

Call for Proposals

CWPA Fall 2010 Conference

Writing Program Assessment: Accountability and Enrichment

Proposal deadline: Friday, July 16th

Conference Theme and Design

More than ever, Writing Program Administrators, Writing Center Directors, and teachers and tutors of writing at the post-secondary level are feeling the pressure of Accountability: we are required by external bodies (such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, a.k.a. SACS) to study and document the impact of our curricula and, subsequently, to revise our programs in response to what we learn. Many of us are in the middle of SACS reaccreditation; many of us have just finished the process; and many of us are soon to begin that process. The process is confusing, intimidating, and enormous, particularly for many of us who haven't had a lot of training in assessment design and implementation.

Often, external pressure leads to "assessment dread"—the assessment process becomes another hoop to jump through or another way in which our work becomes vulnerable to attack by administrators and outsiders who don't understand what we do. Lost in this scenario is the promise of assessment—the ways in which assessment can be used to enrich our courses and to improve the work we do on behalf of our students. It is easy, too, to lose sight of the fact that program assessment can perform important research and lead to significant publications in the field of composition and rhetoric.

In response to the pressures, and sometimes dread, that surrounds the topic, the Fall 2010 CWPA Annual Meeting at Wildacres Retreat Center in Little Switzerland, NC will focus on "Writing Program Assessment." More specifically, the meeting is intended to foster conversations about topics such as

- Current research on practices of writing assessment,
- Assessment terminology,
- Assessment design for external (satisfying accreditation requirements) and internal (improving curricula, advancing research) purposes,
- Assessment implementation (logistics and getting program instructors "on board"),
- Assessment reporting (presenting assessment results in rhetorically effective ways for different audiences).

Conference Schedule and Format

The format of the conference encourages full engagement of participants from a broad variety of institutions and programs. We will mix small, working group discussions with individual and roundtable presentations about writing program assessment.

The conference **will begin at 5:00 pm on Monday, September 20**, and **will conclude at 10:00 am on Wednesday, September 22**.

Monday PM

Following dinner, we will have an opening presentation featuring Chris Anson from NC State. Chris will update us on the current state of research and practice in writing program assessment and provide us with some important questions to guide our thinking about assessment for the remainder of the conference. Following this opening session, participants will have additional social/networking time.

Tuesday AM

We'll begin the day after breakfast with a roundtable featuring representatives from different schools across the Carolinas. As part of this roundtable, participants from small, medium, and large schools will be asked to share their assessment experiences, plans, and concerns. The roundtable, and the open discussion following, is intended to provide ideas and raise important considerations that will inform our activities for the rest of the day.

At the conclusion of the roundtable, we'll provide time for participants to work on assessment plans for their own programs; you and others from your school will have time to review where your program assessment has been and to prepare an outline/overview for where to go next. We intend this morning working session to provide you with the opportunity—removed from the distractions of your day-to-day responsibilities—to focus on assessment design and implementation for your program.

Tuesday PM

After lunch on Tuesday, individuals and teams from different schools will work in small groups, sharing their ideas from the morning session with each other in order to get feedback on assessment plans.

We'll have a break before dinner to enjoy the Wildacres facilities (which include lovely porch chairs for reading and several hiking trails).

Following dinner, we'll share and discuss our assessment ideas as a large group, providing each other with more suggestions and feedback. The day will conclude with an evening social around the bonfire (or a ping-pong tournament if weather precludes a bonfire).

Wednesday AM

We will wrap up after breakfast with an open session dedicated to discussion of how we might continue to support each other in our assessment work. What can the CWPA do to enhance writing program assessment in the Carolinas? How can the organization facilitate assessment and assessment-based research? We will also discuss ideas for future CWPA meetings.

Proposals

We invite proposals from individuals or groups from schools across the Carolinas. Each proposal should be **no more than 500 words** and should contain the following:

- 1) A brief description of recent assessment efforts in your writing program (this program may be a first-year composition program, a WAC program, a technical/professional writing program, a writing center, or some combination of two or more of these).
- 2) A brief overview of your current thinking about future assessment for your program, and
- 3) A list of assessment-related concerns you have and/or issues you would like to discuss with others at the conference.
- 4) The names and contact information (email and phone) for each person affiliated with the proposal.

Please **be sure to title your proposal** and submit it via email to **Wendy Sharer (sharerw@ecu.edu) by Friday, July 16, 2010.**

Titles and authors of accepted proposals will be included on the conference schedule as formal presentations/contributions. We hope this will open up travel funding for all participants.

NOTE: You do not need to present to attend the conference, but if presenting will help you secure funding, we hope you will consider submitting a proposal either individually or with some colleagues from your institution.

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:

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Questions or Comments?

Contact Wendy Sharer at **sharerw@ecu.edu** or 252-328-6698.