

## Dedicating Time and Space for Women to Succeed in the Academy: A Case Analysis of a Women Faculty Writing Program at a Research 1 Institution

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### ABSTRACT

*Using an institutionally sponsored women faculty writing program at a Carnegie Tier 1 research university as a site of analysis, the authors examine how sanctioned, dedicated time, space, and communities for writing affect participants' experiences of writing for publication. Drawing on the constant comparative method, we analyzed 206 surveys from women faculty participants over a three-year period. Findings indicated that the program was highly valued by participants because it offered a sanctioned, dedicated space for their research and increased participants' sense of belonging at the institution. The program also enhanced their writing practices and carved out a "safer" space for women in the male-centered academy.*

WPAs and researchers are increasingly addressing the misconception that faculty have already developed effective writing skills and productive writing practices (Baldi et al., 2013; Geller & Eodice, 2013; Tulley, 2018). Even in writing studies, a field dedicated to the study and teaching of writing, there is little graduate-level writing instruction; instead, faculty typically learn to produce and publish scholarly writing on the job (Micciche & Carr, 2011; Wells & Söderlund, 2018). Although the need for faculty writing support has been identified in our field's literature, most institutions still lack programmatic writing support for faculty across all fields. Compounding the misconceptions that faculty are already skilled writers and do not need support, writing programs primarily serve student writers, a focus that is reflected in funding structures. Despite these challenges, writing programs and the institutions they are housed in should invest in faculty writers, whose career advancement depends on scholarly publication. In the context of writing programs, faculty-centered initiatives also have the potential to create rare institutional spaces where WPAs and faculty can engage in multidisciplinary dialogues that can influence the study and teaching of writing at postsecondary institutions (Clark-Oates & Cahill, 2013).

Existing faculty development typically centers on teaching rather than writing (Geller, 2013). The gap in faculty writing support is primarily being addressed by extra-institutional services such as the National Center for

Faculty Development and Diversity, writing advice published in periodicals and blogs such as *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed*, and academic self-help books (Belcher, 2009; Boice, 1990; Silvia, 2019; Sword, 2017). Many such efforts are spearheaded by current and former writing studies faculty and, therefore, are informed by our field's practices and research (Geller, 2013). However, by definition, external initiatives and resources cannot fully address local contexts. Institutionally sanctioned faculty writing initiatives exist in writing centers, teaching and learning centers, grant offices, and individual departments, but programmatic support is the exception rather than the rule. As institutional demands for research output increase, so too does the need for faculty writing support, particularly through sustained, pedagogically informed initiatives, which WPAs have the expertise to implement.

One response to the complex issues surrounding faculty writing efficacy and productivity is the development of institutionally embedded faculty writing groups. Writing groups of all forms are becoming increasingly popular means of promoting research writing in higher education (Aitchison & Guerin, 2014; Aitchison & Lee, 2006). Such groups vary widely in terms of goals, structures, activities, membership, and support offered (Haas, 2014). Common activities include self-directed or communal writing, other research-related activities such as reading research literature and working with data, providing feedback on ideas and writing projects, group discussions, and creating social connections with group members. There is a well-developed body of scholarship outlining benefits of writing groups: they have been found to increase participants' productivity (Fajt et al., 2013), serve as professional development sites (Garcia et al., 2013; Lee & Boud, 2003; Schick et al., 2011; Hunter et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2013), and provide social and emotional support (Badenhorst et al., 2013; Bosanquet et al., 2014; Cahir et al., 2014; Fajt et al., 2013; Lee & Boud, 2003). Faculty writing groups, in particular, may enhance members' teaching of writing (Smith et al., 2013) and, as previously noted, act as contact zones where WPAs can engage with faculty writers (Clark-Oates & Cahill, 2013).

Of the aforementioned studies, most were written by authors reflecting on their personal experiences. More voices are needed to better understand the variations of writing group members' experiences as well as how WPAs can effectively implement such groups in their home institutions. To extend the existing literature and respond to the need for faculty writing development, this article draws on survey data to explore an institutionally embedded writing program. Our site of analysis is a women faculty writing program at a Carnegie Tier 1 research institution. Throughout this article, we use the term "program" to encapsulate the scope of the groups' activities;

besides providing writing groups, the program offers writing retreats, networking events, and professional development opportunities exclusive to its participants. Another contribution of this study is analyzing a program of this size: it now serves nearly 100 faculty members who are placed in 11 groups that meet weekly throughout each semester.<sup>1</sup>

