

CWPA Statement on Racial Injustice and Systemic Racism

The CWPA Executive Board and Officers
June 16, 2020

With regard to the dehumanizing, traumatizing, and even lethal injustices recently represented by the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Rayshard Brooks, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd, we, the elected and appointed officers and members of the CWPA Executive Board, express solidarity with those who are striving for meaningful societal change and a just world. We acknowledge the insufficiency of any organizational statement unto itself, and that such a statement is only the first step toward meaningful action. However, we feel it is important to explicitly affirm our commitment to an equitable society, antiracist writing programs, and our own organizational self-evaluation and growth. We offer the following statements:

1. We condemn racial profiling, race-motivated violence, and other racist actions against anyone, anytime. We are actively listening to and coalescing with Black Lives Matter activists and social-justice allies who are rightly calling for an end to dehumanizing practices. Many of us have marched and demonstrated in our own local communities as well as providing other material support to protesters and organizations in pursuit of a more just and equitable society. We encourage you to participate visibly and vocally, and to give, as we have, in support of legal defense funds, voter registration initiatives, community-oriented non-profits, and more.
2. We acknowledge that the American educational system has been founded upon, long inflected with, and passively complicit in the perpetuation of white supremacy and racism. Higher education institutions and the writing programs so central to them, particularly in first-year, are inextricably implicated in histories of systemic racism. We strongly encourage all CWPA members to read widely within the growing collection of antiracist scholarship, especially as it directly applies to writing program administration, writing curriculum and instruction, placement, and assessment. Writing program administrators have a responsibility to imple-

ment antiracist practices in their writing programs and actively work to dismantle structures of white privilege.

3. Within the organization, the CWPA board and officers are initiating a principled, comprehensive re-examination of the organization, focused on enacting diversity; building a truly antiracist, inclusive, and supportive organization; and supporting equitable and just writing programs. We are developing a set of clearly defined, measurable actions to which we can hold ourselves accountable, and we invite you to join us in this important work. We will have an initial plan complete and made public by the end of August, 2020.

