

To: Sue Abbotson, Chair of UCC  
 From: Mike Michaud, Chair of Writing Board  
 Date: 5/9/18  
 Subject: Annual Report (2017/2018)

I am pleased to submit this report summarizing the activity of the Writing Board (WB) and Writing Board Chair for the academic year 2017/2018.

**Writing Board Membership (2017/2018 & 2018/2019)**

The table below indicates Board membership for this past academic year and the year ahead. The numbers in parentheses indicate year of service in two-year term.

Position	2017/2018	2018/2019
Chair	Mike Michaud (2)	Mike Michaud (1)
Director of (Writing)	Becky Caouette	Becky Caouette
Director (Writing Center)	Claudine Griggs	Claudine Griggs
Director (FCTL)	Jeanne Haser-Lafond	Jeanne Haser-Lafond
Coordinator (First Year Seminar)	Julie Urda	Julie Urda
Faculty (FAS) (2) -- 1 Math/Science	Deb Britt (1) & Andrea Del Vecchio (1)	Deb Britt (2) & Andrea Del Vecchio (2)
Faculty (FSEHD) (1)	Martha Horn (2)	Martha Horn (1)
Faculty (SOSW) (1)	Stefan Battle (1)	Stefan Battle (2)
Faculty (SOM) (1)	Jiyun Wu (1)	Suchandra Basu/Jiyun Wu (2)
Faculty (SON) (1)	Deborah Kutonplon (1)	Deborah Kutonplon (2)
Faculty (Adams Library)	Tish Brennan (2)	Tish Brennan (?)
Faculty (Comp/Rhet)	Mike Michaud	Mike Michaud

Blue = Ex Officio  
 Green = Rotating

**Writing Board Meeting Dates (2016/2017)**

- Fall 2017: 9/20, 10/18, 11/29
- Spring 2018: 2/21, 3/28 (SSTW Panel Presentation), 5/2

**Writing Board Budget Allocations**

1. First Pages (10/16/18): \$150

## 2. Faculty Development Workshop (1/10/18)

\$2000 (honorarium)  
\$100 (dinner w/Cox)  
\$112 (Cox vehicle cost)  
\$170 (Cox Hotel)  
\$1700 (food for FDW)  
-----  
\$4232

3. SSTW Panel Presentation (3/28/18): \$125

4. WID Workshops (5/2017):

- Sociology WID Workshop (5/29): \$900
- How To of Responding to Student Writing (5/31): \$2600

TOTAL: \$8007

## **Review of Writing Board Activity**

This year, the Writing Board sponsored and hosted three main activities on campus:

### **1. First-Pages**

This was the fifth year the WB teamed up with the First-Year Writing Program and Writing Center to host a Writing Week event and exhibit, First Pages (10/16/18). We had ten readers, five of whom were students, and twenty-three first-pages submissions. Participants read their First Pages and briefly discussed the challenges and opportunities of professional and academic writing. We heard from a diverse group of faculty from across the college. Attendance was around 15-20.

### **2. Faculty Development Workshop (FDW)**

This year marked the 22nd year that the WB has hosted the Faculty Development Workshop, entitled, this year, “Engaging *All* Learners in Writing: Pedagogies that Embrace Cultural and Linguistic Diversity.” Our speaker was Dr. Michelle Cox (Cornell University). Appendix A contains a participation count as well as participant feedback. Appendix B contains screenshots of faculty panels from afternoon sessions. The WB is pleased to be able to continue to offer this signature professional development event, attended this year by roughly 70 full- and part-time faculty members.

### **3. The WID Visibility Project**

The WB is working in collaboration with the college assessment coordinator and the Committee on General Education (COGE) to help bring greater awareness to faculty and students about our WID requirement. Towards these ends, we have launched a three-pronged initiative, described in the memo included in Appendix C. The initiative will take place during the 2018/2019 academic year.

## **Review of Chair's Activity**

The WB Chair's responsibilities include leading the WB and devising and facilitating professional development opportunities for faculty. Towards these ends, I'd like to share my primary activities from this year.

### **1. Summer Seminar for Teaching Writing (SSTW)**

The 2017/2018 academic year marked the seventh of the SSTW. Technically, the SSTW is offered under the Faculty Center for Teaching Writing (FCTL), but I teach it in my capacity as WB chair.

Seven faculty members participated in the SSTW this year:

- Giselle Auger (Communication)
- Elizabeth Kennedy-England (Health and Physical Education)
- Linda Mendonca (Nursing)
- Tamara Nopper (Sociology)
- Janice Okoomian (Gender Studies)
- Sara Picard (Art)
- Sylvia Ross (Nursing)
- Debra Servello (Nursing)
- Jeremy Thayer (Social Work)

At the conclusion of the yearlong seminar, these faculty shared their experiences implementing best practices in the teaching of writing at a Panel Presentation event open to the university community on Wednesday, March 28, 2018. I'd like to thank them for their time and efforts.

