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A JOURNAL OF WRITING CENTER SCHOLARSHIP

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Special Issue on the Work of the Writing Center Director

Janet Auten & Susan Mueller

As guest editors for this special issue of *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship*, we are delighted to both celebrate and explore "The Work of the Writing Center Director" with you. After a welcomed outpouring of proposals, from which we invited about 20 well-crafted essays, we had an enviable wealth of material to consider. The four pieces we bring you here offer a superb blend of fresh ideas and topics with deft discussions that not only engaged us as long-time administrators but also will surely interest those of you who are new to the work.

In "Collaborating, Calibrating, and Control," Elizabeth Powers helps us take a new look at collaboration and analyzes the benefits and challenges of collaborative work across disciplines, programmatic boundaries, and institutions. Mike Mattison's suggestions about "Cultivating Alumni" offer a novel approach to cultivating sources of support for his writing center. His wonderfully readable piece details his experience in seeking out his university's alumni writing tutors and leveraging their support as donors and advocates for the writing center. In her lively essay "Mothering Work," Michelle Miley explores the conflict that women directors often feel between being nurturing and being effective administrators. She argues that mothering and feminist ideals can be equally valuable in navigating a director's daily work. Finally, instead of the usual Tutor's Column, Mary Lou Odom offers a Director's Column challenging us to explore our vision of what our own writing centers should be and to communicate that particular vision to our school community.

One bit of news: due to the outpouring of fine essays we received, we will likely have a second issue of *WLN* dedicated to the Work of the Writing Center Director, in 2017. Stay tuned! Meanwhile, we hope you enjoy this issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together.
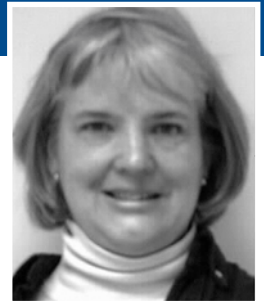
Collaborating, Calibrating, and Control: Writing Center Directors Navigate Institutional Interactions

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It was the best summer ever. I had defended my dissertation and accepted a writing center administrative position for the fall. An invitation from a soon-to-be colleague popped up in my email inbox: "Hey, want to collaborate on this project?" I was flattered and excited. Coming from a very collaborative rhet/comp graduate program and dedicated to the collaborative ideals foundational to writing center work, I was eager to collaborate at my new institution. Two years later, I'm still happy with my position and value close relationships with my colleagues. Yet, I also carry with me two years of tumultuous, conflicted collaboration, different (in kind rather than degree I believe) from the productive dissensus I had previously experienced in teaching, tutoring, and scholarly collaborations. The role of collaboration in the professional life of a writing center administrator (WCA) is nuanced, multifaceted, and at times more confusing than conflicted. This article seeks to explore what collaboration means for WCAs, and how WCAs—those of us who are new, those of us who are newly positioned, and those of us facing new situations—might best collaborate while we're still calibrating to the environment.

The collaborations we foster in our classrooms, in our writing centers, and in our field are not perfect and, as scholarship attests, are not without conflict. Yet, in teaching, tutoring, and field-based scholarship, we generally have a shared (or shareable) understanding. For instance, we might consider ourselves all Bruffee-fied and Trimbur-ed: we are motivated to collaborate as a way to engage in community, and we understand that collaboration can help normalize difference. In writing center studies, collaboration has been called, "the common denominator of our work"(Eodice 128). Collaboration is indeed our strength, one that Roberta Kjesrud and Mary Wislocki encourage we embrace in negotiations with upper-level administrators.

The critical attention to collaboration in writing center theory is integral to our work. However, when we collaborate with various stakeholders at our own institutions, fundamental differences in understanding can make these cross-campus projects prone to unanticipated conflicts unlike those we experience in teaching, learning, and tutoring. The difference comes, in part, from the inconsistent use of the word "collaboration." In a cross-disciplinary examination of collaboration, Wendy Bedwell et al. note "the range of what researchers mean by collaboration is vast" (141). They trace conceptualizations of collaboration across ten disciplines and find that "depending on the specialization of the authors, the same term could refer to different forms of interactions, providing little, if any, construct clarity" (129). When writing center staff collaborate with stakeholders across our institutions, we must negotiate new, shared understandings of collaboration.

Collaborating with various campus programs is not an unexpected component of writing center administration. Skimming writing center position announcements on the Modern Language Association's Job Information List and writingcenters.org, I found the word *collaboration* appears quite frequently: "candidates should have a demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with faculty across the disciplines in shaping the composition program;" "This position may also involve collaborating on program development (such as working with other tutoring programs);" "The director will . . . foster strong collaborations with faculty, academic departments, and relevant campus units." Within the context of the ads, collaboration seems to indicate institutional realities of shared control, shared resources, and perhaps expectations to play nice with whatever comes a director's way. I do not take issue with these expectations; on the contrary, I appreciate detailed job ads and the sense of institutional context they provide. However, keeping in mind Bedwell et al.'s assertion that there is no interdisciplinary common definition for collaboration, I think the label is often presumptive, causing interacting parties to skip over articulating shared understandings of what their collaboration entails before moving forward. Kjesrud and Wislocki encourage rhetorical inquiry as a strategy for exploring conflict during collaborations with upper-level administrators. I embrace this practice, and think it helpful to 1) extend the practice to all potential collaborations and 2) begin with the simplest of inquiries: seeking shared language of what collaboration is and what the collaborative process entails in a given context.

To gain a more textured understanding of how WCAs engage in collaboration at their institutions, I conducted an IRB-approved

survey and follow-up interviews. Following a query on the WCenter listserv, 37 writing center directors completed the survey, answering multiple choice questions that identified types and frequency of campus units with which they collaborated. Twenty-seven directors followed up on their multiple choice answers by sharing stories in writing or via synchronous interview. The survey indicated a prevalence of collaborations with institutional staff and faculty, affirming the importance of understanding differing disciplinary perspectives on collaboration. The respondents' stories speak to the challenges and rewards of diverse collaboration—collaborative practices worth attempting, continuing, and better understanding.

The stories shared below are considered mostly as a composite, in order to explore two questions: When does interaction count as collaboration? What are key differences in institutional collaborations we need to acknowledge and articulate? In this section, I draw on Bedwell et al.'s definition of collaboration as "an evolving process whereby two or more social entities actively and reciprocally engage in joint activities aimed at achieving at least one shared goal" (130). I offer strategies for thinking around four situational components influential in a WCA's commitment to begin, continue, or discontinue a collaboration: 1) collaborative inheritance, 2) collaborative proximity, 3) collaborative labor, and 4) collaborative representation.

1. COLLABORATIVE INHERITANCE

It's a cultural trope that captures an adolescent anxiety: A new kid walks into the cafeteria, tray in hand, trepidation in heart. Where they sit has social ramifications that could last for years. Being a newly hired or newly repositioned WCA looking for collaborators can bring about a bit of that cafeteria anxiety. As we navigate our way through institutional space, new or repositioned writing center administrators wonder: Who are the key movers and shakers? Who has felt marginalized in the past and needs support? Who has a history of controversial actions? While we may not have cafeteria-level concerns with social appearances, we still must consider the ramifications of our collaborative connections. In "Breathing Lessons," Michele Eodice asserts that "we are the relationships we have" (123). This is a nerve-wracking proclamation to read when entering a new environment with few or no established relationships. If we are the relationships we have, should we rush to build them to gain an institutional identity? With this strategy, we may too eagerly agree to collaborate on time-consuming projects that divert our attention from items we value more.

