

The image features the letters 'W' and 'C' in a large, white, serif font. The letters are filled with a white color and have a dark, irregular outline that gives them a hand-drawn or distressed appearance. They are set against a vibrant green background with a visible, swirling, painterly texture. The 'W' is on the left and the 'C' is on the right, with a small gap between them.

A JOURNAL OF WRITING CENTER SCHOLARSHIP

BRADY AND SINGH-CORCORAN | READON, DEANS, AND MAYKEL
HIXSON, LEE, HUNTER, PARETTI, MATUSOVICH, AND MCCORD
BARRON AND CICCARELLI

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Special Issue on Writing Center Support for Graduate Thesis and Dissertation Writers

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This special issue extends the conversation, well underway, on writing center support for graduate student writers. As guest editors, we wanted to contribute to that conversation with articles that address both individual tutorials and alternative models for supporting graduate student writers. The articles here invoke institutional perspectives on partnerships and resources and the need to foster long-term habits of writing and peer collaboration. Absent from these themes is that of writing center support for multilingual graduate students, a topic rich and complex enough to warrant its own special issue.

Supporting graduate student writers—whether English L1 or L2—calls for alliances among writing programs and other disciplinary units. Laura Brady and Nathalie Singh-Corcoran trace their writing center/WAC partnership and provide a heuristic for planning and managing change when a center is awarded funding to provide dedicated support for graduate student writers. Having secured funding, administrators must determine the most effective ways to allocate resources. Kristina Reardon, Tom Deans, and Cheryl Maykel describe their center’s efforts to enhance the quality of graduate writers’ individual tutoring sessions as well as to develop “just write” programming that reaches larger numbers of students.

While centers may initiate “just write” programs, these can evolve into productive student-led efforts, as our third article shows. The co-authors’ goal in this research-based account of how and why their engineering writing group functions effectively is to help writing centers consider how they might lay a foundation for similar self-sustaining writing support. In the Tutors’ Column, generalist graduate tutors Paul Barron and Louis Ciccirelli describe story-telling and mapping strategies they have used successfully with dissertation writers in an eight-week dissertation-writing institute.

A Space for Change: Writing Center Partnerships to Support Graduate Writing

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As the Council of Graduate Schools Ph.D. Completion Project reports, even under favorable conditions, at least a quarter of the students who begin a Ph.D. do not complete the degree, and the biggest roadblock is often writing the dissertation. In an editorial in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Ph.D. student Kevin Gotkin catalogues the gaps in his graduate writing education:

I have never workshopped a piece of writing during a course. And no one else in my classes has, either. We usually have a single day in the middle of the semester devoted to talking about our final projects. We go around the room and talk in the most wildly abstract terms about where they might go in 25 pages. It's very exciting, but it's not writing.

We envisioned graduate students like Gotkin finding a space in our writing center to workshop a draft, get feedback on a literature review, or join a dissertation support group, but we did not have the resources to carve out such a space. When we were offered pilot funding to support graduate student writing by expanding our existing writing center services, which were targeted mainly to undergraduates, we knew we needed to act quickly if we wanted to take advantage of the opportunity. But we also knew we needed to anticipate challenges and next steps.

We found that organizational development theory provided practical questions to consider as we changed from a primarily undergraduate center to one that also supported graduate writing. We asked ourselves:

1. Is the change important?
2. Is the change achievable?
3. What resources are available?
4. What alliances enable collaborative problem solving?

5. How do we sustain change?

We will use our local situation to suggest a framework others may use to reflect on the role of change within their own centers, especially as those changes support graduate student writers. The organizational development framework that we use could also prove helpful for any writing center facing a large change.

Supporting graduate student writing relies on partnerships between groups of faculty and students across campus. On our campus, for instance, a WAC/WID alliance with the writing center (The Eberly Writing Studio), provides disciplinary insight: faculty know what counts as evidence in their own fields, how research is conducted, who receives credit, and so forth; but they sometimes have a difficult time conveying this knowledge to students (Paré, et al. 222). The Writing Studio can help graduate students navigate as they learn these disciplinary conventions. Specific alliances, however, depend on local conditions. On other campuses, a writing center might be allied with a center for teaching and learning or perhaps with a university library. The model we propose allows for a range of partnerships. To foster such partnerships, Karen Vaught-Alexander suggests using organizational development (OD) theory. She proposes that WPAs, including writing center directors, are uniquely positioned to create bridges as they negotiate across curricular, student, faculty, staff, and budgetary issues (126). She provides a heuristic, drawn from OD theory, that can help administrators understand the institutional structures, motivations, needs, and resistance associated with change. Vaught-Alexander poses questions that help us consider how we can take active roles as change agents—even at an early stage of program development.

IS THE CHANGE IMPORTANT?

Vaught-Alexander's work inspired us to research current organizational development theory. Particularly useful was Bryan Weiner's observation that readiness for change varies in relation to the perceived value of the change (4). With Weiner's point in mind, before we launched our pilot, we surveyed 126 WVU faculty and 107 WVU graduate students across the disciplines to gauge whether both groups were receptive to graduate writing support. We asked simple multiple-choice questions (e.g., "How likely would you be to recommend or use the following types of writing help?") and included an open-ended question for respondents' additional comments. Although the comments

showed that reasons for support varied, 90% of faculty and 85% of graduate students favored a graduate tutoring pilot. As one faculty member said, “Simply because grad-student writers are more technically proficient or are working on more complex writing tasks doesn’t mean they don’t need support. All writers do.” Representative graduate student comments were similarly positive:

- I think this would be a good idea for graduate students, especially for those writing a thesis or dissertation. A tutor at a writing center might be able to add a new perspective and help the writer adjust the paper so that a general audience would understand it, especially for anyone trying to submit an article for publication in a journal. This would also be helpful with editing for spelling and grammar.
- I would definitely use this service for help with complex and important writing assignments. In-depth help from brainstorming to proof reading would be highly helpful.

But we also heard some resistance, most notably in this faculty response: “Graduate school is sink or swim—if you don’t have these skills coming into it, you shouldn’t be here. I’m not sure we should be spending our writing center resources worrying about graduate students.” We take the resistance seriously. As we work to establish graduate writing support within our existing Writing Studio, we must rely on faculty referrals and insights about differing disciplinary conventions.

IS THE CHANGE ACHIEVABLE?

To understand the resistance and to strengthen our writing center/WAC/WID partnerships, we followed our initial survey with faculty and student interviews. We spoke with people from the humanities, the sciences, and the social sciences, and the interviews revealed some interesting patterns of miscommunication. For instance, faculty comments repeatedly emphasized the scholarly need to “recognize the relevant literature” before joining the conversation. Graduate students knew they had to “form an analysis without presenting it as a series of disconnected thoughts,” but were far less sure about how to form a cohesive argument once completing and comprehending their secondary research. As one student asked, “Do you guys have suggestions for how I might write the way my advisor wants?” From these interviews we realized

that both faculty and graduate students need a language to talk about writing challenges. We were confident that graduate writing support could help bridge this communication gap, but we needed to assess what was realistic in terms of our organizational development. Did we have the financial, material, and intellectual resources necessary to meet the diverse needs of graduate students from across the disciplines?

WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

Expanding the Writing Studio to include graduate-level consultants made us confront *financial resources*. How many consultants would we need for a pilot? How many hours would they work each week? We knew we wanted consultants with prior teaching experience and who were advanced enough in their studies to be familiar with extended academic genres such as theses and dissertations. Because our university strictly limits hourly wage overloads for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), we asked for the equivalent of one full GTA line (20 hours per week). We also needed funds to continue some support over the summer when many graduate students have more time to write. We did not need additional material resources such as printers, whiteboards, and computers since we would be sharing the existing undergraduate space.

As we continue to expand, however, we will need more *material resources*, starting with a new space for longer (quieter) consultations, presentations, and extended hours. For the moment, we have reserved a small office within the existing Studio. Although larger, more permanent space remains an ongoing challenge, we have already submitted a proposal that invites upper administrators to share our vision. We noted that our established partnership with the new WAC/WID initiative on our campus will help address the disciplinary needs of graduate-level communication. Our proposal describes a flexible hybrid space (with movable furniture and partitions) that allows for activities such as traditional one-to-one consultation work, group projects, workshops of 12 to 20, a reception area, and space for the consultants and the Writing Studio coordinator. We also asked that additional writing and presentation technologies be integrated into the space.

Our more immediate material needs are modest. We need books, handouts, and new Web resources for students and consultants that are tailored to the more extended arguments and specific

genres that graduate students produce, such as literature reviews and dissertations. We also need advertising materials to distinguish between our graduate and undergraduate consulting services since both take place in our Writing Studio. In addition to material and financial support for our graduate consultants, we wanted to establish *intellectual and structural resources*. As we considered how best to prepare new graduate consultants, we reflected on the structures already in place for our undergraduate consultants. Those students take a three-credit practicum course. In the first half of the semester, they do a lot of reading, discussing, observing, and writing. By mid-term, they act as peer consultants with supervision from the director and in tandem with more experienced consultants. If the new students do well, they are eligible to continue working for an hourly wage in our Writing Studio.

At the graduate level, we needed a more flexible training structure for new consultants. These consultants already have teaching experience. So instead of requiring them to attend a course, we ask them to complete a reading list that focuses on writing centers, writing pedagogy, and WAC/WID issues. The graduate consultants also meet regularly with the Writing Studio and WAC/WID directors to discuss their professional development and any issues that may arise from their interactions with graduate student writers. In the future, we want to increase their role in our research on writing at the graduate level.

WHICH ALLIANCES ENABLE COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING?

Extending the idea that organizational change starts by changing what people *do*, we returned to our earlier observation that both faculty and graduate students need a language to talk about writing challenges. We developed a series of questions that are easily adapted to a wide range of writing situations. To make the questions easy to remember, we use the acronym PACT, which stands for *purpose, audience, conventions, and trouble-shooting*. Our university is in the process of trademarking PACT and the following circular graphic associated with the key questions:



Purpose: What exactly do I want to happen?

Audience: Who is reading, listening, or viewing?

Conventions: What is expected in this context?

Trouble: What could get in the way of my goals?

A single acronym will never capture all the ways to create, explore, discover, and share ideas and insights. However, a common language used across several contexts can help students analyze the writing and speaking situations they encounter in their classes, work, and communities. As recent work on transfer suggests, language plays a role in how writers connect old and new knowledge and practice; key terms help students create some of those bridges (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak 132, 134-35). However, we are also mindful of Chris Thaiss and Terry Myers Zawacki's warning: "the common terminology that faculty use often hides basic differences in rhetoric, exigency, epistemology, style, form, and formatting" (59). By shifting from common terms to common *questions*, we hope that PACT will help graduate consultants and graduate student writers reflect on their communicative assumptions, expectations, and needs.

HOW DO WE SUSTAIN CHANGE?

Organizational development theory helped us shift from a primarily undergraduate center to a center that also supports graduate writing. As we now anticipate next steps, the PACT helps us remain mindful of our programmatic situation. We hope the following examples of PACT will help other writing center directors reflect on how they might sustain graduate writing support (or other changes) at their institutions.

Purpose: What exactly do we want to happen? When we began offering graduate writing support, we were responding to larger university concerns about graduate student retention and completion rates. As we move forward, however, we find ourselves responding directly to the needs and concerns of faculty and graduate students from across the disciplines. As a result, our Writing Studio increasingly works in partnership with WAC/WID efforts at our institution. We imagine and then initiate collaborations such as these because we know we cannot sustain support for graduate student writing alone; it must be a collective effort.

Audience: Who is reading, listening, or viewing [or using or collaborating]? As we continue to extend the PACT heuristic, we are also imagining new audiences and alliances. Our Writing Studio/WAC/WID partnership continues to evolve by adapting to our local environment and by taking complex social interactions and ideologies into account, as one of us has explored in another article (Brady 17, 22). Our Writing

Studio partnership is further strengthened by alliances with the Department of English, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the University's Office of Graduate Education as well as the WVU Libraries. Since any program's purpose is often closely tied to its funding, our Writing Studio tries to be aware of what gets funded at our university, what gets cut, who decides, and why. That awareness helps us consider our current allies while also anticipating and imagining new audiences and alliances. If we have to make a case for ourselves to a new dean, how will we do it? Can we start to tell our story in a way that might also appeal to a public audience such as legislators or donors as readers? To tell our story well, we need to be mindful of features and conditions distinctive to our programs (like our use of graduate writing groups, the PACT heuristic, and our partnership with the WAC/WID initiative).

Conventions: What is expected in this context? As we think about purposes and audiences, we also want to keep asking what is (conventionally) expected of our Studio—and what do we or can we imagine for it as we move forward? We agree with Claire Aitchison and Anthony Paré's assertion that "it takes more than one-off courses or writing retreats to create the sort of nurturing and challenging environment that develops writing abilities" (20). In addition to workshops and week-long writing retreats (or "boot camps"), we encourage semester—or year-long—writing groups. We build on the work of Sohui Lee and Chris Golde, who advocate "Writing Process" boot camps over "Just Write" programs that emphasize monitored, uninterrupted time. Their process approach assumes that "students' writing productivity and motivation are enhanced by consistent and on-going conversations about writing" and structured time (2). In our retreats, we emphasize conversations that encourage reflective practice. To illustrate, we use a role-perception scale created by Ingrid Moses, and used by Brian Partridge and Sue Starfield in their handbook for thesis and dissertation advisors, that encourages graduate students to consider their underlying assumptions about thesis supervision. For example, one category asks graduate students to consider whose responsibility it is to initiate meetings: the advisor or the candidate (38). If students are unsure, we remind them that their expectations may differ from their advisors, and it may be time for a meeting or email.

