encouraged WPA's regularly to do the kinds of writing that replenish themselves. The plenary talks were followed by small group discussions and responses.

The conference featured five concurrent sessions, with a total of 32 panels and some 80 presenters. A version of the program is archived at <http://www.casilstu.edu/english/hesse/wpaconprogram99.html>.

An opening reception, a banquet, and an evening of music at the old train depot highlighted the social side, although WPA Golf Commissioner Keith Rhodes noted that the demanding program forced this year's tour to be cancelled.

Issues and Concerns

As is traditional with WPA, the conference also featured extensive discussions of issues in program administration, both informal and formal. Attendees elected to join one
cont. on page 2

Is Your Membership Current?

Membership renewal statements were mailed in September. Check the mailing label on this newsletter. The date listed there is when your membership ends.

If that date is August 1999 (or earlier), your membership in WPA has expired! Please contact John Heyda (see last page) right away.

Report on the 1999 WPA Summer Workshop and Conference –cont. from page 1

of eight discussion groups led by Jeanne Gunner, David Schwalm, Beth Daniell, Dennis Lynch, Irv Peckham, Chris Farris, Marguerite Helmers, and Kathleen Yancey/Bill Condon.

At a town hall breakfast meeting on Sunday of the conference, groups shared reports and the membership discussed several ideas quite energetically. The upshot of this meeting were several possible initiatives for WPA to pursue. (See separate story.) Following is a brief representation of points made about several issues. The comments summarized below had support from at least several participants, but their inclusion here by no means indicates consensus.

Articulation/Dual Enrollment. High schools, private schools, and colleges are in an interdependent system, and WPA's need to acknowledge the fact that we can't control all 120 credit hours. WPA's need to be involved with local schools in discussions about the character and quality of writing courses, but with distance education and a growing "free market" of education, these are not entirely local decisions. We should concentrate on writing ability rather than writing classes and use theoretically sound assessments to keep "bad vendors" out of the market.

Accountability and Climate. States in which teachers and university writing faculty worked together with legislators to develop standards (Missouri is an example) have better programs than those in which legislative mandates resulted in less-informed standards and processes (Texas is an example). WPA's need to involve themselves at early levels of these processes rather than respond to actions taken by others.

Required Courses/General Education. We often do not do a good job explaining to publics how college composition differs from high school writing. However the scope of the course tends to make this complicated. Process, a sense of textuality, and critical thinking earmark college writing courses—or should. "First year experience" initiatives in many institutions may cloud the nature of required freshman writing courses, especially when these initiatives are developed "top down." Perhaps required courses should not be in the first year.

Diversity Concerns. Designing curricula that meet the needs of diverse students remains a challenge, with adult learners perhaps the most under-addressed group. Many textbooks contain readings that don't appeal to adults, and initiatives like learning communities are usually designed with traditional aged students in mind. Event rather than issue focuses may be more effective.



Distance Learning. Distance learning is inevitable and not something we can much reject out of hand. We need to remember that it has a history and context, with economic motivations but also educational. Different kinds of distance learning (entirely on line vs. partly; video-driven rather than computer) raise different kinds of issues. A key point is that some courses work better in the medium than others, and rather than pursuing (or resisting) distance learning for all courses, we should analyze the nature of individual courses and their students to decide which to deliver online. WPA needs to explore several policies for distance learning, including on such issues as course goals, assessment, types of course to exclude, faculty credit and rewards,

size of "courses," intellectual property rights, and compensation.

Contingent faculty. Several participants noted the decreased availability of adjunct faculty members even as there is increased demand to staff courses with them. Many faculty who do make themselves available for hiring do not have appropriate qualifications for teaching writing, leaving WPA's to face political and ethical dilemmas of perhaps saying "no" to staffing some sections. Another ethical dilemma involves conducting national searches versus being responsive to local adjuncts. A move away from universal writing requirements may alleviate this situation. So might considering other staffing models, including those used in various clinical fields.

Agendas for WPA. WPA needs better to follow up after conferences and perhaps develop a more activist agenda. We might consider certifying WPAs, developing a set of awards (article, book, practices), developing press releases, issuing position statements on assessment or dual credit enrollment programs. WPA should look for more ways of supporting regional WPA meetings and two year members. We might develop "best practices" awards and should be involved more fully with development of writing majors. Finally, WPA should coordinate the development of a briefing book on issues that confront WPA's.