Often, WCAs walk into collaborations that include residual tensions that predate their own work in the area. Survey and interview narratives include ghosts of WCAs past. The survey respondents shared stories of struggling with collaborative projects already in place when they took on the WCA role, projects geared toward the strengths of the previous administrators rather than their own. Other respondents noted that institutional awareness of previous WCA's "strong" personalities clouded collaborative opportunities. The challenges of collaborative inheritance are not limited to new WCAs. Institutional shifts in reporting lines or structure can create a discord of collaborative expectations. Newly positioned WCAs have to renegotiate collaborations as they are reshaping their own programs.

Collaborative inheritance must be acknowledged and explored as we approach an opportunity to collaborate. New and repositioned WCAs must defend and differentiate values at the same time we are imagining and articulating them. Whether we are new to the institution or just new to the partnership, we should inquire into local histories that may influence how stakeholders view the collaboration. Then, we can best engage in the balance of rhetorical inquiry and advocacy Kjesrud and Wislocki suggest to build a new collaborative foundation, drawing on inheritance without losing our own ability to evolve while we contribute. Bedwell et al. argue that an interdisciplinary definition of collaboration "must acknowledge the influence of time" (129). Being sure that all collaborators share an understanding of this influence on collaboration allows a more conscious transition out of what was inherited as well as an informed awareness of evolution as better understanding of institutional context is gained.

2. COLLABORATIVE PROXIMITY
Another element of Bedwell et al.'s interdisciplinary definition of collaboration includes parties working toward at least one shared goal. However, they note that the interests of collaborators need not all be coordinated: "each entity may have differing, and even competing, sub-level goals" (134). What these sub-goals are and how conflicting goals might impact not only the collaboration but also a writing center depends, in part, on collaborative proximity.

A) NEAR COLLABORATIONS
"So, what's the difference between the Writing Center and that other program?" I am using the term "near collaborations" to discuss the collaborative work done between campus entities that overlap in purpose or resources, entities that often face questions of differentiation like the example above. Responding can be

tricky: how do we represent our services as necessary and unique without inadvertently criticizing other programs? It can get even trickier if we have collaborative projects with these closely aligned groups. Writing center scholarship encourages us to find common values with potential collaborators. It makes sense to embrace what is shared in order to articulate outcomes of a collaboration, but too much overlap can cause a different challenge: the need for differentiation. Eodice proposes building collaborations over building empires, but in an era when writing centers are being folded into learning centers and state university systems are consolidating resources, near collaborations should be approached with a complete understanding of differentiated roles and tasks. We may not want to build empires, but most of us want to build something, even if working towards the boundarylessness that Eodice suggests. We can't anticipate how institutional restructuring might fundamentally change our writing centers, but we should be able to anticipate questions of program differentiation, providing answers that fairly represent ours and other programs while also indicating the unique strengths of having an (independent) writing center.

Survey and interview respondents seemed to struggle with near collaborations especially in situations where funding, staff, or space is shared. One respondent mentioned "trying to avoid duplication" as a challenge when collaborating with other learning support programs, and another described a move "to cleave" the writing center from other tutoring services. Additionally, after engaging in collaborative tutor education projects, some respondents noted the challenge of other entities "poaching" writing tutors with the lure of better hours, higher pay, or less work. One respondent even rejected the term collaboration as he described the process, redefining the work as "more accurately, interaction." These challenges of near collaboration illustrate the competing sub-level goals at play: namely, the goal of each entity to thrive as an entity.

In order to foster healthy collaborations that promote strong relationships between similar campus programs, collaborators should tease out their sub-goals in addition to acknowledging their principle, shared goals (often, improving or expanding support for student writers). Identifying the possible conflicts of sub-goals at the beginning of the collaborative process can help participants differentiate their roles in the collaboration, in turn differentiating the priorities and strengths of their independent services. This foundational practice may include some uncomfortable conver-

sations, but near collaborations are too valuable not to pursue. Study respondents found such collaborations include the reward of increased value in writing across campus, a shared language to use about writing, and development of innovative services and spaces. Additionally, respondents find that being literally close, spatially speaking, allows for organic, spontaneous collaborations to occur if one is open to the possibility.

B) FAR COLLABORATIONS

While near collaborations have the challenges of shared territory and the benefits of organic growth, far collaborations have the benefits of distinct territories and the challenges of facilitating connection. Far collaborations are often what people have in mind when they think of collaboration as a means of bringing different perspectives together to come up with something greater than the sum of its parts. In far collaborations, much work comes as finding a shared goal to work toward. Even without the overlapping missions and competing sub-goals common in near collaborations, far collaborations can prove challenging due to distances (mental and physical) participants must traverse. Study respondents noted lack of time, lack of communication, sheer physical distance, and differing priorities as challenges faced when working together with faculty and staff in other departments or divisions. Bedwell et al.'s point that only one goal needs to be shared by collaborators is important to keep in mind during far collaborations. A WCA and another program coordinator might not see eye-to-eye on many issues, but as long as both are able to envision one shared outcome, they need not try to parse out agreement on everything that might happen. The potential benefits of far collaboration are vast. Respondents described far collaborations that culminated in greater visibility, new programs, and production of co-authored scholarship.

3. COLLABORATIVE LABOR

A perhaps obvious characteristic of collaboration requires the work of at least two people. Bedwell et al. assert that "collaboration cannot be one-sided. Rather, it requires active, mutual engagement in the collaborative process at some level from all involved parties" (134). They particularly name delegation (someone directing the work of another) as separate from collaboration. The active contribution required of all parties is something that is not always present in some of the situations that can get labeled as collaborative. Most commonly in my query, two activities mentioned seemed more delegation than collaboration: 1) tailoring reports to correspond to upper-level administrators' values, and

2) preparing and delivering guest presentations and workshops as labor-intensive collaborations. While these activities often do involve multiple parties, some of the respondents' experiences with them seemed to be collaborative only in that an administrator or faculty member had reached out with an invitation. Spot-on reports and guest presentations are integral activities for many WCAs, but they are not innately collaborative, as collaborations are process-oriented, not relationship-oriented (Bedwell et al. 130). We can consider such activities as great writing center PR and demonstrations of good rapport with colleagues as valuable, but we should not necessarily view them as collaborations. Rather, such activities harness some potential for future collaboration, if the faculty member or administrator is interested in extending the connection to work with the WCA toward a shared goal.

While Bedwell et al. argue that collaborations are reciprocal, "engagement or participation from each party does not have to be equal" (134). This consideration is an important one when beginning any collaboration. Unlike writing center collaborations, in which roles are set, and co-authorship, in which equal labor is expected, in other institutional collaborative work the balance may not be so clear cut. One survey respondent noted of one collaboration: "I often feel that I am putting in more work in the partnership," and others echoed the sentiment. Expectations of labor should be discussed in detail at the outset of the project, whether collaborators be representative of the same or multiple levels of administration and staff. When possible, plans should be made to check in on renegotiating roles and workload at key points throughout the process.