I'm pleased to report that year eight of the SSTW is about to begin, with full financial support from the college and a class of eight faculty members signed up to attend. The main work of the 2018/19 seminar will take place during the week of May 21-25, 2018.

### **2. Co-Op Workshops and Ongoing Professional Development**

During the 2017/2018 academic year, I offered the following professional development opportunities:

## **Fall:**

### The “How To” of Peer Review

This fall, the campus Writing Board and the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning are teaming up to offer an online mini-course, “The ‘How To’ of Peer Review,” that will guide you through a critical element of teaching the writing process: peer review—the practice of having students share and discuss their writing-in-progress with one another before they hand it in to you for a grade.

“The ‘How To’ of Peer Review” consists of a series of instructional videos that participants will watch on their own time during scheduled weeks and then discuss with a small cohort of faculty-colleagues and the course instructor, Mike Michaud, chair of the Writing Board. The videos and discussion will be available to participants via Blackboard.

Registration for the fall term is limited to ten faculty members. Places in the course will be given out on a first-come/first-served basis. The sign-up period closes on October 1. [Click here for full details and for registration information.](#)

## **Spring:**

1. The “How To” of Peer Review (3/12-3/16/18)
2. What I’ll Do Next Time: Writing Great Writing Assignments

In this co-op workshop discussion, we’ll share a case-study of a writing assignment from an art history course, discuss the assignment’s scope and rationale, share excerpts of student work in response to the assignment, and reflect on how to improve the assignment. If you are interested in learning the nuts and bolts of assignment design or just looking for conversation around teaching and learning, you will find this workshop illuminating. Facilitated by Sara Picard (Art) and Mike Michaud (English).

Wednesday, February 21, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.  
Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, Adams Library 406

3. The “How To” of Collaborative Writing Assignments

In this co-op workshop, we will focus on collaborative writing projects, sharing our experience with assigning such work in disciplinary courses, and reflecting on the challenges and opportunities of collaborative writing assignments. If you currently assign collaborative writing projects or are curious about doing so, or if you are just looking for conversation around teaching and learning, you will find this workshop illuminating. Facilitated by Elizabeth England-Kennedy (Health and Physical Education) and Mike Michaud (English).

Tuesday, February 20, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.  
Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, Adams Library 406

### 3. Additional Developments

- a. Last year I commented on plans with the outgoing VPAA to discuss the Writing Board budget. Sadly, no progress has been made on this initiative and it is unlikely that any progress will be made until we have a new VPAA installed. For now, the WB's budget will continue to be housed in the budget of Dean Earl Simson. I am hopeful that the funding that has been provided in the past will be continued.
- b. Last year in my annual report I discussed a meeting I participated in with the adjunct faculty union leadership, with the hopes of identifying opportunities for the union and the WB to collaborate on professional development around writing and pedagogy. After efforts to follow up with the union representatives failed, no follow-through has occurred.
- c. It was brought to my attention in a recent WB meeting that one important and little commented upon development that occurred when the WB was reconfigured and rechartered around 2012 was that the chair of the WB is now a writing specialist, whereas, previously, the chair was always a member of the faculty but a non-writing specialist. This was done for strategic reasons, to provide a sense of credibility for the board and to detach its work from that of the writing specialists on campus. Since 2012, a writing specialist (me) has chaired the Board.

Perhaps this is not a problem. Perhaps, though, something was lost in the reconfiguration. In the future, we might consider restoring the previous arrangement and the creation of a WID coordinator, similar to the FYS coordinator, who would be charged with overseeing WID. For while our efforts to draw visibility to WID are a good start towards improving WID at RIC, they provide no mechanism for ongoing evaluation and assessment. We continue down the track of attending to WID every few years, but not creating a regular mechanism by which WID plans are reviewed by a writing specialist or board of knowledgeable faculty and renewed.

- d. Concerns that the WB has about the existent WID arrangement going forward are as follows (this is in addition to the fact that there is no ongoing mechanism for review/renew):
  - i. ideally, WID faculty would be "certified" in some manner as having participated in some minimal level of PD around writing and pedagogy,
  - ii. ideally, WID courses would be capped at manageable numbers (i.e. no more than 25) to ensure that faculty who teach them can be successful
  - iii. ideally, departments/programs would identify a position or a committee that would provide ongoing evaluation/review/renewal of WID plans (a question that came up at the last WB meeting was: "Who will do all the work of the WID Visibility Project in each department?"--good question).

