

To: Sue Abbotson, Chair of UCC  
 From: Mike Michaud, Chair of Writing Board  
 Date: 5/6/15  
 Subject: Annual Report (2014/2015)

I am pleased to submit this report summarizing the activity of the Writing Board (WB) for the academic year 2014/2015. You'll find, first, a review of the Writing Board membership (I have just completed the second year of my second term as WB chair). From there, I will review the work of the WB and the Chair.

### Writing Board Membership

Position	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016
Chair	Mike Michaud	Mike Michaud	Mike Michaud
Director of (Writing)	Becky Caouette	Becky Caouette	Becky Caouette
Director (Writing Center)	Claudine Griggs	Claudine Griggs	Claudine Griggs
Director (FCTL)	Joe Zornado/Bonnie Macdonald	Bonnie Macdonald	Bonnie Macdonald
Coordinator (FYS)	Quenby Hughes	Quenby Hughes	Quenby Hughes
Faculty (FAS) (2) -- 1 Math/CS	Mikaila Arthur/Namita Sarawagi	Mikaila Arthur/David Abrahamson	Deborah Britt/David Abrahamson
Faculty (FSEHD) (1)	Martha Horn	Martha Horn	Martha Horn
Faculty (SOSW) (1)	Deborah Seigel	Deborah Seigel	Jennifer Meade
Faculty (SOM) (1)	Randy DeSimone	Randy DeSimone	Randy DeSimone
Faculty (SON) (1)	Kiersten Brennan	Kiersten Brennan	Deborah Kutenplon
Faculty (Adams Library)	Tish Brennan	Tish Brennan	Tish Brennan
Faculty (Comp/Rhet)	Mike Michaud	Mike Michaud	Mike Michaud

Blue = Ex Officio  
 Green = Rotating  
 Green = New Members

## **Writing Board Meeting Dates (2013/2014)**

- 9/24/14
- 10/29/14
- 11/19/14
- 2/25/15
- 4/22/15

## **Review of WB Activity**

This year, the WB sponsored/co-sponsored three events on campus: First Pages (in collaboration with First-Year Writing and the Writing Center), the annual Adjunct Dinner and Faculty Development Workshop, and the Write-In (in collaboration with First-Year Writing and the Writing Center). In what follows, I summarize developments at each of these events.

### *First-Pages*

This was the second year the WB co-sponsored a Writing Week event and exhibit, First Pages (10/20/14). Following the FYW program's lead, we solicited First Pages of writing from faculty across the disciplines, ultimately assembling a collection of 39 faculty First Pages from across the disciplines. These were put on display in Adams Library during Writing Week and the week following it. As with the year before, from our 39 contributors, we solicited 10 faculty to join us at our First Pages event, held in the Rinehardt Room of Adams Library. Here, contributors 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 about a diverse range of written genres. Food was provided by the FYW program. Attendance was around 15-20. It seems that First Pages is becoming a regular part of our yearly offerings and for this we are glad.

### *Adjunct Dinner & Faculty Development Workshop (FDW)*

As in previous years, the WB's primary activities this year were the annual Adjuncts and the Academic Conversation dinner (1/13/15) and FDW (1/14/15). We invited a new speaker this year, Dr. David Jolliffe of the University of Arkansas. Dr. Jolliffe delivered a talk on reading, in keeping with this year's theme: "Writers are Readers, Too!: Engaging Students in the Reading Process." In this way, the WB attempted to branch out from our usual focus on writing but aimed to keep our audience in mind by addressing a topic

that we assume has relevance for faculty from across campus: reading.

Dr. Jolliffe was well-received at the Adjunct Dinner and FDW but the feedback was mixed. Here is a sampling of some of what we heard:

### Positive

- Dr. Joliffe was an engaging and dynamic presenter with lots of useful insight and information.
- Interesting topic--a needed complement to writing pedagogy.
- Great speaker--great big ideas and specific strategies. I liked the opportunities to read and try out strategies.

### Negative

- I'd have liked to have stuff on how to encourage students to read in the first place
- Structure was good but content was lacking.
- I do feel as though for me, in biology, it is difficult to sometimes implement, but it has me thinking!

Additional feedback on the adjunct and FDW events can be found at the end of this report, in Appendix A.

The afternoon sessions at this year's FDW were, in my opinion and in the opinions of many members of the Board, particularly good. Including our Writing Center tutors, who had a panel of their own, lead by Claudine Griggs (WC Director), 21 faculty and students participated in the afternoon sessions. This was by design. We want faculty to stick around for the second part of the day but we also want as many faculty as possible to feel engaged with and connected to this ongoing professional development event. We had some truly terrific panels--among them, one that featured tutors from the Writing Center ("Reading to Write: Writing Center Tutors Discuss the Challenges of Helping RIC Students to Read and Write for College), another that featured Erik Christianson (History), Corrine McKamey (Ed Studies), and Carolyn Obel-Omia (Ed. Studies) on using students' low-stakes writing to teach reading-in-the-disciplines, and a great session featured Tish Brennan (Adams Library) called, simply, "I'm Supposed to Get Five Things...: Reading the Research Assignment." In total, there were six panels during the afternoon sessions and I feel as though they were terrific and really showcased some of the good work our own local faculty are doing as regards the teaching of reading (and writing) in the disciplines. I feel fortunate to be able to call on

so many talented people to support this event.