4. COLLABORATIVE REPRESENTATION

In a late-season episode of Seinfeld, Elaine's "sidling" co-worker sneaks up beside her to share praise she's receiving from the boss. Sometimes in collaborations (and perceived collaborations) WCAs have to be a begrudging Elaine or a lucky sidler. How collaborations are represented in reports and presentations may not reflect the actual process of the work. Sidlers might pop up to take credit, and to keep the peace, appear collegial, and present the collaboration as a success, a WCA may let them share the credit. Other times, WCAs find themselves being pushed forward into the role of the sidler. One respondent described being presented as the "writing expert" working on a project applying for external funding though they had not participated in constructing the grant application or planning the project. Another respondent was uncomfortable being placed in a position to speak for an en-

tire department when no actual collaboration had taken place. Additionally, Kjesrud and Wisloki note that because of their complexity, "we can't always tell when collaborations are succeeding or failing" (96). Whenever a representation of a collaboration is being constructed for an audience, it may be helpful to include a depiction of the evolving, active, process of the collaboration. Emphasis on process can shed light on involvement in a way that examining a product of collaboration cannot (Bedwell et al. 130).

In her discussion of connecting writing center assessment to other campus program goals, Ellen Schendel lists many benefits of collaborative work, while warning readers of one thing: "Collaboration at any cost sells out the important work of the writing center; it also won't allow for genuine, mutually beneficial partnerships between the writing center and other units" (103). This caveat to collaboration is good advice that reaches far beyond center-based assessment projects. In order to be productive, contributing members to our academic institution, WCAs should evaluate opportunities carefully, learning about histories affecting the collaboration; work to gain common understanding of the nature, process, work, and ramifications of the collaboration; and consider how the collaboration might best be represented to other parties. Conducting such inquiry may delay initiation of team projects, but could strengthen their ability to be productive, enriching, and truly collaborative.

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A is for Alumni: Cultivating Past Advisors as Current Advocates

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Were the fall semester of 2014 a movie, I could imagine myself as Benjamin Franklin Gates, the character played by Nicolas Cage in *National Treasure*. Surrounded by boxes of old files, I was elbow-deep in papers in a side room of our school's library, digging for any sign of past Writing Center employees: a frayed name tag, a tattered attendance sheet, a crumpled memo. Anything that could give me another name to add to the list—a list of every advisor who had worked in the Wittenberg Writing Center since its founding in 1980. We did not have one on file, and attempts to recreate the list from other sources had been stymied: all the old employment records before 1995 had been destroyed, and the course for writing center advisors had not begun until 1990; there were at least ten years of advisors hidden away. All we had to go on were the random files left by the previous director, ones now stored in boxes in the basement of the library. So I searched.

The reason for creating the list was fairly straightforward: we wanted to host a reunion, celebrating thirty-five years of student writing advisors at Wittenberg[1]. That reunion, though, was part of a larger plan, one that aimed to strengthen the relationships between the Writing Center, the school administration, the school's advancement department, the school's communication office, and our alumni. We wanted to cultivate the ties with our former advisors so that, yes, we could (selfishly) position the Writing Center as central to the school's mission[2]. And that plan had, and continues to have, many moving parts.

The writing center field has long recognized the value of its work for tutors beyond the walls of the writing center itself. Sue Dinitz and Jean Kiedaisch talk of how writing center staff benefit from talking with writers: "While tutoring and writing, independently, help students develop skills with wide relevance in the work world, practicing them in combination—tutoring writing—allows

for a mutual reinforcement of these skills." And these skills are "central to success in almost any profession" (5). Paula Gillespie, Brad Hughes, and Harvey Kail have written about the Alumni Tutor Project, a research endeavor that has highlighted "detailed information on the skills, values, and abilities that tutors have taken with them and on the ways they adapted their knowledge of writing and collaborative learning to suit their needs" after graduation (40). More importantly, the authors have explained how to use this information with different populations, from administrators to colleagues to donors to ourselves. And we have at Wittenberg done such surveying; every year we ask the graduating seniors to fill out a questionnaire regarding their work, and we have previously polled several alumni on how their days in the Writing Center connected to their current work.

Yet we were looking for something more than survey results. It is one thing for writing center administrators to offer their research from these projects; it is another for the alumni themselves to offer their stories. We wanted to build from Gillespie, Hughes, and Kail's work, to bring the alumni themselves into the conversations, so we started with a reunion.

That reunion idea was the result of collaboration with our school's director of alumni relations. Over the course of several conversations, we talked about the best way of interacting with alumni. One of our first steps was writing an article on the Writing Center for the alumni newsletter. From there we began trying to track down the names of everyone who had worked in the Center. We wanted an email list so that we could send updates on the Writing Center, letting the group know of recent publications and conference presentations from current advisors; we also hoped that we could use the former advisors as a resource for current staff. Might they be able to offer advice about finding jobs, about using the skills gained in the Writing Center in the outside world? From those first steps came the idea for a reunion, one that was especially timely given our 35th anniversary.

Now, the preceding paragraph might give a simpler picture than intended. It would appear that the director of alumni relations and I sat down, agreed to a plan, and followed through. A collaboration. However, it's fair to say that the Writing Center was never a priority for the alumni office, as the school had made a recent decision to focus on athletics and our president's push for more professional programs at Wittenberg. We had to make our own concerted push to generate interest in the Writing Center. The advisors and I sent emails, made phone calls, and tried to

keep reminding the Alumni Office staff about deadlines. If there is a line between persistence and being a pest, we possibly crossed it a time or two, but we did manage to arrange everything for the reunion, from the guest list to the menu to the invitations to a celebratory video. Most of that work took up the spring of 2015, as we were planning the reunion to coincide with fall Homecoming. The director of alumni relations had said that a good turnout for an event such as this, at a small school like ours, would be about twenty. We had nearly sixty.

To return to the *National Treasure* reference, the reunion of Writing Center advisors was for us what the finding of the secret message on the back of the Declaration of Independence was for Ben Gates. There was something more to discover. To start, it was a marvelous feeling to be in that room, to watch writing advisors from the 1980s share stories with the current advisors. We had all of the decades represented, and in that space, the cross-generational connection was strengthened. Even better, we had both the director of alumni relations and the university president in as guests, so they saw first-hand the attachment to the Writing Center that these alums had. Our next step was to decipher how best to proceed.

