

**TO:** Sue Abbotson, Chair of Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC)  
**FROM:** Mike Michaud, Chair of Writing Board (WB)  
**DATE:** 11/18/16  
**SUBJECT:** Report on WB Activity (Oct/Nov)

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

The Writing Board is pleased to announce that the 21st Annual Faculty Development Workshop (FDW), our signature professional development opportunity of the year, will be held on January 11, 2017, from 8:30-2:30pm in Alger 110. I've included a Save the Date card along with this report

Our speaker will be Dr. Neal Lerner, an associate professor of English and director of the Writing Program at Northeastern University in Boston. Dr. Lerner has published on the history, theory, administration, and practice of teaching writing in classrooms, laboratories, and writing centers. His recent publications include a co-authored paper, "Writing and Becoming a Scientist: A Longitudinal Qualitative Study of Three Science Undergraduates," in the edited collection *Applied Linguistics and Literacies for STEM: Founding Concepts, Methodologies and Research Projects* and a co-authored book, *Learning to Communicate in Science and Engineering: Case Studies from MIT* (MIT Press, 2010). We hope you will join us to learn more from Dr. Lerner about evidence-based practices for responding to student writing.

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

As I noted in my last report, this fall I have continued to offer professional development opportunities to faculty via collaborations with the FCTL and the FYS program. As of this writing, I am shifting gears to focus on planning for this year's FDW.

Last spring, I convened a small group of faculty, along with Ron Pitt, to discuss our Writing in the Disciplines (WID) requirement. My concern had to do with the lack of follow-up with regard to WID. Departments were asked to submit WID plans as part of the new General Education program and many (most) did, but it's been 3-4 years since plans were submitted. Are they working? How do we know? What support do faculty who teach WID courses need? What are students' experiences of WID courses? These are some of the questions I hope our ad hoc committee will investigate

A plan was devised at our initial meeting in February 2016 to hold a series of "listening sessions," sponsored by the Writing Board, the FCTL, and COGE, to learn more about

RIC faculty members' experiences teaching WID courses. In light of the change in administration and other matters affecting the college last spring, the decision was made to defer these meetings to the 2016/17 academic year. In early fall 2016, I reached out to COGE and the FCTL to initiate planning for these meetings, which would, ideally, have taken place during the fall 2016 semester (I will be on sabbatical during spring 2017). As we approach the end of the fall term, no action has yet been taken on these listening sessions. I continue to be concerned about the lack of follow-up with regard to WID. While the college has devoted considerable resources to investigating the success of our General Education program, to date little, if anything, has been done to learn about our WID requirement.

Thank you for the chance to share this news and these updates.