

Council of Writing Program Administrators
2019 Conference Call

**More Seats at the Table: Radical Inclusion in Writing Programs
Baltimore, Maryland @ The Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel**

Workshop: July 21-24, 2019

Institutes: July 25, 2019

Conference: July 25-28, 2019

Writing happens all around us—frequently in traditional college settings, but equally frequently in places (and with people) we might not ordinarily think about. If we turned our collective gaze to those non-traditional sites, students, faculty, and methods, what might we see? What writing programs currently exist that are understudied or marginalized in some way—for example, community-college programs, prison writing programs, community and adult-education writing programs, immigrant-focused and second-language programs, basic-writing programs? Within our college settings, how are writing programs serving populations that might otherwise be marginalized or overlooked? How can we pull up a chair for those students, sites, teachers, and ideas that have been underrepresented at our CWPA table?

What's So Radical about Inclusion?

For those of a counter-cultural bent, “radical inclusion” might conjure an association with the alternative festival Burning Man, which lists the concept as the first of its ten founding principles: “We welcome and respect the stranger. No prerequisites exist for participation in our community” (“The Ten Principles”). However, the concept has been widely taken up in academic and social-justice circles as well, applied to gender and sexuality, leadership, disabilities advocacy, faith communities, and more. In addition to supporting social ideals of acceptance and equality, radical inclusion may foster creative problem solving. As Duane Hoover writes, “once a participant comes to accept that there are no prerequisites to full participation except for membership and a willingness to serve [...] a remarkable ability to generate innovative ideas emerges, as well as a remarkable openness to the new ideas of others” (542). Taken in this sense, radical inclusion shares some characteristics with design thinking—most notably with design thinking’s emphasis on human-centered, empathetic ideation. To most of us, inclusion seems to just make sense, but in the context of much of today’s public dialogue of exclusion, consciously choosing to be inclusive can be a radical act.

When we look closer to home—in the colleges and universities at which many of us work—we also see a system that parses its participants into those who are at the table and those who are on the margins. Which students are college-ready? Whose languages are valued? Which faculty members have tenure and voting rights? Who serves on which committees, and why? Whose ideas tend to be heard? Asking these questions can help us see who is on the inside and who is out, and can spur us to ask how we might reshape our institutions to be more inclusive. Similarly, asking

ourselves difficult questions about CWPA—who is involved, whom and what do we support, what ideas do we feature, and more—can help us further our efforts to make our professional organization more inclusive.

As you consider proposing a session or poster, here are some questions that might guide you¹:

- The word “radical” comes from the Latin “radix,” meaning “root,” so to accomplish radical inclusion in the writing classroom means that the roots of the space must change. What are the roots of our spaces? What would changing them look like in the way we read, give feedback to students’ writing, or grade?
- What are the implications of blurring the lines between “pre-college” and “college” students in programs such as ALP and/or concurrent enrollment of high-school students in college classes?
- How might we expand the definition of “college writing” to include forms of writing beyond traditional papers?
- In what ways do our writing programs’ formal policies and tacit understandings invite or alienate certain populations?
- What do the data tell us about marginalized groups, and how can data be used to support inclusion?
- What do demographic and population shifts mean for programs/curricula/teachers/administrators? How can writing programs become proactive rather than reactive to population shifts?
- How do we support vulnerable students and faculty while taking care of our own emotional needs?
- How do we recognize when more voices are needed in the conversation? How do we invite those voices to the table without inadvertently marginalizing them, or placing the burden for change on them?
- How might the principle of radical inclusion change our approach to community building for writing programs across and beyond our campus? What institutional forces counteract drives to be more inclusive? What do the hidden barriers we’ve encountered tell us about systemic exclusion at the institutional level, and what can be done?
- How might governance structures within writing programs be structured to maximize inclusivity and to give voice to as many stakeholders as possible?
- How might we include the voices of contingent faculty more deeply in our programs and institutions?
- What forms of knowledge—and knowledge-making—are valued in our field, and what other forms might need to be included?