In closing, I'd like to thank the members of the Writing Board for their good will, good ideas, and good company. I'd like to welcome Suchandra Basu, who will be filling in for Jiyun Wu while she is away on sabbatical in fall 2018. I'd like to thank the Sanchez administration for its ongoing support of the work of the Writing Board and I'd like to thank interim VPAA Sue Perlmutter for her support. Finally, I'd like to thank Veronica Bruscini, administrative assistant in the FCTL, who has assisted me with many initiatives over the past 5-7 years and who, until now, has remained unnamed as a source of support and assistance to the Writing Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this annual report and these reflections.

## **Appendix A**

*Signed In: 68*

This year we again administered an online survey to request feedback on the Faculty Development Workshop. We received 49 responses. Here's what we learned:

**What additional suggestions or feedback can you provide to help us improve this event?**

- Maybe black or pinto beans would have been good. The panel with the students at the end was great! I wonder if that could be included more?
- Great topic but I felt discussions became a little repetitive; speaker, and breakouts pretty much saying the same thing
- The student panel added an important dimension to this program. When appropriate to a workshop topic, do include the student voices and perspectives again!
- I always wish there were more opportunities for less-formal interaction (more workshop-like)
- Better vegetarian options
- In the future, how about putting the faculty workshops after the keynote and after a student response panel?
- The topic of multilingual learners and writers is the one that I wanted to see at the annual workshop. I am so pleased that this topic was presented so effectively.

**What topics would you like to see covered at future Faculty Development Workshops?**

- Teaching writing for diverse levels of preparation?
- Maybe something on experiential learning in a classroom setting? (as opposed to internship/service learning options)
- Instructor Feedback on Student Writing - Best Practices
- Online course design / effectiveness; REALLY effective peer reviewing strategies (getting students to offer feedback with some SUBSTANCE); designing strong

collaborative projects; designing strong oral presentations; a program focusing on the BEST, most effective and interesting assignments faculty members have ever experienced; effectively dealing with underprepared (writing) students; weaning students off addictions to trivial electronics

- Working with students with disabilities such as deaf / hard of hearing or blind
- looking at student work, ways of responding to students
- Threshold Concepts and their relationship to information discovery and writing
- Teaching peer review
- Would love more workshops on supporting diverse learners
- Effective methods for giving students feedback on their writing
- How to better motivate students?
- How to get students to use reading to improve their writing.
- low stakes writing, designing writing in the discipline programs
- perhaps learning from others how they successfully engaged students in writing within their discipline (social work, education, nursing...)
- Reading: a lost skill. Can it be recovered?

**Appendix B**

## Appendix C

**To:** Department/Program Chairs

**From:** Jim Magyar (COGE), Maureen Reddy (Assessment), Mike Michaud (Writing Board)

**Date:** 4/11/18

**Subject:** Creating Greater Visibility for Writing in the Disciplines (WID) at RIC

The Committee on General Education (COGE), building on and extending its earlier work on Writing in the Discipline (WID), is asking departments/programs to help create greater visibility for our WID requirement. Towards these ends, we ask your assistance with three initiatives:

1. **WID Webpage:** departments/programs will need to create a WID webpage, to be included on department/program homepages, in which answers to a series of common WID questions, provided by COGE, are given (this webpage will ultimately become a link within the grey navigation box on the left side of department/program homepages);
2. **Syllabi Statement:** departments/programs will need to include language on course syllabi which explicitly identify WID courses as such;
3. **RhodeMap:** departments/programs will need to revise their RhodeMaps to explicitly identify which classes in their curriculum count as fulfilling their WID requirement.

We make these requests because it has come to our attention that RIC students and faculty are not always aware of their department's/program's efforts to satisfy the college's WID requirement. We seek to create greater visibility and awareness about the college's commitment to teaching writing in the disciplines, a key element of our General Education program. Below, we provide more information about each of the three initiatives.

### 1. WID Webpage

We ask that departments create a WID webpage which contains answers to the following questions:

1. Why or in what ways is writing important to your discipline/field/profession?
2. Which courses are designated as satisfying the WID requirement by your department?  
Why these courses?
3. What forms or genres of writing will students learn and practice in your department's WID courses? Why these genres?
4. What kinds of teaching practices will students encounter in your department's WID courses?
5. When they've satisfied your department's WID requirement, what should students know and be able to do with writing?

To assist departments/programs in the process of generating answers to these questions, we are providing language borrowed from existing WID plans (see Appendix). We offer these

examples as heuristics that departments/programs can draw on as they work to generate answers to the five common WID questions, above.

