

Practical Perspectives for *The New Work of Writing Across the Curriculum: Diversity and Inclusion, Collaborative Partnerships, and Faculty Development*: A Review

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Perryman-Clark, Staci M. *The New Work of Writing Across the Curriculum: Diversity and Inclusion, Collaborative Partnerships, and Faculty Development*. Utah State UP, 2023. 156 pages.

Universities must prioritize diversity and inclusion in recruiting and retaining diverse students and faculty, especially as the demographic shift looms. Scholars in rhetoric and composition are uniquely situated to contribute to these efforts, particularly those with writing program administration and writing across the curriculum (WAC) experience because expertise in language, writing, and communication are needed across disciplines and administrative units to perform this work. Methods for doing so are at the center of Staci Perryman-Clark's *The New Work of Writing Across the Curriculum: Diversity and Inclusion, Collaborative Partnerships, and Faculty Development*, published in 2023. *The New Work of Writing Across the Curriculum* is grounded in Perryman-Clark's experiences as a WPA, director of the Office of Faculty Development, and upper-level academic administrator at Western Michigan University (WMU). This work has informed her assertion that "stronger collaborations between WAC initiatives and centers for faculty development and teaching and learning are vital steps toward moving diversity and inclusion efforts forward as they pertain to teaching and learning at institutions of higher education" (9). Perryman-Clark presents WAC scholarship and literature surrounding faculty development work as theoretical frameworks "offering potential opportunities to respond to calls for stronger diversity and inclusion initiatives in campus environments" (15). *The New Work of Writing Across the Curriculum* charts a course for rhetoric and composition scholars to forge coalitions among writing scholars, faculty development experts, and university administration—roles that are frequently siloed. Only through collaborative efforts can WAC and faculty development programming fully unlock the expertise of professionals

to forward and institutionalize diversity and inclusion within university missions.

Perryman-Clark's book includes six chapters that discuss different initiatives, partnerships, and professional development opportunities working together to support and maintain both WAC and diversity and inclusion efforts. In the book's introduction, Perryman-Clark shares her professional journey from WPA to director of a faculty development office to academic administrator. In her role as faculty developer, she reports strong commitments to WAC and diversity and inclusion work and emphasizes that "diversity work is WAC work and WAC work is institutional work" (6). The combination of her experiences led her to mark the exigence for a project that explicitly connects diversity, WAC, and teaching and learning centers, which she notes this project begins to address. In the context of declining enrollments and shrinking budgets in higher education institutions, Perryman-Clark argues that WAC programs can serve as a bridge for promoting diversity and inclusion, and faculty development centers can provide opportunities for writing teachers to improve their teaching practices related to these areas. She emphasizes the need for collaborative partnerships and innovative approaches to survive and thrive in this environment.

In the first chapter, Perryman-Clark makes the case for the importance of formal collaboration between faculty development centers and WAC programs. This chapter serves as a literature review of both faculty development and WAC scholarship, investigating the ways diversity and inclusion work are taken up in each area to find that "faculty development data and research includes desires for more diversity programming, while limited attention has been paid to diversity more generally within WAC programming" (25). Because each area of expertise may serve the other, she identifies "purposeful and explicit partnerships and collaborations" as a key to addressing the desires expressed in faculty development scholarship and the gaps left in WAC. Faculty development offers an avenue to alignment with institutional missions and close ties with senior administration to build long-term, sustained programming; WAC specialists provide "sophisticated understanding of rhetorical knowledge and versatility" that can serve to inform diversity initiatives (25). Chapter 1 firmly establishes the need for and an answer to questions of how to strengthen diversity and inclusion efforts on university campuses.

