

TO: Sue Abbotson, Chair of Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC)

FROM: Mike Michaud, Chair of Writing Board (WB)

DATE: 4/15/16

SUBJECT: Report on WB Activity (Mar/Apr)

Work of the Writing Board

On March 23, 2016, the Writing Board collaborated with the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) to host the Summer Seminar for Teaching Writing (SSTW) annual Panel Presentation in Adams Library. The event was well-attended and functioned as the “dissemination” moment for the dozen or so faculty members who participated in the SSTW during 2015/2016 to share their experiences of implementing effective strategies for teaching writing in the disciplines.

The Writing Board currently has several tasks ahead of it:

1. **Targeting WID Faculty:** We are planning a first-ever Writing in the Disciplines (WID) workshop. This spring, with the help of our intern, Tina Agudelo, we have compiled a list of WID courses and instructors. While some of this information is contained on the COGE website, it is not aggregated into one document and no names of faculty who teach WID courses are included in the COGE materials. Tina and I worked to organize WID courses into a single spreadsheet and to identify WID faculty so as to begin to recruit them for targeted professional development opportunities.
2. **Funding:** This year the WB decided to take a look at its budget and reconsider the way it allocates professional development funds. We were able to significantly curtail our spending on our annual January workshop--the thinking being that spending our entire budget on a single one-day event is not the best strategy for effective professional development. The good news is, we were able to free up funds for additional professional development activities. The bad news is, because the funding was specifically targeted in particular directions for the 2015/2016 funding cycle, we had to stay within those parameters in forming any new plans. This is not necessarily bad news, though, as we will be allocating the additional funds we have remaining for 2015/2016 on our WID workshop (see below).
3. **WID Workshop:** Dr. Neal Lerner (Northeastern University) will be our consultant for the WID workshop on June 3, 2016. We are targeting a small cohort of WID faculty for this event. This is the first time we are attempting to offer a workshop aimed not at the pedagogy of individual faculty members but, instead, at individual faculty members functioning as representatives of their departmental units. The plan is to ask faculty to revisit their department’s WID plan and to assess progress with implementation/ coordination and assessment. We will remaining WB professional development funds for 2015/2016 on this event. We continue to feel that if we want faculty to turn out for substantive professional development, we must incentivize them to do so. Participants at

this workshop will be compensated with a \$150 professional development reimbursement (and provided with a nice lunch).

4. **Budget:** The WB continues to explore the possibility of having its own budget, separating its budget from Dean Earl Simson's budget. We are also in the process of proactively trying to budget for the 2016/2017 year as we continue to reinvent the way we offer professional development to RIC faculty.
5. **WID Listening Tour:** During the spring 2016 semester, a small group was formed to discuss the college's WID requirement. Out of the group's discussions came the idea for a series (probably two) of listening sessions with RIC faculty members, to learn more about their experiences of teaching WID courses and implementing WID plans. Originally plans were to hold the listening sessions during the spring 2016 semester, but with all that's going on on campus this term, we've decided to delay these sessions until fall 2016.

Work of the Writing Board Chair

Much of what I've been up to has been outlined in the section above. I'd like to note a few additional items of interest:

1. **Summer Seminar for Teaching Writing:** We have received funding to run the SSTW for the sixth year in 2016/2017 and the recruitment process has begun. To date we have five full-time faculty members signed up for this year's seminar, which will run, as in years past, during the first week of summer session 1.
2. **Professional Development (Spring 2016):** My professional development co-op workshops at the FCTL this spring have now drawn to a close. As in years past, I collaborated with individual faculty during the spring term to offer three co-op workshops focused on writing pedagogy. The last one, this past week, with Dr. Brian Knoth of the Communication Department, on assignment design, was particularly well-attended and well-received. The workshops I offered "Faculty as Writers" were not as well attended. This was the first time I've teamed up with faculty in this series to talk about how they get writing done here at the college. Perhaps I'll try again, perhaps not.
3. **Professional Development (Fall 2016):** I am in the process of planning professional development offerings for fall 2016. I plan to collaborate, again, with the FYS program to offer professional development workshops targeted specifically at their needs. Given low turn-outs at co-op workshops this spring, I am thinking more strategically about offering continued such workshops going forward.
4. **Professional Development for the WB Chair:** This year at the annual Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), the largest conference for post-secondary writing instructors and administrators in the country, I participated as a discussion-leader in a half-day workshop on writing across the curriculum. The workshop was aimed at supporting those who are new to this kind of work. Since I, myself, am somewhat new to the work, I learned a good deal from the workshop. I share this with you because it represents my continued effort to extend my on-campus work on WAC at

RIC beyond our campus. Towards these ends, I have a small publication coming out in an edited collection next year and now I've presented at a professional conference. I look forward to continued opportunities to expand the scope of my interest in WAC work beyond our campus and to learn from my colleagues in other institutional contexts.

5. **Planning for 2017 FDW:** Along with the Board, I am in the early stages of planning our showcase event of the academic year, the Faculty Development Workshop, for January 2017.
6. **Professional Development for Adjunct Faculty:** I have reached out to the adjunct faculty union to discuss opportunities for professional development targeted at their needs. Joe Szpila and I are in the very early stages of coordinating on this front.

The WB has its final meeting of the academic year on April 20, 2016. We have much to discuss. I continue to feel lucky to have such a terrific group of colleagues with which to work and feel grateful for the institutional support the college provides for professional development work around writing and pedagogy.

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