--Doug Hesse

The WPA *President's Newsletter* is published generally in late winter, summer, and fall and is written and edited by Doug Hesse, who welcomes professional notes related to WPA. His contact information is included on the back page. The Newsletter is sent to all members of The Council of Writing Program Administrators.

Announcement and Call for Proposals
2000 Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA)
Workshop and Conference

Charlotte, North Carolina

For updated information as it becomes available, see: <http://www.cas.ilstu.edu/english/hesse/wpawelcome.htm>

The WPA Summer Workshop, July 9-13

An intensive four-day workshop for new and re-newing WPA's, co-lead by Martha Townsend and David Schwalm. The workshop will be held on the UNC-Charlotte campus, beginning with a reception the evening of July 9, and going through noon July 13. The complete registration fee will be a veritable bargain of around \$550, which will include all registration materials and fees, most meals, and campus housing. Institutions regularly fund WPAs' attendance at this well-regarded workshop, and many new WPA's negotiate support as a condition of hiring. More detailed information will be available on the website in the early spring, or contact Marty Townsend.

The WPA Summer Conference, July 13-16

The Conference will begin with a plenary session and reception Thursday, July 13, and go through noon Sunday, July 16. It will be held at the Omni Hotel in vibrant downtown Charlotte, where WPA has reserved a block of rooms, and at the UNC-Charlotte downtown conference center. Registration costs, yet to be finalized, will be comparable to or cheaper than recent years, with discounts for nontenure-line registrants and will include breakfasts, receptions, breaks, and a banquet. Meg Morgan is local arrangements chair, Doug Hesse program chair.

In the spirit of recent WPA conferences, this one, too, will be participant-centered and highly interactive, with frequent break-outs, working group sessions, extensive discussions, and social opportunities.

Call for Proposals

Theme: **In the Thick of Things**

A common observation is that WPA's work in the middle: between teachers and "higher" administrators, between managerial and scholarly interests, between disciplinary and institutional concerns, between programmatic dreams and budgetary realities, between student needs and public desires. But there are broader dimensions to WPAs' being in the thick of things. The circumstances that birthed WPA in the late 1970s have changed significantly. It is no longer taken for granted, for example, that first year composition must be required, that process approaches are the dominant orthodoxy, or that writing programs must be housed in English departments. We must also confront the implications of distance education, for-profit education, increased consumerism, legislative intervention in teaching methods, growing interest in learner-centered education, and general education reform. How might we work effectively—for our students, our colleagues, our profession, our culture, ourselves—within this often messy middle?

I invite proposals addressing this theme as well as those addressing any issue of concern or interest to WPA's.

- What can we know about and learn from past programmatic efforts to organize the teaching of writing?
- How might writing and writing programs be situated within departments, institutions, the academic landscape, the larger culture? How might we understand the circumstances in which we find ourselves?
- What models, practices, or theoretical perspectives should WPA's pursue at this juncture?

I also strongly encourage

- reports on assessments of writing programs or features within them, including local studies
- discussions of effective practices in program design, faculty development, working conditions, and so on.
- analyses of issues like distance learning, articulation, technologies and writing, education reform, etc.

The topic areas above are merely suggested. Feel free to discuss ideas with me.

As the proposal cover sheet on the reverse of this page indicates, I invite proposals for a range of formats, including standard papers, workshops, roundtables/issue groups, and "effective practices" presentations. Proposals are due February 15, 2000, and invitations will be issued March 15.

Doug Hesse • 4240 Department of English • Illinois State University • Normal, IL 61790-4240
ddhesse@ilstu.edu • phone 309/438-3667 • fax: 309/438-5414

2000 WPA Conference Proposal Cover Sheet

July 13-16, Charlotte, NC

A. Proposer's Name: _____

Institutional Affiliation: _____

Preferred Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

B. Title of Proposal: _____

C. Type of Proposal (check one)

Entire 75-minute session. (panel, workshop, discussion roundtable, etc)

Individual presentation. (Program chair will combine with other proposals.)

D. Type of Session (check one)

Twenty-minute paper(s)/presentation(s). Explores issues, ideas, theories, practices; or presents research, historical perspectives, critiques; positions; or etc.