¹ In the spirit of the conference call, these questions were generated by a diverse group of faculty, WPAs, and graduate students: Jeff Andelora, Jacob Babb, Sheila Carter-Tod, Christine Cucciarre, Annie Del Principe, Casie Fedukovich, Bre Garrett, Holly Hassel, Asao Inoue, Jeffrey Klausman, Mandy Macklin, Michael Rifenburg, Clare Russell, Sarah Snyder, and Courtney Adams Wooten.

- How can we make the term “writing program administration” more welcoming to the variety of programs that impact writing, including writing centers, writing-across-the-curriculum programs, teaching and learning centers, and community writing groups?
- How can we more broadly think about what constitutes who we consider a WPA and what we consider the work of a WPA? Are high school AP teachers who make staffing and curricular decisions, about courses that count as college WPAs? Do they deserve a place at the table? A voice in the discussion?
- What about WPAs at focused schools, small private schools, religious institutions, on-line or for-profit institutions, universities designed to serve specific ethnic populations? How do we welcome them to the table? How do we create a space for their voices to be heard?
- How can we provide—and avail ourselves of—the type of professional development we need for more socially just professional organizations, programs, and classrooms?

I hope you find these questions generative. However, I also want to encourage you to propose sessions based on other issues you find pressing or important about WPA work.

Join Us!

CWPA welcomes those who participate in "writing program administration" writ large. This includes work at multiple sites within 2- and 4 year institutions: writing centers, first-year writing programs, professional and technical writing programs, community writing programs and collaborations with secondary schools, ESL writing programs, WAC and WID programs, institutional assessment programs, multi-modal programs, and any other place where writing instruction happens. CWPA also welcomes those who participate in writing-centered programs outside of college settings—community-based programs, those working with incarcerated individuals, programs working with special populations such as veterans or immigrants, and more.

There are three parts to the annual conference:

- The **pre-conference workshop** for writing program administrators (July 21-24). This intensive workshop is designed for both new and continuing WPAs, providing the opportunity to learn from experienced WPAs about both the theoretical/intellectual underpinnings of our work and the practical, day-to-day knowledge needed to succeed as a WPA. The 2019 Workshop Leaders will be **Jonikka Charlton, Mark McBeth, Michelle LaFrance, and Amy Ferdinandt Stolley**.
- The **pre-conference institutes** (July 25). This year’s conference will feature two institutes: a “writers’ bootcamp” designed to help writers ready work for publication, led by **Lori Ostergaard** and **Melissa Ianetta**; and one focusing on how to support ethical labor practices, led by **Seth Kahn** and **Darci**

Thoune. More information will be forthcoming on the conference website:
<https://www.cwpa2019.com/>

- The **conference itself** (July 25-28): We invite proposals for posters, panels, individual presentations, and interactive workshops as part of the conference schedule. For the past few years we have put a priority on encouraging interactivity, and I'd like to encourage you to continue thinking about how to involve attendees in problem-solving and discussion. The conference commences with an early evening reception and plenary on Thursday, July 25, and concludes with our annual town hall breakfast which ends at about 11 a.m. on Sunday, July 28.

The 2019 CWPA conference location is at the Marriott Waterfront Hotel in beautiful downtown Baltimore, right on the waterfront with easy access to dining, parks, and local attractions: (<http://baltimorewaterfront.com/where-to-go/>). Our CWPA Saturday-night outing will be at the groundbreaking American Visionary Art Museum, which, in keeping with the conference theme, features work by artists outside the mainstream.

Proposing a Session or Poster

A. Conference Proposals

We are happy to accept both individual and full-session proposals as follows:

1. *15-minute individual presentations.* Presenters may submit individual paper or presentation proposals; these will be combined into panels/sessions with around three presenters. We'll once again try to put you in touch with one another in advance of the conference so that you can develop a coherent panel.
2. *Full-session proposals.* You may submit a proposal for a session with groups of 3 or more presenters/facilitators. We encourage you to consider innovative, interactive delivery methods.
3. *Poster presentations.* You are welcome to develop a poster presentation by yourself or with others. You could either work with a group to develop a full session with 4 – 6 posters, or propose an individual poster presentation, and we will form sessions on related topics. ***We will provide a regular conference slot for these sessions to allow for conversation, and we will ask you to be present during this slot to discuss your poster with attendees.***

Here are some ideas:

- Develop a session that briefly describes an innovative approach that you have tried, plan to try, or might try. Invite discussion, critique, and creative,

collaborative problem-solving so that participants leave with new approaches for work on their campus.

