

IWAC 2020 WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

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IWAC 2020: Celebrating Successes, Recognizing Challenges, Inviting Critique and Innovation

In their history of the Writing Across the Curriculum movement, Bazerman and his colleagues (2005) observe, “As far as has been documented, the earliest Writing Across the Curriculum faculty seminar was led by Barbara Walvoord in 1969-70 at Central College (a four-year liberal arts college in Pella, Iowa)” (p. 26). The 2020 conference marks the 50th anniversary of Dr. Walvoord’s seminar—and provides an opportunity to celebrate and reflect, individually and as a field, how our well-established educational movement has grown and continues to evolve.

As an educational movement, WAC is both successful and widely recognized. Early in the effort to identify high-impact practices, under the phrase “writing-intensive courses,” it was included in a list of several educational practices that had been shown to contribute to student learning and success (Kuh, 2008).

Yet the WAC movement is far from a finished product. As WAC practitioners, we understand it as a set of teaching and learning activities that can—and should—be continuously assessed and improved. Over the past five decades, the WAC community has

- responded to changes in our social, technological, and educational contexts;
- adapted to and taken advantage of new approaches to teaching critical thinking, assessing educational attainment, engaging in civic discourse, and preparing students to join disciplinary and professional communities;
- begun to address calls for social justice, diversity, inclusion, and equity;
- developed an awareness of the diversity of institutional cultures and the need to implement WAC differently in small colleges, community colleges, primary and secondary institutions, research universities, international/transnational campuses, and online institutions;
- fostered important innovations, including the use of technologies to support writing instruction and new approaches to WAC program design, such as the communication across the curriculum (CAC) model, the writing-enriched curriculum (WEC) model, the English across the curriculum (EAC) model, and various models that involve writing centers and writing fellows programs; and
- launched WAC programs in numerous nations and in multiple languages and, in doing so, adapted to the wide range of challenges facing WAC as an international movement.

This conference calls for both celebration of successes and careful consideration of the challenges facing the WAC movement. And it calls for critique in the service of improving and strengthening the use of writing and speaking to advance learning. We invite proposals that address the broad categories of celebrating success, recognizing challenges, offering critique, and advancing innovation.

Whether through research projects, classroom-based inquiry, or theoretical explorations, we offer the following suggestions for addressing this year’s conference theme:

- **The history of WAC.** We seek to celebrate the scholars and programs that have shaped WAC as a movement—of those whose stories have been told and those whose stories remain yet to be

shared, of voices that have not been heard outside of local contexts, and of once-innovative practices that might bear reexamination.

- **The role of WAC as an educational movement.** We are particularly interested in proposals with an emphasis on WAC as a high-impact practice, on its role in improving student learning and success, and on improving how instructors can use and foster critical and creative thinking through writing and speaking.
- **WAC pedagogy and practices.** We encourage proposals from both WAC scholars and disciplinary colleagues outside of writing studies that address the wide range of instructional practices that use writing and speaking to support learning and critical thinking in disciplines across the curriculum, in first- and second-language contexts, in new and established technological contexts, and in primary, secondary, undergraduate, and graduate education.
- **WAC program design and leadership.** We invite proposals that consider the range of options for designing and assessing programs, addressing faculty resistance, supporting students, and ensuring funding, among other issues. Given the complexity of developing, leading, and growing WAC programs, we value perspectives from the wide range of programs that have developed across the globe.
- **The impact of larger educational contexts and trends on WAC pedagogy and practices.** We solicit proposals that address the impact of information technology and social media on instructional efforts, of regressive testing practices, of the growing reliance on faculty in contingent positions, and of the growing use of learning analytics to assess student learning and faculty teaching effectiveness, among other areas of concern.
- **WAC as an international and transnational movement.** While WAC has deep roots in the United States and, historically, in the Language Across the Curriculum movement in the United Kingdom, it has expanded across national boundaries over the last two decades. We invite discussions of how WAC is situated in and has adapted to various national and transnational contexts, the challenges WAC practitioners have faced within those contexts, and the outlook for growth and change in those contexts.
- **The role of WAC in addressing social justice.** We encourage discussions of how WAC might play a role in addressing issues of social justice. In particular, we seek proposals that address the role of WAC in (1) working against racism, sexism, classism, ageism, ableism, intolerance of diverse sexual orientations, intolerance of the religious beliefs of others (including the lack of such beliefs), and exploitive labor practices, and (2) addressing the gap between rich and poor that continues to shape the preparation and perceptions of students entering our classrooms.
- **The impact of WAC in diverse social and linguistic contexts.** We invite proposals that address the role of WAC in a world where linguistic diversity is increasingly common, where our confidence in the information we consume is eroding, and where “standardized” notions of writing and reading shape the experiences of our students.
- **WAC and institutional and interdisciplinary dynamics.** We seek explorations of the distinctive challenges involved in enacting WAC in collaborations with or among faculty, staff, and administrators across academic fields and departments. We are particularly interested in how we might negotiate and reconcile disciplinary and institutional territories and boundaries, how we might make our academic spaces more inviting and generative, and how we might understand the institutional, regional, national, and global conditions that have helped or hindered interdisciplinary collaborations.
- **The impact of the polis on WAC.** We encourage proposals that explore connections between WAC and the impact of intrusive governments, the burden of student debt, public disinvestment in education, and the engagement of our students and graduates in civic and

professional discourse. We also encourage proposals that consider the opportunities and challenges associated with shaping public perception and policy regarding language and literacy instruction.

We welcome submissions for:

- interactive workshops
- panels (typically, three or four speakers)
- roundtables (typically, more than three or four speakers)
- individual presentations (which will be combined with other proposals to form a panel)
- teaching demonstrations
- poster presentations (both print and digital)

Panels, roundtables, and teaching demonstrations will be presented in 75-minute blocks, while workshops will be three hours long. Poster presentations will be take place over two 75-minute blocks.

We ask presenters to limit themselves to one speaking role in panels, roundtables, and teaching demonstrations (excluding service as a chair or respondent to a panel). In addition to a speaking role on a panel, roundtable, or teaching demonstration, we also encourage participants to consider participation as a workshop leader and as a presenter of a poster session.

We also ask presenters to consider issues of accessibility as they develop their presentation. Useful information about accessible presentations can be found on the Composing Access site at <https://u.osu.edu/composingaccess/>.

For more information about the conference and the call, please visit <https://iwac.colostate.edu> or contact us at iwac2020@gmail.com.