### *Write-In Event*

This year the WB collaborated with the Writing Center and the First-Year Writing Program on a new event, suggested by FYW Director Becky Caouette, called the Write-In. The idea is to provide a space for students to congregate and to provide computers, snacks, and the services of writing tutors at a busy time of the semester, with the hope that students will take more seriously the demands of academic writing. (Oh, and this is supposed to be fun, as well!) There is this idea that some people have a hard time getting themselves to actually sit down and write, and so if you make the writing into a social interaction that involves other people, perhaps they will be more productive. I think there is something to this idea, but I can say, speaking for myself, that I prefer to write alone.

In any event, our attendance at this inaugural event was not high, but our enthusiasm was and we plan to try it again in the fall. We think the idea is a good one, but that it might take some time to catch on.

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

As chair of the Writing Board, my work continues to be divided between two tasks: 1) leading the WB, 2) outreach to the RIC community to provide support for faculty on writing and pedagogy. As regards the former, I plan and facilitate our monthly meetings and lead the WB in planning events such as those described above. As regards the latter, I provide various professional development opportunities as regards the teaching of writing. In what follows, I will speak about the professional development I offered during the 2014/2015 year.

### *Three-Part Workshop Series: "The How To Of Peer Review" (fall 2014)*

During the fall semester and in collaboration with the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) I offered a three-part workshop on the use of peer-review in disciplinary courses. My workshop was organized around the following ideas:

- **Workshop I:** Imagining Peer Writing Groups as Part of Your Practice -- *9/16/14, 12:30-2pm*
- **Workshop II:** Faculty Training for Peer Review, Part I -- *10/21/14, 12:30-2pm*
- **Workshop III:** Faculty Training for Peer Review, Part II -- *11/18/14, 12:30-2pm*

Attendance at these workshops was actually quite good. The workshops were well-received. I believe that peer-review is one of the strategies for teaching writing that, if implemented well, can make a considerable difference in students' success in learning disciplinary forms of writing. I was glad to have faculty attend these workshops and glad to learn that many are already experimenting with this teaching technique.

### *Writing in the Disciplines: Collaborations with Disciplinary Faculty (spring 2015)*

During the spring semester, I collaborated with the FCTL and several recent graduates of the Summer Seminar for Teaching Writing (SSTW) to lead a series of discussions on a variety of topics related to teaching writing-in-the-disciplines. Here is a list of the topics we discussed and faculty who co-lead the workshops with me:

- *Students Reading Students: How To Use Students' Low-Stakes Writing to Generate Better Class Discussions—Tuesday, February 10, 12:30-2:00pm (Erik Christianson)*
- *What's Blackboard Good For??? Teaching Writing!—Tuesday, March 24, 12:30-2:00pm (Carolyn Obel-Omia)*
- *What We Talk About When We Talk About Student Writing—Tuesday, April 14, 12:30-2:00pm (Carol Cummings)*

The discussions were well-attended and offered the opportunity to talk and work on issues related to writing and pedagogy across disciplinary contexts. This is the second year I have teamed up with faculty from other departments during the spring semester to co-lead faculty workshops. I plan to continue to do so. Between the afternoon sessions of the Faculty Development Workshop and these co-lead co-op workshops, I am able to provide graduates of the SSTW further opportunities to hone their skills and develop new knowledge about writing and pedagogy and, further, to continue to expand the number of campus leaders on matters related to teaching writing in the disciplines. I see building faculty leadership as a central element of any good WAC program.

### *Summer Seminar for the Teaching of Writing (SSTW)*

While the primary work of the SSTW takes place in May, after the official academic year has ended, my responsibilities as SSTW facilitator extend throughout the academic year as I conduct follow-up meetings and one-on-one conferences with SSTW participants during the fall semester and then plan and facilitate the Panel Presentations event, at which SSTW participants share and reflect on their learning, in the spring (I also read

and respond to SSTW participants' final written reports). The SSTW heads into its fifth year on campus this summer and I am pleased to say that we are at full capacity, with twelve faculty participating. I'd like to thank the five deans for stepping in to offer financial support to keep the SSTW running this year and the VPAA Ron Pitt for continuing his support for this important professional development initiative.