Trouble: What Could Get in the Way of Our Goals? As we consider potential trouble spots as we develop a graduate

writing center, we know that space and funding are limited. To address these limits, we are exploring new alliances with our university librarians and colleagues in Communication Studies. We are talking with the Department of English, our dean, and the Office of Graduate Education about where our growing Writing Studio should be located and the advantages and disadvantages of shared or hybrid spaces. Visibility for new types of graduate support is another challenge. We continue to value the ways in which our writing center's partnership with our WAC/WID program helps support and sustain these efforts. Moving forward, we plan to formalize our use of faculty members as sounding boards into an advisory board that meets regularly. We will also continue to build alliances with administrators across campus. Finally, we hope to avoid some obvious trouble spots by drawing on the expertise and generosity of more established graduate writing centers.



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Finding a Room of Their Own: Programming Time and Space for Graduate Student Writing

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In 2005 the University of Connecticut implemented general education reform that included more emphasis on writing-intensive courses and generated a reboot of the writing center. The new University Writing Center, housed in the Institute for Teaching and Learning, was mandated to support writing-intensive courses across the disciplines. Once new directors were hired, we got to work expanding tutoring, forging an array of campus partnerships, delivering teaching workshops, piloting a writing fellows program, leading writing assessment efforts, and conducting research. By 2010 the Center had earned a *CCCC Writing Program Certificate of Excellence*, and the selection committee praised us for “running a rich, complex, and ambitious program touching multiple aspects of students’ writing lives. . . . The Center has forged many partnerships—on campus and off—with sustained evaluation and reflective practice. . . . The Center is very busy, very diverse, very pro-active.” Yet despite the productive ways we expanded during those first five years, we hardly gave a thought to graduate writers.

Still, they found us. During our years of rapid growth, graduate students, mainly international doctoral students, comprised 10-15% of our individual tutorials. While graduate students were a presence at our Center, their numbers were not enough to nudge us to make structural changes to our undergraduate-focused model, although we did offer stand-alone ESL workshops, hire at least one international graduate tutor each year, and train staff on how to tutor graduate student writers. One reason we focused on undergraduates is that our entire funding came from undergraduate tuition dollars. As long as the Graduate School didn’t contribute to our budget, we reasoned, we shouldn’t commit more time and resources to graduate students. We

wanted to resist the habit of writing centers doing ever more with less; we also wanted the Graduate School to support programs for their students.

A new Graduate School dean arrived just as the Graduate Student Senate began advocating for writing support, and as retention and time-to-degree were cycling back in as institutional concerns. The dean responded to our modest request for financial support with a *yes*, funding a 20-hour weekly assistantship for a graduate coordinator. We, in turn, promised to develop a range of graduate programming. Yet this new source of funding forced us to reflect on a key tension in working with graduate student writers on longer projects: how much should our programming focus on creating structured time and space for writing (e.g. retreats, writing groups, boot camps), versus delivering direct instruction (e.g. individual tutorials, formal courses)? In this article, we trace our path toward finding a balance between the two.

OVERVIEW OF UCONN'S SOLUTIONS

We began by offering a semester-long, non-credit-bearing course on academic writing for graduate students, taught by an advanced doctoral student on our staff. More than 150 students applied for 20 slots. We learned, however, that though students valued the course content, attendance dwindled as their teaching, lab, and family demands intensified. Only a dozen participants persisted to the end. To deal with that attrition problem and to reach more students, we altered the course and added a variety of programs. We shortened the course from 15 to 5 weeks and began offering it 3 times a year, which allowed us to enroll 60 students and gave our graduate coordinator time to organize other programs:

- Three 4-day dissertation boots camps (January, Spring Break, May);
- Graduate writing retreats one Saturday each month and 2-hour Monday morning retreats the first 4 weeks of each semester; and
- Thirty-minute workshops on topics relevant to all graduate students, (e.g., personal statements, introductions, abstracts), which replaced sparsely attended, hour-long workshops intended for second language writers.

Later, we began requiring graduate students coming for individual tutorials to schedule a brief intake meeting with our

graduate coordinator.

The first iterations of these programs were promising, although we still fretted about attrition: many more students would sign up than show up. This presented a critical problem because planning and registration for seminars and boot camps were necessary, and no-shows displaced other potential participants. Our fix was to start requiring a \$100 advance deposit at registration, with the understanding that the deposit would be returned if the student attended all of the sessions. For Saturday writing retreats, Monday morning retreats, and thirty-minute workshops, however, we stopped worrying about attrition and came to expect that about a third or more of registrants would not show, and built that expectation into our planning.

Perhaps most importantly, we discovered in program surveys that what graduate students often claim they need (e.g., editing, writing instruction) does not always align with what they appear to need most (e.g., time and space to write). Most of our graduate-specific programming accords with what Sohui Lee and Chris Golde call the Just Write model, which prioritizes providing structured time and space for graduate student writing (2). We had three significant exceptions: our individual tutorials, 30-minute workshops, and 5-week seminars. These all fall under what Lee and Golde call the Writing Process model, which emphasizes building long-term productivity by engaging writers in conversations about writing (2). While direct instruction and workshoping of drafts remain central to our 5-week seminars and tutorials, we realized that to serve the widest range of graduate students with our limited resources, we should focus at least as much—or more—on initiatives that create structured time and space to write.

JUST WRITE PROGRAMMING

Writing Retreats: Our monthly Saturday retreats encourage the simple habit of setting structured time for writing. This is a collaborative venture among the Writing Center (organizes everything), Graduate School (funds the person who does that organizing), and Graduate Student Senate (pays for beverages and snacks). Over the first 2 years, workshop registration ranged from 52 to 104. No matter how many registered, however, only about half actually showed up. In our third year, initial sign-ups were lower, but attendance numbers were nearly the same, and over time we came to expect around 50 participants and

a 33% attrition rate. Our 2-hour Monday morning retreats run similarly: we book a free room on campus, invite students, and don't worry about attrition.

Across the first two years of retreats, 60% of the 238 students who responded to surveys noted that they were much more productive at the retreat than they would normally be during the same block of time at home. An additional 25% reported that they were a bit more productive. The most frequent written responses were simply "thank you," although some students were more effusive: "I am coming to as many of these as I can fit into my busy schedule. The whole world stops and I just work." Another: "I am so much more focused at the retreats. I am a slow writer, and this venue provides me a way to be more strategic in what I accomplish. Being here all day removes the pressure of 'I just have x amount of time and need to hurry and be productive!!' Without that kind of pressure, I seem to feel free to actually BE more productive."