To begin this process, we ask that departments/programs return to their original WID plans, most of which were written 5-7 years ago, to determine a) whether they still accurately capture the department's needs and desires as regards WID, and b) whether language from these statements can be repurposed on the new departmental WID webpage. Ideally, existing WID plans will be discussed by faculty at department meetings or assessed by a departmental curriculum committee (WID plans can be accessed by visiting the COGE webpage on the RIC website).

Dr. Michael Michaud of the campus Writing Board, who has been charged with assisting departments/programs with this initiative, will facilitate all communications with Web Services once departments/programs have generated their webpage content. *We ask that Mike be the only one to communicate with Web Services on this project.*

Additionally, Mike can meet with departments/programs to discuss WID requirements and offer feedback on WID webpages, should they desire assistance. Mike can be reached at [mmichaud@ric.edu](mailto:mmichaud@ric.edu) or 456-8661.

## **2. Syllabi Statement**

We ask that once WID requirements have been revisited, revised, and approved by departments/programs, that a statement be created to include on syllabi of WID-designated courses. This statement should identify WID courses as such to both students and faculty.

Towards this end, we provide, below, the following WID syllabus statement template, which departments can adapt for their own purposes.

\_\_\_\_\_ has been designated by the Department of \_\_\_\_\_ as one of its Writing in the Disciplines (WID) courses. Students enrolled in WID courses should expect to write more than in traditional classes and to receive instruction in and feedback on their written work. WID courses like this one build on and extend knowledge of writing that students gain in General Education courses such as First-Year Writing, First-Year Seminar, and Connections classes as well as other departmental WID courses.

If departments prefer to write their own syllabus statements, they are encouraged to do so.

## **3. RhodeMaps**

We ask that once WID requirements have been revisited, revised, and approved by departments/programs, they, in cooperation with the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC), work to update their existing curriculum RhodeMap to explicitly identify the courses that

have been designated as satisfying their WID requirement. This can be accomplished by contacting Mike Michaud or Sue Abbotson, chair of Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) ([sabbotson@ric.edu](mailto:sabbotson@ric.edu)).

~

We thank you for your time and effort in helping to create greater visibility for writing in the disciplines at RIC. To assist you in planning, we offer this suggested timeline for the completion of the three initiatives outlined above:

1. **End of Fall Term (2018):** Answers to questions for WID webpage generated;
2. **End of Spring Term (2019):** Syllabus statement adopted or drafted; RhodeMap revision completed.

***As you can see, it is our hope that each department will be able to complete these three initiatives by the end of the 2018/2019 academic year.***

If you have questions or would like help in facilitating these projects, please reach out to Mike Michaud ([mmichaud@ric.edu](mailto:mmichaud@ric.edu)). Once you have completed these projects, please forward your documents to Mike and he will facilitate discussions of them with COGE.

## Appendix: Sample Language for Answers to Common WID Questions

### Why is writing important to your discipline/field?

- Writing is essential to communicating as a professional nurse. Professional nurses write as caregivers, advocates, teachers, and researchers. Nurses use writing to provide high quality safe care to patients and communities, to propose improvements to health care delivery, and to promote changes in health care policy. (Nursing)
- An essential writing skill for chemists is learning to keep a good laboratory notebook. The lab notebook is the permanent record of all experimental work. In research labs, it is the notebook record that provides data for publication or a patent claim. Future workers need to be able to repeat an experiment from the notebook record. (Chemistry)
- Writing assignments are integral to all accounting and CIS courses. Students in both majors need to have the ability to communicate with many constituencies and in many forms. Accounting majors learn how to communicate information to help users make smart decisions. (Accounting & CIS)
- Writing in the Discipline of general management (GM) concerns three major areas: writing done by managers; writing clearly and concisely; and writing with others. Topics include planning, organizing, leading, and controlling aspects of the company's structure, operations, employees, and relationships with the external environment (e.g., economy, laws). (Management)

### Which courses are designated as WID by your department? Why these courses?

- The History Department has designated three classes among its course offerings as particularly emblematic of "Writing in the Discipline." These consist of History 200 "The Nature of Historical Inquiry," History 361 "Seminar in History," (designated for History/ Liberal Arts and Public History Certificate students) and History 362 "Reading Seminar in History." (History)
- The specific courses in which chemistry students learn to write in the discipline are Organic Chemistry (CHEM 205-206), usually taken in the sophomore year, Analytical or Environmental Analytical Chemistry (CHEM 404 or 416), typically taken in the junior year, and Physical Chemistry I Laboratory (CHEM 407), taken in the junior or senior year. (Chemistry)
- BIOL 111 Introductory Biology I: Introduction to scientific communication and modeling primary scientific literature; BIOL 320 Cell and Molecular Biology: Developing further data analysis and communication skills – modeling primary scientific literature; BIOL 460 Senior Seminar: Synthesizing information: writing a scientific review paper. (Biology)
- We recognize that writing is integrally related to analyzing and responding to literature. We directly address the kinds of writing particular to the discipline of literary studies in English 201, English 202, and English 460. (English)

