

TO: Sue Abbotson, Chair of Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC)
FROM: Mike Michaud, Chair of Writing Board (WB)
DATE: 12/18/15
SUBJECT: Report on WB Activity (Nov/Dec)

For several years, the Writing Board has been reconsidering key elements of its mission here on campus and questioning the Board's allocation of professional development funds. To communicate our concerns and desires to members of the administration, this fall the Board chair drafted a memo which he circulated to the full Board for discussion at our November meeting. The Board helped the chair revise the memo and voted on one of its key elements (to dissociate itself from the annual Adjuncts and the Academic Conversation dinner). Having received Board approval for the memo (and the vote), the Board chair took it to members of the administration, principally VPAA Ron Pitt and Dean of LAS Earl Simson for discussion.

At these meetings, several important objectives were accomplished:

1. members of the administration indicated their support for the Board's decision to end its association with the Adjunct event;
2. Dean Simson clarified that the Board's professional development allocation does not need to be earmarked primarily for the annual Faculty Development Day, thus freeing up the Board to reconsider the way it allocates funds for professional development at the college;
3. VPAA Pitt suggested that the Board consider obtaining its own budget, rather than have its funding within the budget of Dean Simson;
4. VPAA Pitt indicated his approval to form a committee to explore Writing in the Disciplines at RIC.

With these developments, I'm pleased to announce that the Board is moving in an exciting new direction in the year ahead. We have already successfully reduced the cost of the FDW and we are considering ways to create new programming that meets the needs of our faculty. We will explore the creation of a Writing Board budget in 2016 and we have formed a small committee to explore our WID requirement, scheduled to convene for the first time in the early part of the spring term. I'm providing a copy of the memo that was shared with VPAA Pitt and Dean Simson as an appendix to this report.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these developments.

Appendix

TO: Ron Pitt (VPAA), Earl Simson (Dean of FAS),
FROM: The Writing Board
SUBJECT: Revised Funding Mechanism for Writing Board
DATE: 11/29/15

Objective

Our goal is to secure a new funding mechanism for the campus Writing Board (WB). We wish to

- re-allocate portion of funding provided for the annual Faculty Development Workshop (FDW) to other kinds of professional development;
- transform conditional funding provided through the FCTL into more permanent funding for the WB.

Request

Yearly Spending on Writing Across the Curriculum at RIC, 2011-15

Events/Programs	Allocation
Faculty Development Workshop	\$7-8000
Summer Seminar for Teaching Writing	\$10-11,000
TOTAL	\$17-18,000

Proposed Spending on Writing Across the Curriculum, 2016-2020

Events/Programs	Allocation
Faculty Development Workshop	\$3600
Summer Seminar for Teaching Writing	\$9600
WID Outcomes & Assessment Workshops	\$4300
Refreshments, etc. for other Events	\$1000
TOTAL	\$18,500

Justification

As the entity on campus “charged with the responsibility to coordinate writing across the curriculum in an advisory capacity and as a forum for discussion of writing,” we see our proposal as a response to both the college’s new “Strategic Plan -- Vision 2020,” which explicitly touches on matters related to writing and pedagogy in its “Culture of Learning Goals” (see CL-2, 5, 6, & 15), and to the following important developments on campus:

1. The establishment of new First-Year Seminar and Connections courses, each of which is charged with meeting the college’s Written Communication outcome;
2. The establishment of a new Writing in the Disciplines (WID) requirement which asks departments to attend to teaching writing in their disciplines;
3. Changing faculty demographics, with an influx of new faculty;
4. Increased demand for the campus Writing Center.

The proposal for a revised funding mechanism for the WB that we have outlined above and argue for below is a direct response to these developments. **In short, we have more faculty teaching more courses which are explicitly charged with providing writing instruction than ever before.** These faculty, especially those who are relatively new to teaching and new to the college, need the opportunity to learn about evidence-based practices for teaching writing in the disciplines. RIC faculty consistently report that they receive no such training as part of their graduate education. Our proposal works to meet their needs by offering continued professional development on teaching writing across the curriculum (WAC).