In our second year of offering retreats, we considered adding planning activities and goal-sharing conversations. While 55% of our participants said they would *not* like such activities, others noted that brief discussions or handouts would be useful. At a recent retreat, we took small steps toward what we see as more of a Writing Process retreat model by inviting writers to share their goals with others before the session began, fill out a goal-planning worksheet, and attend a conversational lunchtime seminar. While programs such as the Cornell Writing Center have seen success with process-oriented discussions (Allen), our participants met the request to share their goals with blank stares. Survey responses showed that most participants did not value exercises, although some said the planning worksheet was helpful. More telling, only 5 came to the lunchtime workshop. One student's comment seemed to sum up the impressions we got from others: "I found the efforts to direct our productivity or structure the event annoying. Food, coffee, and quiet. That's all I need." It is possible that resistance to the addition of "Writing Process" elements may have occurred because participants are often repeat attendees. They may have come to expect a Just Write model, not knowing the benefits of alternative models. Still, we take returnees as a positive sign and acknowledge that our center is a place to do writing, not just to talk about writing.

Boot Camps: Our boot camps also operate with a governing Just Write ethos. They run for 4 consecutive days, are capped

at 20 participants, and encourage a sense of solidarity among participants because they are set in relatively small, distinctive spaces, such as the natural history museum on our campus (for boot camp models see Allen; Lee and Golde; and Simpson). We want predictable attendance and a counterbalance to writing-avoidance behavior, so we require a \$100 deposit, which students get back if they attend the 3-hour morning session all 4 days (though most persist straight through the afternoons, too). In terms of productivity, boot camp results are good: nearly all 43 participants who have responded to our informal surveys on boot camps over the past 3 years told us that they produce much more during the boot camp than they would have in their offices during the same time block; most tell us that they composed between 10 and 38 pages.

WRITING PROCESS PROGRAMMING

Five-Week Academic Writing Seminars: The graduate course in academic writing was born of both the calls by some faculty for formal graduate writing instruction and our own center's recognition that some of our repeat visitors could benefit from a formal course. For the Graduate Seminar in Academic Writing we wanted a hybrid seminar and writing group, something akin to what Laura Micciche and Allison Carr hope for in a graduate writing course: one that would "create space, community, and rhetorical awareness/flexibility necessary to brainstorm, create, and sustain a wide variety of critical writing projects" (478). We include some direct instruction—mini-lessons on structure, style, grammar, and so on—discuss writing processes, and model workshop-style writing groups that we hope participants will maintain in the long term.

The curriculum has evolved during the first 3 years. After trying a format that used faculty guest speakers who talked about their own writing processes, we shifted to a workshop model. We required students to bring an ongoing writing project and centered our course around 3 main assignments: 1) analyzing published writing in the same genre as their own; 2) interviewing advisors about discipline-based expectations and the advisors' own writing habits; and 3) meeting one-to-one with the seminar instructor to talk about specific concerns in an ongoing project. We aimed to make the seminar, as Peter Khost, Debra Rudder Lohe, and Chuck Sweetman write, an "occasion to think aloud and hear others discuss creativity, style, and writing process (even writers' block)" with the aim of providing "valuable

opportunities to face, analyze, and discuss the importance of writing” (23). Student response has been affirming. While some participants have acknowledged they would prefer lectures on writing topics, most buy into the workshop model. One participant evaluation noted, “This was a wonderful and useful experience for me, and helped me to familiarize with the general characteristics of scholarly writing standards.” Yet our hope of fostering longer-term writing groups like those Claire Aitchison describes has not panned out—many of our participants wrote in course evaluations that the groups were too dissimilar in disciplinary focus. However, the seminar complements the Just Write retreats and boot camps and remains a vital component of our graduate writing portfolio.

Graduate Student Tutorials and the Graduate Coordinator’s Role:

As we developed this new spectrum of graduate programming, we were soldiering on with tutorials in the same ways that we always had. Graduate students often brought in dissertation chapters or articles too lengthy to read through and discuss in our standard 45-minute sessions. We responded by training our tutors on strategies for focusing on 5-page sections. Still, we found most undergraduate tutors lacked the disciplinary expertise that Heather Blain Vorhies argues is necessary to help graduates. First-year tutors, in particular, felt intimidated when graduate students asked questions that a peer—a fellow graduate student or an advanced undergraduate student—could handle better. While we employ 6 graduate tutors, their appointments are usually booked first, often by undergrads. A disproportionate number of first-year writers, then, were working with graduate tutors while graduate students were working with undergraduates. The latter mismatch caused anxiety. Moreover, graduate students who persisted often demanded that undergraduates edit for them, which was out of step with our writing center philosophy, and some graduates were signing up for multiple appointments per week—at a time when our undergraduate traffic was increasing to the point where all appointments were booked well in advance. Since our funding comes from undergraduate education tuition moneys, with the Graduate School funding only the graduate coordinator’s assistantship, we had to get creative.

A team of graduate tutors suggested we create more tutorial access and nudge graduate students seeking extensive assistance toward more independence. Borrowing from the University of

New Hampshire's thesis coach model, we now require graduate students to meet with the coordinator before signing up for a set number of sessions with one tutor. After listening carefully to each graduate student's goals and priorities, the coordinator assigns an advanced tutor—a fellow graduate student or senior undergraduate tutor from the same or similar discipline—to that graduate student, referring to a list of tutors' fields and strengths in tutoring devised by the center directors. For international students with little or no experience with writing centers, the coordinator also explains our tutoring philosophy. Our intention is to match the writer with an appropriate tutor, to limit less productive repeat sessions, and to open space for a sustained sequence of tutorials tailored to longer pieces of writing. As with undergraduates, we work with graduate students in all stages of the writing process, including editing. We have found our tutorial pairings ensure that when graduates students do work on editing issues, the issues are addressed collaboratively through incremental, learning-oriented practice. Graduate students have responded positively to this approach. The graduate coordinator, then, wears many hats, including:

1. Matchmaker, who considers on a case-by-case basis the goals and priorities of each graduate student seeking tutoring and pairs them with an appropriate tutor.
2. Tour Guide, who ensures that graduate students are aware of all writing resources and directs them toward the seminars, retreats, and boot camps as appropriate.
3. Gatekeeper, who determines the usefulness of sessions for those graduate students who only want editing or who do not actively participate in sessions.
4. Tutor Confidence Booster, who tells tutors whom they have been paired with and what the writer's goals are. In this role, the coordinator also sets policies that support staff when they inform graduate students about the required meeting with the coordinator and why that step is important (we generally allow a graduate writer to have at least one session if they have booked it before understanding the meeting requirement).
5. Progress Monitor, who evaluates tutor reports that assess effort and progress over the course of several sessions, asks the graduate students about meeting their stated goals, and determines whether more sessions seem warranted.