Workshop. (will teach strategies/skills/practices to other WPA's; audience participation/interaction)

Roundtable/issue group discussion. (brief introduction/framing of an issue, followed by proposer-facilitated discussion)

Effective practices. (presentation of effective models, strategies, or practices, with the aim of providing "how to" advice to interested participants)

Note: Depending on the number and nature of proposals, the program committee may adjust times to make the most effective program. We will not do this without consulting proposers. --DH

E. Names of co-presenters. (If a group/panel proposal; otherwise ignore.) **Important:** On a separate page include for each presenter all of the information requested in Part A, above.

F. Abstract(s). Include with this cover sheet four copies of an abstract of not more than 200 words per presenter. Abstract(s) should identify presenter(s) only as "Speaker 1, Speaker 2," etc. Include individual paper titles, if applicable, on abstracts.

Return this cover sheet and FOUR copies of abstract(s) by February 15, 2000, to

Doug Hesse • Program Chair, WPA • 4240 Department of English •
Illinois State University • Normal, IL 61790-4240

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Call for Year 2000 Research Grant Proposals

The Research Grant Committee of the Council of Writing Program Administrators invites proposals to research issues and practices in writing program administration. Maximum awards of \$2000 may be given; average awards are \$1000. All current WPA members are eligible to apply. Please organize your proposal as follows:

1. A cover page that gives the names of all investigators (please don't identify yourself or your institution in the rest of the proposal);
2. A maximum of two pages in which you
 - explain the project and how it will address issues of common concern to WPAs;
 - give a timetable detailing how the project will proceed;
 - describe how the results will be shared professionally (note that grantees are expected to submit articles resulting from the research to *WPA: Writing Program Administration* for first consideration and to present the results of their research at the annual WPA breakfast during the CCCC convention).
3. A realistic, detailed budget on a separate page. You may find the following criteria useful in preparing your proposal; WPA Board members will use these to conduct blind reviews of all proposals.
 - a. Relevance: How relevant is the project to the work of writing program administration? How might other WPAs benefit from the outcomes of this research? How applicable is the project to other contexts?
 - b. Prior Scholarship: What is unique about the project, or how does it expand on existing research?
 - c. Methods: How clearly explained and appropriate is the methodology for the study? Could similar results be obtained with a less complex or expensive investigation?
 - d. Feasibility: How likely is it that the project can be completed successfully in the time proposed?
 - e. Cost Effectiveness: How effectively are the expected outcomes of the project balanced with the proposed use of funds? How important are the objectives relative to the expense?
 - f. Dissemination: How compelling is the plan to share the results?

Ordinarily, funding is not given for release time for the grantee or others; for purely local initiatives or projects with little relevance to other settings; for outside consultants or evaluators; for the production of non-researched materials; for dissertation research; or for supplements to existing grants, unless it is clear that the WPA grant provides an opportunity to extend the project in new directions.

Please send four copies of the proposal to the address below no later than Feb. 1, 2000. Winners will be announced at the 2000 WPA breakfast.

Chris M. Anson
Professor of English
Director, Campus Writing and Speaking Program
Box 8101 (OR) 131G Tompkins
North Carolina State University
Raleigh, NC 27695-8105
(919) 513-2577

WPA Events at MLA

WPA will sponsor two sessions and a party at the upcoming MLA meeting in Chicago.

104. Who Should Teach Writing Courses I?

Monday, 27 December, 7:00-8:15 p.m., Field, Hyatt Regency

1. "Jumping Writing Program Claims? The Subtle Cooptation of a Pedagogy."
Douglas Dean Hesse
2. "Writing *as* and Writing *in* a Discipline: Necessary Innovation in Small College WAC,"
Carol A. Rutz, Carleton Coll.
3. "Seeking Qualified Writing Instructors: A Writing-across-the-Curriculum Approach,"
Thomas M. Hemmeter, Beaver Coll.

WPA Holiday Party

Monday, 27 December, 8:30 to 10:00 p.m.

(following WPA session)

Billy Goat Tavern
Michigan Avenue

768. Who Should Teach Writing Courses II?

Thursday, 30 December, 8:30-9:45 a.m. Atlanta, Hyatt Regency

1. "Fighting the Backlash against Composition through Graduate Education,"
Sally Barr Ebest, Univ. of Missouri, St. Louis
2. "All Full-Time Composition Teachers All the Time: Now!"
Keith Stewart Rhodes, Missouri Western State Coll.
3. "A New Attitude toward First-Year Composition: Keeping the Baby, Throwing Out the Bathwater,"
Ruth Overman Fischer, George Mason Univ.