As important, our proposal expands professional development work on WAC at RIC from an individual to a departmental or programmatic level. It’s not enough to train individual faculty members in WAC best practices. **Departments and programs need to think systematically about how they will respond to campus-mandated writing requirements and they need guidance in doing so.** Our WID Outcomes & Assessment Workshops will work to meet this need while also working to build a shared vision of WAC at the college.

In sum, for the past twenty years, Rhode Island College has supported professional development for WAC principally through funding a single-day event that the Writing Board hosts, the annual Faculty Development Workshop (FDW). In this proposal, we seek to extend the college’s long-term commitment to WAC beyond a single-day model, which we see as no longer serving the needs of our faculty.

In what follows, we outline the specific recommendations of our proposal.

1. Preserve but Revise Faculty Development Workshop

We feel strongly that the FDW should continue. This event draws a sizeable crowd of faculty and has become a tradition on our campus. Having said this, with changing demographics (i.e. an influx of new, young faculty) we have witnessed a slight decline in attendance at the FDW

(see Appendix A for more information on attendance at the FDW and Adjunct Dinner). While we will continue to work hard to recruit faculty to attend the FDW, we feel that a one-day professional development event no longer serves campus needs. We propose the following changes to the FDW:

a) Reduce the honorarium to featured speaker

Market research on speaker's fees indicates that the honorarium we pay is at the high end (although in-line for a half-day workshop, of which we have done three in the past five years). We propose cutting our honorarium in half and limiting our speaker to a 60-90 minute lecture/presentation (this was the original model for the FDW).

b) Reduce spending on meals

Due to the high cost of food/refreshments on campus and a desire to spend funds for WAC more strategically, we feel that streamlining our food/refreshments budget is necessary. We will cut back on spending for breakfast and afternoon snacks/coffee but maintain allocations for lunch.

c) End association with Adjunct Faculty Dinner

After several years of discussion, the WB proposes the end of its association with the Adjunct Dinner for the following reasons:

- the event was originally conceived of as an “appreciation” dinner for part-time faculty, a purpose which falls outside our primary mission;
- we wish to encourage our part-time faculty to join with full-timers at an inclusive single event aimed at our *entire* faculty;
- we wish to find better ways to reach our part-time faculty when it comes to professional development for WAC;
- with declining attendance rates at both events, but especially at the Adjunct Dinner (see Appendix), it only makes sense to consolidate these two events.

Table 1, below, visualizes our past and proposed budget for the FDW.

	Existing Allocation	Revised Allocation
Honorarium	\$2000	\$1000
Travel/Lodging (speaker)	\$600	\$600
Food	\$4500 ***	\$2000
Totals	\$7100	\$3600

*** This number represents the average amount spent on food for both the Adjunct Dinner and the FDW during 2014 & 2015.

2. Preserve the Summer Seminar For Teaching Writing (SSTW)

In 2011, in collaboration with the FCTL, the WB chair began facilitating the Summer Seminar for the Teaching of Writing (SSTW), a year-long intensive workshop in which a small cohort of faculty drawn from across campus meet to learn about evidence-based practices in teaching writing across the curriculum. The SSTW represents the first institutionally-supported and sustained effort to expand WAC at RIC beyond the annual FDW.

Through the SSTW, which has now run for five years, we have trained 57 full-time faculty members, including several department chairs and one dean, in the “how to” of effective writing instruction (see Appendix B for a list of participating faculty). The SSTW has been instrumental in the grassroots work of training individual faculty members to develop effective writing pedagogies.

We feel strongly that the SSTW should continue, but its funding has been contingent upon a yearly renewal request. In the same way that the FDW was made a regular budget item of the WB in or around 2012, we wish to make funding for the SSTW a regular part of the WB budget. We request that the current funding allocation for the SSTW, where ten full-time faculty members are compensated for their participation with a \$700 professional development reimbursement and the facilitator is compensated with 2 FLHs, be maintained.