All of these functions have been working well—with the exception of progress monitoring, since the graduate coordinator does not have enough time to track all the pairings. We plan to develop a more streamlined system to allow the coordinator to simply check our database of tutor notes. The first year of this strategy (2014-2015) resulted in fewer graduate students scheduling appointments than in previous years. By the first half of the fall 2015 semester, however, appointments again picked up as word about successful pairings circulated. We plan to assess the strategy at the end of this academic year to determine whether graduate student numbers are still lower than in previous years, and, if so, whether graduate students are registering for the other graduate student-focused programs, or whether our new policy is perceived as making the center less accessible.

While we don't know what the assessment will show, we've decided that a Just Write approach to retreats and boot camps merits as much—maybe even more—space on the spectrum of graduate writing support as more traditional approaches like tutoring and group instruction. When we tally attendance at all our programs, we are reaching more graduate students from more disciplinary backgrounds per semester than ever before. Our methods are gaining traction, too: we've learned that graduate students in several departments have used our model to create their own writing groups and retreats. We're always tinkering with our graduate student writing assistance, but we think we've struck the right balance. For now.

1. When this article was drafted, Reardon and Maykel were Ph.D. students at UConn.



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Understanding the Structural and Attitudinal Elements That Sustain a Graduate Student Writing Group in an Engineering Department

Cory Hixson, Walter Lee, Deirdre Hunter,
Marie Paretti, Holly Matusovich

Virginia Tech | Blacksburg, Virginia

Rachel McCord

University of Tennessee | Knoxville, Tennessee

Doctoral writing groups have become a staple on academic campuses, as reflected in Claire Aitchison and Cally Guerin's collection *Writing Groups for Doctoral Education and Beyond*, which highlights scholarship on these groups. But as those authors note, "[the field's] understanding of when, how, and why writing groups operate in academic scholarship is still fragmented and under-theorized" (6). We address this gap by exploring one such group, the Virginia Tech Engineering Education Writing Group (EEWG), using qualitative interviews with EEWG members and non-members to help writing center staff consider how they might support similar efforts.

BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

Separate from the Virginia Tech Writing Center, which provides coaching for students across all majors and academic levels, the Virginia Tech Engineering Communication Center ("the Center") is a research/outreach center focused on teaching and learning communication in engineering. Housed in the Department of Engineering Education, the Center also hosts the self-sustaining graduate student writing group, the EEWG. Once a week, graduate students (mostly in engineering education) meet in the Center and write primarily dissertation-related texts. No professional staff or trained tutors attend these meetings; the only resource the Center provides is space. Yet the EEWG has become a persistent, highly productive presence, supporting doctoral students from the proposal through the dissertation. Given the low resource investment and high productivity of the EEWG, we sought to explore the practices that have sustained

the group in order to identify practical implications for writing center staff seeking ways to support graduate student writing. The study authors include current and former EEWG members (Hixson, Lee, Hunter, and McCord), the engineering education faculty member who initiated the EEWG (Matusovich), and one of the Center's co-directors (Paretti); thus multiple stakeholder perspectives are represented in this article.

HOW THE GROUP EMERGED

After watching herself and her graduate students struggle to find time to write, Matusovich created a local full-day "writing retreat" to provide dedicated time and space in which her engineering education research group (6 graduate students) could focus on writing and hold one another accountable to personal goals. Because these initial sessions (typically 1 or 2 per semester) proved productive, she suggested that the retreats become a regular practice, and the EEWG was born. The EEWG initially met in various places, including department conference rooms and library study rooms, before settling consistently into the Center. Together, the group established a code of conduct for members:

- To limit distraction and maximize efficiency, group members agreed on beginning and ending times and to not come and go for other commitments during the day.
- Each individual's goals were written on whiteboards to make them visible to everyone. Completed goals were marked off, often eliciting applause and encouragement.
- The EEWG was limited to goal-specific writing tasks; group members were encouraged to avoid checking email, social media, etc.
- The group would break for lunch at a set time and interact socially over lunch.
- Group members could ask burning questions of one another if they needed urgent feedback, but general conversation was discouraged.

After a year and a half under the direction of Matusovich, the EEWG evolved organically as several of the graduate students assumed leadership (reflecting their growth as scholars and emerging professionals). The focus was narrowed to peer support for major doctoral writing tasks (e.g., proposals, dissertations), and students from other departmental research groups were encouraged to join. At this point, the Center, and

with it the EEWG, moved into a newly-constructed engineering academic building. This new space was designed to promote collaborative work; 2 long walls are covered with white boards and movable tables can function as individual desks or be grouped into larger worktables. At the time of the move, the EEWG consisted of 4 members (authors Hixson, Lee, Hunter, and McCord), 2 actively working on dissertation proposals and 2 analyzing data and drafting dissertations. The group agreed to meet once a week for a full day. To hold each other accountable for attending, members regularly communicated to determine who planned to attend each session. In addition, the group members also built a high level of trust. As before, the EEWG focused on individuals' goal-specific writing, but the trust the members created also included a willingness to share works in progress, to provide feedback during sessions, and occasionally to comment on others' work outside of the sessions.

The current iteration of the EEWG reflects several frameworks familiar to writing center staff. First, the EEWG easily maps to the dimensions and variables Sarah Haas identifies in her typology of writing groups: the EEWG is characterized by a discipline-specific membership, peer leadership, face-to-face contact, and a meeting place within the institutional setting. The meeting length for this weekly group, however, is longer (ranging from 4 to 8 hours) than times reported for weekly groups across Aitchison and Guerin's collection (1.5 to 3 hours). Second, although it brings writers together, the EEWG differs from traditional conceptions of writing groups as workshops where writers bring texts written elsewhere to one another to gain feedback. Instead, the EEWG resembles Neal Lerner's conception of a writing laboratory—a place where the physical act of writing happens as visible everyday work. That is, EEWG sessions emphasize physically putting words on the page as the primary activity, rather than bringing texts created elsewhere for feedback. At the same time, EEWG sessions do not exclude feedback. The current structure includes a tacit commitment to sharing work with and providing feedback to one another, reflecting an ongoing process of creating and talking about texts.

EXPLORING THE EEWG: GATHERING & ANALYZING INSIGHTS

To better understand how other writing centers might support graduate writing groups like the EEWG, we wanted to learn how the EEWG was serving its graduate student members, what kept other graduate students from attending writing sessions, and

what features could make the EEWG more useful. We therefore conducted an Institutional Review Board-approved qualitative study, individually interviewing 8 students who participated in any iteration of the EEWG as well as 4 students who had not participated in it. Interview participants were invited via an email sent to current engineering education graduate students (EEWG attendees and non-attendees) as well as to recent EEWG alumni. Each audio-recorded interview was conducted by one of the authors as researcher-participants, using a protocol we piloted by first interviewing one another. Because the pilot interviews successfully captured relevant data, we included them in the dataset. While using researcher-participants to interview other EEWG members may raise concerns regarding response bias, both the exploratory nature of the study and diversity of the research team members' experiences with the EEWG helped mitigate any potential bias.