The program under study was created to promote equity for women faculty, who still face systemic barriers in the academy, including discrepancies in promotion and tenure, salaries, and recognition for their contributions (Crimmins, 2019; Geisler, 2010). COVID-19 has compounded such discrepancies (Malisch et al., 2020; Oleschuk, 2020). Mothers of young children, in particular, must negotiate intense demands on their time to succeed in the academy (Tulley, in press). Additionally, women faculty, compared to their male colleagues, traditionally allot less time to research, which is more highly valued in tenure and promotion processes, and more time to teaching (Modern Language Association, 2009) and service (Misra et al., 2011). Repercussions of deprioritizing research especially impact women associate professors, who “may hit a glass ceiling near the top of the ivory tower” due to disproportionate service commitments (Misra et al., 2011, para. 1). Writing initiatives have the potential to mitigate these structural inequalities, as they allow women faculty to dedicate time and space for their research (Grant & Knowles, 2000). Therefore, this program was created to promote structural conditions in which women faculty can prioritize research and writing as well as form a supportive community spanning academic ranks and departments.

Nearly all published discussions of writing groups document women-only writing groups, whether those gender dynamics occur by default or by design, as McGrail et al. (2006) found in their meta-analysis of research on faculty writing initiatives. Although their study is over a decade old, the focus on women’s experiences has remained consistent. For many of these groups, the shared experience of navigating academia as women was central to its members’ experiences of writing in a communal setting—and to the production of the very scholarship the group produced, as they co-authored articles on their group dynamics (Barry et al., 2004; Bosanquet et al., 2014; Fajt et al., 2013; Penney et al., 2015). Our study similarly reveals the centrality of gender to members’ experiences, but on a larger scale compared to past studies, as we are unique in exploring a large, institutionally sanctioned, multidisciplinary program serving women faculty from all ranks.

## WOMEN FACULTY WRITING PROGRAM BACKGROUND

To provide a women-only space that enhances women faculty's writing and research, the Women Faculty Writing Program (WFWP) was founded at Texas Tech University in 2015 by two faculty members and a writing center administrator (the co-authors and a colleague). The co-founders have backgrounds in Women's and Gender Studies and one had recently been engaged in a research project on women-only space, indicating powerful benefits of such space (Lewis et al., 2015) and, thus, were motivated to experiment with a women-only program. The program began during a time of growth and transition at the institution, which was designated a Carnegie Tier 1 institution that same year and a Hispanic-Serving Institution in 2017. WFWP's initial membership was 17 women faculty from four of the university's 12 colleges. Participants were provided space on campus, coffee, and a facilitator. Now in its fifth year, WFWP has nearly 100 members from all colleges.

Originally, the program was sponsored by the President's Gender Equity Council, the Writing Centers of Texas Tech University, and the Women's and Gender Studies Program, though we did not receive formal funding. We now receive funding, which pays for facilitators' stipends, writing retreats, food at networking events, and limited marketing materials. We felt we had a convincing argument for seeking funding after we kept better records of work done in the program, especially after we tracked details pertaining to grant proposals; the dollar amount, rather than the number of grant submissions, was the most compelling data point when requesting support from upper administration. In addition to the initial sponsors, WFWP now receives support (whether financial or in-kind) from the Office of the President; the Office of the Provost; the Office of Research and Innovation; the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and the Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development Center. Our growing collection of sponsors reveals the centrality of women's research to many university stakeholders and suggests the intricacies of administering such a program.

WFWP was modeled on the Indiana University (IU) Women Faculty Writing Groups (renamed the Faculty Writing Groups after they began to offer co-ed groups) developed by Laura Plummer. Like IU's groups, WFWP is divided into groups of about 9-15 writing "fellows" who meet for weekly writing sessions led by faculty facilitators. Each session begins with a half hour of goal setting and discussion revolving around a reading about productive writing or professional development, followed by two and a half hours of self-directed writing time. Unlike most writing groups described

in past studies, in-meeting activities do not involve reading or responding to group members' writing. Instead, like the group described in Hixson et al. (2016), WFWP's structure emphasizes dedicated writing time and space, in keeping with our goals of promoting and sustaining a productive research writing culture for women faculty. The addition of structured, dedicated discussion and goal-setting time sets WFWP apart from writing groups documented in the literature.