The first idea was to build off the theme of generations. How could we showcase the longevity of the Writing Center? For this, we did not have to look far. One of the recent Center alums was working for the Office of University Communications, and one of her responsibilities was to create and edit the Wittenberg Magazine, the school's main publication. What we proposed was a cover story on the Writing Center, interviewing advisors from different years. I pitched the idea to our interim director of University Communications, and she seemed at least open to the idea. Then, I also enlisted the help of one of the alums from the reunion, a 2001 graduate, who currently serves on the Alumni Board. He then wrote to the interim director:

> It was good to see you at Homecoming. While on campus, I had the honor of attending the 35th Writing Center Reunion, which was beautifully orchestrated . . . [the] Writing Center was an influential aspect of my Wittenberg education, and it was fun to see it given the recognition it deserves over the Homecoming weekend. Mike had an idea, and I would like to second it. And that's to do a Writing Center/Writer's Workshop story for the *Witt Magazine*. We could celebrate 35 Years of the Writing Center. Mike suggested featuring a student writing advisor from each decade the Writing Center has operated at Witt, and how the center influenced

them and what they're doing now. . . . The good news is that we have plenty of old photos in the archives!

Shortly after, one of the writers from the university's Office of Communications wrote to ask for the names and emails of past advisors. She wanted recommendations for people she could interview for the profile. It looked as if we were headed for a cover story.

Of course, not everything goes as expected. In the midst of our post-reunion planning, the president left the university. The reasons were several-fold, and her leaving put many other initiatives and projects on hold, including the *Wittenberg Magazine*.[3] I received a few emails from the interim director about how they were assessing the magazine's status and would be in touch, but there has been no further word, and there has been no magazine. So as quickly as our hope of an in-depth cover story was lit, it was extinguished.

Publicity, though, is but one avenue we can travel. Another is fundraising. Gillespie, Hughes, and Kail briefly mention fundraising in their article, and they note that "[s]uccess in fundraising requires that writing center directors have vision, persistence, and patience, an understanding of fundraising principles, regular communications with alumni, and substantial rhetorical and institutional political savvy" (46). That's a long list of requirements, on top of what writing center directors already do. Yet it has been enlightening for me to sit down with members of our University Advancement office and hear how they speak of their work. As a small example, I once asked in an email how we could sell the work of the Writing Center, and I quickly had a reply: "Selling is the wrong verbiage. We want to remind them of their efforts and engage them to support the current writers through giving."

So we weren't selling. But we were dealing with money. And we were dealing with what Ronald Burt (and others) would call attachment, the "emotional connection between a person and an organization" (620). People need to feel connected to Wittenberg in order to give money, and we had to determine the best way to talk with them about the Writing Center so that we could remind them of (or rekindle) their attachment. As Gillespie, Hughes, and Kail ask, "How does a writing center possibly fit into this pattern of identification and support?" (46).

For starters, we needed some concrete funding opportunities. If we asked people to give money, they needed to know what it would be used for. Here's an initial brainstorm list:

- An endowed advisorship. That's the same idea as an endowed chair, but for much less money. We'd need to generate $2000-2500 per year, and that person's name could be given to an advisor position (we could even buy a small wooden chair to hang on the wall). The advisor holding the position would communicate with the donor, and if we had a few, we could think about a dinner each year. (If we somehow found twenty-five or so of these, we would have the employee budget covered.)

- A Writing Center travel fund. The advisors attend national and regional conferences, and the money would be used for travel, registration, and hotel costs.

- Sponsorship of our nonfiction journal, *Spectrum*, published through the Writing Center. The publication usually costs around $4000 per year, so there could be a one-time sponsorship, or a larger donation could fund the journal perpetually.

These are the ideas that the staff of Advancement took with them when they went to talk with possible donors. They were looking, obviously, for people who valued writing, learning, collaboration. We collected all the names of past editors and contributors to Spectrum, as we hoped some of them would be interested. Then again, one group of people needed very little in terms of a reminder of their attachment: the writing advisors.

Here is where my thinking changed. For the past dozen years, at two different writing centers, I believe I have been most focused on publicizing our work to outsiders. Writing center administrators are, in many ways, salespeople. We have to pitch the writing center work so that others can understand and appreciate it. And, yes, support it. When I thought of donors, as Gillespie, Hughes, and Kail also seem to, it was of others. People who did not come from a writing center but could appreciate one. Yet the alumni who have worked in a writing center don't need a sale—that's the "wrong verbiage." We're not pitching anything to them. Instead, it's more like preaching to the choir. With my conversations with the Advancement staff, I was trying to figure out my sermon, and how to pass around the collection plate.

If that last image gives you pause, it did me, too. I have no problem talking about and advocating for the Writing Center. I'll do so anytime, anywhere. But this is different territory. This is asking for money from the people I had been talking about—the advisors. It seems too much like bringing your work home, of denigrating the writing center space by bringing money into it. We talk about coffee, couches, and conversations, not coins and coffers. Yet we

do also talk about the connection that develops between advisors and writers, between advisors and advisors, and between advisors and a writing center. And one of Burt's suggestions about building personal attachments is to "create emotional experiences at university that encourage interpersonal relationships" (641). Those are exactly the relationships that are created in our Writing Center, and that our alums mention when they write; they talk about the "family" of advisors, and they refer often and fondly to the two previous directors, Mimi Dixon and Maureen Fry.

As for my doing the asking, that role makes sense, too. Though Scott Gaier, who focused on alumni relations, does not examine alumni's connection to resource centers like a writing center,[4] he does make an interesting suggestion regarding the classroom experience: because "alumni giving" is strongly connected to "academic satisfaction," then a school should consider using "faculty as a major stakeholder for soliciting gifts" (287). Yes, professors should ask for money. Students are connected to their teachers, and having that group ask for money could be more successful than having administrators or others do so. But, if professors can be possible fundraisers, why not writing center administrators? Or, for that matter, the advisors?

Our next endeavor put us into a position to ask for money: a phone-athon. One of our current advisors, Benjamin, also works for the Advancement office, and he is in charge of the phone room—Witt students regularly call alumni with updates and fundraising requests. He and I worked out a deal with the university that we could come to the phone room and call alums for an evening, and, whatever donations we received would go directly to the Writing Center. We used our guest list from the reunion for our call list, and Benjamin put together a script for us to use. Then, one spring evening, five advisors and I went and called our alums.

According to Benjamin, our evening was an "extreme success." We were talking mostly with more recent graduates, who don't have much money, and several who had not given in a few years, suggesting a possible dissatisfaction with the school. These are not people who give often, but we had a high success rate. And, in addition, the current advisors who worked the phones were again able to connect with previous advisors; through these conversations they had their connection to the Center strengthened, and that in turn may create alumni connections once current advisors graduate. Also, we learned that an account for Writing Center gifts did not exist, so we put in a request for one.

That brings us to now. To return once more to the movie reference: we will never find a hidden treasure. I am certain there is no underground vault at Wittenberg, and I am fairly certain that we will not find any alum with the wherewithal to fully fund the Writing Center. There is no Hollywood ending for us, no room full of precious metals. But there is some hope. For instance, we do now have our own account number for donations. People can donate directly to the Writing Center online, using the drop-down listing. That's a small change, but it's significant for us. We are now recognized in a manner that the university administration understands and appreciates. We have established relationships with the Advancement and Communication Offices, and I am having continuing conversations with members of both.

