Fifty Years of WAC: Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going?

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Abstract: On the 50th anniversary of the start of the writing across the curriculum movement, the authors explore the historical foundations of the movement, consider key developments that have occurred since its emergence as one of the most enduring and successful education reform movements in North America, and reflect on potential directions for future growth. The authors include in a wide range of voices from the WAC community via quotations from published work and original videos provided by WAC scholars.

In their history of the writing across the curriculum (WAC) movement, Charles Bazerman et al. (2005) observed, "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 2019-2020 academic year marks the 50th anniversary of Walvoord's early seminar. With this in mind, it is both a time for celebration and a time to take stock. In this article, we draw on our understanding of our historical roots to challenge and question not only where WAC as a field is going but also to interrogate its present and future roles in the research and practices of key areas in writing studies, including first-year writing instruction, technical and professional communication, writing assessment, inclusiveness and access, and global collaboration.

As David R. Russell (1991, 2001, 2020) and others, including Bazerman and his colleagues (2005), have reported, the use of writing in courses outside English and communications departments has a long and rich history. When it finally gained the sense of identity that characterizes the WAC movement today, we were able to begin thinking about it as a set of practices that could be assessed and improved. The active and ongoing examination of what makes WAC work has been a central part of what has led to its success. It has brought about significant changes in our understanding of its goals, characteristic practices, and relationship to other educational emphases and practices, such as critical thinking, student success, educational assessment, civic engagement, and career preparation. It has given rise to an awareness of the need to implement WAC differently in small colleges, community colleges, K-12 institutions, research universities, and online institutions. And it has informed the development of important innovations, including the use of instructional and

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communication technologies to support writing instruction and new approaches to WAC program design, such as the Writing-Enriched Curriculum approach developed at the University of Minnesota (Flash, 2016), WAC programs that involve partnerships with writing centers and writing fellows initiatives, and numerous communication-across-the-curriculum programs that combine writing, speaking, and critical thinking processes.

Yet, as with most educational movements, WAC is far from a completed project. If it is to continue to grow and flourish, it must continue to welcome change and growth. As Vershawn Ashanti Young (2018) wrote in his call for proposals for the 2019 Conference on College Composition and Communication, we need to "open possibilities, many of them yet unknown." Continuing to open possibilities in WAC begins, at least in our experience, with invitations to discussion, with opportunities to perform, with creating spaces to collaborate, with a willingness to reflect on the ideas that shaped past and current practices, and with a welcoming attitude toward new ideas. Opening possibilities might also begin with something other than the standard scholarly documents with which many academics are familiar. Our exploration of WAC practices and possibilities has led to the creation of a multimodal, multi-vocal reflection on where we have been and where we might be heading. Key issues considered in this essay include:

- WAC's origins and history, including both the many adaptations it has made as it has been applied in diverse educational contexts and its relationship to other educational movements, such as service-learning, undergraduate research, and problem-based learning, among other high-impact practices. We trace the formation of communities of scholars who championed WAC over the past five decades, consider efforts made to adapt WAC to varying institutional contexts, and reflect on efforts to establish WAC as a recognized area of specialization within writing studies.
- The impacts of larger social, economic, political, and cultural contexts on our work as teachers, learners, scholars, and leaders. We discuss the effects on the careers of those involved in WAC (such as the uncertain recognition of WAC work in evaluations), the implications for WAC of the growing numbers of faculty in contingent positions, the impact of gender-based and other forms of discrimination, and the effects of uncertain institutional budgets on WAC programs and, by extension, on the WAC movement as a whole.
- The growing sense of WAC as an identifiable disciplinary subfield, which has led to the rise of formal and informal organizations within WAC, such as AWAC, the WAC Standing Group, the WAC Graduate Organization, the International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference, and the WAC Clearinghouse.

What follows reflects our attempts to remember and reflect on a formative movement in higher education. Given the complexity of work in WAC over the past five decades, as well as the potential for growth and change over coming decades, it is necessarily incomplete. We offer this polyvocal text as an attempt to historicize, reflect on, and explore ways in which WAC might continue to serve as a force for change in writing studies and, more generally, within secondary and post-secondary education.

Where Have We Been?

While WAC can trace its roots to numerous sources, including the Language Across the Curriculum movement in Britain during the 1960s and the Communication Movement that followed the second World War (Russell, 2002) as well as through discussions emerging from the 1966 Dartmouth Conference on English, scholars generally point to a semester-long seminar led by Barbara Walvoord at Central College during the 1969-1970 academic year as the beginning of the WAC movement. In 2019, Walvoord recalled that she and her colleagues in the Central College English department had

heard perennial complaints from colleagues across the disciplines about the quality of student writing and the writing skills of their graduates (personal communication, March 6, 2019). When her Milton seminar failed to reach its enrollment threshold in the fall of 1969, Walvoord received approval from her department chair to offer the seminar. It became a year-long workshop that led to what might be considered the first informal WAC program in the United States.

*Video: Perennial complaints from colleagues across the disciplines combine with a Milton seminar that fails to "make," leading **Barbara Walvoord** to create the first WAC Workshop at Central College in Iowa.*
View the video at https://youtu.be/pMcX8cMJMCI.

Foundations for WAC

David R. Russell's history of writing in the academic disciplines (1991, 2002, 2020) recounts ways in which activities we would now view as consistent with the WAC movement have been carried out for more than 150 years, since the beginning of modern higher education after the Civil War.

The impetus can be traced to the shift from a single curriculum where all students took the same courses to curricula where students took specialized subjects and pursued majors in universities. This shift, influenced by the new German model of the university, valued research and the creation of new knowledge as never before. The previous, single-curriculum model emphasized Latin and oratory, spoken rather than written rhetoric, and educated students primarily for the ministry; the new elective curriculum emphasized original research and vernacular written communication, educating a new class of professionals in a wide range of fields. Perhaps more importantly, the new industrial United States, spurred in

Ruth Mary Weeks, NCTE

part by academic research, valued writing in significant ways. This new recognition of the importance of writing led to a shift from a focus on oral rhetoric to a focus on written essays, memoranda, and

reports—in every field. English departments were formed to study British (and much later American) literature, courses that focused on oral rhetoric were dropped, often shifting to other departments, and the system of extracurricular literary (really debating) societies evolved into the Greek letter fraternity and sorority system. A new course, Freshman Composition, quickly became ubiquitous—and was assumed to prepare students to write anything in any field.

From the first years of Freshman Composition, in the 1870s, there were complaints that one course was insufficient, that teachers in all disciplines had to help (Russell, 1991, 2002, 2020). And there were various attempts to do so, including at Harvard, where Freshman Composition began. But the impetus toward specialization swamped these attempts, as did the overall inertia of the massive growth in higher and, especially, secondary school enrollments.

At the turn of the 19th century, a group of school reformers became part of the wider Progressive Movement in advocating for progressive education in writing, reading, and speaking (Gradin, 1995). They were inspired by John Dewey's vision of developing students for democratic life through education seen as a social transaction among partners, not simply as a transmission of static information or traditional culture. The goal was to improve both society and its individual members. Although the movement was in many ways co-opted by business interests intent on increasing the utility of future workers, it gave rise to attempts to make education in the disciplines include students' interests and voices, and to educate the whole person, rather than just fill minds with facts. And it was this vision that would later motivate many in the 1970s to pursue WAC (for example, Elaine Maimon praised Dewey as the "presiding ghost" in her early efforts.)

Some of these programmatic attempts at collaboration across the curriculum lasted a decade or more. These included various "cooperation" programs in secondary and higher education, where English teachers cooperated with teachers in other disciplines to improve student writing, and the "correlated curriculum" movement in the high schools, which was spearheaded by Ruth Mary Weeks. Weeks (1936), who would become President of NCTE in 1930, argued for the systematic incorporation of English into all subjects, advocating for the use of team-taught interdisciplinary courses, control of curriculum by teachers, and a focus on education for democracy. The correlated curriculum would be, she believed, "an educational home-coming for English," which in previous curricula was "taught in no other way than in relation to the classics, philosophy, and history" (p. 10). But it would also mean "recasting the whole educational program in the mold of a central purpose, so that not only the parts but the whole will have a meaning, a meaning which will tie part to part by a recognizable bond" (p. 10), the bond of a democratic community where all could speak—and write.

In higher education, the backlash against specialization included the General Education movement, or rather movements, because there was little agreement on what should constitute a general education, either in terms of which books should be read by all, or—and more difficult still—what sorts of writing would be necessary. Most universities retain a general education program today, but these programs are typically a menu of courses rather than a focused program. Numerous WAC programs have found important leverage by working with general education programs, whether the general education program takes the form of a small set of courses taken by all students or the more common approach where a variety of general education electives meet distribution requirements.

The return of veterans at the end of World War II and the GI Bill that followed led to another, even greater, surge in U.S. college enrollments. The resulting Communications Movement attempted to teach students to recognize and resist propaganda, and it inspired, in part, the founding of the Conference on College Composition and Communication as a distinct area within NCTE, which added new impetus to efforts to broaden the teaching of writing—and speaking—at the college level. Even so, by the 1960s, English departments in U.S. colleges and universities had become dominated by literary scholarship. Writing instruction, in contrast, was best characterized as prescriptive and

largely focused on grammar, mechanics, and style, a pedagogical approach often termed "current-traditional" (Connors, 1981).

Two other very different "across the curriculum" efforts that involved writing also gained prominence after WWII: remediation and abolition. Writing centers—originally called "writing hospitals" (Vose, 1925, p. 5)—and remedial courses were places to send students who entered the university without the educational preparation needed to write at the required level, or who did not have the resources that would allow them to learn without assistance. For similar reasons, a number of universities and colleges—usually small, private, and selective institutions—abolished required composition courses, typically using the rationale that students should have learned to write before entering college

James Britton (center)

or, if they had not yet done so, that the responsiblity should not fall to the English department, whose job was to teach great literature rather than closely analyze and mediate writing.

But English departments in the 1960s also saw a small but eventually influential revival of interest in classical rhetoric and the teaching of writing, as well as growing interest in language across the curriculum and in students' personal and social development through writing. These developments were profoundly influenced by British scholar James Britton and his collaborators, such as Nancy Martin, many of whom would collaborate with Britton on his influential book, *The Development of Writing Abilities, 11–18* (1975). At the groundbreaking 1966 Dartmouth Conference on English, U.S. teachers met teachers from across the Atlantic to respond to the question "What is English?" and to outline ways it might be taught. Scholars who

Nancy Martin

attended the conference had been systematically researching language across the curriculum, not just in terms of disciplinary discourse but also in terms of the individual development of students who came from a variety of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds (see Donahue, 2015).