Knotted Threads from WPA-L

Carol Rutz, Carleton College

The back-to-school period inspired WPA-L threads touching on demographics, politics, institutional history, social history, research queries, and intergenerational pedagogy. An arbitrary characterization:

Demographics. “Where are they all coming from?” cried WPAs across the land. Like it or not, providing FYC still drives many of our programs, dragging the complex issue of working conditions along with it.

Politics. Jena Burges’ innocent inquiry about the 1998 CCCC acceptance rate set off an energetic discussion of the proposal submission process, a process that, given its flaws, seems all the more remarkable for its successes

Institutional history. What does “back to basics” mean? David Jolliffe ventured a formula, modified by Irv Peckham and others, and Keith Rhodes proposed a list of “basics” that we could own in place of mythological ones.

Social history of WPAs. Donald Wolff answered Irv Peckham’s challenge to report on his social origins and how they influence his teaching. Irv wants your story, too:

irvin_peckham@unomaha.edu

Research query. Becky Howard’s continuing work on plagiarism turned attention to funky handbook titles from the ’60s and ’70s. Davids Schwalm and Jolliffe earned tie-dyed copies of Becky’s next book.

Pedagogy. Sara Glennon asked us to examine the mysterious practice of teaching cursive writing to elementary students, inadvertently opening the gates to memory lane. Make room in The Bad Penmanship Hall of Shame!

Subscribe to WPA-L at
listserv@asu.edu.

Report on Executive Board Meeting at Purdue

The WPA Executive Board met several hours 16 July in conjunction with the summer conference. The first portion of the meeting was open. The board discussed, then tabled, possible amendments of the constitution, learned that the 1999 breakfast in Atlanta generated a small surplus, which will be applied to next year, and agreed that the 2000 WPA CCCC breakfast will be high atop the Marquette Hotel in Minneapolis. Carol Rutz and Holly Littlefield are working with Chet Pryor on the local arrangements.

WPA: Writing Program Administration editors Marguerite Helmers and Dennis Lynch reported that 40-some articles had been submitted already this year. The Board approved an increase of \$1000, to \$5000, for annual support of the journal.

Shirley Rose and Bud Weiser indicated that the Purdue meeting would break even financially; the

Board discussed options for the 2000 meeting and were reminded

that the 2001 meeting would be at Miami University in the fall, although the workshop would be held earlier that summer, in Phoenix. Hesse asked Chet Pryor, Tom Clemens, and Beatrice Smith to propose ways of increasing two-year college presentation in WPA.

The Board approved a new agreement with Miami University to serve as institutional home of WPA for the next three years, and welcomed John Heyda as new treasurer, Jennie Dautermann as new secretary.

Chris Farris recommended and the Board agreed that of the future WPA sessions at MLA, one would be invited, and the other filled through an open call. The board discussed some revisions in the research grants call for proposals.

David Schwalm is chairing a committee that will propose a calendar year budget for WPA by December 1999. It has been five years since a membership dues increase, and the Board will actively consider one next year. The Board approved expenditures

of up to \$400 to pay Hesse’s travel to New York for meeting on part-time staffing (MLA paid all other expenses); of up to \$600 for the annual cocktail party at MLA; and of up to \$200 to produce the fall newsletter.

Deb Holdstein reported that the Consultant Evaluator Service has been very busy and requested additional financial support, which the Board will consider as part of its budget.

The Board thanked Bob Johnson for his service as secretary/treasurer and wished him well in his new position at Michigan Tech.

