CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION TO WAC AND PARTNERSHIPS THAT CROSS ACADEMIC LEVELS AND DISCIPLINES

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Every day we read about the gap between high school and college writing, how high schools are not preparing students for college writing, and after all the handwringing and finger pointing, many teachers and scholars contend that high school-college partnerships would be the most effective way to solve this problem. As we wrote in "Building Better Bridges: What Makes High School-College WAC Collaborations Work?":

> To better prepare students for writing across the curriculum in higher education, some high school teachers and college professors have formed partnerships. The idea is that a cross-pollination of ideas from the teachers, who know the students best, and the professors, who know the expectations and forms of college writing best, could greatly benefit students, teachers, and professors. Why do some programs fail and others succeed? What in successful partnerships might be replicated by others? (Blumner and Childers 91)

Through our interactions with teachers at all academic levels involved in WAC partnerships, we discovered the need to demonstrate a variety of successful models with various collaborations between schools and institutions, so others can emulate them and use the book as a model to work with a variety of stakeholders in promoting this type of collaboration. Our research, done through our own scholarship, International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference workshops (2010 and 2012), and a survey that led to a publication (Blumner and Childers), provides a sound footing for this book as well as confirms the need for such literature. We present here a collection of collaborative partnerships among middle schools, high schools, colleges and universities to improve writing across the curriculum (WAC). Schools and colleges are forming part-

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nerships to improve WAC and student matriculation as they have seen an increasing need for more coordinated efforts to prepare students for the kinds of work and civic engagement that is increasingly required of people to succeed and contribute to our society. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) refer to this as college and career readiness.

Renée Clift, Mary Lou Veal, Marlene Johnson, and Patricia Holland define collaboration as "The explicit agreement among two or more persons to meet together over time to set and accomplish a particular goal or goals" (54). The purpose of this book is to promote models of collaborative partnerships across the curriculum and across schools/colleges, so other institutions can design their own programs or create new innovative ones. Also, we want to encourage sustainability in such partnerships based on what has and has not worked for others. These partnerships vary from secondary to postsecondary WAC partnerships, all involve WAC, and many include writing centers as part of the partnerships. Each chapter has been written by participants from the institutions at the core of that particular collaboration and detail their program and their experiences in it, addressing topics such as pedagogy, philosophy, budgeting, daily pragmatics, problems encountered, benefits, results and recommendations. Contributors include educators in South America and Germany who wish to share their partnership experiences as well. All authors have read and responded to other chapters, and readers will note how authors reference work from other chapters in their own to create a cohesive connection and model collaboration throughout the entire book. In fact, this book itself is an example of another kind of partnership, one in which there are no hierarchical differences among participants and no standard for what does and does not work. Our authors are unique educators who approach partnerships based on their own backgrounds, experiences, research, students, disciplines, institutions, and state or national standards. Our readers are also exceptional educators who will adapt what is included in these chapters to their own backgrounds, experiences, research, students, disciplines, institutions and state or national standards.

## WHY PARTNERSHIPS? ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES

Whether initiated by the secondary or postsecondary institution, the partnership has to be a highly collaborative one. As we noted in our brief introduction, authors frequently refer to the advantages for both partners involved. And, with knowledge of upcoming changes in the SAT, both secondary and postsecondary educators will need to know more about what and how their collaborative partners are teaching writing. For high school partners, there is an overwhelming need for some professional development to assist teachers in

applying WAC theory into practice in all disciplines. Educators know their students and understand their potential, but sometimes lack the knowledge of how to use writing in all subjects to improve critical thinking, learning and writing. Through collaborative planning with colleagues, they can design ways that do not make more work for them, but instead help their students learn while they assess their own teaching as well. Administrators are limited in the amount of time and monetary assistance they can offer to such projects. In dual credit (DC) courses, "beginning these programs is typically less expensive and faster to start for the [high schools], since the (DC) approach does not require external workshops to operate, nor does it require an expensive and stressful test to validate the class" (Uhlenkamp). For instance, in Chapter 8 of this volume, the authors describe how the high school teacher had to offer assistance in her own classroom without any funds to do much more until she created a partnership with the nearby university and began a peer tutoring/coaching program through the partnership. We believe this experience is not uncommon. And, as we hear more and more about CCSS, partnerships can be an important advantage if there is what Annette D. Digby, Barbara C. Gartin, and Nikki L. Murdick refer to in "Developing Effective University and Public School Partnerships" as "communication, concern, compromise, and commitment" (37) on the part of all involved. Without these four essential components, they may be unsuccessful or never partner at all (38).