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, another surge in college and university enrollment took place, this time spurred by the civil rights movement and a shift to open-enrollment admission polices. The surge brought new populations to higher education, populations with characteristics that differed markedly from those of previous generations of college students. By this time, however, U.S. writing teachers had available concepts and models for thinking about writing development—and for doing something about it—which we now know as writing across the curriculum.

A number of other movements "across the curriculum" emerged either before today's WAC movement (great books, general education, faculty development) or after (diversity, multiculturalism, ethics, internationalization, mathematics, and philosophy as well as reading, literacy, problem-based learning, and communication across the curriculum). But none before or after have had both the longevity and reach of today's encompassing WAC movement (Russell, 2020).

A Period of Rapid Growth

Shortly after Walvoord's WAC workshop at Central College, which we might think of as the first *informal* WAC program, the first *official* WAC program was launched at Carleton College, another member of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest. With support from a grant from the Northwestern Foundation, Harriet Sheridan, then dean of the college and past chair of the English department, hosted faculty writing workshops (called "rhetoric seminars") and began training "student rhetoric consultants" (now called "writing fellows") to support the use of writing in classes across the curriculum. Carleton's WAC program has continued to operate, with some changes in its name, since that time.

Other formal WAC programs followed at institutions such as Beaver College (now Arcadia University), Michigan Technological University, and the University of Michigan.
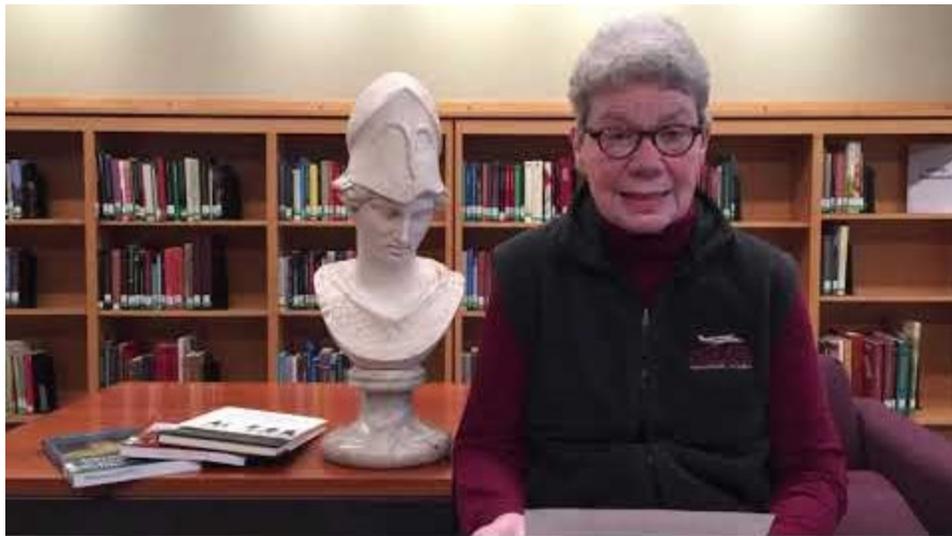
Video: Carol Rutz discusses how Harriet Sheridan established the first writing fellows program at Carleton College.
View the video at https://youtu.be/pp-wcrLG4e0.

Johnny Can't Write?

Newsweek magazine's cover story on December 8, 1975, was entitled "Why Johnny Can't Write." It opened with an alarming warning: "If your children are attending college, the chances are that when they graduate they will be unable to write ordinary, expository English with any real degree of structure and lucidity" (Sheils, p. 58).

In that early December, Elaine Maimon was completing her first semester as a full-time Assistant Professor of English and Writing Program Administrator (WPA) at the suburban Philadelphia private liberal arts college then called Beaver College (now Arcadia University). She had been appointed to the WPA position the previous year while she was still part-time, having begun working there as an adjunct in the fall of 1973.

Elaine recalls being surprised when the department secretary told her that the dean of the college wanted to see her. Her first thought was that the dean wanted to continue an unpleasant conversation that had unfolded a few weeks earlier. In those days before computer scheduling, students could choose composition sections for the second semester by placing their names on sign-up sheets, one for each section, scotch-taped to the counter outside the Dean's office. As the WPA, Elaine had made

sure that each section had a red-line indicating a maximum of twenty students in each section. But the students cheerfully ignored the red-line and continued to add their names, with no limits at all, to the sections of the most popular instructors. Elaine's high-tech solution to this imbalance in section enrollment was to use scissors to cut the sign-up sheets away from their scotch tape when the number reached twenty.

Alerted by the snip-snip—and the protests from students literally cut off from their section of choice--the dean had emerged from his office to demand, "What are you doing with my sign-up sheets!?!"

Elaine responded that she was protecting the reputation of Beaver College as an institution that kept sections of English composition at a manageable size.

But the December summons was not—at least not directly—connected with the scissors adventure. As soon as Elaine walked into the Dean's office, something came flying at her. She safely caught the missile, which turned out to be the "Why Johnny Can't Write" issue of *Newsweek*. Elaine momentarily considered a career in baseball, although that was another area like university life where women did not compete on an even playing field. But before she could take full satisfaction in her skills as an outfielder, the dean demanded to know what she was going to do about the article.

Ever bold, Elaine replied, "At Beaver College or nationally?"

It turned out that this encounter actually did lead to both local and national change. It was the beginning of writing across the curriculum at Beaver College—an initiative that would lead to a fully integrated institutional WAC program that would become a laboratory and model for other institutions.

As fate would have it, Elaine already had plane reservations later that month to fly to the Modern Language Association (MLA) Conference in San Francisco. For the flight from Philadelphia to San Francisco and the hotel costs, Beaver College had granted her a munificent $50. But she was determined to go. Elaine observed:

> Would a male professor have been granted a larger travel allowance? Probably. Since major presentations on the teaching of writing—one by Mina Shaughnessy entitled, 'Diving In'—were on the program, should a dean who wanted something done about writing have sprung for a little more travel support? Undoubtedly. But in that era many WPA's and emergent WAC scholars were women in contingent positions. In my own case, after two years as an adjunct working to make myself indispensable, I was finally in my first year of a tenure-track position. But many other WPA's had even less job security. (personal communication, January 3, 2020)

At the San Francisco MLA meeting, Shaughnessy's "Diving In" changed the course of Elaine's career. After the presentation, on a cable car headed to Fisherman's Wharf, Harriet Sheridan, then Acting President of Carleton College, overheard her enthusiastic praise. She invited Elaine for a glass of wine and a conversation about what they were doing at Carleton. Elaine returned to Beaver College with a specific answer to the dean's challenge about what she was going to do about "Why Johnny Can't Write." It was the Carleton Plan, emulating the Carleton "rhetoric seminars" and "student rhetoric consultants" (writing fellows). In January 1977, Harriet Sheridan travelled to Beaver College to be the first leader of a faculty workshop that provided the imprimatur for the National Endowment for the Humanities grant awarded to Beaver College in July 1977.

WAC at Beaver College

On July 14, 1977, a Bastille Day to remember, Beaver College received word that the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) had awarded $207,726, the largest federal grant in the College's history, for "A program to strengthen the humanities at Beaver College through an emphasis on instruction in writing and reading by all faculty" (EI-27873-77-752). The grant award marked a major change for NEH in recognizing writing and rhetoric as essential disciplines within the humanities. Previously, writing had been regarded as a superficial skill inappropriate for humanities funding. It is noteworthy that the Bay Area Writing Project's (BAWP) metamorphosis into the National Writing Project received NEH funding in the same grant cycle.[1]

Edward P. J. Corbett talks with Elaine Maimon and Beaver College (Arcadia) literature Professor Pradyumna Chauhan about writing and rhetoric in the late 1970s.

That summer day in suburban Philadelphia was a focal point of joy and accomplishment for the Beaver College team. They had understood that the only way relatively unknown Beaver College could be recognized by NEH would be to submit an early proposal for the January 2, 1977 deadline. That had meant a serious end-of-semester scramble to write a comprehensive and meaningful proposal. The members of the team knew it was important to reference the already planned January workshop scheduled to be led by Carleton Acting President Harriet Sheridan. Faculty leaders, including department chairs, had signed up for that workshop, even though no compensation was offered. But they proposed in the NEH grant that those attending in January 1977 would be eligible for summer workshops potentially funded by NEH.

The grant support allowed Beaver College to bring about a culture change in the teaching of writing. Uncompensated January workshops were prerequisite to stipends for participation in five-week summer workshops that took place over the next three years. The team invited top scholars in rhetoric and composition to work with faculty for four of five days each week. The fifth day was set aside for the faculty group to think through how to apply the scholar's perspective to writing across the curriculum at Beaver. On the Wednesday evening of each scholar's week, the college hosted a lecture for the general public, inviting colleagues from universities, colleges, and high schools. The workshop attracted a wide range of participants from inside and outside the college, including leading scholars in rhetoric and composition Edward P. J. Corbett, Donald McQuade, Harvey Weiner, John R. Hayes, Linda Flower, Lynn Bloom, Richard E. Young, and Nancy Sommers.
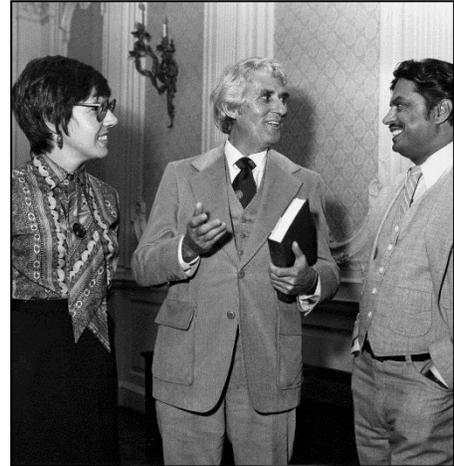
Elaine Maimon and Beaver College (Arcadia University) colleagues Jerry Belcher, Barbara Nodine, Helene Cohan, and JoAnn Bomze participate in a faculty writing workshop in the late 1970s.

The essential principle underlying the writing workshops was that curriculum change depends on scholarly exchange among faculty members. That principle pertains far beyond writing across the curriculum and is the *sine qua non* for deep, conceptual change in any area. Not only faculty members but most intelligent people resist change that is based on "how-to" or other superficial approaches. Real, lasting change results from what Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle (2015) describe as engaging with "threshold concepts of writing studies" in ways that allow us to understand critical disciplinary concepts.