Most important, we have strengthened ties with our alumni. We have built upon the momentum of the reunion and now keep in touch through our Facebook page, periodic emails, and a yearly newsletter. Each of those communications brings a few responses from former advisors, and they, at times, are advocating for us. Just this semester, one of the alums, unprompted, sent an email to the Business Department, suggesting that all majors bring their portfolios to the Writing Center. He was a Business major and wanted to remind everyone of the benefits of an outside reader. To have another voice advocating for the work done in the Writing Center was a welcome change—a reward perhaps nearly as valuable as gold.

NOTES

1. Wittenberg is a liberal arts school with approximately 1800 students.

2. Wittenberg was, and is, going through a difficult transition period: lower enrollment, budget cuts, administrative turnover. Programs are being asked to justify their existence, and though there has not been any formal charge to the Writing Center to make such an argument, the times seem to call for an active approach.

3. A great deal of turnover occurred in the Office of Communications, including our former advisor.

4. Somebody should!

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Feminist Mothering:
A Theory/Practice for Writing Center Administration

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If there is anything that I have learned in my time [as a tutor in the Writing Center], it is the way that spaces can influence and shape your experiences. I have spent 5 semesters in this space, learning to listen, to ask questions, to be empathetic, and to be confident. The Writing Center has been the central site of my growth throughout my undergraduate career, and I will forever be grateful for the family that this space provided me. These orange couches will continue to be my favorite place on campus. - Tutor Post on Facebook (April 29, 2016)

In my first year as a new writing center director, I found myself in an unusual meeting. Somehow, one of our State Representatives had heard from one of her constituents that our writing center, newly renovated and now directed by a tenure track faculty member, had recently declined in quality from the service it had been providing. Our writing center tutors were not editing students' papers for them. Rather, under my leadership, tutors were simply talking to students about their writing. And that talk, she heard, was all about feelings. She reported this narrative to our president, concerned about the direction our student support was heading. Fortunately, a colleague who knows the representative orchestrated a meeting so that we could explain that while we do not edit students' papers (such an action would not help students learn or develop as writers), our work with students covers much more than simply their "feelings" about writing. Somewhat surprised at how committed we are to our pedagogy, the representative agreed to talk to us. She now has a better understanding of why our tutors work with writers in conversation rather than with a red pen. But the experience troubles me; having the work of a writing center described as "just talking about feelings" diminishes and devalues what I believe is central to a necessary pedagogy writing centers offer in today's university systems.

My experience reflects the devaluation of writing center work

that for years scholars have connected to the feminization of writing centers. Over twenty years ago, Mary Traschel noted, "To the extent that writing centers are constructed as feminized worksites they risk . . . containment and separation from the academic marketplace, where the value of real, 'intellectual work' is negotiated" (32).[1] More recently, Melissa Nicolas warns against the feminization of the center, arguing that our reputation as "nurturing service-oriented places" is problematic since this "'feminization of the writing center narrative' functions to 'code the position of the writing center director as 'inferior,' regardless of rank" (12). Jackie Grutsch McKinney, placing the narrative of writing centers as "cozy home" as the "most firmly entrenched" part of our grand narrative (20), notes that this domesticated narrative can lead to the devaluation of writing center directors:

> Whether female directors have carved themselves a home in the writing center (an argument I'm not prepared to make) or centers have been labeled "feminine" and thus seen as inferior by others, clinging to the identity of a writing center as cozy home may be problematic in terms of gender. Female directors who insist on cozy, inviting spaces may be unwittingly narrating their work as not intellectual in the eyes of some. Fact is, *if the writing center is a home and staff is family, that makes the director the mother.* (26, emphasis added)

I know that in an environment of corporatized academies,[2] any ties to domestication may prove dangerous. Any analogies to writing center as home or a director's work as mothering work in an institutional system revering a production model has the potential to diminish writing centers to a subservient position. But, while deconstructing our grand narrative, Grutsch McKinney asks us to imagine what doors narratives close as well as open. I wonder what doors we close if we abandon "writing center as home," and our work as "nurturing work." Could the caregiving work of writing centers, caregiving Traschel ties to our roots, be vitally necessary in university systems where students often experience intense stress to keep up with the pace of capitalistic production? Could our "mothering" work be essential in resisting the patriarchal culture of our academic institutions?

I resist the silencing of my mother identity both at home and in the center. What some might call the mothering work of the writing center fulfills me and empowers me. I find joy in creating a space where student writers struggle to find their own voice, a messy space that allows growth and development of writers and

tutors, a space that works alongside the classroom space, but that does not replicate that space. The Facebook post that begins this article, a post made by one of our tutors prior to graduation, suggests that our familial, "homey" space, a space shaped by our own insistence on listening, encouraging, nurturing, is indeed an important space to many. Rather than silencing or rejecting the identity of "feminine" space, I would like to see writing centers reclaim our nurturing (mothering) work as empowering, vital work within the institution. Applying the theory of feminist mothering developed by Andrea O'Reilly, I argue that by infusing the principles of feminist mothering into our own theorization of writing center administration, writing center directors empower writing center work and resist the neoliberal, patriarchal production of the institution.

FEMINIST MOTHERING: A THEORY/PRACTICE FOR ADMINISTRATION

In Adrienne Rich's powerful exploration of her own experience as mother, she differentiates between two "meanings of motherhood" (13). The first reflects the institution of motherhood as experienced within patriarchal culture, a culture that "for most of what we know as the 'mainstream' of recorded history, has ghettoized and degraded female potentials" (13). She juxtaposes "motherhood" against the experience of "mothering," one rooted in "the biological potential or capacity to bear and nourish human life" (13). Writing center directors may see parallels in Rich's experience and their own in a university system that focuses on production and outcomes, devaluing, as Shari Stenberg notes, "learning processes that entail engagement of (an often recursive) process, collaboration and dialogue among learners, and reflection" (8). Our insistence that writing centers not be recognized as domesticated, feminized spaces speaks to our feelings of degradation.

Responding to the space that Rich opened up for a new discourse on motherhood, mothering theorists like O'Reilly have begun to explore other narratives that empower rather than diminish the mothering experience. The practice/theory O'Reilly calls *feminist mothering* offers a discourse that reclaims power for the mother and "so provides a promising alternative to the oppressive institution of patriarchal motherhood" ("Introduction" 4). As such, feminist mothering acts as a negation of motherhood as institution, allowing women to be both feminists and mothers. Recognizing that it is a tension-filled term, O'Reilly defines "feminism" within the context of feminist mothering as a "recognition that

most (all?) cultures are patriarchal and that such cultures give prominence, power, and privilege to men and the masculine and depend on the oppression, if not disparagement of women and the feminine" (8). "Feminist mothering may refer to any practice of mothering that seeks to challenge and change various aspects of patriarchal motherhood that cause mothering to be limited or oppressive to women" ("Feminist Mothering" 796).

In a similar vein to O'Reilly, composition scholar Stenberg argues that repurposing feminine practices (and I would argue through repurposing empowering feminine practices) within the neoliberal institution is vital for students. Stenberg notes the importance of understanding "education as a complex, relational practice" in helping our students become active participants in shaping their worlds (8). The writing center, a space where feminine practices like listening, reflection, and collaboration are nurtured, can be one of those spaces. I am interested in how thinking through the theory/practice of feminist mothering opens a space for administrators to speak a new discourse that rejects devaluation of our feminine practices, empowers our nurturing work, and resists the silencing of feminine values in the production model of the neoliberal institution.