Because the program was formed in response to disproportionate service loads placed on women faculty, facilitators strongly emphasize the need to protect this writing time, which members call "dedicated space" or "sacred time," where they commit to not only attending the entire meeting but also to eliminating distractions. Discussions emphasize regular, ongoing productive writing practices, but, given other demands on their time, this is the only scheduled, protected time some members have for writing in a given week. The program also responds to writers' needs for community-based support through feminist co-mentoring: mentoring relationships that emphasize nonhierarchical, relational learning and professional development (Bona et al., 1995). Providing space for formal networking and professional development is especially important for women faculty (Tulley, in press). As previous research has indicated, women faculty, in comparison to their male colleagues, continue to experience disadvantages with sanctioned networking and professional development both within their institutions and within their wider fields, including conferences and journals (Geisler, 2010).

As the program has grown in size, so too has it grown in complexity. Weekly writing sessions remain the bedrock, but the program has grown to further our goals of increasing research productivity, facilitating mentorship and collaboration, and creating a university-wide network of women scholars. Through a partnership with the Office of Research and Innovation, WFWP offers grant writing-focused groups, sometimes co-facilitated by members of that office who offer presentations and resources. WFWP fellows who identify as BIPOC can also opt into an affinity group, which we piloted after a conversation with Assata Zerai, then-Chief Diversity Officer at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, who led a group of Black women faculty. The group at our university, which members chose to name "Women Owing Writing," also operates as a means of enhancing equity for BIPOC women, for whom inequities experienced by women are exacerbated, including increased service loads and lower tenure and promotion rates (Gutiérrez y Muhs et al., 2012; Harley, 2008; Matthew, 2016). The "Women Owing Writing" group has collaboratively shared their experiences and provided guidance for establishing women faculty

writing groups at the Faculty Women of Color in the Academy Conference (Alviña et al., 2019). Another unique group is a “drop-in” group initially developed for women administrators whose demanding schedules made the 15-week commitment untenable. The drop-in group runs in a similar manner as the other groups, but all members are permitted to participate, even if they only attend once or twice. Based on feedback from group members, increased childcare demands due to COVID-19, and evidence that mothers in the academy face unique conditions (Tulley, in press), we added a group for mothers with young children in the fall of 2020. (As of this writing, we have not collected survey data on this group.) Additionally, each year, WFWP holds a weekend writing retreat in a nearby town with the goal of making significant progress on a project. Other program activities have included networking events, write-ins (one-day community writing events), and speaking events where members share their expertise.

In providing women faculty with dedicated time, space, and community for writing, the program pursues the goals of creating a supportive, multi-disciplinary network of women scholars that promotes mentorship and collaboration; enhancing research productivity and external funding; fostering productive, sustainable writing habits that serve members throughout their careers; facilitating interdisciplinary collaboration; and increasing rates of tenure and promotion among women faculty. Although writing productivity is not the only metric of success, documenting the number of writing projects submitted and accepted has increased institutional buy-in. Espousing the importance of intangible benefits of the program and, more importantly, substantiating those claims with quantifiable evidence of success has brought the program increased funding and visibility.

## METHODS

### *Study Design*

This study employed a data-driven methodology. Employing qualitative research methodologies beyond personal reflection provides compelling evidence for the efficacy of institutionally embedded writing groups to improve research productivity as well as the social and emotional well-being of women faculty participants.

At the end of each spring and fall semester from 2016 to 2018, a survey with open-ended questions was circulated among WFWP participants. The first author obtained IRB approval at our university.<sup>2</sup> Members participated voluntarily and were asked to answer questions about why they joined, their expectations for the program and for themselves, how (and if) the women-only aspect was relevant, their writing strengths and obstacles, and their

productivity as measured in terms of projects submitted and accepted. We also asked about their demographic information. See the appendix for the survey. We modified questions slightly after the first semester and transitioned from administering the survey through an emailed Word document to administering the survey in person through paper forms plus emailed Word documents. These changes were implemented to garner richer responses and increase participation so that the data regarding participants' experiences would be more representative of the entire group. The response rate ranged from 24% to 66% over the six semesters data were collected. We collected 206 responses over the course of three years. Because many women remained in the group for multiple semesters, some individuals may have responded to the survey multiple times; however, their perceptions of WFWP and of themselves as writers may have shifted over time.