For postsecondary institutions, the advantages include recruitment of future students to the institution, an understanding of what students have learned and how they mature before entering their first-year courses, a laboratory partnership for secondary education majors, and new perspectives on teaching and learning. Also, the college has minimal direct expenses in terms of faculty salaries and facility costs; high school teachers instruct dual credit courses on high school campuses (Uhlenkamp). Many partnerships involve classroom research that postsecondary instructors can conduct with their secondary partners, sometimes a necessary component for college faculty participation. We both have observed misconceptions that both partners have had because of the lack of communication, so a better understanding of what and how teachers are teaching and young adults are learning becomes extremely valuable not only to postsecondary teachers in all disciplines, but also especially for teachers of writing and secondary education courses.

The disadvantages for all partners usually involve working out the problems of time and money to establish and maintain the partnership. Digby, Gartin, and Murdick point out that partners have to work on "the synchronization of both partners' schedules to allow times for meeting and other partnership activities" (38). Many have noted that institutional structures, rules, and responsibil-

ities cause unanticipated conflicts that can be overcome if the lines of communication and commitments are there. For instance, at the University of Arkansas where a team partnered with a public school nearby, the "university partners wished to research cooperative learning in the middle school science classroom, but the time selected was at the end of the school year" (Digby, Gartin, and Murdick 38). The problems of dealing with the end-of-year requirements at the middle school would not have allowed for authentic research, so the middle school teachers suggested that the research be conducted at the beginning of the following school year. Therefore, the partnership was able to continue because all partners were involved and flexible enough to accommodate each partner's needs.

And, what happens when the funds run out? Are the institutions willing to continue the collaboration by sharing the financial burden of continuing it, or are individuals involved in the partnership able to apply for and successfully receive grants to continue it? If these collaborations are to succeed long term, they are dependent upon the impact on students at both institutions as well. According to Kenneth Bernstein, when preparing students for the AP test, he could:

> not simultaneously prepare them to do well on [the essay] portion of the test and teach them to write in a fashion that would properly serve them at higher levels of education.... Now you are seeing the results in the students arriving at your institutions. They may be very bright. But we have not been able to prepare them for the kind of intellectual work that you [college instructors] have every right to expect of them. (32)

Kathryn Noble McDaniel, a university history professor, writes in "Read Long and Prosper: Five Do's and Don'ts for Preparing Students for College," that her college students are frequently required to complete thesis-length projects, but with "no preparation in writing longer papers, students become overwhelmed by the assignment. They do not know how to formulate a topic that can be explored in more than two or three pages" (85). She concludes that because of a lack of such experience, they also "lack confidence that they can write at length and in depth and that there is even anything worth saying beyond page two" (85). Both of these examples indicate why communication between secondary and postsecondary teachers could make a difference in the learning of all students and better prepare them for future writing, thinking, and learning experiences. It is more than just "transitioning" or bridging the gap. Also, notice that Bernstein is talking about dealing with test preparation rather than preparation for the intellectual experience of college, and he is frustrated by his situation, while McDaniel's frustration is dealing with students that teachers

like Bernstein have had to send to her. Imagine a different scenario, like ones in many of our chapters, where these two educators meet and discuss goals that would eliminate both of their frustrations and help their students become more fulfilled writers and learners as they transition from secondary to postsecondary institutions of learning.

The challenges Digby, Gartin, and Murdick describe at University of Arkansas presuppose a philosophical and pedagogical alignment between secondary and post-secondary educators; yet we have seen relationships in which that is not the case. Though all educators have their students' success at the forefront, what that looks like and how it is achieved may differ markedly, as well as how requirements and pressure placed on educators may vary dramatically. Also, negotiating and understanding different participant and institutional cultures and roles in the partnership can strain relations between institutions. These presuppositions, requirements, and pressures can make aligning work between secondary and postsecondary education daunting, labor and time-intensive, and often uncompensated. The time it takes to create and maintain these collaborations can be exhausting and frustrating, and institutions may not value the work in meaningful ways that reward the educators involved, rather than simply adding their efforts to an already heavy workload.

