

It's for Everyone: The Inclusive Writing Center

This conference explores the question of how we can more effectively serve all students, particularly those who may be otherwise marginalized by the academy. Peer tutors are more than just smart students who want to "help" those who are less gifted. Recent scholarship has become increasingly concerned with what scholar Nancy Grimm calls the "new racism" in writing centers: that is, the conception of "help"-seeking by "needy" students working with "expert" students. This observation extends beyond race to include issues of language, disability, school preparation, and other markers of difference the academy seeks to mainstream. Paternalistic perceptions of our work compromise our ability to create a safe social space for all students in the writing center. The inclusive writing center considers the subconscious messages we send, both individually and as institutions, about who belongs in the Center: whether it's by whom we employ, how we organize the physical space, or how we think and talk about ourselves to the rest of our various campuses. The keynote speaker for this conference will be **Dr. Stephanie L. Kerschbaum**, Associate Professor of English at the University of Delaware and author of *Toward a New Rhetoric of Difference*.

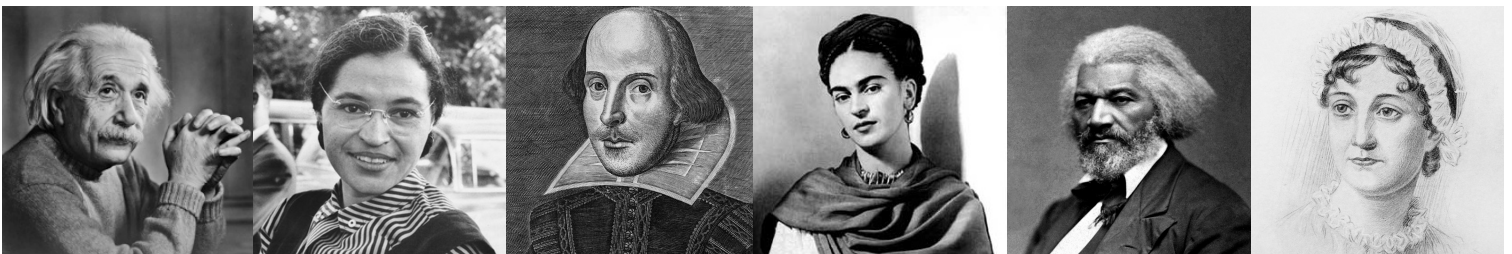
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

We especially welcome presentations that consider linkages between the writing center and critical pedagogy, cultural competence, gender and sexuality, multilingualism, universal design, and interdisciplinarity. Questions for consideration may include but are not limited to:

- What role can writing centers play in recognizing and nurturing—rather than erasing—difference?
- In what ways do interpersonal dynamics in individual tutoring sessions relate to larger power relationships within the culture?
- How do directive and nondirective tutoring approaches interact with student identities? How do we decide when to offer and when to withhold information about prestige dialects and why?
- How might writing center pedagogy inform tutoring practices in the content areas?
- Given that most learning disabilities are invisible, how can writing centers use practices that are universally accessible to all learners?

Proposals will be accepted until April 15th, 2016.

pugetsound.edu/ncptw2016



THE PROPOSAL

We are, in short, hoping to inspire presentations that combine research with reflection and introspection with data. Of course, we also welcome writing center scholarship on any topic of general interest to the writing center community. We will accept up to two (2) proposals from any individual, so long as one of the proposals includes more than one presenter. Presentations will take the following format:

- **Individual Presentations:** 15-20 minute papers that will be combined into a panel by the program chairs
- **Panel Presentations:** 3 to 4 presentations of 15-20 minutes each on a particular theme or question
- **Round Tables:** 15 minutes of introductory comments/question framing by the presenters and then a discussion among attendees
- **Poster Presentations:** A research-fair style presentation of research in which the presenter(s) create a visual argument and informally discuss their research with attendees.
- **Workshop Session:** 75-minute interactive session in which leaders will guide participants through the investigation of a new area of knowledge.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Stephanie L. Kerschbaum



Stephanie L. Kerschbaum is Associate Professor of English at the University of Delaware, where she teaches first-year writing, advanced writing, and disability studies courses, as well as graduate seminars in rhetoric and writing studies. Her experience working in the Writing Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison has deeply informed her work as a teacher and researcher.

In her book, *Toward a New Rhetoric of Difference*, she addresses conversations about diversity in higher education, institutional racism, and the teaching of writing by focusing on how people talk with one another, especially around issues of difference. For example, she asks questions like, "How does someone come to realize another person has a different meaning for a word or a phrase than they do?" or "How does someone communicate to someone else how they want to be understood?" These questions underpin everyday acts of communication, from routine conversational exchanges to decisions about which direction to take in a one-to-one conference.

With Margaret Price, she is currently at work on an interview study of disabled faculty members. Her most recent article, "Anecdotal Relations: On Orienting to Disability in the Composition Classroom," examines the ways that teachers use stories to create and frame the relationships they build with their students in the classroom where disability is concerned.