During the three years of the NEH grant, Beaver College faculty and students learned to see writing in new ways, resulting in a process approach to teaching writing and to unprecedented connections across disciplines. At the conclusion of the first NEH grant, Beaver College received another NEH grant to disseminate writing across the curriculum nationally, culminating in hosting a 1983 national conference on writing in the humanities. After that, Beaver College received a third NEH grant to reach out to Philadelphia-area high schools to establish WAC. Additionally, Beaver obtained funding from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) to incorporate problem-solving and critical thinking across the curriculum. That was the first instance of expanding the infusion model from writing to other important cross-curriculum capacities, a trend that continues today.

WAC at Michigan Tech

While WAC gained its start in liberal arts colleges, it quickly moved to universities. Scholars from Michigan Technological University had been engaged in early conversations about WAC and they established their own WAC program in 1978. Led by Art Young and Toby Fulwiler, the WAC program at Michigan Tech involved scholars such as Carol Berkenkotter, Randall Freisinger, and James Kalmbach, among others. A distinguishing feature of their work was a strong emphasis on assessing the impact of WAC efforts across the university. Their early work resulted in two edited collections (Fulwiler & Young, 1982, 1986) that offered evidence-based conclusions about the impact of WAC on student learning and put forth guidelines that would shape the design of WAC programs at other institutions.

*Video: **Art Young** discusses the work he and his colleagues carried out in the late 1970s and early 1980s at Michigan Technological University. View the video at https://youtu.be/X0RZirWDno4.*

WAC in K-12 Settings

While the formal use of WAC in K-12 settings has been less pervasive than in colleges and universities, it has shown similar staying power and has proven to be an essential tool for preparing K-12 students for careers and college. WAC existed in the schools long before any formal K-12 WAC programs were established, especially in elementary schools where cross-curricular courses were taught in self-contained classrooms and teachers used writing in a variety of subjects. Once formal WAC programs were launched, however, they typically followed the higher education-based initiatives of the 1970s, and were influenced by reform movements in public education such as "open school" concepts and efforts to make education more student-centered. Research studies in addition to Britton's (1978), such as those conducted by Janet Emig (1971, 1977), as well as leaders within the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), had begun to consider how best to apply WAC concepts in K-12 classrooms. Also, in the 1980s secondary school teachers were reading Donald Murray's "Writing as Process: How Writing Finds Its Own Meaning" (1980) and *Write to Learn* (1984). Between whole language programs (Goodman, 1982) and Nancie Atwell's *In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents* (1987), elementary and middle school educators began to see writing as important in more than language arts classrooms.

The National Writing Project (NWP), which began in 1973 as the Bay Area Writing Project, also had a profound impact on educators at all academic levels. The original purpose of the NWP was to co-construct a knowledge base for the teaching of writing by involving cross-disciplinary teachers of all academic levels. In 1982, James Gray, founder of the NWP, collaborated with the American Association for School Administrators to publish *Teaching Writing: Problems and Solutions* (Neill, 1982), a precursor to NWP's *Because Writing Matters* (Nagin, 2003) and *The Neglected R: The Need for a Writing Revolution* (The National Commission on Writing in Our Schools and Colleges, 2003). Working with the National Writing Project in Northern Virginia, Chris Thaiss explored connections between his work with K-12 teachers and WAC. This work, in combination with other partnerships between early WAC programs and K-12 educators, led NCTE to sponsor a series of two-day post-conference workshops at its annual convention. One of the first workshops, held in 1983, brought together a WAC team from Michigan Tech with secondary school WAC leaders such as Pam Farrell (later Pam Childers). The work emerging from these early efforts led to publications such as *Roots in the Sawdust: Writing to Learn across the Disciplines* (Gere, 1985), *Language Across the Curriculum in the Elementary Grades* (Thaiss, 1986), and *The High School Writing Center: Establishing and Maintaining One* (Farrell, 1989).

In the 1990s, more books on K-12 WAC were published, including Programs and Practices: Writing Across the Secondary School Curriculum (Farrell-Childers, Gere, & Young, 1994), and K-12 educators presented on WAC at conferences, including the first National Writing Across the Curriculum Conference, which was held in 1993 in Charleston, South Carolina. Attention to WAC in K-12 settings continued to grow as postsecondary teacher-preparation programs across disciplines added required courses in the teaching of writing.

*Video: Chris Thaiss discusses the role his work with the National Writing
Project—and K-12 more generally—played in his work with WAC.
View the video at https://youtu.be/SxRcuhkQzoc.*

Since the late 1990s, WAC has spread nationally and internationally through the web in both public and independent K-12 schools. Teachers are able to exchange ideas, coordinate student forums and webinars among institutions at all academic levels, and experiment on WAC initiatives with global partners. Within the US, there are nearly 200 NWP sites in all 50 states, and many elementary and secondary school teachers involved with these sites have become acquainted with WAC. In turn, these NWP teachers have influenced the use of writing in elementary, middle, and secondary school classrooms in all disciplines. WAC partnerships between secondary and postsecondary institutions continue to grow as well (Blumner & Childers, 2011, 2016).

Several other areas have had a strong impact on WAC in K-12 settings. Writing center scholarship has contributed significantly through the natural connections in the areas of writing, genre, and interdisciplinarity (Mullin & Childers, 2020; Jordan, 2006; Lowry & Childers, 2000; Mullin & Childers, 1995). WAC has also gained additional momentum through initiatives such as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS); Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education; and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). New articles and books are coming out regularly, with researchers emphasizing the many connections between these movements and WAC (Childers & Lowry, 2012; Wessling, VanKooten, & Lillge, 2011). In addition, statements from professional organizations, including the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* (2011) and the *WPA Outcomes Statement* (2014), connect directly to WAC in K-12 schools, particularly in terms of how secondary teachers prepare their students for writing in all disciplines in college and beyond (Childers & Lowry, 2016).

Video: Pam Childers discusses WAC in K-12 settings.
View the video at https://youtu.be/YFsiCosp27U.

WAC in the Community Colleges

Community colleges have been actively engaged with WAC from the start of the movement. Terry Collins and Suzanne Hofer's annotated bibliography on "interdepartmental responsibility for the teaching of writing skills," completed in 1976, identifies several WAC or WAC-like efforts then in progress at two-year institutions.

- In 1974, Ann Laster and Nell Ann Picket described an approach that involved teaching first-year composition in partnership with 13 departments at Hinds Junior College.
- In 1975, Harvey Weiner reported on efforts by writing faculty at LaGuardia Community College to work with and develop materials for faculty in other departments to support college-wide efforts to upgrade writing skills and to support learning in disciplinary courses.
- In 1976, E. Lee Gershuny and Daniel Rosich described an interdisciplinary course at the Borough of Manhattan Community College that used writing assignments to explore connections between English and data processing.

The growth of interest in WAC among two-year institutions parallels that of four-year institutions. In 1988, Barbara Stout and Joyce Magnotto reported the result of a survey of 1,270 institutions that were members of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. The 401 survey responses indicated that two-year colleges were engaged in WAC in roughly the same percentages as other higher-education institutions:

> Almost one third of the survey respondents reported that their colleges have WAC programs. This percentage is consistent with other recent estimates of WAC programs at colleges and universities (see the Appendix in this volume and Kinneavy, 1987). Survey responses from 111 community colleges indicated that they are planning or considering writing across the curriculum. The remaining 169 of the 401 responding colleges do not have programs. Eleven reported discontinuing their programs, and one reported reinstating a program after a lapse. (p. 22)

While the institutional reward structures for community colleges pose their own set of challenges to those who seeks to launch and support WAC programs, the level of engagement with WAC has continued to be similar to that of other institutions (see Blau, 2010; Hughes-Wiener & Jensen-Cekalla, 1991; Reiss, 1996; Rose & Theilheimer, 2002). The experiences of Donna Reiss and her colleagues at Tidewater Community College highlight challenges and opportunities that shape work at many two-year institutions.

Video: Donna Reiss recalls key moments in the development of WAC at Tidewater Community College. View the video at https://youtu.be/qQxTwBY0f3c.

WAC at HBCUs, HSIs, and TCUs

The trajectory of WAC at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) is similar to that of community colleges, small liberal arts colleges, and regional and state universities. Sue McLeod's national survey of WAC programs, conducted in 1987 and reported in her book, *Strengthening Programs for Writing Across the Curriculum*, shows strong investment in WAC among these colleges and universities. Nine HBCUs reported that WAC programs or initiatives were in progress at their institutions, with two institutions—Lincoln University and Norfolk State University—having had their programs in place for more than three years and one—Spelman College—having their program in place for more than a decade. Among HSIs, 37 reported that WAC programs or initiatives were in progress at their institutions, with five institutions—Alverno College, California Lutheran College, California State University Fullerton, Orange County Community College, and Texas State Technical Institute—indicated that their programs had been in place for at least seven years. No Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) reported WAC programs or initiatives at that time. McLeod's survey is noteworthy because it was sent to every college and university in the US and Canada. Given a response rate of 40.7% (an impressive response rate in itself), the numbers reported here are almost certainly less than the total number of programs in place at the time.

Interest in WAC was strong among HBCUs and HSIs during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Elaine reports that her work with the NEH National Board of Consultants took her to the University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff, an HBCU, in 1979. She also recalls serving as an NEH consultant for El Centro Community College in Dallas, an HSI, from 1980 to 1983, where she "worked with Judy Lambert on what was probably one of the first CC/HSI WAC programs" (personal communication, December

2020). Elaine also reports that a number of HBCUs and HSIs, such as Hostos College, participated in the 1983 Writing in the Humanities conference. In addition, during the 1990s, numerous faculty members affiliated with WAC efforts at HBCUs and HSIs participated in the bi-annual institutes on writing and critical thinking hosted by the University of Chicago (see National Seminars on WAC, below).