In theorizing how we can empower the nurturing work of writing centers and writing center administration, I draw from three principles O'Reilly sees replicated in the mothering practices of feminist mothers. First, feminist mothers reject the patriarchal assumption that a mother's identity is solely that of mother. Resisting the erasure of identity beyond mother-self, feminist mothers insist on work identities, partner identities, activist identities; in addition, they do not limit the identity of mother to the biological, heterosexual mother. Secondly, feminist mothers insist on shared parenting, rejecting the institutional doctrine that the mother must be the sole caretaker of the children. Carework is shared by partners, by friends, by family, and through daycare. Finally, feminist mothers believe that mothering work is not limited to the private, domestic sphere, but rather that motherwork is social and political. The political work of these mothers occurs not only in the advocacy for all peoples, but also in the raising of children with feminist values.

IDENTITY BEYOND MOTHER/DIRECTOR
The first principle of feminist mothering I draw from speaks to the multidimensionality of writing center administrators' work and identities. O'Reilly notes that "feminist mothering does not restrict or reduce a woman's identity and purpose solely to moth-

erhood" ("Feminist Mothering" 818). I argue that cultivating a multidimensional identity is necessary not only for mothers but also for writing center administrators.

In my motherwork with my children, I have often insisted that the cultivation of my identity beyond wife and mother is essential both to my health and to my children's. Yes, I am often tired. Yes, I am often torn between the professional work I need to do and the time I want to spend with my children. Amber Kinser calls this inherent tension of a mother who has relationships with people other than her children "relating-in-multiplicity" (125). This same tension exists in the writing center. The nature of my work as a writing center director means that I must also balance multiple relationships and identities; there are constant meetings. And my faculty line means I must find time away from the center to engage in research and writing. My time away is often confusing not only to tutors but to others outside our center who do not realize my role is multidimensional. But, as developing my selfhood through work beyond my children is valuable to them, my insistence on research and on other relationships makes visible for others in the institution the intellectual work that is a part of directing a center. Through my insistence on self-outside the "mother-role" of the writing center, I empower our work as intellectual, valuable work within the institution.

INSISTENCE ON SHARED PARTNERSHIP

Another principle from feminist mothering that speaks to writing center administration occurs in the insistence of shared partnerships. In order for mothers to invest "time and energy to develop a selfhood beyond motherhood," feminist mothering insists "upon real, shared parenting (partner, daycare, othermothering, etc.) and critique[s]. . . the excessive child-centeredness of intensive mothering" ("Feminist Mothering" 818). Writing centers, often dubbed the "fix-it shops" of writing, are used to having students sent our way so that we can do the work (nurturing work?) of improving or fixing their "lack of development" as writers. Michael Pemberton, for example, notes the danger of the "marriage" between writing centers and writing in the disciplines faculty members, echoing the often heard excuse that other faculty "don't have time to teach writing" (120).

We know to resist this "fix-it shop" mentality. And we know that writing center theory grounds itself in theories of collaboration. Michele Eodice even asks us to "demand collaboration" as a means to "reach others in ways that can impact policy, influence administrative and institutional leaders, and help us grow lead-

ers from among our writing center fellows" (129). But collaboration often results in one entity being subsumed by another, or into what Katrina Powell and Pamela Takayoshi call "missionary activism, "when one takes on the identity of "service provider" or "savior," to act as "the one in control, the paternal figure who knows best when to intervene" (395-396). My colleague Doug Downs and I have coined the term "collaboricity," a combination of "collaboration" and "reciprocity" to reflect shared partnership, an acknowledgement of both the independence and interdependence of writing programs and writing centers (forthcoming 2016). This idea of shared partnership—educators working sometimes together, sometimes independently—reflects the insistence of feminist mothering that care of children cannot solely lie on the mother's shoulders. Helping our students grow and develop (which sometimes means listening to their feelings) must be a shared enterprise.

MOTHERING AS POLITICAL/ACTIVIST ROLE

But feminist mothering does more than simply empower mothers and motherwork. In outlining the theory of feminist mothering, O'Reilly insists that feminist mothers make better mothers. Through teaching feminist values to their children, making mothering activist work, feminist mothers allow "children to grow outside and beyond the gender straightjackets of patriarchal culture" ("Feminist Mothering" 811). Children develop empathy, care, acceptance. O'Reilly notes that in developing these values, children may find themselves at odds with their peers who hold to patriarchal values. She notes that feminist mothers "must teach our children not only to resist patriarchy but more importantly how to keep safe and sane in so doing" ("Feminist Mothering" 811).

Writing center administrators often advocate for teaching values indicative of feminist values. Sarah Blazer's recent article on a "cohesive, transformative staff education" program that orients staff "to issues of difference" and develops inclusivity (17) is just one example; Tracy Santa's article on listening is yet another. In my role as director, I want to create a space for writers to find their voices, and I want my tutors to have voice, too. In a sense, I want to "raise my tutors" to have feminist values.

Feminist values often come through in my insistence that those of us in the writing center must take both reflective and reflexive stances, that we must practice what Krista Ratcliffe describes as rhetorical listening. Confronting different viewpoints through rhetorical listening can be unsettling at times, particularly as one both listens empathetically and stands firm in one's own identity.

As Grutsch McKinney notes, "[Feminist] work does not have to be 'comfortable' . . . and in fact, might work better if it is confrontational and unsettling" (27). I do want tutors to be safe and sane in their work. But in the sometimes unsettling work, I have seen tutors begin to develop empathy for others and confidence in themselves. The Facebook quote beginning this article speaks to both, as does our center's recent panel of past tutors who joined us to talk to current tutors about what they had taken from their writing center work into their lives beyond the university. Over and over they mentioned empathy. Confidence and empathy— what more could we want?

CONCLUSION

I hear voices cautioning me about creating too much of a "mothering" space, of being too "mothering" in my interactions with tutors and student writers. I hear those cautions, and I heed them. These are known dangers. Feminist mothering provides a theory/practice by which I can embrace the nurturing/motherwork of the writing center while resisting the patriarchal trappings in the domestication of motherhood. And through empowering the nurturing work of the writing center, the practice of feminist mothering provides me a means by which to resist the neoliberal values that are shaping our institutions. By thinking through administration through the lens of feminist mothering, I believe writing center directors can embrace the nurturing work that we do, using our feminist values to, as Stenberg argues, intervene in our increasingly neoliberal institutions.

NOTES

1. Traschel's article not only gives a thorough review of the feminization of writing center work but also provides a positive comparison between mothering work and writing center administration.

2. See Slaughter and Rhoades on the corporatization of the university.

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Director's Column: "Local Work: Identity and the Writing Center Director"

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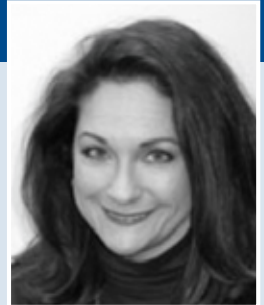
"So, after careful consideration, it appears the Writing Center is a Center after all."—email to department chair from associate dean, 2009

"And it may be, that after this review process, we end up determining that some Cente— like the Writing Center— aren't actually Centers."—statement to university Center/ Institute directors by provost, 2015

Four years into my career as a writing center administrator, I found myself involved in a somewhat surreal email exchange with my department chair, dean, and associate dean. The issue at question was whether the writing center was actually a "Center" and thus subject to specific funding and reporting requirements. This debate about our identity lasted for over a year until the dean eventually declared that, in fact, the writing center was a Center.

