

TO: Charlie McLaughlin, Chair of Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC)
FROM: Mike Michaud, Chair of Writing Board (WB)
DATE: 4/17/15
SUBJECT: Report on Writing Board Activity (Mar/Apr)

Work of the Writing Board

In addition to our regular meetings, the writing Board has been involved with and/or sponsored two writing-related events this spring--the first was the SSTW Panel Presentations, held on April 8, 2015, the is a new event, the Write-In, on Thursday April 23, 2015. We are co-sponsors of the Write-In with the First-Year Writing Program and the Writing Center. This event is open to all RIC students and is designed to give them a focal time and location to work on end-of-term writing projects. Members of the English Department's Composition Committee (of which WB members Michaud and Caouette are members) will staff this event, along with tutors from the Writing Center, who will be on hand to offer assistance and guidance to any/all students who attend. This is a first time event and we are pleased to be a part of it.

Aside from these events, our work during the spring term has involved discussions about plans for our spring 2016 Faculty Development Workshop.

Finally, three Board members will be leaving us this spring:

Kiersten Brennan (Nursing)
Deborah Siegel (Social Work)
Mikaila Arthur (Sociology)

We are sad to see these three faculty members go but grateful for their service. We are in the process of bringing on new members to replace them. So far, we have:

Deborah Kutenplon (Nursing)

Work of the Writing Board Chair

In my capacity as WB chair, and in collaboration with the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, I have completed another series of professional development co-op workshops this spring. I seem to have fallen into a pattern where during the fall semester I offer some sort of series on the "how-to" of teaching writing in disciplinary contexts and in the spring, I team up with faculty members in the disciplines to co-lead a workshop on some topic related to writing in the disciplines. This has worked well and represents an important step in the process of developing an engaged campus culture around issues related to the teaching of writing. We have had close to fifty RIC faculty come through our Summer Seminar for Teaching Writing

and it is to these folks to whom I go when I am looking for collaborators. Doing so accomplishes two goals: 1) it lends my work credibility in the sense that it's not *just* the writing guy who is talking about writing on campus, 2) it helps faculty in the disciplines continue to internalize the identity of one-who-has-expertise in matters related to the teaching of writing. I am pleased to have had the chance to team up with the following faculty members this spring: Carolyn Obel-Omia, Erik Christianson, Carol Cummings.

The next step in helping to develop faculty as experts in WID is to engage them in a collaborative endeavor towards some sort of scholarly publication. I have already initiated one such relationship with Dr. Christianson and am hopeful that once his schedule quiets down we'll have the opportunity to talk more about turning the co-op workshop we delivered this spring into an article. Dr. Cummings also seemed interested in taking our discussions to the next level, so I plan to reach out to her as well.

I am advising and consulting with the School of Social Work, who is launching a writing course for newly accepted graduate students who have demonstrated that they struggle with writing. This summer the SSW will offer the first such course for these individuals, taught by Dan Weisman. I have worked with Dan to offer feedback on the course syllabus and plan to continue to keep in touch with him to learn how the class goes and whether the faculty feel that it is accomplishing its objective, which is to provide those who need it with a kind of "boot camp" experience as relates to the nuts and bolts of writing BEFORE they begin their graduate coursework. I think this is an exciting initiative and I commend the SSW for taking it on.

If you were to ask me what the most fun thing I've been up to this spring has been, I would tell you that it has been shooting video with Summer Seminar for Teaching Writing graduates for a testimonial video I am putting together. Over the winter I acquired some video production equipment and am trying it out with a small group of thoughtful faculty from across the disciplines. I want to learn how their orientation towards writing changed as a result of their participation in the SSTW and what they do differently in their classes as regards writing instruction. To date I've shot video with eight faculty and have two more scheduled for early May. I hope to edit the videos this summer and am excited to share the final products with the campus community in the fall.

Finally, my time has been taken up with planning for this year's SSTW. As I may have mentioned in an earlier memo, we had to secure funding for the seminar this summer by other means and we were successful. I'd like to thank the five college deans and, in particular, Dean Earl Simson, for their financial support. With their help, we are able to offer the SSTW again this summer. I'd also like to thank the VPAA, Ron Pitt, for his continued financial support.

This summer will mark the college's having invested roughly \$50,000 in professional development for faculty on teaching writing (and this is just the SSTW). This is nothing to

sneeze at and I feel grateful to have had this support. I am also pleased to report that as of this writing, our seminar for this summer is FULL to overflowing. We have twelve faculty signed on (two more than we anticipated) and one faculty member on the waitlist. I cannot wait to begin to get to work with these faculty. The SSTW continues to be among the most meaningful experiences I have had on campus and, I believe, the professional development initiative that accomplishes the most sustained good as regards the teaching of writing in the disciplines.

Thanks for the chance to share this news and these developments and thanks, again, to the college for its support.