As has long been the case with WAC efforts more generally, some early initiatives at HBCUs and HSIs flourished, while others briefly flowered and then languished or ceased before starting anew. Among the more enduring programs are the WAC programs launched at Spelman College in 1978 and at Howard University in 1991. In 1992, Jacqueline Jones Royster charted the development of the Spelman program, which has operated continuously since its founding and is now named the Comprehensive Writing Program, over its first fifteen years:

> We began with the notion, as did many other institutions throughout the nation (see Griffin, "Programs"), that greater success in developing communication skills called for an extension of this responsibility in reasonable and productive ways beyond the English department to other departments across the curriculum. This strategy seemed capable of enhancing our efforts to produce graduates who can perform well in graduate and professional schools and in the world of work. (p. 119)

By 1985, Royster noted, the program had expanded its focus beyond what was typical of many WAC programs at the time to include the notion that "good writing is good thinking" (p. 120). In what has become an important element of many modern WAC programs, Royster and her colleagues turned their attention to the role of writing in fostering critical thinking:

> This new concern led us to wonder just how our students were actually operating—not just as communicators, but as thinkers, learners, problem finders, and problem solvers. We decided to give specific and conscious attention to developing what the literacy community now calls higher-order literacy skills. In essence, we had changed the conceptual frame of the program. (pp. 120-121)

Teresa Redd, who co-founded the Howard University program and enjoyed a long tenure as its director, described a similar trajectory for the program, writing, "The WAC program at Howard University was built on the primary tenets of the WAC movement, 'writing to learn' (WTL) and 'learning to write' (LTW)" (2018, p. 66). Redd recalls a significant amount of collaboration among the various HBCU WAC initiatives. In particular, she points to a WAC and technology initiative that resulted in her leading workshops at Spelman College, Bowie State University, and Virginia State University in the late 1990s (personal communication, December 2020). Today, Howard University's WAC program has expanded its focus to include critical thinking and the support of learning across the disciplines. The program website states that

> the writing-intensive courses that are the centerpiece of the WAC program help students master the text conventions of a particular discipline, while reinforcing skills learned in Freshman English. At the same time, the courses empower students to use writing assignments to read and think critically about the subject matter of the discipline. ("Writing across the curriculum at Howard University," 2004)

The large number of HSIs reporting WAC initiatives or programs in McLeod's survey—8.7% of all reported WAC programs—indicates strong faculty and administrative interest in using writing to support learning among this group of institutions. Of the 56 institutions indicating that their WAC

programs had been established in 1982 or earlier, HSIs accounted for more than 12% of the total, significantly higher than their overall representation among programs at the time.

In contrast with HBCUs and HSIs, TCUs appear to have engaged in relatively few WAC initiatives. Searches of TCU websites for terms related to WAC and writing-intensive courses found only a small number of presentations and workshops. At the time this article was published, we were unable to find any formal WAC programs at TCUs.

National Seminars on WAC

In the 1980s, the NEH dissemination projects led by Beaver College, brought together nationally known faculty members from English and from other disciplines to work in teams with local high school instructors. In addition, The NEH National Board of Consultants made experts available to lead the establishment of WAC programs across the country. Elaine Maimon, for example, served as an NEH consultant at El Centro Community College (Dallas, TX) and Pacific Lutheran University (Tacoma, WA). The Pacific Lutheran consultation led to the formation of a regional WAC organization, the Pacific Northwest Consortium.

In the 1990s, the University of Chicago, under the leadership of Carol Schneider, who later became the long-term President of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), organized a series of national institutes on writing and critical thinking. These institutes had a powerful influence on making writing across the curriculum mainstream.

Similarly, Robert Morris College in Pittsburgh sponsored three WAC video teleconferences entitled *Writing Across the Curriculum: Making It Work*, featuring WAC leaders of all academic levels. These live teleconferences offered wider audiences of educators and administrators an opportunity to call in questions, hear leaders discuss the origins of their own

National Endowment for the Humanities. A national dissemination program for writing in the humanities: Summer institutes in the teaching of writing. Beaver College, September 1980-August 1983.

programs, and see videos of WAC in action at various institutions. The last video teleconference (1994) was subtitled *How Schools and Colleges--and Communities--Collaborate to Improve Learning*. Many school districts and universities convened entire faculties or communities of educators to watch these sessions together and tapes of the teleconferences were used for subsequent professional development.

WAC Scholarship

By the early 1990s, the need for publishing outlets dedicated to WAC scholarship had become clear. The first WAC journal with a national focus, *Language and Learning Across the Disciplines* (https://wac.colostate.edu/llad), published its inaugural issue in 1994. Founded by Sharon Quiroz and Michael Pemberton, it was published in print until 2004, when it merged with the online journal *Academic.Writing* to form *Across the Disciplines.* In 1999, *The WAC Journal*, which had been founded in 1989 by Roy Andrews as a means to encourage WAC efforts at Plymouth State University, began to accept work from outside the university. A year later, it made its archives available on the WAC

Clearinghouse (https://wac.colostate.edu/journal), which has continued to publish the journal (now with Parlor Press and Clemson University).

Video: Michael Pemberton discusses the founding of Across the Disciplines*.*
View the video at https://youtu.be/GCucc0-EhFY.

The WAC Clearinghouse was founded in 1997 as a site to distribute resources and curricular materials for the WAC community (see https://wac.colostate.edu/about/brief-history). Within a few years, it had become home to *Academic.Writing, The WAC Journal*, and the archives for *RhetNet* and *Language and Learning Across the Curriculum*, as well as to books by WAC pioneers Sue McLeod, Margot Soven, and Art Young, among others. By 2003, the Clearinghouse had begun to publish original books, starting with Charles Bazerman and David R. Russell's edited collection, *Writing Selves / Writing Societies*. It is now home to several journals, the CompPile database, and more than 125 scholarly monographs and collections as well as a growing collection of resources for writers, writing instructors, and WAC scholars.

Video: Chuck Bazerman reflects on the WAC Clearinghouse as an open-access publisher
for many of his republished and original books and a major scholarly outlet.
View the video at https://youtu.be/jEcE45fz_BQ.

Video: Pam Childers discusses the impact of open-access scholarship.
View the video at https://youtu.be/WEZDX-ihsTY.

Connecting to Other Areas of Writing Studies

WAC has long been closely aligned with work in writing centers. By the time the National Writing Centers Association (now IWCA) began in the early 1980s, WAC-based writing centers had popped up nationally at many secondary and postsecondary institutions (Kinkead et al, 2015). Later, following their conferences in 2005, the European Writing Centers Association (EWCA) and European Association of Teachers of Academic Writing (EATAW) collaborated by alternating the years of their conferences because of their shared connections to writing studies.

Video: Michael Pemberton discusses the relationship between WAC programs
and writing centers. View the video at https://youtu.be/1HPi_MC3wa0.

Similarly, with increasing globalization and internationalization across our universities, many WAC scholars realized the need to explore intersections between WAC and L2 writing. As early as 2000, Paul Kei Matsuda and Jeffrey Jablonski argued for a "mutually transformative model of ESL/WAC

collaboration." Notably, Terry Myers Zawacki, the former WAC Director at George Mason University, and Michelle Cox offered a strong response to Matsuda and Jablonski through their edited collection, *WAC and Second Language Writers: Research Towards Linguistically and Culturally Inclusive Programs* (2014), noting that "The goal that drives this collection is this: that WAC theory, research, and practice must be expanded to include and 'embrace,' to echo [Ilona] Leki, the differing perspectives, educational experiences, and written voices of second language writers" (p. 16). Their collection and similar work have advanced data-driven conversations about how the needs of multilingual writers can challenge and improve the norms and assumptions guiding WAC practices and programs.

Video: Terry Myers Zawacki discusses the connections between WAC and second-language writers. View the video at https://youtu.be/sIjEc4-PMG4.

More recently, long-standing efforts to address communication across the disciplines at the graduate level, such as offering graduate seminars in professional writing and thesis preparation, have led to the formation of the Consortium for Graduate Communication (https://www.gradconsortium.org). The Consortium is an international association that focuses on professional development in written, oral, and multimodal communication to graduate students, working in both first and second languages.

Video: Michelle Cox discusses the formation of the Consortium on Graduate Communication. View the video at https://youtu.be/ahwgT3htxLY.

WAC, Contingency, and Gender

In *Leading Academic Change: Vision, Strategy, Transformation*, Elaine Maimon (2018) noted that writing across the curriculum has long been informed by feminist principles. That's not a surprise given the number of women leaders of the movement. WAC has typically been seen as transformative, rather than transactional, depending on shared ownership rather than on bartering, buying, and selling.

That said, WAC has not escaped the routine oppression of women, faculty members in contingent positions, and members of minoritized groups. In 1981, after applying for a position in which she could have continued to lead WAC work at the institution that employed her and her husband—and after bringing in a major grant to fund development of a WAC program—Sue McLeod was told that it would be foolish to hire her for a tenure-track position since, as a faculty spouse, "she wasn't going anywhere." This proved to be a bad move for the institution. McLeod subsequently found a tenure-line position at Washington State University, where she became a department chair, an associate dean, and one of the early leaders of the WAC movement.

Video: Sue McLeod reflects on the challenges of working on WAC as an adjunct faculty member and a faculty spouse. Not long after being turned down for a tenure-line position, she took a tenure-line position at Washington State University and became one of the leaders of the WAC movement.
View the video at https://youtu.be/ETsGl0YV43Q.

McLeod's experiences as an adjunct faculty member were far from unique. When Joan Mullin was hired as "professional staff" to start a Writing Center and WAC program at University of Toledo, she was told that it would eventually turn into a tenure-line. While she was grateful to have a job in a typical downturn year for academic hiring, she eventually spent twelve years in that contingent position in an English department that was largely resistant to viewing writing studies as a legitimate area of scholarly inquiry. Writing at that time was seen as an upstart area claiming to be a discipline. Moreover, she was a woman. Within the first two years, she was advised by a senior male colleague in the department to (1) "wear jeans more often and schmooze around a lot," (2) "don't call the president by his first name"—which everyone else on campus did by the president's insistence—and (3) "watch who you eat lunch with." That last one was unexplained, but the advice offered was "you aren't really faculty" (personal communication, February 25, 2019).