Six years after this determination, however, I sat in a university-wide meeting of Center directors and heard the provost announce that we each would need to apply to maintain our "Center status." This step, he explained, would ensure institutional alignment with state system guidelines specifying, for example, that Centers "pursue teaching, research, and outreach across a diverse set of scholarly and social topics" and that the work of all Centers be "aligned with local, national and global needs" ("Centers"). Because those characteristics described our thriving writing center, I listened dispassionately—until the provost offhandedly told the packed room that one result of this process might be the realization that some centers—for example, The Writing Center—had never really been centers at all.

I suspect that like many writing center directors, I tend to think I have "heard it all." Rarely, therefore, am I fazed by misunderstandings of what the center is or does. But the provost's com-

ment stunned me. For over twelve years, I had used the writing center's identity as motivation, guidance, and evidence for nearly every aspect of my work. Yet despite those efforts, I now faced the harsh reality that this identity was still too easily misjudged.

Since this experience, I have grown thoughtful about the Writing Center's identity as I have questioned why my work requires me so frequently to explain and re-explain the center within its own institution. In particular, I contemplated the many documents I have created for just this purpose—documents meant to convince others of the Center's worth as I see it. Taken as a whole, such documents form a kind of textual, chronological narrative revealing how a center's identity is constructed over time and providing writing center directors with a useful tool to examine this crucial component of our work. Thus, armed with my array of emails, annual reports, memos, and formal proposals, I undertook some textual soul searching.

As I considered—and was at times surprised by—how I had constructed my center's identity, I realized that what we know in the field of writing center studies may differ in significant ways from what we know within our own institutional contexts and as directors of our own unique, situated writing centers. I want to offer here the lessons that emerged from my self-study in the hope that as writing center directors we might consider more productively and more deliberately the work we do on behalf of our writing centers.

I focused most closely on four formal proposals I wrote between 2005 and 2016 that demonstrate deliberate efforts to present a writing center identity that upper-level university administrators would find compelling. Each proposal had a distinct purpose and responded to a significant challenge or change in the Writing Center and/or the university as a whole: The first (2005) requested an additional faculty appointment for the center when the aftermath of a departmental shakeup left the veteran director fulfilling a role in the chair's office. The second (2006) proposed a fee for first-year composition students as a way to meet the dean's requirement that centers generate a portion of their own funding. The third (2015) was requested by the dean to outline the merger and administration of two very different writing centers following a state-mandated consolidation of my university with a smaller, STEM-focused institution. The fourth (2016) was the application to remain a Center announced by the provost.

I first holistically read each document and considered how I had focused my depiction of the Writing Center; next, I examined

trends in the frequency of my use of recurring words/terms (to-taled electronically and proportionally to each proposal's overall word count). As is often the case in any institution, change at my university comes in bursts; thus proposals one and two were writ-ten in close chronological proximity as were proposals three and four. Nine years separated the second and third proposals, and not surprisingly, there were marked differences in my perspective and language at the two ends of this time frame.

In general, the earlier proposals discuss a writing center that provides "multi-faceted writing support" that "has assisted thou-sands of students with all manner of writing-related concerns" and that "has always supported all writers on campus through a pedagogy grounded in the scholarship and disciplinary best prac-tices of writing center studies and composition and rhetoric." In other words, these proposals depicted an excellent writing cen-ter—but a writing center that could be situated at almost any in-stitution.

When directors speak of our centers in such broad terms, we no doubt intend to legitimize our work by aligning it with estab-lished ideals. We do so at our peril, however, as our audiences are unlikely to recognize those ideals or the worth we attach to them. Furthermore, as Jackie Grutsch McKinney suggests, a con-sequence of overlooking distinguishing features of our individual centers is that we restrict much of what we could say about them. Indeed, in examining these four attempts at communicating my center's identity, I see missed opportunities in which I failed to highlight meaningful aspects of the Writing Center's crucial role within the university.

Not surprisingly, certain words and terms were used consistent-ly throughout all four proposals: the university's name, the term *writing center* and the words *writing*, *tutors*, *student(s)*, *faculty*, *support*, and *program(s)*, all of which appeared at rate of .33 per-cent or higher. The trends in the usage of these words, howev-er, are telling. In proposals one and two, *writing center* and *stu-dent(s)* appear most frequently whereas in proposals three and four, *writing center* and the university's name are the most often used words. In fact, only in proposal four is *writing center* not the most common term; instead, the university's name is used more frequently.

The most recent documents also introduce for the first time terms prominent in my institution's discourse. Thus, rather than featur-ing disciplinary language more appropriate for a tutor-training manual, proposal four highlights writing center support to stu-

dents that "complement[s] their coursework, progression to degree completion, and career goals." Similarly, instead of referencing writing center scholarship to legitimize the work of our center, I highlight the center's efforts at "connecting with the broader [university] community to foster engagement with writing and highlight the university's commitment to improving the literacy practices of [the state's] citizens."

What prompted this revelatory shift in my writing and thinking? While I would like to credit my own good sense and maturity—and indeed, I think the administrative savvy earned as a veteran writing center director was a factor—this change was also guided by the highly structured application for centerhood itself. Along with requests for a variety of information from center directors, the provost's office had used the application to highlight university goals, plans, and initiatives. As I discussed key elements of the writing center alongside those of the institution, the relationship between the two became more and more apparent—hopefully to my audience but also, perhaps more clearly than ever before, to me.

As a result, whereas the earlier documents described a more general, ideal writing center, the final two proposals depicted a far more locally situated center recognizable within and unique to its own institution. Taken as a whole, the evolution of the language of these proposals shows a sharp increase in the connections being made between the center and its local context. As writing center directors, attending to these local connections to demonstrate a center's worth should be the first deliberate step we take when we consider writing center identity.

As my university's center application suggests, our institutions need and want to be made aware of these connections. Illustrating the role and reach of the writing center within its institution automatically situates its identity in a local context that audiences both understand and value. While writing center studies as a field continues to develop strong organizational and scholarly identities and as we promote and celebrate our internationalization and associations across regions, we cannot ignore the importance that local arguments hold—perhaps more crucially than ever before—for individual writing centers and their directors.

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Announcements

CAPITAL AREA PEER TUTORING ASSOCIATION
November 11, 2016
Arlington, VA (at George Mason University)
"Vision and Revision in the Center"
Keynote speaker: Jennifer Wells

CAPTA aims to build community among secondary school writing center directors, tutors, and partners. The conference sessions will include sessions for tutors, directors, and administrators. Conference email address: <capta.connects@gmail.com>; conference website: <captawritingcenters.org>.