Secondary and postsecondary partnerships can make a big difference to students, especially if they are actively involved in the collaborations. In describing how the Tar River Writing Project (TRWP) partnered with a local high school (Pitts County School District, NC) to redesign its graduation project, Stephanie West-Puckett and William P. Banks explain how "teachers, like any group of professionals both want and need to have some degree of agency in the construction of the curriculum that they teach ... Likewise ... students benefit from being involved in the creation of a new curriculum" (355). The principal and leaders of J. H. Rose High School had wanted "a curriculum that provides rich literacy instruction with embedded opportunities to read, write, speak, and listen in both virtual and face-to-face environments" (357). With this team of collaborators focusing on the same goals, the students will definitely benefit from this collaboration. In another collaboration between Boise State and a nearby public school, Rachel Bear, Heidi Estrem, James E. Fredricksen, and Dawn Shepherd state, "Our goal is to consider how our pedagogical decisions in these two different contexts might helpfully echo each other, providing opportunities for richer professional conversations and continued productive learning for students" (131). They conclude their chapter by saying that their high school and college educators "want our students to make contributions, to feel and to provide support for one another, to learn from more experienced writers, to write about topics and in different modes and media that matter to them and to others, and to feel

connected to other members of the classroom community" (135).

We as educators should not be working in isolation. Educational changes have been encouraged through many partnerships. For instance, Digby, Gartin, and Murdick discovered, "The partners must be committed to the idea that forming a university/public school partnership will lead to improvement in the education system by increasing the quality of education for all involved" (38). In a similar way, Candyce Reynolds, Danielle D. Stevens, and Ellen West describe their cross-disciplinary study of student learning based on Malcolm Knowles' belief that "learning is facilitated when they [students] are confronted with a problem that needs to be solved and calls upon them to creatively address the problem" (53).

## EDUCATIONAL MOVEMENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

There are several educational movements that connect directly to high school-college partnerships. As an introduction to those not familiar with each of these educational movements, we will provide brief overviews with sources to help readers get a sense of the overlaps and discrepancies among these movements. For this chapter, we will be focusing on the CCSS in writing (http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/W) that notes students "develop the capacity to build knowledge on a subject through research projects and to respond analytically to literary and informational sources. To meet these goals, students must devote significant time and effort to writing, producing numerous pieces over short and extended time frames throughout the year." Some of our authors delve into more specific connections that promote healthy approaches to the CCSS without overwhelming secondary teachers with preparing students for an assessment. Michelle Cox and Phyllis Gimbel make these connections in "Conversations Among Teachers on Student Writing: WAC/Secondary Education Partnerships at BSU" in the special issue of *ATD* on *WAC in Secondary Schools* (http://wac.colostate.edu/atd/second_educ/cox_gimbel.cfm). Through partnerships with their postsecondary colleagues, teachers can connect the key concepts that students need to master in preparation for writing in college; and, these concepts are also essential to success with CCSS. For instance, the secondary and postsecondary educators in the Tar River Writing Project (TRWP) critically examined and questioned requirements of the CCSS in relation to the Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing (http://wpacouncil.org/framework) and learned that "work with teachers around CCSS should move beyond comprehension of complex (and contradictory) texts and into collaborative critique, which creates opportunities for teachers to build capacity and excise agency in conversations about curriculum reform" (10).

Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing (http://wpacouncil.org/framework) outlines expectations for incoming college students. The document describes eight habits of mind (curiosity, openness, engagement, creativity, persistence, responsibility, flexibility, and metacognition) and literacy-based skills and experiences (rhetorical knowledge, critical thinking, writing processes, knowledge of conventions, and the ability to compose in multiple environments). The Framework connects clearly to the principles of WAC. Authors of several chapters in this collection make these connections in describing how their partnerships encourage many of the concepts from the Framework. For instance, both Mary McMullen-Light (Chapter 6) and Marie Hansen et al. (Chapter 8) mention the importance of openness and critical thinking, while Trixie Smith (Chapter 9), McMullen-Light, and Hansen et al. discuss persistence and flexibility.

