



Call for Proposals

The 18th International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference

Listening to the Moment: Fostering Constructive Collaboration, Resiliency, and Connection through WAC

In 1999, Krista Ratcliffe asked Rhetoric and Composition/Writing Studies scholars to journey with her on an exploration of how *listening* could be leveraged to “inform our field theoretically and pedagogically” (p. 196). Rhetorical listening, she argued, could serve as a way for us to examine the various cultural logics at play that inform how we interpret situations, conduct research, and engage in dialogue with those who are different from us – not as a way to *win*, but as a way to *understand*.

With its roots in practical action – as a pedagogy, a curriculum, a movement – WAC practitioners are historically well versed in listening to what institutions and communities need. Yet, recent cultural, political, and social shifts globally have made that listening work more complex. Education, broadly, and writing programs, specifically, have been challenged from multiple directions, with little expectation for that to change: shifts in government priorities, interference, and scrutiny; the continued decrease of state and national-level funding in the US; the proliferation of Generative Artificial Intelligence; changing student and faculty populations, along with changing perceptions of the purpose of higher education; increased (and increasing) impacts of climate change; and shifting priorities within higher education itself has created a need for WAC programs to both respond to emerging concerns and engage in principled

leadership. WAC programs have the potential to play critical roles in addressing these concerns (i.e., through the teaching of writing as a way to critically engage with the world around us), but only if we, in collaboration with our disciplinary colleagues, listen to understand the narratives at play and can, in turn, make our value (and *values*) known and demonstrable. We have an opportunity to build connection and enhance resiliency through strategic, constructive collaboration and coalition building.

With WAC's emphasis on *listening*, *connection*, and *collaboration*, we invite participants to consider the active role educators and administrators play in shaping critical thinking and literacy in a wide range of contexts. For example:

- What does listening to diverse stakeholders look like in WAC work (including writing-enriched and disciplinary writing)? With what goals do we listen? Who participates? Who leads? How can we think about effectively balancing listening with action? What fosters and what inadvertently limits our abilities to listen first and craft actions based on what we hear? When, in the interest of advancing changes related to writing and writing instruction, does listening become difficult?
- What does collaboration and coalition building look like in the 21st century? How do we productively work across and beyond educational spaces to collaborate with one another to the benefit of learners? How do we bridge gaps between K-12 and higher education, or first-year composition courses and courses in various disciplines? How do we collaborate across *international* contexts?
- In times of austerity and the rise of Generative AI and large language models, what are effective strategies for listening to what stakeholders need, and communicating what WAC scholars and practitioners – and *writing* – have to offer? How do WAC practitioners and leaders articulate our value to those outside the discipline and to administrators, and recognize the value those individuals bring to the table? How do these considerations and constraints vary across institution types? How do we help *students* see the value of what we have to teach?
- What role does WAC play teaching toward public communication? How can we leverage what we know about reading, writing, speaking, and listening to help others communicate effectively (e.g., on issues of public policy, civil rights, or climate change; in public,

familial, and academic spaces)? How do different global contexts impact those considerations?

- How have WAC practices and principles invited many voices? For example, providing flex that supports neurodivergence, welcoming pause to consider perspectives and experience polar to our own, etc? Where and how are we listening to the voices in our cohorts, classrooms, and educational communities?
- How have changing student and faculty populations, along with changing perceptions of the purpose of higher education, impacted WAC work? How has it altered teaching practices, curricular design, programming, and other areas of consideration?
- How can we imagine (and re-imagine) WAC work within the larger learning trajectories of our students? Where, and how, does WAC integrate with the different kinds of things that students learn to know and do in K-12, post-secondary, and/or graduate education?

These questions are not exhaustive and we welcome proposals that connect with the conference theme in ways that are different from those represented above. To that end, and in alignment with past IWAC Conferences, we welcome proposals for:

- Preconference Workshops
- Panels (typically three or four speakers)
- Roundtables (typically five to seven speakers)
- Individual Presentations (which will be combined with other proposals to form a panel)
- Teaching Demonstrations
- Poster Presentations (both print and digital)

Panels, roundtables, and teaching demonstrations will be presented in **75-minute blocks**, while workshops will be **two** hours long. Poster presenters will have dedicated space to display for the entirety of the conference; however, two 75-minute blocks for Q&A will be scheduled, with poster presenters assigned to one of those sessions.