To analyze our data, both the interviewer and another researcher listened to each interview and completed a written summary of the interviewee's description of the EEWG, his or her motivation to participate (or not), the perceived pros and cons of participation, suggestions for improvement, and conceptions of the "ideal" writing session. The full research team then analyzed these summaries together to identify themes. We used these summaries, to protect confidentiality among peers and between students and faculty involved in the study.

SELF-SUSTAINING PRODUCTIVITY: STRUCTURE, COMMUNITY, AND COMMITMENT

Our analysis identified 3 themes among EEWG members relevant to writing centers hosting these kinds of groups. First, *structure* was critical for establishing a bounded mental space in which to write and for supporting students' agency with respect to participation. Although Matusovich provided the initial code of conduct guidelines for her research group's writing retreats, she served not as an authority but as a model for setting guidelines, reflecting, as Aitchison and Guerin note, "how groups doggedly re-form themselves by establishing their own norms, routines, and behaviors" (10). Interviewees reported that the group *collectively* established morning start times and designated lunchtimes at the beginning of each semester to create dedicated time for writing. Interviewees commented on the ways in which all members respected the rules and

noted that groups would revisit them as needed. While not all interviewees agreed on the details of the “ideal” structure, all highlighted the importance of collaboratively establishing a structure that everyone could work within. This formalization provided students with agency over their schedules and helped them avoid conflicts that would inhibit participation. At the same time, it created both permission and accountability; members were expected to write during EEWG sessions, and EEWG guidelines ensured that members used the time to achieve their writing goals (Aitchison).

The EEWG structure also positioned writing days as a regularly scheduled *public* commitment similar to a meeting or class. In creating this public space, the EEWG worked against the “hiddenness” of academic writing and instead placed writing at both the physical and metaphorical Center of the Department of Engineering Education. But while the Center provided a useful physical space, the public location also created barriers when the space could not be “controlled” (e.g., other Center events occasionally displaced the EEWG) or when, as described below, the location was too distant from a student’s office.

Second, interviewees described an important *communal* dimension, centered on trust, which affected their writing and their sense of belonging in both the graduate student and larger academic communities. Trust was important in building writing confidence and skill because it enabled members to seek and provide feedback. The expressed goals of the EEWG community were to help one another make progress on writing projects (and eventually graduate), to become better writers, and to produce better final products. Interviewees thus described the EEWG as a space where they felt comfortable asking for and giving candid feedback. Notably, feedback was not part of Matusovich’s original writing retreats; intentional feedback emerged when members felt a need to talk about their writing—talk that required trust. This trust also provided space to commiserate about writing struggles, which interviewees said helped them overcome mental hurdles associated with writing—especially at the doctoral level. We note that the shared academic discipline may have supported the emergence of communal trust because members could provide feedback on both writing structure and content. This feedback component thus represents an area for further research, particularly for multi-disciplinary groups.

The opportunities for both feedback and emotional honesty

about writing practices helped build the EEWG into a community of practice (CoP). Etienne Wenger uses CoP to describe how organizational groups function by working on a common enterprise, engaging interdependently with one another, and sharing a language and set of tools. Typically, newcomers become part of the CoP by engaging with more experienced employees; in this case, though, EEWG members were not learning from a more experienced writer. While Matusovich's work with her research group provided an initial model for a writing CoP, the EEWG has sustained itself without regular expert participation. Though EEWG members typically receive regular feedback from their advisors individually, the EEWG is currently a place for *peers* (i.e., doctoral students in a shared discipline) to come together for support and feedback.

The third theme that emerged from the data, *commitment*, reflected interviewees' willing interdependence with respect to accountability, support, and feedback. Commitment was linked to both structural and communal dimensions. Structurally, interviewees described prioritizing the EEWG sessions, attending consistently, arriving on time, bringing realistic yet challenging goals, and checking up on anyone who missed a session. With respect to community, interviewees described respecting one another's desires to be productive, engaging in both individual writing and community building (e.g., giving feedback and participating in strictly social lunchtimes), and supporting each other outside of the EEWG sessions.

To capture the relationships among these themes, we turn to a common engineering structure: the keystone arch, which consists of two halves, each unable to stand on its own. Where the halves meet, the keystone provides connection, strength, and stability for the whole system. *Structure* and *community* represent the two half arches, independently important to each EEWG member. But while these two halves facilitate the EEWG, each individual's *commitment* represents the keystone that bridges the two and yields self-sustaining participation.

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION: STRUCTURE AND TASK

Two themes emerged from interviewees who did not participate in the EEWG. First, *structure* (schedule and location) hindered participation. Several students noted that EEWG sessions conflicted with other meetings, classes, etc. While the rule minimizing entrances and exits from the EEWG motivated

students who participated, non-member interviewees cited this practice as a hindrance because they believed they would disrupt the group if they needed to leave early. Others noted that the idea of structure itself conflicted with their personal writing habits; they write when they need to or feel like writing, not at scheduled times. The location was also problematic, particularly for students located in other buildings. These students found it easier to write in their own offices rather than carry writing supplies to the Center.

A second barrier was the writing *task*. Several students cited not being far enough along in their program to necessitate EEWG participation, especially given the length of a session. Others considered certain writing tasks ill-suited to the EEWG. For example, one interviewee found it better to write alone for tasks requiring concentration, while another did not need the motivation of a group for tasks that required little concentration. Non-members also considered EEWG sessions unnecessary for small writing tasks. Interestingly, though not consistent enough to become themes, a lack of *commitment* to EEWG's current iteration and possible future *community* both emerged as decision influencers in the non-participant interviews. That is, some non-participant interviewees explicitly stated that they did not consider EEWG sessions as time that should be prioritized, and thus scheduled other meetings during the sessions. But some non-participating interviewees acknowledged community as a potential motivator for future participation, noting that having people to write with would be helpful.

NEXT STEPS AND LESSONS LEARNED

For the Center, as well as for writing centers in general, hosting writing groups such as those described here can be an important way to support graduate student writers. Through the EEWG, the Center functions as a place to *come together* to write and provide feedback to other writers in community. Both physical space and length of time appear critical; graduate students, particularly in disciplines like engineering, they may need longer stretches of protected time to craft the texts required for degree completion.

Notably, while the current space includes several useful affordances—whiteboards and flexible furniture—technology also emerged as a key need. Interviewees wanted dual-monitor setups to view articles, book chapters, outlines, previous writing, and data as they took notes or wrote their own texts,

and such affordances could lower barriers for students housed elsewhere by limiting what they need to carry. At the same time, space is not the only, or perhaps even the most important, thing writing centers can offer. By collaborating with campus spaces where writing sessions could occur, writing centers can initiate groups similar to the EEWG and can provide early models, much the way Matusovich did for her students. Additionally, while the EEWG meets without input from an expert, writing centers could provide expert feedback on writing, which interviewees identified as desirable. Such feedback would not—and interviewees agreed, should not—happen weekly. Instead, biweekly or monthly sessions in which writing coaches were available for part of a session could effectively support members’ desires to become more effective writers. As Aitchison and Guerin note, the field still has much to learn about when, how, and why graduate writing groups function, as well as what writing centers can do to support them. But initiating and modeling productive practices—including both structural and communal dimensions—can lay a foundation for the kind of sustained commitment that has made the EEWG productive.