The newest version of Council of Writing Program Administrators Outcomes Statement for the First-Year Composition (http://wpacouncil.org/positions/outcomes.html), last amended in 2008, "describes the common knowledge, skills, and attitudes sought by first-year composition programs in American postsecondary education." Even though this statement specifically focuses on the first-year composition course, it serves as a guide for incoming first-year students in all disciplines; and, therefore, serves as a good place for partners at both academic levels to begin a dialogue. It is also written in an accessible and non-threatening way that can engage teachers and faculty from all subjects and disciplines. Because the Outcomes predate both Framework and CCSS, one can see the influence of them on both documents.

The goals of STEM education include encouraging educators to "invite our children to look at their school work as important to the world" (TIES). As Pamela B. Childers and Michael J. Lowry point out in referring to the *Atlas of Science Literacy* (American Association for the Advancement of Science) and John C. Bean's *Engaging Ideas*, "STEM education and WAC programs encourage interaction with society, evidence and reasoning in inquiry, application of knowledge, and engagement of students" (33). Two of our chapters in this collection focus specifically on science partnerships; one, a collaborative chapter, describes the partnership and its specific goals in relation to writing in science (Myelle-Watson et al.), while the other explains how a science teacher partners with others to improve writing, teaching and learning (Lowry).

Though less directly connected, but certainly influential in high school-college partnerships is academic achievement and college readiness testing. The ACT, SAT, and state-specific tests for high school graduation drive school curriculum decisions and influence college acceptance. The importance of the tests for students, teachers, schools, and districts, as well as colleges' use of tests in

admissions decisions, potentially casts a shadow over partnerships. And historically, the material tested does not align with the skills necessary for success in college (Hiss and Franks 2014). That may be changing, though. At the time of this writing, College Board has announced major changes in the SAT that will test students' knowledge based on what they have learned in secondary school, rather than what they should be able to do in college (Lewin 2014). Such changes also will continue over the years and should be impetus for even more secondary-postsecondary collaborations across the curriculum.

## KINDS OF PARTNERSHIPS

In our research of existing partnerships, we discovered that many connect to statewide and community projects, dual credit courses, discipline-specific partnerships, volunteer professional organizations, writing centers, National Writing Project (NWP), pre-service through secondary education projects, and others including Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs.

Community involvement is essential to the success of both secondary and postsecondary schools within a particular region. Just as the Tar River Writing Project (TRWP) collaboration with J. H. Rose High School in eastern North Carolina involved members of the community to act as mentors and role models in their Project Graduation, other public and private institutions do so in other ways. Henry Jenkins describes how "Participatory culture shifts the focus on literacy from one of individual expression to community involvement. The new literacies almost all involve social skills developed through collaboration and networking" (4). And, community may go beyond a physical region to a virtual one. In their digital literacy partnership, Bear, Estrem, Fredrickson, and Shepherd explain, "All of us are members of a larger 'participatory' culture that digital work makes possible" (132). In Trixie Smith's chapter of this collection, she describes short-term collaborations often work with community organizations.

As described in the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) 2012 position statement on dual credit/concurrent enrollment (DC/CE) courses, "state, national, and corporate leaders ... have identified DC/CE as one way ... to ensure 'college and career readiness' and a seamless bridge between secondary and postsecondary curricula assessment" (par. 1). College writing program administrators have focused on ensuring that high school teachers have credentials to teach college composition, and that course content in high schools is as rigorous as course content on college campuses (Hansen and Farris; Sullivan and Tinberg). National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP), which began in 1999, is the accrediting organization for dual credit programs. Many states encourage accreditation from NACEP, and

the standards may be found at http://www.nacep.org/accreditation/standards/ (Uhlenkamp 2014). In this collection, McMullen-Light includes a dual-credit teacher at the secondary school in her partnership in Chapter 6.