- Develop **interactive debates** on key issues facing the profession that can then be widened to include audience participation. Perhaps begin with *short position statements* and then open to audience questions and comments that invite innovative solutions. Or name a common problem we face, and then invite the audience to innovate with you.
- Present a **scenario** that surfaces a challenge that you are currently facing, provides background information and your initial impulses for addressing the challenge, and then calls for innovative approaches to solving it. ***Feel free to create full session proposals from a set of similar issues faced on different campuses.***
- Choose a key topic, and develop a series of short, **rapid-fire presentations** (20 slides, 20 seconds per slide, [PechaKucha-style](#)) with 4 - 6 presenters, leaving plenty of time for audience discussion.
- Briefly describe **research-in-process** with the goal of audience suggestions, feedback, or to find research partners. This will give scholars the chance to share ideas, provide suggestions, *and/or even propose collaborative research teams for cross-institutional research, inviting potential partners to attend.*
- Develop an **interactive seminar on an innovative WPA technique or skill** that you have learned. These seminars are meant *share effective WPA practices that go beyond the things we learn as scholars of our discipline.* You might help participants learn more topics such as: collecting data that can help to advocate for resources; innovative graphics to display assessment findings; using pertinent tools and technologies for budget development; new technologies for empirical research; methods for focus groups or interviews; developing IRB applications and ethical practices for human subjects research; creating interactive curriculum development or assessment sessions; garnering publicity for your programs' work; doing advocacy work in the community; developing outreach centers or initiatives.

Listing Your Session in a Strand

We will feature several strands of sessions, and you can indicate your desire to be featured in one of the strands in your proposal.

A. Gender and Sexuality Strand: This strand will be devoted to sessions focusing on how gender and sexuality impact WPA work—both in our professional community and in the classroom.

B. Mentoring Strand: This strand will be devoted to professional development and mentoring issues. If you are submitting a proposal in any format to talk about mentoring (broadly defined), please indicate so in the proposal; it will be directed to the chair of the CWPA Mentoring Project for review. Also feel encouraged to email jjanang@luc.edu to let him know that you have submitted a proposal intended for the mentoring strand. For more details, please visit the CWPA Mentoring Project on the CWPA website.

C. People of Color Caucus Strand: CWPA's People of Color Caucus will offer a strand of sessions devoted to issues of racial and ethnic diversity in writing program administration related to scholars, teachers, students, and administrators of color. If you are submitting a proposal in any format that relates to issues appropriate for this strand, please indicate so in the proposal; it will be directed to the chair of the CWPA POC Caucus for review. Also feel encouraged to email genevieve.garcademeller@utrgv.edu to let her know that you have submitted a proposal intended for the POC Caucus strand.

D. Self-Care Strand: This strand will delve into issues of self-care, emotional labor, and wellness—for our students and ourselves.

E. Two-Year College Strand: This strand will be devoted to topics related to, involving, and discussing the contexts of two-year colleges. If you are submitting a proposal in any format that relates to issues appropriate for this strand, please indicate so in the proposal.

F. Tenure-Free Strand: This strand will address the impact and influence of untenured and non-tenure track WPAs and faculty in writing programs.

Submitting Your Proposal

We will begin accepting proposals on January 1, 2019. The instructions for submitting a proposal and the submission link are available at: <http://www.wpacouncil.org/cwpa-2019-proposal-instructions>

Also visit the in-process conference website: <https://www.cwpa2019.com/>

Deadlines and Costs

- Final deadline for **Conference** Proposals: **March 1, 2019**. We will work hard to give you a quick turn-around on a rolling basis, so please feel free to submit earlier!
- Registration costs can be found here: <https://www.cwpa2019.com/registration>

Questions?

Please direct Baltimore-related questions to Phaye Poliakoff-Chen at Phaye.Poliakoff-Chen@goucher.edu. Please direct proposal-related questions to Mark Blaauw-Hara at markblaauwhara@gmail.com.

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Works Cited

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- "The Ten Principles of Burning Man." *Burning Man*, burningman.org/culture/philosophical-center/10-principles/. Accessed 13 August 2018.