- HED 300 Concept of Teaching, HED 417 Instructional Planning in Health Education, HED 418 Practicum in Health Education, HED 428 Student Teaching in Health Education (Health Education)

\*\*\* Note that few of these examples articulate *why* these courses are identified as WID.

### **What forms or genres of writing will students learn and practice in your department's WID courses? Why these genres?**

- Examples of formal writing include among others précis of articles, analytical book reviews, comparative book reviews, historiographical essays and research papers. (History)
- In the chemistry program, students learn to keep laboratory notebooks in Organic Chemistry (CHEM 205-206). The notebook is used to record procedures, observations, data, and conclusions. (Chemistry)
- The most salient point at which our department captures the quality and depth of our candidates' abilities to write in their disciplines is with the Teacher Candidate Mini Work Sample (TCMWS). These assignments require candidates to write about 5 critical areas relevant to meeting the exceptional learning needs of their school-age students. (Special Education)
- Forms of communication include financial statements and related analysis, tax returns and tax advice, audit reports, client proposals and recommendations. CIS majors learn the conventions of program and systems documentation and how to communicate facts, ideas and recommendations in systems analysis and design projects. (Accounting & CIS)
- Management students (in all concentrations) and marketing students must be able to plan, write, and complete reports, recommendations for action, memoranda, and letters. (Management)
- Because the discipline of Psychology is a science, the peer-reviewed journal article plays a major role in transmitting advancements in knowledge of human behavior. (Psychology)

\*\*\* Note that few of these examples articulate *why* students are asked to learn these genres.

### **What kinds of teaching practices will students encounter in your department's WID courses?**

- Students meet one-on-one with the instructor twice during the semester. At those times, their research projects are discussed as well as their progress in improving their writing. (History)
- Often our 300 level classes use a combination of "low stakes" and "high stakes" writing assignments daily in this class. In sociology 345, for example, students submit journal writing and discussion board comments ("low stakes"), which they are to do daily. They

also submit five formal (4-6 pages) papers due every two weeks. These formal writing assignments are theory driven and use a variety of books on victimization. Students are expected to use citations and references to document their work (“High stakes”).

(Sociology)

- Peer review is used for some assignments, some instructors review and comment on (but do not grade) a draft of the paper; or, after the reports are evaluated and returned with comments, students are required to take them to the Writing Center for help before resubmission. (Chemistry)
- Students are required to write a report that analyzes the accounting policies and financial statements in the case, along with making a recommendation on whether to purchase the company’s stock, supported by the analysis. Typically the instructor does one sample case at the beginning of the semester to provide a model for students to follow in these assignments. (Accounting & CIS)
- The review paper is submitted as a series of critically evaluated drafts culminating in a final submission at the completion of the course. (Biology)
- A complete first draft is peer reviewed using a structured review form. (Management)
- Students write a term paper in four parts. Subsequent assignments build on feedback given on earlier assignments. (Management)
- Students may be asked to submit multiple drafts of some papers, responding to feedback from peers and/or the instructor. (Anthropology)
- Larger projects will be broken into their components, with the opportunity for instruction on writing and presentation at each stage. There will be opportunity for revision on some of papers. (Anthropology)

### **When they’ve completed your department’s WID requirement, what should students know and be able to do with writing?**

- One of our program goals is “ability to articulate sociological analyses in oral and written form.” (Sociology)
- Students can learn how to write like a sociologist, including statement of research question and/or hypotheses, presenting a literature review, presenting one’s findings, writing a discussion section and a conclusion. We stress the difference between an opinion essay and a critical research paper. (Sociology)
- A desired outcome is for our students is to develop their writing over the course of their studies. Our goal is that their work in sociology 460 reflects their enhanced ability and comfort with writing formal research papers. (Sociology)
- **WID Program Outcomes:** The Bachelor of Science in Nursing graduate will:
  - Effectively communicate in writing in the various professional nursing practice roles.
  - Accurately and precisely document professional practice in clinical settings.
  - Prepare thoughtful and effective research papers in the discipline of nursing.
  - Prepare oral and written presentations individually and collaboratively to achieve a specific purpose.

- Engage in reflective writing for personal professional development.