

2020 SWCA Conference Host Proposal

Submitted by: Jaclyn Wells, University of Alabama-Birmingham

Location & Dates

Conference: February 20-22, 2020

Board retreat and dinner: February 19, 2020

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Proposed Theme: Growing Our Centers

Writing center stories are dominated by themes of growth: growth in usage, growth in space, growth in institutional profile. We also talk about our students in terms of growth: in what ways do they need to grow, how do we support that growth, and how do we measure it? Finally, our field is ever growing, with small groups of like-minded writing professionals growing into a robust field with its own journals, organizations, and conferences.

Birmingham is also growing. Every day, the “Magic City” sees a new neighborhood expanding, a new brewery opening, and a new development project or organization in the news. An ever-growing urban university, the University of Alabama-Birmingham has grown along and within Birmingham, seemingly always expanding its reach deep into the city—always a new building, a new parking lot, a new and bigger and better club, event, or program, the biggest ever freshman class!

In cities and universities, disciplines and writing centers, students and teachers, growth is exciting. But, we must grow sustainably, responsibly, and reflectively. Further, we must find ways to measure our growth effectively, questioning not just how much we are growing but also how *well*: is this growth positive, is it productive, is it helpful? Are we reporting and even celebrating our growth in productive ways? Finally, what are the potential downsides of growth? Is scaling back ever the better option?

In the growing, bustling city of Birmingham, and specifically, in the growing urban campus of UAB, we will meet to reflect on ideas of growth: the growth of our centers, our field, our students, and even ourselves. Growth is exciting and important—no wonder it dominates so many of our narratives!—but growth narratives should not go unchallenged, nor should we assume that growth is a natural byproduct of our hard work or something that outside stakeholders will automatically see or appreciate. At UAB, we will meet to question: How do we create goals for productive growth, how do we support productive growth, and how do we measure, report, and even celebrate growth?

Submissions may explore growth as it relates to the following areas:

Student writers

- Identifying goals for growth
- Negotiating priorities
- Measuring growth
- Supporting growth in all writers

Writing centers

- Identifying sustainable goals for writing center growth
- Measuring and reporting writing center growth
- Expanding the writing center's physical and online spaces
- Developing and growing partnerships with on-campus and off-campus groups
- Expanding and improving our services
- Gaining resources and funding

Writing center staff

- Growing a staff of tutors
- Creating and growing training opportunities
- Reflecting on growth as a writing center professional
- Developing and growing a writing center research agenda

Writing center discipline

- Growing our field
- Growing our partnerships in the region
- Developing a greater body of writing center research

Proposals will be accepted through Monday, October 14, 2019.

Proposed Keynote Address

Dana Lynn Driscoll has agreed to give a keynote address about long-term learning development and writerly growth. She will address how we consider and measure development and growth in the writing center context. Dr. Driscoll is an Associate Professor in the Composition and TESOL Ph.D. program in the Department of English at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She will begin directing IUP's writing center in summer 2019.

Driscoll has published extensively on writing centers, learning transfer, and writing assessment, among other areas. She is an expert in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research methods and design and has been an advocate for using research to inform writing center practice. A selected list of Driscoll's most recent publications follows.

- The Box under the Bed: Learner Epistemologies and Writing Transfer. (Forthcoming). With D. Jin. *Across the Disciplines*.
- Centering Institutional Status and Scholarly Identity: An Analysis of Writing Center Administration Position Advertisements, 2004-2014. (2017). With S. Wynn-Perdue and A. Petrykowski. *WCJ* 36.2.
- Context Matters: Centering Writing Center Administrators' Institutional Status and Scholarly Identity. (2017). With S. Wynn-Perdue. *WCJ* 36.1.
- Ideals and Realities in Students' Literacy Development: Writing Center/ELT Collaborations to Support Learning Transfer. (2017). *TESOL Arabia Perspectives* 24.3.
- Down the Rabbit Hole: Challenges and Methodological Recommendations in Researching Writing-Related Student Dispositions. (2017). With G. Gorzelsky, J. Wells, C. Hayes, & S. Salchak. *Composition Forum* 35.