As previously mentioned, many of the partnerships described in this collection focus on writing in high school English and first-year composition classes; two focus on science connections. The collaborative work between the middle/high school teachers in Illinois with educators at Northern Illinois University (Chapter 5) demonstrates a clear desire to improve student learning that includes formative assessment with writing, rather than statewide assessment that occurs too late to make a difference in the learning of students in classes. By working as a team, educators can change that situation through a grassroots movement. Michael Lowry's personal experiences (Chapter 3) creating secondary-postsecondary partnerships through a variety of volunteer professional organizations remind readers that we don't have to wait for someone else to start such collaborations, and we don't have to wait for formal, institutional structures to be built; as professionals, all educators can discover ways to work together for the benefit of their own growth as teachers and the learning of their students. These examples can clearly be adapted to other disciplines as well.

In our research on partnerships, we discovered a wide variety of secondary-postsecondary writing center partnerships. In her research on the collaborative leadership qualities involved in six writing center partnerships in the United States, Julie Story notes the importance of exploration, power, and dynamics that enabled these partnerships to demonstrate the craft of human interdependence. She also mentions the resistance to change on the part of those outside the collaboration. Writing centers continue to be an ideal place to start WAC-based collaborations (Childers and Lowry, "Introduction"). The interaction among writing center directors and future directors through International Writing Centers Association (IWCA) annual summer institutes, as well as their state, regional and international conferences, allow partnerships to form in a variety of venues. In this collection Marie Hansen, Debra Hartley, Kirsten Jamsen, Katie Levin, and Kristen Nichols-Besel (Chapter 8) describe how one such partnership began and continues to grow and impact more writing centers on the secondary level. Many of the authors in this book, for instance, have met at several of these gatherings over the years and collaborated on other works as well. In fact, Luise Beaumont (Chapter 7), Kirsten Jamsen (Chapter 8) and Pam led a workshop on WAC Partnerships at the European Writing Centers Association conference at Viadrina University in Germany in July 2014.

As frequently as writing center partnerships were mentioned, many also connected to the National Writing Project. In fact, in many cases the two become clearly connected because of their similar beliefs in the value of WAC at all

academic levels, the importance of student-centered practices, and their strong belief in teachers teaching teachers. The Tar River Writing Project partnership with J. H. Rose High School (JHR) is a perfect example. The school is described as having "struggled with racial parity and a higher than average dropout rate. In addition, JHR has struggled to graduate lower-achieving students, and increasing its graduation rate is a top priority for the school over the next few years" (West-Puckett and Banks 355-56). The principal and a few of the school's teacher-leaders called on Tar River Writing Project to help create a graduation project in which teachers could "conceptualize a curriculum that promotes (1) authentic inquiry, (2) experiential learning, and (3) making a doing—in short, a curriculum that provides rich literacy instruction with embedded opportunities to read, write, speak and listen in both virtual and face-to-face environments" (West-Puckett and Banks 358). Several authors in this collection have participated in and led National Writing Project sites near their institutions where participants in the institutes, as well as their leaders, represent all academic levels. Just "hanging out" for faculty development with professional colleagues from primary, secondary and postsecondary institutions breeds more partnerships.

In his article "The Persistence of Privacy: Autonomy and Initiative in Teachers' Professional Relations," J. W. Little emphasizes that true collaboration demands interdependence. Pre-service/secondary partnerships offer opportunities for just such interdependence. There is a natural progression from training for the educational profession to observing, then practice teaching, and eventually full-time teaching. At each of these stages, professional development and mentoring have essential roles while students are taking postsecondary courses as undergraduates and graduates, as well as within the very secondary institutions where they are teaching. Also, ongoing professional development means that teachers of secondary education courses, as well as the secondary teachers across the curriculum, must be aware of the latest challenges to teaching, the knowledge and social development of new generations of students from K-12, and beyond. Many of us have experienced an undergraduate or graduate school instructor referring to "when I was in school" in a similar way to what parents, politicians and other members of society say. That is not an acceptable response because advancements in all disciplines and societal changes require us as professional educators to be familiar with current pedagogical, educational, and global issues if we are to be effective in the classroom. Also, how are we to know the visions of future educational possibilities? How better to know what is happening and what constraints classroom teachers face than partnering with them?