### *Analytical Process*

The authors engaged in content analysis using the constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965). We closely analyzed responses, examining each idea and comparing each idea to previous ideas. If the idea was already mentioned, we grouped the idea with the similar idea. If an idea was not similar to previous ideas, we coded the idea as a new category. We reached saturation when no new ideas emerged (Roy et al., 2015). We then engaged in a more theoretical analysis, abstracting how the categories fit together and weaving the categories from the content analysis within the wider literature, guided by principles of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). As with all interpretative qualitative analyses, our perspectives inevitably influenced the analysis. Wherever possible, we used direct quotations, designating participants' words with quotation marks.

### FINDINGS: BEING DEDICATED TO THE DEDICATED SPACE

Overwhelmingly, data indicated that participants highly valued and were committed to WFWP. They expressed a strong dedication to the program because it unapologetically carved out sanctioned time and space to think, write, and connect with other women. Specifically, the data revealed that the program's dedicated time and space allowed for: (a) developing and sharpening writing practices, (b) feeling an increased sense of belonging at the university, and (c) acknowledging and addressing the need for a women-only space within the male-centered academy.

Participants consistently indicated that the sanctioned three-hour block of writing time was crucial to their strong satisfaction with the program. Regularly designating time each week to research increased their research

productivity. They claimed that WFWP was the only space they had that was “dedicated solely to research” during the week. Participants described the time set aside for the program as “reserved,” “designated,” “protected,” “cherished,” “secluded,” and “focused,” indicating a clear pattern of time scarcity for research. Participants often described the space as “sacred”—a “precious” time in their week.

Participants documented the need to schedule regular time for their research. One full professor explained why she joined the program: “I wanted the rigid time requirement of a regular meeting I must attend.” Her need to schedule writing time as an obligation to engage in her research was a common thread and was especially the case for associate and full professors, who often had high service loads. An associate professor explained, “it is helpful for me to have time dedicated to my scholarly research that is scheduled away from distractions and obligations in my home department.” The issue of avoiding distractions in the program was noted multiple times in the survey data—many faculty members indicated that they were unable to work in their offices because of interruptions from students or colleagues. In sharp relief from their office space, the WFWP space allowed them to “concentrate” on their writing.

Furthermore, the regular time set aside for writing helped participants structure their research goals beyond the three-hour meetings. One participant explained that the weekly meeting “centers my week and my research.” Others scheduled additional writing times because they felt encouraged by their productivity in the WFWP meetings. Furthermore, the timing of meetings also impacted participants’ writing productivity. One member discussed how the Friday afternoon meeting time “helped [her] move into the weekend feeling productive.” This dedicated time helped participants focus on their writing projects; as one participant noted, WFWP “gave me precious time and peace of mind that I need to work.” This participant perceived a relationship between “time” and “peace of mind” as central to her writing practices, emphasizing that WFWP both provided effective structural conditions and promoted emotional wellbeing.

Participants who are also administrators (approximately 1/3 of the sample) described an enhanced appreciation of the sanctioned time carved out weekly for their research. Administrators conveyed how little time outside of the writing program they had for research and, therefore, one used the word “precious” in describing the time afforded by WFWP. For one woman faculty administrator, “[T]his block of time is sometimes the only time I have to work on my research.” Another appreciated the dedicated time WFWP provided, explaining, “by participating . . . I was guaranteed at least three hours of writing each week.” Such responses are especially

significant for administrators, as they generally have the highest service loads among faculty.

Beyond protecting research time from teaching and service, weekly meetings also helped participants negotiate domestic and family obligations, which are other structural barriers that can prevent women faculty research productivity (Baker, 2012). For example, an assistant professor with an infant and a toddler commented, “I can get a lot done in a little bit of time where I can devote my whole attention to a project and the group provided me time to focus.” Responses about protecting time, especially from service and/or familial obligations, suggests that WFWP is one means to mitigate structural inequalities that affect women faculty.

### *Developing and Sharpening Writing Practices*

Reserved time for writing was coupled with other factors that added to participants’ high value assigned to the program. Participants consistently indicated they felt the structure helped them become more productive writers. Goal setting, readings, and discussions encouraged participants to regularly reflect on their writing practices and experiment with new strategies.

Being exposed to new writing strategies and integrating those strategies into their writing practices has increased many members’ confidence and efficacy in their writing. As one participant stated, “The WFWP has given me confidence in my process of writing.” Another woman described her added sense of competency:

I feel much more competent with my writing, and I feel much more in control of the process. Rather than writing being something that happens due to external forces, I perceive greater say in when and how I write based on the strategies I have learned as part of this group.