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● There’s the blog, “Connecting Writing Centers Across Borders” ●

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Tutors' Column: "Stories and Maps: Narrative Tutoring Strategies for Working with Dissertation Writers"

Paul Barron and Louis Ciccirelli

University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, Michigan

In 2003, the University of Michigan's Sweetland Center for Writing initiated the Dissertation Writing Institute (DWI) to provide time, space, funding, and writing consultations to graduate students in the writing stage of their dissertations. Each spring term, Sweetland funds 24 graduate dissertators ("fellows") for an 8-week intensive writing program that combines interdisciplinary workshops, accountability meetings, and one-to-one sessions with consultants, all aimed at helping fellows develop their writing practices and speed their time to completion. A 3-year internal program evaluation showed that the DWI fellows, in surveys and interviews, valued the writing consultations as highly as they valued the office space, required writing time, and funding they received as participants. As program directors and experienced writing center faculty-consultants, we regularly draw on our MFA training to work with graduate dissertation writers across disciplines. In this column, we share 2 narrative approaches we use in the DWI to help DWI fellows gain conceptual distance from their in-progress texts. This distance helps them focus on the rhetorical dimensions of their dissertations as they invent new material, communicate the significance of their projects, develop local and global structures that work for their purposes, and consider the effects of possible choices on readers.

TELLING A STORY – PAUL

Anticipating audiences that range from advisors to funding agencies and hiring committees, doctoral students frequently express their desire to compose dissertations that tell stories. For these writers, *telling a story* serves as shorthand for showing how both the area of study and the dissertation's precise intervention matter. Reconceptualizing dissertation writing as a form of narration is thus particularly useful for consultants

serving graduate writers across the disciplines. Consultants can invoke the concept of “the story” to provide a way of talking about movement and narrative choices which, alongside disciplinary knowledge and conventions, can communicate the significance or “so what?” of the dissertation. The language used to invoke narrative as a framework for thinking about the dissertation and its rhetorical dimensions can be adapted to the graduate writer and discipline. For example, “Would opening with this vignette allow readers to experience the thematic concerns of the chapter?”—which is appropriate for the humanities—might be phrased differently in the sciences and social sciences: “Would describing the effects first help readers understand the problem this chapter is addressing?” A less directive approach in either case would be to ask students to suggest different angles to start from and to consider the effects of beginning with each.

Focusing on where the story begins is crucial. “What is the conflict?” in narrative becomes “What is the problem?” in dissertations. To demonstrate the mutability of this concept, I frequently draw on a way of structuring introductions used by engineering students I’ve worked with. Overall, their projects follow the scientific IMRaD (Introduction, Methods, Research, and Discussion) structure, and the introductions specifically answer four questions: 1) What is the problem? 2) What have others done to solve this problem? 3) What is missing? 4) What are the objectives of this project? The specific problem represents one side of a conflict, while prior scholarly work on the problem represents the other. Previous researchers have fueled the story, but now the doctoral student must advance it through its next chapters.

Some dissertations are in need of narrative *structure*. In a recent consultation, one student’s chapter on Indian religions and philosophy was intricate and depended on an archeological close reading in which he constructed an absent text by analyzing later texts which had responded to it. The student, assuming he should remove himself and his process of discovery from the chapter, initially constructed a chronological account that did not foreground his theory that a key text had been missing, nor the fact that he had reconstructed the missing text. Discussing the chapter as part of a narrative, he saw that he needed to present the material as the story of reconstructing the missing text, a move that would both emphasize what he had done and allow readers to experience their own process of exploration.

The writer restructured the chapter by beginning with the problem, a centuries-long textual debate that had ended almost without trace. Why? Before he could answer this question, he needed to say that the available texts (now silent on the debate) seemed to be responding to a further missing text. In its initial version, the chapter read as flat data progressing to an as-yet-unseen point of importance. In the revised version, I was able to piece together the investigation along with the writer and repeat the crucial steps of the argument back to him. In this case, the narrative structure made the stakes clear and provided a logic for the chapter that, much like a good story, could be easily recounted.

MAPPING OUT THE STORY – LOUIS

As dissertators strive to understand the contours of the genre and define the borders of their own projects, they often express concerns about how to shape and arrange their material. These kinds of structural concerns can open up conversations about how a student might organize her research and establish a critical narrative. In my initial meeting with dissertation writers, I use a mapping process to help the student and myself understand what the writer has done thus far, what stage the sections are in, and what the writer hopes to accomplish going forward. The map is a simple visual template with empty boxes representing the chapters in a linear outline. While the map allows writers to organize their thoughts in an informal discussion, it also functions as a storyboard on which they plot parts of their dissertation and the relationships among those parts. Writers can locate which sections have been drafted and where the current piece of writing fits into their project.

Beyond its explanatory function, mapping provides writers with a broad-stroke composing tool—one that suits the larger orchestrations of dissertation work. As evidence of the map’s effectiveness in a consultation, Sarah, a DWI fellow in musicology, described her use of mapping as a crucial “processing tool for me to start to figure out what sections make sense, [and] what could go in those sections.” Rather than become mired in linear writing, students like Sarah use mapping to think holistically, an approach which, as she said, allows her to think “more about fleshing out thoughts and organizational structure” than about perfecting prose.

Mapping, then, becomes a composing mode for many dissertators. They think through and visually represent the

arrangement and arcs of their work, whether in a section or chapter or across the whole dissertation. As Sarah suggested, “It’s the stuff that is simmering below the surface of language ... impulsive, instinctual connections that I try to push into the concrete language realm of thinking.” By adopting a mapping approach to composing, writers can gain the elbow room needed to work through their uncertainty. “I don’t have to leave the kind of creative mindset when I am mapping,” Sarah explained. “What mapping does is help me maintain progress through a project without putting too much pressure on the finality of finishing the thing.”

Mapping’s emphasis on arcs and narrative also encourages dissertation writers to develop a rhetorical awareness of the effect of their structural choices on readers. The writer’s questions about sequence, pacing, and emphasis allow her to imagine the expectations of her specialized audience. As the writer considers *where* she is taking her readers and *how* to best guide them to her meaning, she must clarify her own particular intervention. In this way, mapping enables the writer to gain authorial distance and locate critical points of emphasis for her readers. As I’ve seen, many writers continue to use strategies developed in their initial mapping session to conceptualize and articulate key choices they make as they work through subsequent dissertation sections. They also develop their own forms of mapping, using whiteboards, putting multi-colored Post-It notes or construction paper on walls or desks, or spreading notes out on the office floor. They often bring their maps to individual meetings or ask me to visit their offices to “walk through” their arguments and writing. Often our discussions return to their maps as they talk through their larger understandings of their projects even as particular sections are completed.