The chapters in this volume share and celebrate various WAC partnership manifestations that vary from frameworks to build connectivity between institutions while addressing Common Core State Standards (Chapter 2), to academic

and non-academic collaborations around science education (Chapter 3), to two chapters on non-North American WAC partnerships (Chapters 4 and 7), and an argument for short-term collaborations (Chapter 9). As you examine the book, you will see it is broken into three broad sections: Unique Programs, Process-Based Programs, and Writing Center-Based Programs. Although most chapters are unique processes that may involve writing centers, we tried to organize them into these individual sections for emphasis; however, they all represent models that are replicable once accommodations are made for local contexts.

In the first chapter of the Unique Programs section, Michelle Cox and Phyllis Gimbel (Chapter 2) detail their using WACommunities as a framework to bring secondary and post-secondary educators across disciplinary boundaries together to discuss what the Common Core State Standards will mean for writing instruction in different disciplines and their implications for teaching writing across the curriculum and across the secondary-post-secondary divide. Chapter 3, by Michael Lowry, discusses several partnerships that he initiated, including the creation of a NASA-sponsored online course, interdisciplinary activity among science, art and English teachers through Project Zero at Harvard, and interactions within volunteer professional organizations such as National Science Teachers Association. All of these projects involve collaboration with post-secondary communities. The emphasis of the chapter is to place these specific examples in the larger context of creating connections between secondary and postsecondary institutions that have an impact on WAC for teachers to improve student learning. The final chapter of the section (Chapter 4) by Federico Navarro and Andrea Revel Chion describes the writing program at a high school, which is an innovative literacy project that has critically adapted the WAC perspective in the initial and advanced course of a high school in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In addition, it discusses how the project addresses some of WAC's major challenges when implemented in a middle/high school.

The Process-Based Programs section begins with a chapter by Danielle Myelle-Watson, Deb Spears, David Wellen, Michael McClellan, and Brad Peters about a grant-funded partnership that studied the use of writing-to-learn activities to develop critical thinking strategies in ninth-grade science classrooms. The chapter describes the challenge of accommodating the unexpected to maintain and value the partnership. It tells of the struggles secondary teachers have and the thoughtful ways in which they modified their teaching to accommodate competing needs and interests. Mary McMullen-Light, in Chapter 6, provides readers with the genesis and development of a partnership that spans the secondary-postsecondary divide. McMullen-Light explains the seemingly unlikely partnership and how some shared fundamental goals the educators have for their students results in a successful and meaningful collaboration that establishes a

sustainable high school writing center and valuable WAC professional development opportunities for both the community college and the high school. The last chapter of the Process-Based Programs section is by Luise Beaumont, Mandy Pydde, and Simone Tschirpke. They examine the expectations and communication issues surrounding a collaboration between a German university and a German high school. The project partnered university staff and peer tutors with high school tutors to develop a WAC-based peer tutoring center in the high school. Though the project did not go as planned, the authors learned much about differing expectations and how to negotiate them.

The final section, Writing Center-Based Programs, begins with an inspiring collaboration between Burnsville High School and the University of Minnesota. The authors, Marie Hansen, Debra Hartley, Kirsten Jamsen, Katie Levin, and Kristen Nichols-Besel, tell a compelling story of a cold-call request for a visit to bring the high school tutors to the University of Minnesota. From there the collaboration grew into relationship building, professional development, and deep friendships, and the authors share the experience and the lessons learned. In Chapter 9, long-term partnerships are the ultimate goal. Trixie Smith demonstrates that sometimes partners just need a jumpstart, a little help in conceiving of and planning for the possibilities, to get started with new programming. Short-term partnerships also have the advantage of low costs, low commitments, and fewer logistical problems. Despite these low-stakes investments, the payoff can be rich and rewarding for area teachers, students, and community members, as well as the WAC-based writing center, its staff, and the university.

In the concluding chapter of the book, we zoom out to comment on the broader trends that emerge from the chapters of this book, as well as survey data about additional partnerships not included in this volume. We also offer some possible directions partnerships might head in the future and how they can be nurtured to offer meaningful experiences for students, teachers, and scholars. We believe the book offers educators valuable models of high school-college partnerships and analyses of the experiences of those involved. There are many barriers to bridging the divide between K-12 and college, but the need to develop partnerships is as great as it has ever been. Finally, we believe the myriad of successes showcased in these pages offer readers hope that WAC partnerships are possible, necessary and inspiring.

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