Not all women commented that they were more confident in their writing. Often, these concerns had to do with structural issues in academia, in keeping with Tarabochia and Madden’s (2018) findings that faculty writers are concerned about “time constraints that make scholarship feel rushed and disingenuous” (p. 435). For example, one participant noted, “I’m not feeling so positive about my writing, right now . . . I like to write, but slowly and thoughtfully and I don’t have time for that if I want to be more productive.” Even so, some responses suggested that the communal aspects of the program normalized writing concerns, which, in turn, increased participants’ confidence in their writing. An associate professor noted that, in participating in WFWP, “you realize your struggles are not unique,”

further explaining that “its [sic] hard to leave the group not feeling energized and refreshed.”

### *Feeling an Increased Sense of Belonging at the University*

Another prominent thread in the data was the enhanced sense of connection with other women, and, by extension, a stronger sense of belonging at our university. No other space at our institution brings together faculty from divergent disciplines on a weekly basis—in fact, this program is one of the most sustainable multidisciplinary initiatives in place at our university. Moreover, our institution has no other program that consistently promotes the scholarship of such a large number of women.

Respondents identified the sense of belonging as a key reason they initially joined and continue to participate in the program. One member joined because she “Wanted to feel more at home,” and others joined “to meet women faculty” and “build new relationships.” Another noted that feelings of connectedness surpassed her expectations: “I think I did not expect to feel as connected as I did. I knew that I would experience some sense of camaraderie and community, but I did feel this much more strongly than I initially anticipated.” Survey responses indicated that faculty who were new to the institution often joined WFWP with the explicit purpose of meeting new people, while existing members of the university expressed happiness at enhancing their network of colleagues.

In administering the program, we intentionally promote networks and connections by trying to place women at all ranks and women in as many disciplines as possible in each of the writing groups. We are committed to doing so to: (a) promote co-mentoring, (b) expose women faculty to other women’s research across disciplines, and (c) encourage cross-fertilization of ideas and collaborations. Many participants indicated that the variety of ranks and disciplines were important reasons they valued the program. One participant explained, “I felt like the connections formed helped me network with more senior faculty members and helped make me feel a part of a larger community.” Another stated, “I was eager to see how the group would evolve and gradually we came to know each other. I made new friends and colleagues with whom I will continue to work on some collaborative writing and research efforts.” We consider these networks to be fundamental to the writing program’s purpose.

Given this evidence that participation enhances members’ sense of connection to the university, as administrators of this program, we make efforts to recruit incoming women faculty. Prior to their arrival, we send personal emails describing the program and inviting them to apply. We

also participate in our university's new faculty orientation. Moreover, current members have used the program as a recruiting tool for new departmental hires.

*Acknowledging the Need for Women-Only Space  
in the Male-Centered Academy*

Participants' sense of belonging is connected to the women-only structure of the program. Another strong thread in the data was the acknowledgment of the need for women-only space in universities. In the survey, we asked, "How did the women-only aspect of the group affect your experience, if at all?" All but a few women indicated that the women-only component was critical—and a couple of members indicated that they would not have joined if the program were co-ed.

A prominent thread addressed safety. Women felt safe to express their concerns and experiences, felt "more at ease," and felt that they were not being judged. As one woman explained, "I'm not worried that I am being judged based on my gender and I feel like I can be more open about the struggle of being a woman in the academy." Other terms commonly employed to describe the significance of the women-only space included *safe, comfortable, open, supportive, encouraging, and non-competitive*. Many responses linked these qualities directly to the gendered nature of the groups. A participant explained, "It felt like it was a supportive environment due to the women-only aspect. It was nice to not have to qualify or apologize for discussions of work-life balance, confidence, or sharing personal information." Moreover, since the movements #MeToo in October 2017 and Time's Up in 2018, we noticed a trend in responses, with greater awareness of the need for women-only space during and after the fall of 2017. We discussed these findings in more depth in an invited talk focusing on feminist principles and feminist women-only space (Sharp & Messuri, 2017).