For Joan, working in a contingent position in a traditional English department in the early days of WAC proved problematic: her class in writing theory was canceled after two years because she was "stealing graduate students from other classes." When she walked into the room for a department meeting, one male colleague would typically sighed loudly and say, "What's *she* doing here?" No one ever called him on it, neither the women sitting there nor the department chair. Joan observed:

> While, by all means, not everyone in English, nor all males, were exclusionary and sexist, by far that was the norm at my institution and, as I became a member of professional WAC and writing center organizations, I heard this was the norm overall: sexism, low pay, exclusion from opportunity. I have been told of WAC professional staff (all female stories) being asked to leave the room when decisions are voted on; as with Sue McLeod's story, all have been tagged "trailing spouses" or as non-research faculty who lack the wherewithal to vote on hiring decisions, even of their own supervisors.
>
> Luckily, while devastated by the treatment, I was naïve enough to think if I proved myself it wouldn't matter, and in some ways, it didn't. While the exclusion from English hurt and created a defensiveness it took a long time to shake, a victim mentality I recognize in a lot of WPAs. I just acted like the PhD/academic that I thought I was. As involvement in the profession grew, so did publications and my CV. As the programs on campus succeeded and my own networks solidified, I was included on faculty committees across campus, even those not usually open to professional staff like search committees and program reviews, because of *how* I was, not how English constructed me or males (and there are more stories from those outside English). Or even females.
>
> Overall, gender prejudice seemed closely tied to the lack of understanding of our field. I think of the male sociologist who took my picture from a news item, posted it on his office door and wrote across it in red "She will teach you to rite." While female tenure-line colleagues in Biology or history were equitably treated and treated me as such, female colleagues in English treated me according to my rank. (personal communication, January 23, 2020)

Stories of inequity formed common complaints within the field in the late 1980s to early 2000s, and Joan's experience seven years into her position was not uncommon: given a strong record of publication and leadership in professional organizations, one of her colleagues, a nationally prominent English department rhetorician, urged his colleagues to vote on moving her position onto a tenure line. When he realized that the vote was clearly going to be "no," he successfully persuaded them to "vote not to vote on the matter of Joan Mullin's tenure." Rhetorically smart, he explained that the vote would allow a subsequent attempt to move her into a tenure line. Eventually, disgusted by the tenor of the conversations about Joan and the field of which he considered himself a part, he left the department.

A few years later, another attempt was made to convert Joan's position to a tenure line. This time it was successful, but not without complications and unnecessary drama. As has been the case with many in the field of writing studies, Joan's work in service and administration—and the nature of the scholarship that emerged from that work—complicated her promotion and tenure case. Nonetheless, she earned support from her department, her college, and the university's personnel committee. Then it was rejected by a new provost, a woman, who questioned the value of "service work" in what she viewed as a still-emerging field. Joan recalled what happened next:

> The procedure was that, if a case was rejected at any level, it was closed—but whoever rejected the case had to explain to the previous committee, dean, or chair the reason for rejection. The head of the university personnel committee who had passed my case was a prestigious male scientist—the university's top NSF grant receiver by millions. The provost argued to him and the committee that I didn't deserve it, that this wasn't a valid field, that rolling my position into a tenure line wasn't policy. After arguing the committee's case to no avail, the chair told her that it was her right to reject, but that everyone on the committee, and a majority of faculty would openly protest the decision. She approved my case. (personal communication, January 23, 2020)

Joan observed that "the professional humiliation and emotional toll—sometimes indefinable and unperceived—that such treatment causes cannot be overstated. The saddest part of tales like this are how our defenses and the damage done by colleagues cause many of us to self-destruct on personal and/or professional levels" (personal communication, January 23, 2020). Despite the inclusiveness that WAC has professed to embrace since its founding, we can point to similar situations—and too often situations that do not end well—for colleagues who seem to be working in conditions that vary little from those typical of the 1980s and 1990s. This is as true for minoritized groups as it is for women. While attention to this issue, to the point of public shaming, has led to improvements, one of the key issues faced by members of the WAC community—inadequate knowledge of writing studies as a disciplinary field worthy of respect—continues to cause undue pressures on too many of our colleagues. Joan argues, however, that it is possible to relieve that pressure:

> Equity and visibility are areas we need to push as an agenda for the future. We start by making these issues explicit, calling them out, using our allies, and remembering that there *are* models, and there *are* those who have gone before and succeeded—and many of them are in powerful positions now. Anyone still struggling should reach out because, in so many ways, WAC and the many who have built WAC have resources to offer, support to give, and a robust field behind which more can stand. (personal communication, January 23, 2020)

Resistance to WAC

Following a period of expansion and enthusiasm, WAC proponents came to recognize that many faculty members outside the field of writing studies were reluctant to embrace WAC. While early work had focused on professional development aimed at faculty members who shared an understanding of the important role writing could play in student learning and success, work in the second and third decades of WAC turned increasingly toward how best to work with those who were reluctant to use writing in their courses. Resistance to WAC took various forms, including concerns about the lack of expertise required to teach writing, lack of time to put in the work to do WAC well, inflexible curricula (related to presentation-based pedagogies), and mismatches with institutional rewards structures (Couch, 1989; Kaufer & Young, 1993; McLeod, 1989; Soven, 2000; Swanson-Owens, 1986; R. Young, 1991).

Video: Mike Palmquist discusses the rise of resistance to WAC efforts in the late 1980s. View the video at https://youtu.be/bThSqc1FCxE.

In response, WAC proponents began to explore new models. In many cases, such as the bottom-up, writing-center-based model developed by Tori Haring-Smith (1987),[2] these new models appeared to be based more on local circumstances than on a concerted effort to develop an alternative model. In others, such as the speaking and listening across the curriculum approach advocated by Roberts (1983), these models were launched from a desire to expand the scope of WAC. In still others, such as the integrated approach developed in the early 1990s at Colorado State University (Palmquist et al., 1995), the goal was to address local forms of resistance, in their case, resistance linked to a rewards structure that privileged scholarship and funded research over teaching. "What would it mean to look at writing-across-the-curriculum in a different way?," asked Palmquist and his colleagues, noting that they had "wrestled with our discovery that WAC as it is typically conceptualized—what we've come to think of as 'WAC Orthodoxy'—does not work on our campus" (Palmquist, 2000, p. 373).

Video: Mike Palmquist discusses one new model for WAC that began at Colorado State University in the early 1990s.
View the video at https://youtu.be/nOFRg_BCRac.

WAC has continued to diversify its approaches, with notable successes such as the Writing Enriched Curriculum developed by Pamela Flash and her colleagues at the University of Minnesota (https://wec.umn.edu), the communication across the curriculum approach that is perhaps best

exemplified by Chris Anson and his colleagues at North Carolina State University (https://cwsp.ncsu.edu), and the electronic communication across the curriculum approach that was highlighted by Donna Reiss, Dickie Selfe, and Art Young in their 1998 edited collection.

Forming a Community

Efforts to create a formal, membership-based professional organization for writing across the curriculum have strong roots in efforts such as the national WAC seminars and institutes that occurred in the 1980s and '90s, the meetings of the National WAC Network (later the International WAC Network), which was led for more than three decades by Chris Thaiss, the National (later International) Writing Across the Curriculum conference, and the formation of regional and special-purpose WAC organizations, such as the Northeast Writing Across the Curriculum Consortium, the WAC Graduate Organization, and Consortium for Graduate Communication. In 2014, the *Statement of WAC Principles and Practices* was published by the Network, and, beginning in 2016, efforts were initiated to form what would become the Association for Writing Across the Curriculum (which we discuss below).

The (Inter)National WAC Network

The International Network of Writing-across-the Curriculum Programs (INWAC), established by Chris Thaiss as the "national" WAC Network, provided annual (and in many years, bi-annual) opportunities for members of the WAC community to meet, share ideas, and seek support at conferences, most notably special interest group meetings at the CCCC, NCTE, and IWAC conferences. On the Network web page on the WAC Clearinghouse, Thaiss described the Network as "an informal community of teachers, researchers, and institutions," all of whom were involved in some manner with WAC on a local, regional, national, or international basis (https://wac.colostate.edu/network/). With support from the Northern Virginia Writing Project as well as from members of the Network, an annual print directory was published from 1981 to 2005. In 2006, the Network entered into a partnership with the WAC Clearinghouse and the membership directory was distributed online. Eventually, the directory would grow to roughly 1,800 individuals. As part of the partnership, the Clearinghouse provided web space for information about the Network's Board of Consultants and partnered with it on publishing efforts.

Video: Chris Thaiss discusses the origins of the National Network of Writing Across the Curriculum Programs. View the video at https://youtu.be/ETpCUgnoX8o.

When Thaiss stepped down as leader of the Network in 2015, Michelle Cox, Ann Ellen Geller, Jeff Galin, and Dan Melzer became its co-chairs. In addition to continuing the Network's activities, the group began a series of discussions with INWAC members and key stakeholders in the larger WAC community about forming a membership-based professional organization, laying the foundation for establishing the Association for Writing Across the Curriculum.

The (Inter)National WAC Conferences

The first three National WAC conferences, held in February 1993, 1995, and 1997 in Charleston, South Carolina, were sponsored by Clemson University, the College of Charleston, and the Citadel. The conference then moved to bi-annual summer conferences sponsored by campuses throughout the US and involved international WAC leaders more prominently over the years (shifting to meeting in even-numbered years in 2002). Marty Townsend (2020) has provided a detailed history of the conference in an edited collection that emerged from the 2018 IWAC conference. In her discussion of the origins of the conference, Townsend points to Art Young as a key figure in the origins and development of the conference:

> WAC conferences began in 1993 in Charleston with the support of Art Young, one of WAC's foremost founders, scholars, and practitioners. Young, then a professor of both English and Engineering at Clemson University, was in Charleston to consult for Angela Williams at The Citadel and Sylvia Gamboa at College of Charleston, both of whom "were making a major commitment to WAC." ...Gamboa had been asked to "start a WAC program...to help evaluate writing across the disciplines." Having neither a WAC background nor a budget to travel to other programs, she "pushed for a conference in Charleston to bring WAC information there." Young took the idea back to Clemson, where Carl Lovitt was directing the Pearce Center for Professional Communication, with the suggestion that Lovitt help them organize it. ... Lovitt, Gamboa, and Williams' goals were straightforward: "to bring together practitioners in WAC and CXC (Communication across the Curriculum) and offer a forum for exchange of best practices." The first two conferences saw no emphasis on research or assessment, but participant feedback in 1995 indicated strong interest, and by the 1997 conference, research on WAC programs, especially in assessment, was added. By the time of the third in 1997, the attendance had grown so large—some 750—the three-way consortium had begun looking for a new host to take over. (p. 25)

Townsend notes that the shift from a "national" to an "international" conference began in 2004, when it was held at the University of Missouri, and was codified in 2006, after the 2004 conference had shown the existence of strong interest in WAC among members of the international writing studies community.

