

Carolinas Writing Program Administrators (CWPA)

Sixth Annual Fall Conference

Writing Research and Program Preservation in Tight Financial Times

September 21 – 23, 2009

Wildacres Retreat, Little Switzerland, NC

<http://www.wildacres.org>

Conference Theme and Design

Since Chris Anson's call at the CWPA Meeting in the Middle in February 2007 to research ways to improve student writing and writing programs at our universities, Carolinas Writing Program Administrators has worked to facilitate researched responses to the challenges and opportunities facing our programs. This year, many of our members share the challenge of preserving "what's good" about our programs – and moving forward with innovation – in a time of financial hardship.

In recognition of this shared challenge, this year's CWPA fall conference invites participants to share research and problem-solving on creative responses to tight financial times. Participants might examine how to use budget cuts as opportunities to restructure programs in positive ways, share research that demonstrates the need to preserve small class sizes/low teaching loads, or challenge our assumptions about what is truly essential to a strong writing program. This list is not exhaustive, and we invite members to draw on their particular areas of expertise in order to assist like-minded colleagues from across NC and SC to better understand the state of research and practice in related areas.

As we consider the challenges facing our programs, how might existing research guide our decisions? If past research doesn't address our issues, how might we construct research projects to gather the information we need and then share it with colleagues at other institutions?

Participants ideally will come away with both creative ideas for negotiating our current WPA challenges and a broader sense of the state of scholarship in rhetoric and composition, especially as it pertains to specific institutional problems, needs, and opportunities we are facing in these tight financial times.

Pre-Conference Preparation for Participants

The format of the conference encourages full engagement of all participants, who represent a broad variety of institutions and programs. We will mix small group discussions about research related to the current challenges we are facing with individual/panel presentations about completed research. If you would like to present at the conference, please choose one of the following options based on the topic you want to explore and the status of your work. To facilitate collaboration and networking, **please submit your materials and project title to Jessie Moore (jmoore28@elon.edu) by July 1, 2009.**

- **Option A: Problem Statement and Literature Review**

Submit a one-page statement detailing a problem or opportunity that you are experiencing or will expect to experience at your institution, and a research question or set of questions relevant to that problem/opportunity. Include a bibliography of works that address your selected topic or

similar problems or opportunities. If you select this option, please bring an annotated version of this bibliography to the conference.

- **Option B: Proposal for Individual/Panel Presentation**

Submit a 500-word proposal for an individual or panel presentation on research you already have completed that might inform discussion about preserving – or even enhancing – writing programs in tight financial times.

Topics for both options might include issues relevant to WPAs or to specialists in professional writing, computers and composition, writing centers, or any other sub-area of composition and rhetoric. Example topics may include maintaining small class sizes in tight financial times, enhancing the assessment of a writing program as a preservation method, or protecting programs that better serve specific student populations (but that often are targets for budget cuts).

Accepted proposals for both Option A and Option B will be included on the conference schedule as formal presentations/contributions. We hope this deliberate choice to acknowledge the value of sharing work-in-progress (Option A) will open up additional travel-funding for all participants. Option A speakers will share their work during small-group discussions, with reports back to the larger group; Option B speakers will present to the larger group as part of 60-minute panel presentations.

Review of proposals will start July 1 and presenters will be notified of acceptance via e-mail by July 15. **You do not need to present to attend the conference, but if presenting will help you secure funding, we hope you will pursue one of the options offered above.**

Conference Format

The conference **will begin at 5:00 pm on Monday, September 21, and will conclude at 10:00 am on Wednesday, September 23.**

On **Monday night**, following an opening social and dinner, we will have a brief opening presentation arising from the conference proposals and a networking opportunity around the bonfire (or a ping-pong tournament if weather precludes a bonfire).

On **Tuesday**, following breakfast and a panel presentation, participants will meet in small discussion groups to examine the problems/opportunities facing our writing programs. These discussions will be informed by the problem- or opportunity-statements, research questions, and annotated bibliographies shared by participants. We foresee conversation focusing on how we might address actual problems or opportunities at our home institutions knowing how research done elsewhere has addressed these issues.

After lunch on **Tuesday**, the small groups will report back to the larger body, before we break for some downtime to enjoy the Wildacres facilities (which include several hiking trails). Participants will reconvene for dinner, another panel discussion, and an evening social.

Wednesday morning, after breakfast, we will hear from one more panel before a closing session. We hope that participants will leave with a more robust sense of the research that might inform a WPA's particular response to problems or opportunities facing his/her program, as well as possible cross-institutional research opportunities.

Registration and Cost

The registration price of \$165 includes lodging and 5 meals at Wildacres, as well as all conference materials. The **registration deadline is August 31 with no refunds after September 7**. Prior to September 7, you may cancel and receive a full refund.

We anticipate that space will be limited. We will maintain a waiting list if you pay the registration fee, which will be returned in full if no openings become available. Send your check with the accompanying registration form to the CWPA Treasurer, Nancy Barendse at:

Nancy Barendse
Charleston Southern University
P.O. Box 118087
Charleston, SC 29423-8087

nbarends@csuniv.edu

Questions or Comments?

Contact Jessie Moore, CWPA Web and List Manager, at Elon University (jmoore28@elon.edu).

Carolinas Writing Program Administrators has been an affiliate of the
National Writing Program Administrators since 2003.