Additionally, Black Lives Matter and other movements engendered more discussion about racial injustice. WFWP carved out space for BIPOC women in a predominately white institution. Members of the "Women Owning Writing" group, who experience multiple dimensions of marginalization as BIPOC women, developed deeper connections with each other. One participant wrote that in this group, "there was the added ease of discussing the intersections of my identities and how these impact my work, scholarship, and productivity." Another stated, "For the women of color group, I feel like the expectation of feeling supported was greater. . . . these women knew me on a personal level—we shared real life stories and struggles and validated one another." This sense of validation further

demonstrates the ability of faculty writing programs to provide crucial emotional and social support, especially for underrepresented faculty. In this sense, writing programs have the potential not only to mitigate structural conditions preventing women faculty's career advancement but also to enhance their sense of safety and connection in a male-dominated university. These benefits may be even more significant for those who experience multiple forms of oppression.

## DISCUSSION

The present study offers important contributions to the existing literature. This is one of the only known studies to examine a faculty writing program using a large number of surveys; moreover, these surveys were collected over a three-year period, capturing data as the program grew and its membership increased. The study responds to wider concerns regarding women faculty members' depleted time for research and the misperception that most faculty members can be highly productive scholars without writing support. Findings indicated that the Women Faculty Writing Program at our Carnegie Tier 1 research university was effective, valued, and needed. Women in our sample expressed commitment to the program because it offered regular, dedicated time and space for engaging in research, writing, and connecting. Women faculty of all ranks in WFWP needed consistent sanctioned time and space to concentrate on their research and to regularly engage with women faculty colleagues from departments across campus.

The voices of the writing group members included in this article overwhelmingly demonstrate the value of such programs as faculty writing support initiatives. For universities, the importance of offering an institutionally embedded faculty writing group cannot be understated. The women in our program indicated that the institutionally recognized, dedicated time and space had a variety of benefits, including improving research productivity, sharpening their writing skills, feeling more in control of research output, connecting with other women, and participating in a supportive space within the academy.

Although we understand members' development of productive writing practices to be the most significant outcome of this program, we recognize the significance of quantifiable results, both because research productivity is central to the career advancement of faculty and because such results justify the need for institutional support of such initiatives. We have found measurable indicators of program efficacy—especially counting the number of publications and the dollar amounts of grants funded—to be crucial

to garnering institutional support and funding, especially from upper administration.

### *Limitations and Future Research Directions*

This study provided a replicable, aggregable, data-driven methodology (Haswell, 2005) to explore writing group formation and efficacy for one women-only faculty writing program at a Carnegie Tier 1 university. As with all studies, there are limitations. The case study genre is necessarily limited, as unique conditions of this institutional setting, group dynamics, and experiences of individual participants affect writing group efficacy.

Survey-based methodologies also have limitations; the response rate ranged from 24% to 66% over the six semesters of data collection, so not all group members' views were collected. WFWP members who had low attendance, did not believe the program to be effective, or felt less of a sense of belonging may not have taken the survey or may have been absent when surveys were distributed. Some may have selected to leave the program or stop attending meetings. Surveys were distributed at the end of each semester, a notoriously busy time for faculty, which may have affected response rates. The mode of distribution changed from online (which had a lower return rate) to onsite distribution followed by an email containing the survey. Moreover, the methods employed in this study represent snapshots of participants' experiences; a longitudinal study is needed to explore how participants' writing practices and experiences with the program changed over time.

The women-only membership has proven effective for nearly all participants in this study, but, as McGrail et al. (2006) point out, most writing group research has studied women. This group structure may be transferable to other underrepresented groups with similar effects; in fact, the responses from the Women Owning Writing group reinforce this possibility. A few participants have suggested groups for LGBTQIA faculty. Such spaces may allow faculty from other traditionally underrepresented groups the same sort of supportive environment that WFWP members have identified. Moreover, co-ed groups following similar group structures and principles may also be effective, though the data largely indicated that members believed the women-only atmosphere was central to the program's supportive environment.

Presumably, the women faculty who elect to join and remain in WFWP are supportive of the program's principles and practices and, therefore, may find the structure more effective than a more general sample of women faculty or faculty of all genders. For example, WFWP members may be

more open to women-only spaces, more interested in writing in communal environments, or more in need of structured time away from service. They may already value productive writing practices, as they elected to join a writing accountability group. This assumption is borne out by the thread in the data that identified writing productivity as a writing concern and/or strength. Since membership in the program, like participation in the survey, is self-selected, members' individual characteristics affect the generalizability of the results.

The institutional structure also affected members' experiences with the writing program, as we have shown. This program is effective for faculty in our specific institutional context. Writing programs that are not embedded in and supported by institutions likely function differently, as do programs in different types of institutions, especially those that emphasize research less. The multidisciplinary scope of the program, as well as the range of faculty positions included, also influenced group members' experiences. Cultural differences due to region/country may cause results to vary, as could gender or racial makeup of the institution. For example, writing programs may function differently in women-only colleges, in which women-only spaces proliferate.

