



15th Annual Fall Carolinas Writing Program Administrators Conference

September 16-18, 2019 | Wildacres Retreat, Little Switzerland, NC ([Directions](#)) | \$220/\$210 (includes 2 nights lodging, 5 meals)

- **Proposal deadline: 11:59PM Monday, August 26, 2019**
- **Registration deadline: 11:59PM Friday, September 6, 2019**

Theme: Holding Space: Trauma, Community, and Care in Writing Programs

Today I write on behalf of the Carolinas Writing Program Administrators to extend sympathy, strength, comfort, and compassion to all of you. You have built and led this organization. You have hosted us in your space. We have shared ideas and strategies, meaningful glances and laughter and tears, meals and M&Ms, coffee, wine, and good beer, mountain sunrises and city sunsets. In so many ways, your campus is our campus; your students, our students; and thus, your heartbreak, pain, trauma, and healing—ours, too. We are holding space for you as long as you need it.

Carolinas WPA President Paula Patch wrote and published these words on May 1, 2019, hours after a gunman shot and killed two UNC Charlotte students in a classroom on campus. At Wildacres this year, we continue to make good on our promise to our UNC Charlotte colleagues and to all our colleagues in writing spaces in North and South Carolina. We hope you will join us in the space of healing through learning and sharing.

Conference Schedule and Format. The conference begins at 5:00 pm on Monday, September 16, and concludes at 10:00 am on Wednesday, September 18. Jan Rieman’s Monday evening plenary session on will be followed by a full day Tuesday of workshops and presentations for and by writing teachers and program administrators. Non-tenure track members and attendees are invited to gather to talk shop and make connections during the **NTT Network** portion of the retreat. **Paula Patch** will convene that group. Unscripted time will be available, too, on the beautiful mountaintop of Wildacres Retreat, with a closing session Wednesday morning. All meals are provided.

Wildacres Retreat is a low-tech, informal setting conducive to relaxing, collaborating, and learning with friends and colleagues across the Carolinas. We welcome teams or solo participants from across our region.

Monday Evening Speaker and Tuesday Workshop Leader: Jan Rieman, UNC Charlotte

Developing Trauma-Informed Practices in Writing Programs: Addressing the Impact of Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on Students, Teachers, and Programs

By the time they reach college, 66 to 85 percent of youth report lifetime traumatic event exposure, with many reporting multiple exposures (Read, Ouimette, White, Colder, & Farrow, 2011; Smyth, Hockemeyer, Heron, Wonderlich, & Pennebaker, 2008). College students are particularly vulnerable to experiencing a new potentially traumatizing event (PTE); and as many as 50 percent of college students are exposed to a PTE in the first year of college (Galatzer-Levy et al., 2012). In addition, data show that nearly $\frac{2}{3}$ of U.S. adults have Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Given the high rates of students who have experienced traumatic event exposure or ACEs, writing programs need to reexamine their institutional roles in order to better address the impact of trauma and ACEs on our students, our institutions, and on ourselves.

Trauma in postsecondary learners can manifest in a number of ways: difficulty focusing, attending, retaining, and recalling; tendency to miss a lot of classes; challenges with emotional regulation; fear of taking risks; anxiety about deadlines, exams, group work, or public speaking; anger, helplessness, or dissociation when stressed; withdrawal and isolation (Hoch et al., 2015). Researcher Bruce Perry notes that students dealing with the aftereffects of trauma and ACEs often struggle to process new information when they are triggered or stressed. “The major challenge,” he writes, “is to furnish the structure, predictability, and sense of safety that can help [these students] begin to feel safe enough to learn.”

Despite the challenges and limitations we face as non-mental health professionals, having a trauma-informed framework can help rhetoric and composition teachers and WPAs be better prepared to not only recognize how trauma, ACEs and other adversities impact learning, but to develop policies and procedures to more holistically support learning in the midst of the realities of our students’ lives.

Call for Proposals.

We encourage individual or team proposals from people in the Carolinas who are working in any teaching, research, or administrative positions related to writing. We welcome proposals related to this year's theme of Holding Space: Trauma, Community, and Care in Writing Programs.

Two different conversation-style presentation types will facilitate conversations around this theme:

1. **How We Help:** Share a teaching method or writing program leadership strategy that is working well at your site. Or present findings from a study you’re involved in that would interest writing teachers and WPAs. 20 minutes includes feedback time.
2. **Help We Need:** Describe a teaching, program leadership, or research problem or story that you would like help thinking about with other attendees. 20 minutes includes feedback time.

Proposals include:

- Names and contact information (email, phone, home institution) for each person associated with your proposal
- Type of presentation (How We Help, Help We Need)
- A title and 200-word (more or less) description for the program

Submit your proposal by completing this [online proposal form](#). Proposals are due by 11:59 p.m., Monday, August 26, 2019.

You are entirely welcome to attend without presenting, but those whose proposals are accepted will be listed on the formal agenda. This may help you advocate for travel funding. Proposals also help us plan appropriate groups and design activities around members' goals.

Registration and Cost. The registration fee of \$220 for full-time tenure track faculty and \$210 for other faculty and graduate students includes 2 nights' lodging, and 5 meals at Wildacres, as well as all conference materials and annual voting membership in Carolinas Writing Program Administrators.

Deadline. Conferencegoers must register by 11:59PM **Friday, September 6, 2018**.

Plans changed? Registration will be fully refunded if we are notified by 11:59PM Friday, September 6.

Questions or Comments? – Contact Paula Patch, ppatch@elon.edu, 336-278-6200