WPA in 1978

President:	Harvey Wiener
Vice President:	Winifred Horner
Treasurer:	Joseph Comprone
Secretary:	Lawrence Kasden
Editor:	Ken Bruffee

Board Members: David Bartholomae, Harry Crosby, Don McQuade, Elaine Maimon, Richard Raspa, James Raymond

President's Message: A New/Old Initiative for WPA

Twenty one years ago in his "President's Message" (*WPA: A Newsletter for Writing Program Administrators* 1.3, spring 1978), Harvey Wiener told members that

Our plans for this year are big. We're working to establish a Clearinghouse which would respond quickly to your request either for data on other writing programs or for accurate, timely descriptions of course content and sequences on other campuses. Although the NEH-Iowa University project is an important first step in assisting new administrators, we'd like to supplement that approach with seminars and workshops of two or three days' duration for those institutions that cannot spare their program directors for a full term. We're eager, too, to establish a system of advisory teams which could visit campuses by invitation and could evaluate existing structures. Finally, we aim to produce in-depth studies on issues in writing program administration. (4)

In the decades since then, WPA has achieved nearly all these goals. The WPA summer workshop has been enthusiastically attended, the Consultant-Evaluator Service is thriving, and *WPA: Writing Program Administration* publishes the best of research on program administration.

Additionally, a number of books dedicated to program administration have appeared, beginning perhaps with Carl Klaus and Nancy Jones's *Courses for Change in Writing* (from the NEH-Iowa Institute) and Ed White's *Developing Successful College Writing Programs*, and accelerating through several recent edited collections, including Joe Janangelo and Kristine Hansen's *Resituating Writing*, Diana George's *Kitchen Cooks, Plate Twirlers, and Troubadours*, Linda Myers-Breslin's *Administrative Problem-Solving for Writing Programs and Writing Centers*, and Shirley Rose and Irwin Weiser's just-published *The Writing Program Administrator as Researcher*. Under contract is Irene Ward and Bill Carpenter's *The Allyn and Bacon Sourcebook for Writing Program Administrators*, and in development is Theresa Enos and Stuart Brown's comprehensive handbook for writing program administration.



Yet it seems that WPA has been somewhat less successful in achieving its founders' "clearinghouse" goal. That's understandable, given the shifting complexities of writing programs nationwide and the

stubborn refusal of data to stand still. I don't mean at all to slight the wonderful function that WPA-L and its superb archive has played in answering queries ranging from class size to compensation. Still, it is difficult to get comprehensive and authoritative information conveniently, and listowner David Schwalm, in a recent email to the WPA Executive board, casually mused that he was "concerned about the listserv becoming excessively reiterative."

Announcing the WPA Briefings Project

So I listened closely when participants in the Sunday town hall meeting at the WPA Summer Conference proposed developing a WPA "briefing book" on current situations and issues affecting writing programs. The proposal came in the context of discussions of dual-credit enrollment situations, guidelines for distance learning courses, and state-mandated assessment.

I am pleased to announce that WPA will pursue the "briefings" idea. I am in the process now of forming an editorial group that will generate topics, solicit proposals for individual chapters, appoint writers, and see the pieces through publication. I expect that individual briefing articles will first see publication in the WPA journal, then be collected in another form, possibly bound, possibly electronic, provided as a benefit to members, with any additional revenues going to the organization.



Possible further topics include current assessment models, two- and four-year college articulation, high school/college articulation, a compilation of WPA job descriptions, and the kinds of things that generate FAQ's on WPA-L: a comprehensive set of information on course sizes, teacher loads and compensation, what constitutes "writing intensive" courses, and so on.

Bill Condon proposed that untenured faculty members especially be invited to contribute to this project, perhaps working with a senior mentor WPA. Such a process would, among other things, help build credentials toward tenure. This model makes some sense to me, at least as an ideal for several of the chapter.

If you have specific ideas for topics or would like to nominate yourself to write part of the briefing book, please contact me. More importantly, please participate in discussions of the project on WPA-L or other venues. The process is in an early formative stage, though I expect that once basic parameters are set, the time toward publication will go quickly, since timely information will be most helpful to members. I will post updated information on the WPA website, and I welcome any queries. --Doug Hesse

Contacting WPA

Questions or suggestions about the mission, activities, or initiatives of the organization or about this newsletter:

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Membership Dues: John Heyda, WPA Treasurer, Dept. of English, Miami University—Middletown. 4200 E. University Blvd. Middletown, OH 45042. heydajf@stream.mcs.muohio.edu

Questions about membership status, mailing, subscriptions to *WPA: Writing Program Administration*

Jennie Dautermann, Dept. of English, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45046. dauterjp@muohio.edu. 513/529-1393

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Council of Writing Program Administrators Home Page: <http://www.cas.ilstu.edu/english/hesse/wpawelcome.htm>

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Address Correction Requested