Since 2002, the conference has been held every other year, with past conference directors serving as a committee that selects the new conference director and then provides advice and oversight as the conference is planned. In late 2018, following the formation of the Association for Writing Across the Curriculum (see below), the IWAC conference hosts voted to affiliate with the new organization. The 2020 conference marks the first conference held under the auspices of the Association.[3]

Archives for the conference can be found on the WAC Clearinghouse, beginning with the 2006 conference (see https://wac.colostate.edu/resources/wac/proceedings). Efforts are underway to increase the amount of materials available from the earlier conferences.
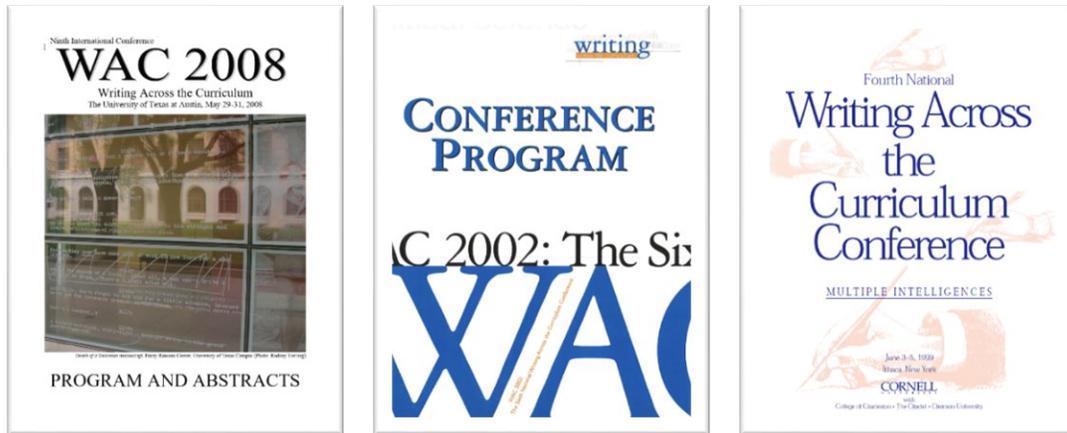
Regional WAC Associations

A regional WAC Association, the Northeast Writing Across the Curriculum Consortium, began as a meeting of regional WAC Directors at the 2007 Critical Thinking and Writing Conference at Quinnipiac University. One year later, the group adopted a name, codified governance procedures, and agreed on organizational logistics. The following year, they offered their first official workshop, "WAC Program Assessment." The Consortium now has more than 100 members representing all of the New England States as well as New Jersey, New York, and Canada. It holds meetings at the Northeast Writing Centers Association in the spring and at the bi-annual Quinnipiac conference in the fall. They also host regular workshops and a listserv. The benefits of membership include mentoring for those newer to WAC admin, sharing of ideas and initiatives, sharing of approaches to sustaining and building WAC programs, brainstorming to address issues, and creating a community among WAC colleagues. See https://newacc.colostate.edu to learn more about the consortium.

More recently, efforts have been underway to form an Asian-Pacific WAC association (Julia Chen, personal communication, December 5, 2018). As WAC continues to grow, it seems likely that other regional associations will form.

WAC-GO: A WAC Organization for Graduate Students

WAC-GO was established by graduate students who had strong interests in WAC but lacked a clear focus for how they might find a path into the field. It emerged from the graduate program at George Mason University, found its first home and financial support from the WAC Clearinghouse, and is now a key part of AWAC. To learn more, visit https://wacassociation.org.

WAC-GO is a response to two related exigencies: First, by the early 2000s, it had become clear that many of the scholars in WAC who had largely sustained the movement were beginning to move into retirement. A new generation of WAC scholars was asking the obvious question: who would take their place? Second, it had become equally clear that, if a new generation was to take advantage of growing enthusiasm for WAC scholarship, formal structures could make these paths into WAC work more visible and more accessible. These exigencies came together when Michelle LaFrance, after noticing a strong graduate student presence at the 2014 Conference for Writing Program Administrators, asked how a stronger graduate-student presence might be encouraged at the IWAC conference. She subsequently approached then-graduate students Brian Hendrickson and Al Harahap (and later Alisa Russell) with the idea of starting a similar graduate organization for WAC. These founders of WAC-GO assembled an advisory board, connected with the IWAC 2016 conference, set bylaws and leadership for the organization, and created a web presence on the WAC Clearinghouse.

*Video: Alisa Russell discusses the formation of the WAC Graduate
Organization. View the video at https://youtu.be/rkEb-iuFUck.*

At the time this article was written, WAC-GO was operating under its fourth leadership team as a committee of AWAC.[4] The WAC-GO leadership team provides a number of professional and research support resources, including but not limited to a once-per-semester newsletter that features grad student projects, a cross-institutional mentoring program pairs graduate students with scholar-practitioners at different institutions for a year, a post-CCCC webinar to drive grad student research, and travel funding for WAC-related events. WAC-GO also works to ensure that issues affecting graduate students be addressed by AWAC. In a chapter in the edited collection emerging from the IWAC 2018 collection (Russell, Chase, Nicholes, & Johnston, 2020), early leaders of WAC-GO identified the main questions driving the organization's initiatives:

> How do we energize the momentum of the field by encouraging fresh and diverse graduate student perspectives? How do we demystify entry points into WAC work and spaces for graduate students? And how do we connect graduate students to peer and faculty mentors and collaborators? (p. 44)

The Statement of WAC Principles and Practices

The development and publication of a formal statement of WAC principles was an important sign of the growing need for a professional organization for WAC. Drafted by an ad hoc committee of INWAC members in February 2014 and endorsed by the CCCC Executive Committee in December 2014, the *Statement of WAC Principles and Practices* was published on the WAC Clearinghouse (https://wac.colostate.edu/principles) that year (Cox et al., 2014). The statement lists principles, goals, and practices for "building an effective and sustainable WAC program," ranging from program development to pedagogy to assessment.

The *Statement of WAC Principles and Practices* served as the launching point for discussions of two additional professional organizations for WAC: the WAC Standing Group, organized under the auspices of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, and the Association for Writing Across the Curriculum, which would replace the informal WAC Network. The establishment of these groups served as the culmination of years of informal discussions about establishing an organization that would serve the WAC community in the same way that the Council of Writing Program Administrators and the International Writing Centers Association served, respectively, the WPA and writing center communities.

Video: Michelle Cox discusses the origin and rationale for the Statement of WAC Principles. View the video at https://youtu.be/tZqJjmst3aY.

CCCC WAC Standing Group

The CCCC Writing Across the Curriculum Standing Group (WAC SG) was established in April 2017 (https://wac.colostate.edu/standing-group). It was proposed by the board of the International Network of Writing Across the Curriculum Programs, which had led Special Interest Group meetings at CCCC for more than thirty years. The shift to a WAC Standing Group formalized the relationship with CCCC, created a rotating elected leadership, and ensured a place on the conference schedule through a sponsored panel or workshop as well as an annual business meeting. Its annual meeting includes announcements and small group discussions about areas in need of new research, the formation of new WAC programs, and support for existing programs, among other topics.

The Association for Writing Across the Curriculum

Many of the historical snapshots discussed in this article have suggested that a membership-based professional organization for WAC would be beneficial. Several organizations—the International WAC Network, the International WAC Conference, the WAC Clearinghouse, regional WAC associations, and WAC-GO—had developed in response to specific needs and thus played important but distinct roles in the field. While they often collaborated and had overlapping memberships, they operated independently and collaboration and coordination among them, while frequent, was informal. By 2016, several developments had led to discussions about forming a membership-based professional organization that might serve a function similar to that served for their constituencies by the Council of Writing Program Administrators and the International Writing Centers Association. These included the endorsement of the *Statement of WAC Principles and Practices* by INWAC; the impending retirement of Chris Thaiss, who had served as the coordinator of INWAC for more than three decades; the growing number of retirements among scholars who had served for many years as an informal leadership group within the community; and a lack of clarity among those new to WAC, given the number of WAC organizations, about where to address questions related to WAC initiatives and how to connect with colleagues in the WAC community (an issue that was particularly pressing for younger scholars and those who had recently assumed responsibility for WAC initiatives at their institutions). These developments left some questioning the sustainability of WAC as a viable subfield of writing studies and others arguing for the need to develop a more formally organized agenda for moving forward as a scholarly community.

In a chapter describing the rationale for forming what would become the Association for Writing Across the Curriculum (AWAC), Chris Basgier and his colleagues (2020) pointed to the benefits that were likely to accompany the establishment of a membership-based professional organization—and the limitations associated with the lack of one.

> The lack of a formal professional organization—a hub, such as those provided by the CWPA and the IWCA—has arguably limited what this collection of WAC groups has been able to accomplish. Barbara Walvoord (1996), for example, observed that a central organization would better position WAC to take part in national movements that impact writing and to support new and existing WAC programs (p. 74). Similarly, Thaiss (2006) noted that without a formal organization, WAC had been unable to "create an agenda to focus efforts, issue position statements, establish and publish standards, conduct statistical surveys of members, and, maybe most basic, ensure continuity through an orderly process of succeeding leadership" (p. 139). (p. 36)

Pointing to Orlando Taylor et al. (2010), Basgier and his colleagues also argued that a membership-based professional organization would likely lead to an increase in "the diversity of scholars who participate in WAC initiatives" (p. 36). This would, they argued, not only strengthen the field but also align "with broader calls to address the disparity between the lack of diversity in faculty and leadership positions in higher education and an increasingly diverse student demographic nationwide" (p. 37).

Over a series of meetings at conferences between June 2016 and June 2018, AWAC moved from a general concept to a project led by a working group composed of a cross-section of new and long-standing members of the WAC community.[5] Over more than two years, the working group assembled an executive board, wrote and codified bylaws, applied for 501(3)(c) status, and opened the organization to members. AWAC consists of both elected leaders and committee members who engage in a bottom-up process that builds the organization's infrastructure through voluntary participation in two types of committees. A handful of committees, such as WAC-GO, WAC Summer Institute, and IWAC committees, were formed through the affiliation of existing groups with AWAC. Others, such as the Advocacy, Communications, Diversity and Inclusion, International Collaborations, Mentoring, Partnership, and Research and Publication committees, focus on issues that have emerged from discussions among members who see these areas as important to the continuing development of WAC scholarship and the WAC community. By early 2020, AWAC had grown to more than 400 individual members and more than 20 institutional members. The AWAC website is available at https://wacassociation.org.

Where Are We Going?