- States, Traits, and Dispositions: The Impact of Emotion on Writing Development and Writing Transfer across College Courses and Beyond. (2016). With R. Powell. *Composition Forum*. 34.
- Conducting and Compositing RAD Research in the Writing Center: A Guide for New Authors and Graduate Students. (2015). With R. Powell. *The Peer Review* 1.1.
- Building Connections and Transferring Knowledge: The Benefits of a Peer Tutoring Course beyond the Writing Center. (2015). *WCJ* 35.2.
- By What Means and for What Purposes? Survey and Interview Data on Writing Center Directors' Research Practices. (2014). With S. Wynn-Perdue. *WCJ* 34.1.
- Theory, Lore, and More: An Analysis of RAD Research in the *Writing Center Journal*, 1980-2009. (2012). With S. Wynn-Perdue. *WCJ* 32.2. Note: This article won the IWCA Outstanding Article Award.
- Reflection, Connection, and Expectation: Transfer of Learning in a Peer Tutoring Course and Beyond. (2012). With S. Harcourt. *Writing Lab Newsletter* 36(7-8) Note: This article was nominated for the IWCA Outstanding Article Award.

Additionally, Driscoll has been an invited speaker at several conferences and other events, including the East Central Writing Centers Association conference (2018), the Joint Conference for the Middle Eastern North African Writing Centers Alliance and the International English Language Teaching Conference (2016), the CCCC Qualitative Research Network (2014), and WCJ Live Events (several).

Proposed Plenary (Optional)

In addition to a keynote address, we may consider a plenary talk on the first day of the conference. Allen Brizee has expressed interest in speaking about the development and growth of technology-based civic engagement. In the ten years since he worked as Purdue OWL coordinator, Dr. Brizee has conducted technologically-informed community-based research, the type of research that helped create the civic engagement section of the OWL. For the plenary session, Brizee could discuss the growth of technology and online writing resources in community literacy and employment initiatives.

Conference Chair

Jaclyn Wells is an Assistant Professor of English and Writing Center Director at the University of Alabama-Birmingham. In addition to directing the UAB's writing center, Jaclyn teaches courses in professional writing and composition. She is active in writing center, community engagement, and faculty development scholarship. Jaclyn has organized many community engagement and service learning projects, including the long-term engagement project that is the focus of her book, *Partners in Literacy: A Writing Center Model for Civic Engagement* (co-authored with Allen Brizee). For one year, Jaclyn directed the Riverbend Writing Project (a National Writing Project site) at the University of Southern Indiana, so she offers experience organizing and hosting faculty development events.

Conference Committee

Conference committee members represent a range of interests from UAB, as well as several writing centers from central Alabama. See table below.

Name	Title	Email Address	Role
Jeffrey Bacha	Associate Professor of English & Director of the Professional Writing Club, UAB	jbacha@uab.edu	Program design (with UAB's PWC)
Charlotte Brammer	Associate Professor of English & Director of the Communication Resource Center, Samford University	cdbramme@samford.edu	Transportation for keynote speaker
Delores Carlito	Associate Professor of UAB Libraries & Information Literacy Coordinator, UAB	dcarlito@uab.edu	Catering & venue
Erin Chandler	Assistant Professor of English & Director of the Harbert Writing Center, University of Montevallo	echandl3@uab.edu	Social events
Amy Dayton	Associate Professor of English & Director of the Writing Center, University of Alabama	adayton@ua.edu	Technology
Matt Kemp	Learning Center Coordinator, Auburn University-Montgomery	mkemp1@aum.edu	Social media
Christopher Minnix	Associate Professor of English & Director of Composition, UAB	cminnix@uab.edu	Advertising
Jessica Robbins	M.A. Student in English & Graduate Tutor, UAB	jrob9628@uab.edu	Technology

Conference Venue

There are two main options for the conference venue: 1. The DoubleTree Hotel on UAB's campus. 2. UAB's academic campus. Each option presents advantages and disadvantages; see below.

DoubleTree Hotel

Jaclyn has met with the sales and catering director and toured the hotel's conference space. All in one place, the hotel could provide:

- Catering for all events.
- A large space for the keynote address, welcome lunch, and awards breakfast. This space comes equipped with technology for presentations.
- An open space, with tables, for registration and a poster session. This space could also be used for a cash bar reception, if we would like to have one.
- Adequate space to accommodate six concurrent breakout sessions. Specifically, there are four meeting rooms large enough for presentations; additionally, the large space for the keynote address and welcome lunch could be broken up to provide two more spaces for sessions. These rooms all come equipped with the technology that we would need.
- Two additional, smaller conference rooms for state representative or other meetings.

The hotel has provided a full proposal (see attached). The estimate for the full conference would be \$36,309-\$50,992 (see budget section). Cost is clearly the main disadvantage of hosting the conference at the hotel. We could certainly host the conference less expensively on UAB's campus.