MID-ATLANTIC WRITING CENTER CONFERENCE
March 31 - April 1, 2017
Reading, PA
Penn State Berks (Pennsylvania State University)

For the Call for Proposals, costs, registration, etc., go to <www.mawca.org/event-2299008>; for information and on-going updates. Conference chair: Holly Ryan <holly.ryan@psu.edu>.

NEW PROGRAM CERTIFICATION IN WRITING CENTER ADMINISTRATION
St. Cloud State University now offers a graduate certificate in Writing Center Administration and includes foundational courses in writing center theory, practice, administration, staffing and training. Designed for both college students and coordinators working in the field, this formal credentialing course of study prepares you for work in the growing industry of writing centers in a college, high school or business setting. Open to writing center administrators with a bachelor's degree. It pairs well with an undergraduate or graduate degree in English or a graduate or doctoral degree in Higher Education Administration, is 10 credits, and all courses are available online. Professor Carol Mohrbacher (camohrbacher@stcloudstate.edu) spent several years planning and getting this course started and will answer questions sent by email; the website is <www.stcloudstate.edu/graduate/writing-center-admin-cert/default.aspx>. Students will be able to start registering in the fall of 2016 for classes in the spring semester of 2017.

WLN REVIEWERS

One of the most important professional services writing center professionals offer is to serve as reviewers of journal submissions. They work away from the spotlight, reading and reviewing submissions that come in to the WLN, and their work ensures that high standards of scholarship are maintained. Although we thank them on the Submit page of our website <wlnjournal.org/submit.php>, we acknowledge that mere thanks does not adequately convey how much we appreciate their time and thoughtful consideration.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: SECONDARY SCHOOL WRITING CENTER TOOLKIT

Secondary school writing center directors are invited to contribute to the digital version of the Capital Area Peer Tutoring Association's (CAPTA) Resource Toolkit for Secondary School Writing Center Directors. For guidelines for submissions and information on how to submit, see the CAPTA website: <captawritingcenters.org/capta-conference/>. Submission deadline: August 15, 2016 (priority), Sept. 15, 2016 (regular).

CFP: SPECIAL ISSUE OF *WLN*: WHAT WE BELIEVE AND WHY: EDUCATING WRITING TUTORS

Special issue guest editors: Karen Johnson (kgjohnson@ship.edu) and Ted Roggenbuck (troggenb@bloomu.edu)

Key to our success in the work of writing centers is our effectiveness in providing tutor education. Our field has over three decades of scholarship on how to educate writing tutors in a multitude of settings, but the wealth and variety of resources can create challenges for those seeking guidance. However, that we also have a number of excellent and popular tutor training manuals does suggest some consistency in how we educate tutors. But to what degree do we share core beliefs about tutor education, how do we know what aspects of our programs to prepare writing tutors are most effective, and to what areas are we not paying adequate attention? Moreover, what are effective contexts for educating tutors? Although credit-bearing courses appear to be ideal contexts for tutor education, what particular aspects of a course make it effective? And for directors who are unable to offer a course or even paid time for educating tutors, how can they effectively prepare tutors for the different rhetorical situations and writers they will encounter?

The full call for proposals, including suggestions for topics and schedule, can be found on the WLN blog: <www.wlnjournal.org/blog/2016/08/cfp-special-issue-of-wln-what-we-believe-and-why-educating-writing-tutors/>

CFP: SPECIAL ISSUE OF *WLN*: TENSIONS IN PROFESSIONALISM: DRESS CODES IN THE WRITING CENTER

Special Issue guest editors: Katie Manthey (Katie.manthey@salem.edu), Shannon Henesy (shannon.henesy@salem.edu), and the 2016-2017 Staff of the Salem College Writing Center (writingcenter@salem.edu)

This special issue approaches dress codes, both implicit and explicit, as a space for embodied, intersectional work—for the way that individuals approach rules about appropriate dress reveals a deeply connected constellation of identity categories: race, class, gender, size, age, etc. For example, Carmen Rios states that contemporary notions of professional dress are, at their core, racist, classist, sexist, and ableist. At the same time, there is undeniable power in being able to perform professionalism, especially for people who exist outside of the white, thin, able-bodied, cisgender norm. Policies and discussions of professional appearance (or lack thereof) in writing center spaces are always already about norming some bodies and giving agency to others—an issue that encompasses the larger idea of embodiment in the writing center.

The full call for proposals, including suggestions for topics, and schedule can be found on the WLN blog: <www.wlnjournal.org/blog/2016/07/cfp-tensions-in-professionalism-dress-codes-in-the-writing-center/>.

CFP: SPECIAL ISSUE OF *WLN*: TRANSFER OF LEARNING IN THE WRITING CENTER

Special Issue guest editors: Dana Lynn Driscoll and Bonnie Devet. Email: (wlnlearningtransfer@gmail.com)

A vital topic in higher education is transfer of learning, or what is generally known as students' ability to adapt, apply, or remix prior knowledge and skills in new contexts, including educational, civic, personal, and professional. As recent writing center scholarship attests, transfer of learning is of key importance to the work we do in writing centers, both with our work with clients but also with our tutors themselves.

The full call for proposals, including suggestions for topics and schedule, can be found on the WLN blog: <www.wlnjournal.org/blog/2016/07/transfer-of-learning-in-the-writing-center-cfp-special-issue-of-wln/>.

GET INVOLVED WITH *WLN*

Interested in serving as a reviewer? Contact Kim Ballard <kim.ballard@wmich.edu> and Lee Ann Glowzenski <laglowzenski@gmail.com>.

Interested in contributing news, announcements, or accounts of work in your writing to the Blog (photos welcomed)? Contact Josh Ambrose <jambrose@mcdaniel.edu> and Amber Slater <aslater5@depaul.edu>.

Interested in guest editing a special issue on a topic of your choice? Contact Muriel Harris <harrism@purdue.edu>.

Interested in adding to or working on our digitial resource database, WcORD? Contact Lee Ann Glowzenski <laglowzenski@gmail.com>.

Interested in writing an article or Tutors' Column to submit to *WLN*? Check the guidelines on the *WLN* website: <wlnjournal.org/submit.php>.

Conference Calendar

Sept. 24, 2016: Nebraska Writing Center Consortium, in Hastings, NE
Contact: Danielle Helzer: <daniellehelzer@cccneb.edu>: conference website: <nebwritingcenters.org>.

October 14-16, 2016: International Writing Centers Association, in Denver, CO
Contact: John Nordloff: <jnordlof@eastern.edu>; conference website: <writingcenters.org/2016/01/call-for-program-proposals-for-iwca-denver-2016-writing-center-frontiers>.

November 4-6, 2016: National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing, in Tacoma, WA
Contact: Julie Christoph: <ncptw2016@pugetsound.edu>; conference website: <www.pugetsound.edu/ncptw2016>.

November 11, 2016: Capital Area Peer Tutoring Association, in Arlington, VA
Conference email: <capta.connects@gmail.com>; conference website: <captawritingcenters.org>.

March 31-April 1, 2017: Mid-Atlantic Writing Center Association, in Reading, PA
Contact: Holly Ryan: <holly.ryan@psu.edu>; Conference website: <www.mawca.org/event-2299008>.

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