

**TO:** Sue Abbotson, Chair of Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC)  
**FROM:** Mike Michaud, Chair of Writing Board (WB)  
**DATE:** 10/20/17  
**SUBJECT:** Report on WB Activity (Sept/Oct)

### **Work of the Writing Board**

The Writing Board has convened two meetings (9/20 & 10/18) and we are pleased to welcome new members, including Stefan Battle (Social Work), Andrea Del Vecchio (Physical Sciences) and Jiyun Wu (Management).

Most of our energies thus far have been taken up with two initiatives: the First Pages event and exhibit (the event was held on 10/16/17 and the exhibit is on display all week in the lobby of Adams Library) and the Faculty Development Workshop (scheduled for 1/10/18). Our First Pages event was a success and we were excited to include student readers along with our faculty readers (this was the first time we've had students at this event). Just this week we have agreed on a theme for our FDW (pedagogical approaches to language diversity) and committed to a speaker (Michelle Cox, Cornell University). We will devote our next meeting to further planning of the annual FDW and are excited to be working with a theme/topic that we have not addressed in previous workshops.

Additionally, the Writing Board would like to offer its support to two recent initiatives.

1. The Chair of UCC, Dr. Sue Abbotson, has proposed the following "jurisdiction": "UCC members take on the responsibility for encouraging and reporting on the progress and successful completion of the Writing in the Disciplines [...] explanations on the homepages of the following programs..." (all college majors and programs are then listed). At other institutions, this kind of work would likely be handled by the director of a Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program. Since we do not have such a program at this time, we support Dr. Abbotson's "jurisdiction" proposal and thank her for her efforts to ensure that departments and programs are meeting their obligations towards the current WID requirement.
2. The college Assessment Coordinator, Dr. Maureen Reddy, has submitted a report to COGE sharing results from summer 2017 assessment initiatives. One of the two items discussed in this report is the college's existent WID requirement. The Writing Board would like to commend and thank Dr. Reddy for her assessment of WID and her many excellent recommendations for how to build on

and improve the work that has already been done in this area. The Board stands by, ready to assist, with carrying out whichever of Dr. Reddy's recommendations COGE decides to act on. In particular, we support the appointment of a WID coordinator. We feel that whatever form WID at RIC takes going forward, appointing a coordinator or director to head up this work will be a critical step.

### **Work of the Writing Board Chair**

My primary work as Writing Board chair continues to be in the area of professional development. While a good deal of my time is taken up with planning our campus-wide events (i.e. First Pages, FDW), most of my energy and thinking is devoted to supporting faculty as well as departments and programs with matters related to pedagogy and curriculum. Today, for example, I strategized with a senior WAC expert at another institution, to learn about how his program was built and how our WID requirement might be further developed. Tomorrow I will meet with participants in this year's Summer Seminar for Teaching Writing to further support them with their efforts to implement "best practices" in the teaching of writing across the disciplines. Next week I will meet with members of a department to rethink their WID plan and I will also meet with individual faculty members to support them in their efforts to retool assignments and feedback processes. The week after that I will lead a week-long online mini-course on teaching with peer-review.

Here is a further run-down of professional development work in which I've been engaged over the past six or so months:

- **Master's Social Work (MSW) Program:** Provide ongoing support to MSW faculty in their efforts to support students with special writing challenges. Lead half-day workshop with MSW faculty on assessment/evaluation of student writing, 5/30/17.
- **School of Nursing:** Provide ongoing support to faculty on design and implementation of curriculum for N226, nursing's writing-in-the-disciplines course. Ongoing consultation on WID curriculum. Lead half-day workshop with N226 faculty, 5/24/17.
- **School of Business:** Ongoing support and liaison for *English 230: Writing for Professional Settings* (required WID course for multiple B-School students). I also teach the course regularly.
- **Adjunct Faculty:** Collaborate with adjunct faculty union to identify targeted professional development opportunities. Lead ½ day workshop with adjunct faculty from History Department, 5/22/17.

- **Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL):** Ongoing collaboration with the FCTL to design and facilitate co-operative professional development workshops on writing and pedagogy. This fall I am teaching an entirely online “mini-course” to 10 RIC faculty members on facilitating peer review effectively in disciplinary courses. I also lead an informal monthly discussion group for faculty on teaching writing.
- **First-Year Seminar (FYS):** I regularly support faculty who teach in the FYS program, offering both formal workshops and informal opportunities for consultation. Planning workshops for spring 2018.
- **Departmental Collaborations:** I serve as an informal consultant to multiple departments and programs across campus, including, most recently, Environmental Studies. Currently working with the department of Health and Physical Education on a revision of its writing-in-the-disciplines plan.
- **Assessment:** Collaborate with assessment coordinator to discuss college WID requirement.

In closing, I’d like to share the good news that my work as Writing Board chair has expanded beyond our campus community in important ways that signal intersections between my service to the college and my evolving research agenda. Recently, I have had a chapter accepted for publication in a new collection on writing across the curriculum (*Sustainable WAC* [NCTE Press] will be published in spring 2018). This week, I learned that a proposal I initiated and submitted with three RIC faculty members to the 2018 International Writing Across the Curriculum (IWAC) conference has been accepted by the conference organizers. Pending funding, we will travel to Alabama next summer to share our work on faculty development with writing and pedagogy.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these developments.