The WAC movement has been generative and transformative. It has spurred innovations in teaching and learning in disciplines as diverse as nursing, engineering, dance, and marketing. The use of writing to support disciplinary learning, a key tenet of WAC, is among the first pedagogical approaches identified by the Association of American Colleges and Universities as "high-impact practices" (Kuh, 2008). That characterization, coming nearly four decades after Barbara Walvoord's initial WAC seminar, is testimony to the enduring and revolutionary power of the WAC movement, a movement that draws its strength and tenacity from the many contributions of scholars inside and outside of writing studies, scholars who have over time built both a strong community and an impressive body of research, theory, and instructional practice.

The promise of WAC is strong. It can serve—indeed, we argue that it has long served—as a revolutionary force in primary, secondary, and post-secondary education. Yet our optimism about

that promise is tempered by our awareness of the challenges the WAC movement will face, inside and outside the field of writing studies, as the community that has formed around it works to enhance student writing, learning, and critical thinking.

WAC as a Force for Change within Writing Studies

As a scholarly endeavor, WAC draws on theory, research, and practice within writing studies even as its interdisciplinary nature positions WAC at the intersection of a wide array of disciplines. Within writing studies, WAC stands at the intersection of several growing (and seemingly divergent) areas of research, theory, and practice. For example, by emphasizing the role of writing in the formation and enculturation of disciplinary ways of knowing and doing, WAC draws on rhetorical genre studies' conception of genres as social actions that inscribe and reflect community identity and values (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010; Bazerman, 2004; Devitt, 2004; Miller, 1984; Russell, 1997). Similarly, WAC has embraced problem-based learning (PBL), a student-centered pedagogy emphasizing open-ended problems and experiential learning, upholding principles of lifelong learning (Williams et al., 2013). Key principles of PBL that WAC embraces include a move toward learner-driven self-identified goals and outcomes, adult learning theory or andragogy, enhanced teamwork and communication practices with responsibilities for shared learning, and applied learning and writing transfer.

WAC also intersects with recent conversations about writing assessment and social justice (Inoue, 2015; Perryman-Clark, 2016; Poe, Elliot, & Inoue, 2018; Ruiz, 2016) that wrestle with what it means (or should mean) to assign and evaluate student writing across disciplinary and social contexts. Moreover, because WAC has always been concerned with the transitions between writing contexts, it holds important implications for efforts to understand the impact of the concurrent enrollment on first-year writing programs (see, for example, the recent special issue of *Teaching English in the Two-Year College* at https://library.ncte.org/journals/tetyc/issues/v48-1), the study of teaching for transfer (Anson & Moore, 2017; Yancey et al., 2014), and lifespan writing research (Dippre, 2019; Dippre & Phillips, 2020; Smith & Prior, 2020). As a result, even as WAC has developed a disciplinary identity that has allowed it to build connections outside of writing studies, it has emerged as an interstitial pursuit that can provide a language and practice to explore resonances among various areas within writing studies.

It's no wonder, then, that we are seeing a growing focus on WAC within writing studies graduate programs. In some cases, graduate programs have developed courses that directly address WAC (e.g, Colorado State University, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and West Chester University, among many others). These offerings have often emerged from a long history of offering WAC programs. In other cases, however, graduate students who are pushing the scope of writing research into other disciplines find themselves, in the words of Brian Hendrickson (2017), "doing the applied WAC dissertation sans WAC program" (para. 1). During her leadership stint in WAC-GO, for example, Alisa heard over and over from graduate students who realized they were interested in—or in fact already engaged in—WAC research and administration without realizing there was a rich, well-established body of scholarship that could support their work. These graduate students find themselves in the all-too-common position of writing a thesis or dissertation without the support of a WAC mentor at their institution, a position that is described frequently when graduate students complete an intake survey to enroll in WAC-GO's Cross-Institutional Mentoring Project.

WAC as a Force for Change in Disciplines Outside Writing Studies

The WAC movement was founded on the principle that writing activities and assignments can improve teaching and learning in disciplines across the curriculum. Its strongest proponents argue that communication is at the heart of how we learn, that the use of writing and speaking to organize

ideas and communicate with others supports learning in ways that other traditional approaches to learning, such as the use of multiple-choice examinations and quizzes, cannot accomplish. WAC also reinforces and in many cases engenders, through the professional development opportunities afforded by WAC (whether through a formal WAC program or the individual efforts of writing scholars), the recognition that writing scholars and scholars in other disciplines share a common purpose. WAC workshops and individual consultations can help those outside (as well as those inside) writing studies discover that they are struggling with similar teaching and learning challenges, and recognize that together we have a greater chance of meeting those challenges.

These WAC efforts can also lead to scholarly projects that have an impact inside and outside of writing studies, benefiting students not only while they are enrolled in classes where writing is used to support teaching and learning but also in subsequent courses as they use what they've learned. This is particularly important for graduate students from other disciplines who find the language and practice of WAC to be generative for their research agendas. For example, a pilot study of the Cross-Institutional Mentoring Project involved a graduate student from an education program focusing on leadership and policy who drew on WAC scholarship to explore her questions about L2 writing support at her institution (Russell & Nicholes, 2019).

WAC as a Force for Change within K-12 Education

As noted earlier, elementary schools were using WAC before they knew what it was, and secondary education has moved beyond the original conception of WAC in much the same way that higher education has. In the 21st century, WAC in U.S. K-12 schools has been elevated through acknowledgment on a federal level by initiatives and publications such as Common Core State Standards (CCSS), *Frameworks for Success in Postsecondary Writing* (CWPA, NCTE & NWP, 2011), and *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (ACLR, 2015). Cross disciplinary teachers in K-12 schools are aware of the CCSS through its specifications of competencies their students must meet before high school graduation. For instance, in the CCSS for grade 3 mathematics, students must be able to "construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others"; while high school algebra students must "construct a viable argument to justify a solution method." These examples demonstrate how writing to learn and other WAC-based principles contribute to meeting disciplinary CCSS successfully. Teachers preparing their students for postsecondary coursework are working to meet both of the *Framework* documents mentioned above by using more sophisticated WAC skills to support student learning. Whether working through discipline-specific or cross disciplinary courses, or by working with WAC-based writing centers, K-12 teachers are using and will continue to use collaborative writing and WAC in mathematics, science, history, art, foreign language, or other disciplinary areas outside English and language arts. As a student-centered movement, WAC fulfills one of the criteria in the ACLR Framework (2015) by encouraging students to ask "increasingly complex new questions whose answers in turn develop additional questions or line of inquiry in any field" ("Research as Inquiry"). These kinds of specific connections to WAC can be found in every discipline, such as science, where the American Association for the Advancement of Science provides guidance on the use of writing in STEM courses (*Atlas of Science Literacy*, 2011).

As WAC continues to increase its impact in K-12 institutions, schools of education in postsecondary institutions must also evolve. Most higher education literacy programs now emphasize the teaching of writing in courses for instructors at every level, from K-12 pre-service programs through graduate programs. The current and future K-12 teachers taking these courses, in turn, apply WAC pedagogies they have learned to their work as teachers (see Tremmel & Broz, 2002). Teachers across disciplines are also discovering how essential WAC theory and practice have become in their online teaching as, during the COVID-19 pandemic, they have had to move away from face-to-face teaching to hybrid and online teaching.

WAC promises to become an even more vital movement in K-12 education, especially in online instruction, where breakout sessions include response to writing by peers and forums offer exchanges of ideas. In addition, writing-to-learn and writing-to-engage activities (Palmquist, 2020, 2021b) connect to experiments, readings, descriptions, critical explanations, and metacognitive approaches to learning in all disciplines. As issues of systemic racism, poverty, and trauma are crying out for writing as social action and self-discovery at all academic levels, WAC as a movement will continue to adapt and have a place in K-12 institutions. During these new global challenges, K-12 and postsecondary educators must share what they have found as successful uses of WAC and continue partnerships for greater faculty development at all academic levels. Mullin and Childers (2020), for example, argue that WAC in K-12 schools should continue to support curricular change that benefits students and faculty and "collaborate more widely, aggregate data on best practices, and disseminate information more effectively."

WAC as a Force for Change in Online Instruction

As this article is being written, we are in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers and students from kindergarten to graduate programs have found themselves engaging in online learning and teaching, a space many have found unfamiliar and, in many cases, daunting. While much of the instruction taking place in these courses fails to provide a teaching and learning experience comparable to that in online courses developed by instructional designers, instructors are quickly gaining a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of what works—and what does not—in online courses. Given the metaphors underlying the learning management systems (LMS) in use at many schools, colleges, and universities, the tendency is to mirror the types of learning experiences and assessments associated with the traditional lecture-style classroom (Palmquist, 2006). This means, unsurprisingly, that much of the assessment taking place in courses outside of writing studies relies on quizzes and tests.

WAC has much to offer instructors who look to their LMS—such as Canvas, Moodle, BrightSpace, and Blackboard—for tools to support learning assessment. Professional development initiatives can focus on the use of tools that are built into or can be integrated into (via Learning Tools Interoperability, or LTI) the LMS used to deliver their online courses. This includes ePortfolio tools, wikis, and the rudimentary peer-review tools built into leading LMSs, such as the peer review activity that can be required for a Canvas assignment. It also includes a range of tools that can be integrated into an LMS through LTI, such as the more sophisticated peer-review tools available from publishers and software companies, including Macmillan's Achieve, Pearson's MyLab, and Eli Review.

WAC also has important implications for workplace communication or the field of technical communication, particularly in the area of what has been called "technical writing across the curriculum" (Olds, 1998; Carter, Ferzli, & Wiebe, 2007). WAC programs, especially those in schools emphasizing engineering or the sciences, have asked what it means to have a WAC program that connects practical, problem-based learning in applied workplace contexts. Principles of technical communication include assisting users who need directions on completing tasks or projects, using products, operating equipment, and so on. Technical communication informs WAC programs by helping students think about ways to be productive and consumer-oriented, helping students see their work as practical and interdisciplinary in ways that require iterative design based on user feedback, and preparing students to communicate using a variety of genres and modalities, particularly in the areas of communicating about technical topics and documenting work. Students and instructors in WAC, influenced by principles of technical communication and informative rhetoric, focus on measuring goals, engaging with multimodal composing and new media, developing instructional guides and training programs, producing medical instructions or usability studies, and more (Day & Lipson, 2005).

On a fairly basic level, then, WAC specialists might point to these tools to help colleagues across the disciplines increase their repertoire of assessment strategies. Once instructors who are using WAC in their courses have access to these tools, we can draw on the same strategies we've used to support the use of writing to enhance teaching and learning in WAC courses. In this sense, the use of WAC in online courses might follow a path similar to those in more traditional settings.