### *Scholarship and Creative Endeavors*

I am pleased to share that I have begun to make my work as a writing-across-the-curriculum specialist a part of my scholarly and creative activity here at the college in several forms: 1) I have approached two RIC faculty members with the idea of penning an article on teaching writing-in-the-disciplines, each an outgrowth of our work leading co-op workshops in the FCTL this spring, 2) I submitted a short article on my experience as a campus writing-in-the-disciplines leader for publication in a new collection of essays on building WAC programs and my piece has been selected for publication, 3) I have signed on to help lead a workshop at next year's Conference on College Composition and communication--on building WAC professional development workshops/initiatives, 4) I am in the process of creating a testimonial video in which graduates of the Summer Seminar for Teaching Writing discuss the ways in which the seminar has impacted their teaching. I think that these small steps represent an important moment in my efforts to consolidate this new professional identity of WAC-leader and to begin to join with the local and national WAC community.

---

In closing, I'd like to thank the chair of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) and the UCC, in general, for the opportunity to share this report and I'd like to thank the college for the ongoing support it provides the Writing Board. The Board feels supported by the UCC and the college and for that we are grateful.

## Appendix A. Feedback Summary of January Events (2015)

### Adjunct Dinner

Signed in: 36 (WB/Admin: 10) -- 26 total adjunct faculty signed in

#### *AD by the Numbers*

<b>Session</b>	<b>VU</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>SU</b>	<b>NU</b>	<b>CU</b>
Speaker	14	12	1	0	0
Format	17	10	0	0	0

#### *AD by Words*

- SOme good ideas presented that can be useful in many academic areas with some modification
- great lecture!
- Engaging speaker!
- Interesting, held our attention!
- I will spend the term thinking about integrating some of Dr. Jolliffe's ideas into my teaching.
- It was interactive, Dr. Joliffe solicited our opinions. I liked that.
- It was great sitting with people from different departments and discussing things with them.
- I will try out these methods in my upcoming classes!
- Maybe too specific to English courses.
- Different! Many specific and applicable strategies presented! Very engaging!
- Thoughtful solutions to common problems.
- I liked the ideas about self-evaluation and weaving a sense of personal investment into the learning.
- I continue to struggle with the divide between courses wherein inquiry-based efforts will work and those were in its off-target
- Great ideas, not sure how to integrate them into the topic I teach
- more interactive, please, less lecturing at us.

#### *Suggestions*

- When is technology in teaching useful/not useful, helpful/not helpful?
- More about writing and student engagement
- Technology in the classroom
- methods of research
- more decaf choices, please
- peer-reviewing
- Two meetings per semester, one at beginning, 2nd  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way through the term
- Have RIC teachers describe their own approaches and successes/failures

**Faculty Development Workshop**

Signed In: 65 (WB/Admin: 12)

*FDW By the Numbers*

<b>Session</b>	<b>VS</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>VD</b>
Morning	16	10	2	1	
Afternoon***	11	11	2		

\*\*\* Five of the feedback forms did not include data on the afternoon sessions (presumably these folks left after the morning talk).

*FDW by Words*

Morning:

- Both content and execution were great.
- I wonder about the “status quo” definition. Isn’t that a hard set of assumptions to pinpoint?
- Outstanding speaker, good ideas and examples
- Dr. Joliffe was an engaging and dynamic presenter with lots of useful insight and information.
- Clear, interesting and practical
- Dr. Joliffe was informative and interesting but the activities were repetitive, which made the morning session too long.
- Activities could have been more clearly explained.



- I do feel as though for me, in biology, it is difficult to sometimes implement, but it has me thinking!
- decaf would be nice!
- Interesting topic--a needed complement to writing pedagogy. The presentation was good--but maybe a bit too anecdotal? Not sure the exercises were as clear as they could be. But still useful!
- I'd have liked to have stuff on how to encourage students to read in the first place
- Fabulous!
- Great speaker--great big ideas and specific strategies. I liked the opportunities to read and try out strategies.
- Enjoyed discussion regarding various strategies all faculty can use in their courses.
- Structure was good but content was lacking. There were some issues with deciphering assumptions--his sense of "data" or "evidence" is quite different than what we might think in the social sciences. Set of article hand-outs had nothing to do with many of our fields. Would have appreciated much more on what level of reading skills we should be expecting students to come to college with.

Afternoon:

- Writing Center--very satisfied
- Nice variety of offerings. Maybe have panelists offer ways to apply their strategies to other disciplines.
- Good discussions
- Cold
- I think that a lot of the breakout sessions could be more workshop-like
- It was hard to choose which one to go to. They were all very interesting!
- Panels are more dynamic than solo presentations.
- Great sharing of ideas!
- FYS session was superb
- Lots of energy on campus
- Nice to hear what colleagues are doing in their classes
- Session on similar topics should have been separated

*Suggestions:*

- too cold
- need different options for vegetarians between Tuesday night and Wednesday
- great work Writing Board! I was very satisfied with the level of cooperation

amongst attendees. Would like to see more opportunities for crossing disciplines.

- Keep up the good work! I can't make it to all the events, but I am glad to have this support!
- food great
- Thank you for putting this program together and for feeding us.
- Make the morning session an hour shorter and replace that hour with a third break-out session, or just make the whole workshop end at 230 rather than 330
- more handouts
- excellent overall
- lovely lunch
- maybe something on how to draw in our own research to teaching
- ideas for ELL learners