We ask presenters to limit themselves to one speaking role in panels, roundtables and teaching demonstrations (excluding service as a chair or respondent to a panel). In addition to a speaking role on a panel, roundtable or teaching demonstration, we encourage participants to consider participation as a workshop leader or as a presenter at the poster session.

Some New Conference Experiences and Elements

In addition to the opportunities to share knowledge noted above, we are happy to announce that IWAC2027 will also be holding “**Community Conversations**” directly after the plenary sessions on Thursday and Friday. These sessions will allow attendees to engage in targeted and constructive conversations around specific topics, but without the formal structure of a workshop or presentation. Like a traditional ‘salon,’ we envision the Community Conversations to function as safe spaces to talk, collaborate, learn, and expand one's perspective; an opportunity for invested educators to learn from one another, to consider collaborative opportunities, and to build connections. Opportunities to suggest topics for conversation will be available at registration.

We are also creating an opportunity for **mentoring**. In collaboration with the AWAC Mentoring Committee and the WAC Graduate Student Organization, we will hold one-to-one and small group sessions where individuals can seek guidance from others with experience in the same topic area of interest. More information about this will be available on our website in January 2027.

Additionally, we are hosting this conference in direct collaboration with the **2027 Writing Through the Lifespan Conference**, which will begin on Monday, July 12, 2027, following IWAC. Incentives for participation in both conferences will be available to make participation more feasible.

Finally, in collaboration with the Computer Science program at UMaine, we have developed a **mobile app** for both iPhone and Android users that will serve the conference in perpetuity. This mobile app will allow for communication between individuals, as well as the linking of conference materials (i.e., scripts, slides, handouts) for accessibility. This will also be how we manage conference content for virtual attendees.

A Note About Virtual Presentations

The conference organizers want to account for the fact that some conference attendees may not be able (or want) to attend the conference in person due to a variety of issues (international and national travel, funding, etc.). However, hosting virtual presentations *live* raises a whole host of

challenges that can negatively impact the conference experience. To that end, here is what we are planning to do:

1. We will be recording all plenary presentations and lunch-time award sessions.
2. All presenters, regardless of modality, will have a Google Folder (via IWAC2027 Gmail) and/or be able to link to a folder of their own (via the mobile app) where they can upload conference materials. Presenters can also choose to record their presentations on their own computers during the conference and upload an mp4 file there.
3. **All panels where 2 or more speakers are attending virtually** will be asked to pre-record the panel in entirety and upload the files to the G-folder with slides/scripts/handouts before the conference begins (by Wednesday morning). Q&A can be facilitated via the mobile app, or they can opt to include a conversation document in the folder where people can dialogue.
4. We will not record community conversations, though we are considering having documentarians for these sessions.

Proposal Preparation

We aim to support proposers in as many ways as possible. Our website offers a **short video** on what successful proposals look like and considerations when composing. Similarly, we will have **proposal coaches** available for those wishing additional support (see Important Dates below).

As you compose your proposal, though, we ask presenters to consider issues of accessibility depending on your presentation modality. Useful information about accessible presentations can be found on the Composing Access site at <https://u.osu.edu/composingaccess/>.

- **Proposals for Workshops, Round Tables, Teaching Demonstrations, and Panels** should be submitted by one individual, with all presenters for the session represented (with abstract, email, etc.). We ask that you keep these proposals between **750 and 1,500 words**, not including references.
- **Individual presentation and poster proposals** are welcome to be submitted individually. Panels will be formed by individual submissions with similar foci. We ask that you keep these proposals between **300 and 500 words**, not including references.

When submitting, you will be asked to designate whether your presentation will be in-person or virtual, as well as to select up to three subject areas that best describe your focus. Submitters can select from:

1. K-12
2. DEIAJ
3. Program Administration and Sustainability
4. Public Communication
5. GenAI
6. STEM, Medical, and Legal Writing
7. Graduate Writing
8. Research, Theory, and Methods
9. Interdisciplinary Collaboration
10. Assessment
11. Faculty Development
12. Critical Thinking
13. WTL, WTE, WID

Important Dates

- Proposal database opens: **July 1, 2026**
- Proposal coach request deadline: **August 1, 2026, 9 pm EST** (submit draft with request for coach via email to IWAC2027@gmail.com)
- Volunteer to review proposals or to be a proposal coach (email IWAC2027@gmail.com):
July 15, 2026
- Proposal submission deadline: **October 12, 2026, 9 pm EST**
- Proposal notifications: **Late December 2026**
- Session schedule notifications: **January 2027**
- Conference dates: **July 7 to 10, 2027, Orono, Maine**