“Telling a story” and “mapping it out” provide ways of temporarily decoupling disciplinary knowledge and rhetorical knowledge so students can see how the writing works as writing. Doctoral students immersed in dissertations can both narrate and observe the effects of new arrangements while developing a keener sense of audience. Moreover, as they figure out how to present their ideas, they also figure out the ideas themselves. In this way, the focus on writing itself, through the interventions of an experienced generalist writing consultant, provides ways for dissertation writers to connect to their projects with renewed vision and purpose.

Announcements

CHRISTOPHER ERVIN WINS 2015 NCPTW MAXWELL LEADERSHIP AWARD

Christopher Ervin, Director of Composition at Western Kentucky University, has won the 2015 Ron Maxwell Award for Distinguished Leadership in Promoting the Collaborative Learning Practices of Peer Tutors in Writing. He received the award at the 32nd annual National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing (NCPTW), Nov. 6, 2015, in Salt Lake City.

The full presentation speech is available on the NCPTW website: <sites.psu.edu/thedanglingmodifier/?p=2730>. The list of previous winners of the NCPTW Maxwell Leadership Award is also available on the NCPTW website: <sites.psu.edu/thedanglingmodifier/?page_id=1126>.

JOB AD: WRITING CENTER DIRECTOR: UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, COLORADO SPRINGS

This is a full-time, 12-month position. The Writing Center Director works in a network with our Communications, Language, Science, and Math Excel Centers and also teaches in the English Department. The full job ad is available here: <www.jobsatcu.com/postings/110967>.

JOB AD: ASSOCIATE WRITING CENTER DIRECTOR: MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Michigan State University is seeking an Associate Director (AD) for its Writing Center. The AD position is a one-year, annual year position in the Academic Specialist system with an expected term of five years. Annual renewal is contingent on performance reviews, program need, and availability of funding.

Review of applications began on October 15, 2015, and is continuing until the position is filled. Applications must be submitted electronically to the Michigan State University Human Resources web site <jobs.msu.edu>. Posting # 2252. Applications should include a letter expressing interest in this position and describing qualifications and experience, a current curriculum vitae, and the names and email addresses of 3 potential referees. For more information contact Chair of the Search Committee, Director of The Writing Center, Trixie Smith, <smit1254@msu.edu>.

WRITING CENTERS ASSOCIATION OF JAPAN: CFP

March 5, 2016 | Tsuda College | Tokyo, Japan
"Writing Centers Across Languages and Cultures"

This symposium provides opportunities for scholars, teachers, students, university administrators, and other professionals to come together to exchange ideas about the role of writing centers in Asian universities as well

as the teaching and learning of writing. The symposium attracts a large number of participants, demonstrating the growing importance of writing centers and a high level of interest in the role and functions of writing centers and writing in Asian higher education. Attendance and participation are free.

The Program Committee invites proposals for both research- and practice-based presentations in English and Japanese. Presenters will have 25 minutes to present and answer questions. We also welcome poster presentations. For guidelines, additional information, and a link to the online submission form, see the conference website: <sites.google.com/site/wcajapan/upcoming-events>.

Deadline for submissions: Jan. 15th, 2016 | Notification: Jan. 29th, 2016

CANADIAN WRITING CENTRES ASSOCIATION: CFP

May 26-27, 2016 | Calgary, Alberta

“Energizing (Writing Centre) Communities”

Deadline for proposals: Jan. 10, 2016

Conference website: <cwcaaccr.wordpress.com/2015/10/30/cfp-canadian-writing-centre-association-conference-2016-calgary-ab-energizing-writing-centre-communities>.

MIDDLE EAST-NORTH AFRICA WRITING CENTERS ALLIANCE: CFP

April 21-21, 2016 | Sultan Qaboos University | Muscat, Oman

“MENA Writing Centers: Ideal versus Reality” | Keynote: Dana Driscoll

The 2016 Conference will be held in collaboration with the International English Language Teaching Conference. Abstract submission deadline: Jan. 20, 2016. Pre-registration deadline: April 14, 2016. Conference website: <menawca.org>. Conference co-chairs: Ryan McDonald <rmcdonald@squ.edu.om> and Susan Finlay <susanf@squ.edu.om>.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WRITING CENTERS ASSOCIATION TUTOR CONFERENCE

February 27, 2016 | Westmont College | Santa Barbara, CA

“Believing and Doubting: Writing Center Ethics, People, and Practices”

Like all SoCal WCA Tutor Conferences, this conference is created by tutors, for tutors. Directors have a parallel meeting and cannot attend tutor conference sessions unless they sit quietly in the back. For further information, please consult the conference website:

<sandbox.socalwritingcenters.org/2016-tutor-conference/>.

Conference Calendar

February 18-20, 2016: Southeastern Writing Center Association, in Columbus, GA

Contact: Eliot Rendleman: <rendleman_eliot@columbusstate.edu>
<www.iwca-swca.org/2016-Conference-CFP.html>.

February 27, 2016: Southern California Writing Centers Association, in Santa Barbara, CA

Contact: <sandbox.socialwritingcenters.org/2016-tutor-conference/>.

March 3-5, 2016: Midwest Writing Centers Association, in Cedar Rapids, IA

Contact: <www.midwestwritingcenters.org>.

March 4-6, 2016: East Central Writing Centers Association, in Alliance, OH

Contact: Danielle Cordaro: <cordarda@mountunion.edu>.

March 5, 2016: Writing Centers Association of Japan, in Tokyo, Japan

Contact: <sites.google.com/site/wcajapan/upcoming-events>.

March 10-12, 2016: South Central Writing Centers Assoc., in Lafayette, LA

Contact: Denise Rodgers: <drovers@louisiana.edu> and Jim McDonald (jcm5337@louisiana.edu); <scwca.net>.

March 18-19, 2016: East Central Writing Centers Assoc., in Southfield, MI

Contact: Sherry Wynn Perdue: <wynn@oakland.edu>.

March 18-19, 2016: Mid-Atlantic Writing Centers Association, in Philadelphia, PA

Contact: Janel McCloskey: <jfp48@drexel.edu> and Lisa Zimmerelli: <ldzimmerelli@loyola.edu>; <mawca.org/2016-Conference>.

April 2, 2016: Northern California Writing Centers Assoc., in Santa Clara

Contact: Denise Krane: <dkrane@scu.edu>.

April 2-3, 2016: North East Writing Centers Association, in Keene, NH

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April 21-22, 2016: Middle East-North Africa Writing Centers Association, in Muscat, Oman

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May 26-27, 2016: Canadian Writing Centers Association, in Calgary, AB, Canada

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July 8-10, 2016: European Writing Centers Association, in Lodz, Poland

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