

**TO:** Charlie McLaughlin, Chair of Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC)  
**FROM:** Mike Michaud, Chair of Writing Board (WB)  
**DATE:** 2/20/15  
**SUBJECT:** Report on Writing Board Activity (Jan/Feb)

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

In January 2015, the Writing Board held its 19th annual Faculty Development Workshop, the title of which was “Writers are Readers, Too!: Engaging Students in the Reading Process.” We also hosted the annual Adjuncts and the Academic Conversation dinner. These events were well-received by the faculty. I have included as an Appendix A (below) my annual report on attendance and feedback from both events.

I’d like to thank members of the Writing Board for helping to make these events a success and I’d like to thank Dean Simson, Vice-President Ron Pitt and the college for their ongoing support of these important annual professional development opportunities.

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

As chair, I continue to offer professional development to RIC faculty around writing and pedagogy. Here is a list of workshops and talks I’ll be giving this spring, in collaboration with the FCTL:

*Students Reading Students: How To Use Students’ Low-Stakes Writing to Generate Better Class Discussions—Tuesday, February 10, 12:30-2:00pm*

Why don’t students talk during class? What can faculty do to encourage greater class participation? If you have asked yourself these questions, this workshop is for you. Facilitated by Erik Christiansen (History) and Mike Michaud (English, Writing Board).

*What’s Blackboard Good For??? Teaching Writing!—Tuesday, March 24, 12:30-2:00pm.*

This session will focus on using Blackboard to facilitate low- and high-stakes writing instruction. Facilitated by Carolyn Obel-Omia (Elementary Ed) and Mike Michaud (English, Writing Board).

*What We Talk About When We Talk About Student Writing—Tuesday, April 14, 12:30-2:00pm.*

What DO faculty talk about when they talk about student writing? Is it all griping? Is any of it productive? And how do these water-cooler and hallway conversations shape our collective understanding of students, their writing, and the purposes for assigning writing in the first place? Facilitated by Carol Cummings (Health and Phys Ed) and Mike Michaud (English, Writing Board).

*The “How To” of Teaching Peer Review, Or, What Do You Do When You Put Students into Small Groups to Discuss Their Writing? Friday, April 17, 9:00am-noon. We’ll have the coffee on!*

Peer review is one of the most effective ways to help students produce better writing — and it’s not just meant for writing courses. This is a three-part series in one morning! Topics include imagining peer writing groups as part of your practice and faculty and student training for peer review. Please RSVP for this session to [fctl@ric.edu](mailto:fctl@ric.edu). Facilitated by Mike Michaud (English, Chair of the Writing Board).

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

## 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 ¾ 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