And just as we see benefits from working with colleagues across the disciplines who teach face-to-face courses, WAC specialists should benefit from their interactions with colleagues who teach online courses. Joan pointed to this in a recent discussion about our work on this article:

> The benefits of working with colleagues in other disciplines doesn't disappear as we now shift online. As I created a new theory-into-practice course (grad/undergrad) for writing tutors, I continually drew on WAC knowledge gained, yes, from our own discipline, but also gained just as much from my work with faculty members across the disciplines. . . . As I did with my WAC workshops, I have to think about threads that cross learners rather than how much I want them to know what I know or how much I want them to know about the little boutique area of study I'm focusing on in my course. (personal communication, August 27, 2020)

WAC will also be influenced strongly by larger trends that are shaping the teaching of writing and speaking more broadly, and in particular the increasing use of assignments that involve multimodality. These assignments can align well with online instruction, allowing students to more easily incorporate sources that employ video, audio, animation, and other digital modalities to present their information, ideas, and arguments.

In the longer term, we expect to see WAC play a greater role in the development of courses in which distinctions among the modalities in which they are delivered have become less important. For the past few decades, we've seen a tendency to view face-to-face, on campus courses as significantly different from courses taught online. We believe this sense of difference will diminish in coming years. Mike has argued for several years (in his past administrative work related to course design and development) that the face-to-face classroom should be a superset of all of our teaching strategies and resources. Rather than viewing the development of online courses as separate from the development of face-to-face courses, we should view them as closely linked processes. When we develop an online course, we should bring the resources back to the face-to-face courses (see NCTE's Online Writing Instruction position statement, 2013; Bedford/St. Martin's bibliography of online writing instruction research; and the ongoing teaching, research, and certification work of the Global Society of Online Literacy Educators [https://gsole.org]). And as these resources are transformed for use in face-to-face settings, they should be brought back to the online course, in a cycle of continuous improvement. While the idea that online instruction will one day replace campus learning has gained some attention, particularly in the past year, the advantages of being part of a learning community (in a way that is currently difficult when you take your courses largely or solely online) will win out, even if people in the campus community take online courses as part of their overall course schedule. WAC can play a critical role in this, as it ought to play in all substantial course redesign projects at colleges and universities.

WAC as a Force for Social Change

As a movement, WAC can and should support social change within the academy and in society more generally. Attention has deservedly focused recently on racism, sexism, and labor equity within the academy and, more specifically, within writing studies. As the WAC community has taken up these issues, it has looked both toward a more equitable and just future and towards its own past role in

supporting inequitable and unjust practices. Importantly, the WAC community must embrace its role as a force for change, a force that involves both the recognition of past shortcomings and the promise of taking meaningful action.

In a recent chapter in Greg Giberson, Megan Schoen, and Christian Weiss' edited collection, *Editors in Writing: Behind the Curtain of Scholarly Publication in Writing Studies*, Mike observed that a key part of his editorial philosophy—a philosophy that has in part shaped the practices of the WAC Clearinghouse—has been a commitment to inclusiveness. Unfortunately, he noted, for many years his approach to inclusiveness was both uninformed and, ultimately, less successful than he had hoped:

> I welcomed anyone who wanted to join the project. All they had to do was ask. Or be asked. In most cases, an invitation to join the [WAC Clearinghouse] was based on scholarly reputation and shared values. In other words, I invited people who were like me. (Palmquist, 2021a)

In many ways, this approach mirrored the welcoming but naive approach adopted by the larger WAC community. For years, WAC practitioners have viewed an open-door approach as a sufficient means of promoting access to resources and opportunities within the community. Unfortunately, as the discussions that led to the formation of AWAC made clear, numerous potential members of the community failed to join, sometimes because they lacked an awareness of how to gain entry and sometimes, perhaps, because they saw few people who looked like them in the WAC community. That perception may have played a role in the lack of racial and ethnic diversity among the most visible members of the WAC movement in its first four decades, even as WAC flourished at HBCUs and HSIs (see WAC at HBCUs, HSIs, and TCUs, above). As Mike noted in his discussion of efforts to enact changes in the Clearinghouse,

> That earlier work taught me that projecting an image—in the case of the Clearinghouse, an image of welcoming inclusiveness—is far from sufficient. If it isn't backed up with action, it amounts to little more than virtue signaling—the kind of signaling we see, for example, by corporations who want us to believe that they care about climate change even as their products worsen the crisis. (Palmquist, 2021a)

Within the WAC community, efforts to enact social change have emerged perhaps most notably from AWAC, WAC-GO, and the WAC Clearinghouse. AWAC's committee structure has proven well-suited to the development of initiatives to increase opportunity for those whose interests align with WAC. Most notably, its advocacy, diversity and inclusion, and mentoring committees have actively supported efforts to promote access to the WAC community and to the resources available through AWAC. And, in fall 20020, its executive committee published its statement on antiracism and social justice (https://www.wacassociation.org/awac-statement-and-resources-for-wac-antiracism-and-social-justice/).

WAC-GO, which became part of AWAC's committee structure when the organization was formed but which had operated for a number of year prior to AWAC's launch, has sponsored a number of efforts targeted at graduate students whose scholarly and professional interests align with WAC. Its mentoring program, which pairs new members of the WAC community with more experienced WAC scholars, has been particularly effective. And its inclusive approach to recruiting new leadership has helped launch a youth movement of sorts that promises to help the WAC community thrive in the long term.

The WAC Clearinghouse, in turn, which had grown to include roughly 180 scholars in a range of editorial roles at the time this article was written, has increased the diversity of its editorial group by inviting new members to its editorial board, editorial staff, and review boards. It has also worked to increase the diversity of its authors by reaching out—on an individual basis, through the publication of its statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion (https://wac.colostate.edu/about/diversity-statement/), and through its invitation to contribute scholarly work (https://wac.colostate.edu/about/submissions/)—to scholars from minoritized and under-represented groups whose interests might align with Clearinghouse journals and book series. To extend those efforts, it has also established partnerships with groups within writing studies to increase awareness of—and an opportunity to take advantage of—editorial and reviewing opportunities in its various journals, book series, and resource areas.

Efforts to promote social change have also involved the WAC community in labor issues—although much more work could and should have been done. While individual members of the WAC community have long recognized and worked to address the impact on faculty members of the growing reliance of higher education on contingent labor, the WAC community as a whole has not grappled with this issue in the depth it should. Given the use of team teaching in a variety of disciplines, and the growing reliance on section leaders in online courses, courses that rely on WAC often involve instructors who work in contingent positions. The WAC community, through its various organizations, should play a larger role in addressing issues related to the use of contingent labor. That work might include issuing position statements and other official notices, holding workshops and sponsoring panels at the bi-annual International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference, promoting equitable labor practices through the recognition of exemplary programs, and developing resources for use by individual scholars, WAC programs, and institutions to support equitable labor practices.

The WAC community should also become more involved in addressing issues related to poverty, in particular issues related to immigration and the digital divide. Our discussion of L2 issues above points to many of the challenges faced by immigrants who strive to become literate in the language of a new home country.

Are We There Yet? Concluding Observations

WAC emerged in part from a series of educational movements in the United States—most notably, the cooperation programs and the correlated curriculum movement in the first three decades of the Twentieth Century and the Communications Movement that followed the second World War—and in part from the Language Across the Curriculum movement in Britain during the 1950s and 1960s. While WAC itself has been seen for much of its first 50 years as a largely U.S. movement, the past two decades have been marked by increasing attention from writing studies scholars and program leaders outside the US (McLeod & Soven, 2006). We believe that the success of the WAC movement will be founded on what we have and will continue to learn from its use and growth in countries around the globe.

We also believe that the growth of the WAC movement will be fueled by the lessons we learn from its application in classrooms and other learning spaces at all levels of education, from primary to secondary to tertiary. The use of writing as a means of learning is well-documented, as are the benefits of a citizenry who can communicate clearly and effectively in professional, civic, and social settings. Continued attention to the lessons we learn from applying WAC principles and practices at all levels of education will be a key part of growing and strengthening the movement.

We believe that WAC can act transformatively between and beyond traditionally-conceived boundaries. We must stay vigilant, however, if we hope to increase its impact on the disciplines it

supports. Equally important, we must cultivate the professional structures that invite engagement in this important area of writing studies. WAC's interstitial connectivity plays a key role in making it a transformative movement. Yet this connectivity also poses significant challenges for our efforts to promote and sustain it. We can accomplish this only through thoughtful reflection and intentionality. For this reason, we believe WAC organizations (such as AWAC, the WAC Standing Group, and the WAC Clearinghouse) and WAC events (such as the IWAC Conference and WAC Summer Institute) will only increase in importance in coming years. Our challenge is to maintain their momentum and expand WAC's reach beyond writing studies.

As we look to the next 50 years of WAC, we recognize the importance of reflection, critique, and innovation. The IWAC 2020 conference theme, "Celebrating Successes, Recognizing Challenges, Inviting Critique and Innovation," marked the 50th anniversary of the first WAC seminar by challenging the community to do more than celebrate the endurance of what David Russell (2020) has called "the longest-lived of the many 'across-the-curriculum' movements in U.S. higher education."[6] If WAC is to endure, the community must continue to reflect on how best to understand and respond to the challenges it faces. Continued innovation in the face of a changing educational landscape will be critical to its long-term success.

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Notes

[1] While Merill Sheils made a number of dubious points in "Why Johnny Can't Write," he did report favorably on the Bay Area Writing Project.

[2] Harriet Sheridan was the Dean of the College at Brown at this time and gave tremendous support to Tori Haring-Smith.

[3] Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Conference was postponed to 2021.

[4] While graduate students can join WAC-GO without joining AWAC, numerous AWAC members have sponsored graduate students' AWAC memberships.

[5] Members of the working group included Chris Anson, Christopher Basgier, Melissa Bender, Ann Blakesley, Laurie Britt-Smith, Pamela Childers, Michelle Cox, Heather Falconer, Jeff Galin, Jonathan Hall, Al Harahap, Brian Hendrickson, Margaret Marshall, Maureen Ann Mathison, Dan Melzer, Siskanna Naynaha, Federico Daniel Navarro, Mike Palmquist, Joseph Pizzo, Justin Rademaekers, Nicole Severino, Stacey Sheriff and Terry Myers Zawacki. A historical account of the formation of AWAC can be found at https://www.wacassociation.org/history-of-awac/.

[6] The IWAC 2020 conference was postponed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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