#### CONCLUSION: FACULTY WRITING PROGRAMS IN THE INSTITUTION

Institutions of higher education, on the whole, continue to overlook the need to offer regular, sustained support for faculty writing and research. As this study suggests, institutions—and, more specifically, writing programs—would do well to dedicate space and resources to faculty writing programs, especially programs focusing on women and other minoritized faculty. The payoff for sanctioned faculty writing programs is significant. As the women in our sample expressed, tangible, regular institutional investment in their research through the writing program engendered a greater sense of belonging and collaborations, sharpened their writing practices, and increased their productivity. Additionally, participants regularly engaged in both formal and informal discussions of writing, including teaching and writing in the disciplines, an outcome that aligns with the goals of many WPAs, thereby making writing programs natural institutional homes and partners for faculty writing programs. As a result of the faculty writing program, women demonstrated renewed dedication to their research and writing and to our institution.

## NOTES

1. Other large-scale faculty writing programs exist, notably Indiana University's Scholarly Writing program, whose Faculty Writing Groups were the inspiration and model for our program. However, large-scale programs are not documented in the literature.

2. RB 2016-5

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#### AUTHORS' NOTE REGARDING THE RECENT CALL TO BOYCOTT THE COUNCIL OF WRITING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS

This piece was accepted for publication in *WPA: Writing Program Administration* in November 2020, prior to the recent call to boycott the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA). After careful consideration and conversations with the editorial team, we, the authors of this piece, have decided to move forward with publishing in this journal, given the editorial team's action plan to reevaluate the journal's editorial practices as well as their description of relative autonomy from the CWPA. We stand in solidarity with those boycotting the CWPA and join their call for the organization to make meaningful structural changes that work to dismantle its culture of racism and white supremacy. We publish this piece in the hopes of advocating for needed support for faculty who have long been unrecognized and underrepresented, and we will not submit future work to WPA unless recommended changes have been made.

**Kristin Messuri** is Managing Director of the Writing Centers and co-founder and co-director of the Women Faculty Writing Program at Texas Tech University. Her research explores affect and writing initiatives. Recent scholarship includes projects examining the workings and efficacy of graduate and faculty writing communities and exploring the intersections of writing center work and disciplinary writing for graduate writing consultants.

**Elizabeth A. Sharp** is Director of Women's and Gender Studies, co-founder and co-director of the Women Faculty Writing Program, and Professor of Human Development and Family Sciences at Texas Tech University. Her research focuses on ideologies of gender, families, and relationships. Her recent projects have focused on bridal and wifely femininities and she engaged in a multi-year trans-disciplinary research project integrating social science and dance.

## APPENDIX

### Survey

This survey is intended to gather information about your experiences in the Women Faculty Writing Program (WFWP), as well as your feelings about and experiences with writing in general. Your responses will be used for research purposes. Additionally, these questions are intended to help you to reflect on your writing practices. Participation is voluntary; you may skip any questions you do not wish to answer, and you may choose not to complete the survey.

#### Demographic Questions

1. Department:
2. Faculty rank:
3. Administrative duties, if any:
4. Gender:

#### Survey Questions

1. Why did you choose to join WFWP this semester? If this is not your first semester in WFWP, why did you choose to participate again?
2. How did the women-only aspect of the group affect your experience, if at all?
3. Throughout the semester, what **expectations** did you have (1) **for the group** and (2) **for yourself as a member of the group**?
4. How did your **experience** of the (1) **group dynamics** and (2) **as a member of the group** compare to those expectations?
5. What concerns or struggles with writing do you experience? What effect, if any, did participation in this group have on those concerns or struggles?
6. What are the positive aspects of your writing? What effect, if any, did participation in this group have on those strengths?
7. How did you spend your writing time during group meetings? Please consider both the tasks you completed (e.g., coding data, outlining, drafting, reorganizing) and the type of projects you worked on (e.g., article, chapter, monograph, conference paper, poster).
8. How many writing projects did you complete in the past **calendar year**? Provide the number and type (e.g., article, chapter, monograph, conference paper, poster).
9. How many writing projects did you complete in the past **semester**? Provide the number and type (e.g., article, chapter, monograph, conference paper, poster).