Chapters 2 and 3 unpack the practical application of faculty development and WAC partnerships at WMU, and this is where Perryman-Clark's work really comes to life. Chapter 2 focuses on the revision of WMU's general education program, which she became involved in to protect first-year writing requirements and prevent "outsourcing the labor of writing

instruction to those who possess no training or expertise” (26). As part of the process across all four phases of reform—from self-study to curricular design, logistical planning to assessing outcomes—Perryman-Clark found that the process of revision provided opportunities “to prioritize writing instruction and diversity and inclusion across campus through more formal structures and partnerships,” which ultimately yielded additional professional development in the form of training and workshops. Similarly, chapter 3 covers WAC and diversity and inclusion professional development opportunities offered by WMU in the form of programs such as the Seminar on Teaching Inclusivity, a panel on experiences with microaggressions, and the Response to Charlottesville workshop. These programs addressed everything from linguistic bias to accessibility to implicit bias in tenure and promotion. Collectively, these chapters highlight the potential benefits of resource sharing and external funding, the role of WAC in breaking down disciplinary silos, and the significance of diversity and inclusion pedagogy in both institutional progress and professional development. The specificity of the information shared—rubrics from general education assessment, pedagogical strategies developed from workshops, and sample programming schedules, among others—illustrates implementation and gives practical takeaways for readers looking to learn more about the processes, subject matter, and benefits of such initiatives.

In the final two chapters, Perryman-Clark shifts to concerns of broader institutional realization of WAC and diversity and inclusion programming. Chapter 4 further emphasizes the importance of collaborative partnerships and innovative approaches for the survival and growth of WAC programs in the face of declining enrollments and shrinking budgets in higher education institutions. She explains two major budgetary structures, the responsible-centered model (RCM) and the incremental budget model, and provides tactics for maneuvering within these models to find and maintain funding. Finally, chapter 5 reiterates the need for collaborative approaches to achieve broader institutional support and resources for sustainability. Perryman-Clark recommends three steps to achieving this goal: first, the pursuit of collaboration through “connection before partnerships and partnerships before merging or centralizing” (119); second, the identification of initiative-based funding to get collaborations off the ground; and third, approaching budgetary constraints with awareness and preparation for working within them. The ultimate goal is to leverage WAC specialists’ expertise in writing and cross-cultural communication with faculty development centers’ stable, centralized locations within institutions to provide opportunities for collaboration and deeper exploration of complex topics such as race and diversity. Coalition building between these services will

assist administrators in seeing the value of WAC programming, faculty development in writing, and diversity and inclusion work as part of the university's mission.

One of the greatest strengths of *The New Work of Writing Across the Curriculum* is Perryman-Clark's emphasis on practical application. She writes to an audience—of rhetoric and composition scholars broadly, but WPAs, those interested in WAC, and perhaps to those outside of these specialties simply looking to contribute to diversity and inclusion efforts at universities—ready to get to work, and she does not disappoint in delivering strategies for pitching in on campus-wide initiatives. Her work makes explicit that “collaborations between faculty development and WAC to foster diversity and inclusion initiatives offer WAC specialists the opportunity to elevate the case for writing instructional support and resources on college campuses” (124). This book fills some of the gaps identified in WAC scholarship as it concerns diversity and inclusion; however, the unpacking of scholarship in each chapter's literature review sometimes reveals a theoretical grounding that appears a bit less developed than the examples and suggestions for practical application that appear alongside it. Perryman-Clark eloquently fills said gaps, but this book may serve those pursuing WAC scholarship better as a gloss than a deep-dive into that area's history with diversity and inclusion. *The New Work of Writing Across the Curriculum's* contributions to future engagement certainly are its strongest suit because of its explicit and actionable paths forward.

The New Work of Writing Across the Curriculum also offers readers a fresh perspective, both on how professional identity may develop for those within our field and how those of us within this field might employ skills beyond the confines of our discipline. Perryman-Clark makes a strong case for the WPA to faculty developer to academic administrator pipeline, pointing out the ways these roles inform one another. The work of pursuing diversity and inclusion, however, is bigger than any of these roles and cannot be completed in silos. For beginning scholars exploring the wealth of interests and areas of specialty that rhetoric and composition offer as they forge their scholarly and professional identities, this book reveals trajectories that are perhaps unexpected. For those with field experience, it may provide surprising approaches to familiar pursuits. The book provides strategies for making the case for faculty development and WAC resources to administrators, and would serve as an informative tool for anyone involved or interested in those positions. No matter what, as higher education continues to evolve along an ever-restrictive, cost-cutting funding model amidst continually diversifying enrollments, everyone on campus must lend a hand

in pursuing diversity and inclusion efforts to achieve the goal of access for all to excellence.

WORK CITED

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