3. Create new WID Outcomes & Assessment Workshops

One of the most substantial new initiatives at the college that intersects with the mission of the WB is the creation of the new Writing in the Disciplines (WID) requirement. Our proposal for WID Outcomes & Assessment Workshops speaks specifically to this requirement by offering departments and programs the opportunity to come together to build WID outcomes statements and assessment procedures that are in keeping with evidence-based practices in the field of

WAC. While the SSTW is aimed at work with individual faculty, WID Outcomes & Assessment Workshops will aim at departments and programs, attempting to create shared understandings and visions for writing in the disciplines *across* faculty and, ultimately, across departments.

WID Outcomes and Assessments Workshops will take place during the summer months. Departments will be invited to apply to participate and modest professional development reimbursements will be provided to attending department members (the WB chair will be compensated in FLH).

Closing

For many years, Rhode Island College has generously supported professional development for its faculty on writing across the curriculum. Research in the WAC community suggests that such funds are well-spent, as they positively impact student learning and retention. We believe that our proposal for revised WAC funding for the Writing Board honors and builds on the tradition of WAC professional development at the college by preserving long-standing commitments, furthering recent initiatives, and introducing new projects that speak to the evolving needs of our faculty and students.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our proposal.

Appendix A

Table 1 (Sign-ups For Adjunct Dinner/FDW)*

Year	Adjunct Dinner	FDW
2010	not available	90
2011	not available	80
2012	65	82
2013	42	85

Table 2 (Sign-ins for Adjunct Dinner/FDW)

Year	Adjunct Dinner	FDW
2013*	32	53
2014	30	60
2015	26	53

* There was a severe weather event on the day of the FDW this year.

Appendix B

Arts and Sciences	Management	Social Work	Nursing	Education
Joseph Zornado (English, 2011)	Randy DeSimone (Mgt, 2011)	Scott Mueller (2013)	Jane Williams (2012)	Corrine MacKamey (EI Ed, 2011)
Bonnie MacDonald (Comm, 2011)	Julie Urda (Mgt, 2011)	Stefan Battle (2014)	Kiersten Brennan (2013)	Chris Kunkel (Couns/Ed Leadership, 2011)
Harriet Magen (Comm. 2011)	Murat Aydogdu (Finance, 2012)		Annette Griffin (2013)	Carol Cummings (Phys Ed, 2012)
Jill Harrison (Sociology, 2011)	Jiyun Wu (Mgt, 2012)		Wendy Doremus (2015)	Carolyn Obel-Omia (EI Ed, 2012)
Roderick Graham (Sociology, 2011)	Alema Karim (Mgt, 2013)		Deborah Kutenplon (2015)	Maria Lawrence (EI Ed, 2013)
Mikaila Arthur (Sociology, 2011)	Jeanne Haser-Lafond (Acct, 2014)			Martha Horn (EI Ed, 2013)
David Sugarman (Psych, 2011)	Jane Pryzbla (Acct, 2015)			Whitney Blankenship (Hist Ed, 2013)
Ann Moskol (Math/CS, 2011)	Marianne Raimondo (Mgt, 2015)			Elizabeth Holtzman (Couns/Ed Leadership, 2014)
Holly Dygert (Anthro, 2011)				Michelle Crossley (Couns/Ed Leadership, 2015)
Becky Caouette (English, 2011)				Sarah Hess (HBS, 2015)
Chris Marco (Psych, 2011)				
Michelle Brophy-Baerman (Poli Sci 2012)				

Jeanine Olson (History, 2012)				
Thomas Malloy (Psych, 2012)				
Sarah Spinette (Biology, 2012)				
Glenn Rawson (Phil 2013)				
Tony Galvez (Comm, 2013)				
Robyn Linde (Poli Sci 2013)				
Natasha Seaman (Art History, 2013)				
Quenby Hughes (History, 2013)				
Deb Britt (Biology, 2014)				
Erik Christianson (History, 2014)				
Michael Parsons (Comm, 2014)				
Thomas Schmelling (Poli Sci, 2014)				
Vincent Bohlinger (English, 2014)				
Pierre Morenon (Anthro, 2014)				
Susan Conklin (Bio, 2015)				
Brian Knoth (Comm, 2015)				
Rebekah Merson (Bio, 2015)				

Elisa Miller (History, 2015)				
Silvia Oliviera (Modern Languages, 2015)				
Jessica Pearson (Music, Th, Dance, 2015)				