The advantages of hosting at the hotel include:

- Ease for conference attendees: UAB's urban campus is large and high-traffic; getting around can be intimidating, and there is not one academic building where we could host the entire conference (see below). Parking can also be challenging. The main advantage of the DoubleTree is having everything in one place so that conference attendees do not have to worry about finding their way around campus. The setup of the hotel's conference area is particularly convenient—it is not a small space, but it is very compact and easy to navigate.
- Ease for conference organizers: The hotel handles all setup, cleanup, technology needs, etc. The organizers would be able to focus on interacting with conference participants, attending sessions, and handling last-minute issues that are unrelated to space.
- Hotel location: The hotel is on UAB's campus. Conference attendees would still get the feeling of being at a conference held on a university campus, and they would be able to easily walk to other parts of the campus if they wanted to explore UAB.
- Reserving early: The hotel is ready to reserve the conference now, so we would know that we had space lined up.

UAB's Campus

There is not one building on UAB's campus that could accommodate all of the conference needs. If we hosted on campus, events would be spread among the following three buildings:

Hill Student Center (1400 University Blvd.)

The HSC has a ballroom that could accommodate the lunches and breakfast, as well as an open space that could be used for registration and a poster session. The HSC also has three classrooms that could be used for breakout sessions. HSC also provides catering. There are charges for using all of HSC's space (see budget section).

Mervyn Sterne Library (1917 13th St. S.)

Sterne Library contains two classrooms that have been approved for use for the entire conference. The classrooms each accommodate about 40 people and are equipped with all of the necessary technology. We could use these spaces for breakout sessions. The classrooms are next to the writing center, so interested attendees could visit. This space would be free to use.

Education Building (900 14th St. S.)

The Education Building is home to UAB's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). The CTL contains two classrooms that could be used for breakout sessions, as well as a smaller meeting room that could be used for state representative meetings. The CTL Director has given tentative approval to reserve these three rooms for the duration of the conference. This space would be free to use and includes the necessary technology.

There are three main disadvantages to hosting on campus:

1. Possible stress for attendees: Attendees would have to navigate between several buildings. Sterne Library and the Education Building sit right next to each other, but they are about a five-minute walk from Hill. While the distance is not great, traffic and parking might make the situation stressful.
2. More logistical work for conference organizers: Conference organizers would need to handle more logistical work during the conference. Specifically, Sterne Library and the Education Building do not have employees who would help with setup and cleanup.
3. Last minute reservations: Space at UAB is limited, and the university is generally unwilling to reserve space far in advance. Our registrar says that classrooms cannot be reserved until after the add/drop period in the current semester. This means that we might be scrambling to find space for breakout sessions at the last minute, if the options described here are not enough or become unavailable.

The advantages of hosting on campus include:

- Cost: The main advantage is cost. Hosting on campus would clearly be the less expensive route. We would incur use and catering charges from the HSC, but those charges would amount to roughly half the charge to host at the DoubleTree.
- An academic environment: Clearly, hosting on campus would give the conference more of a personal feeling. All campus venues—the student center, the library, the center for teaching and learning—are places where students hang out and learn. This fits well with the conference and organization mission.

Projected Costs, Venue

The total anticipated cost for hosting at the DoubleTree Hotel is \$36,309-\$50,992. That estimate is the sum of the catering estimates below plus a 33% food and beverage service tax/charge. The cost would include all AV equipment, catering, and meeting space. Essentially, the AV equipment, space, and staffing are complimentary once the \$15,000 food and drink minimum is met.

- Buffet catering for:
 - Welcome lunch (300 people): \$11,400
 - Keynote lunch (300 people): \$11,400
 - Awards breakfast (300 people): \$9,600
 - Beverages and cookies (300 people): \$5,400
 - Beverages and cookies (30 people—board retreat): \$540
- Other options:
 - Welcome lunch, plated (300 people): \$9,000
 - Keynote lunch, plated (300 people): \$9,000
 - Awards breakfast, continental (300 people): \$6,000
 - Beverages only (300 people): \$3,000
 - Beverages only (30 people—board retreat): \$300

The total anticipated cost for hosting on UAB's campus is \$20,212. Sterne Library and the Center for Teaching and Learning can be used at no cost (AV included), so the expenses are from renting the Hill Student Center and catering the events. The buffet catering estimates below were provided by UAB Catering. The breakdown is below; all costs include the use of AV and guest wi-fi.

- Reserving three breakout rooms: \$2700 (\$50/hour to rent each room for 18 hours each).
- Reserving ballroom for lunches and breakfast: \$1500 (\$200/hour for two hours per event, plus a \$100 fee per event)
- Buffet catering for:
 - Welcome lunch (300 people): \$4,977
 - Keynote lunch (300 people): \$5,277
 - Awards breakfast (300 people): \$3,857
 - Coffee and cookies (300 people): \$1,419
 - Coffee and cookies (30 people—board retreat): \$122
- AV technician: \$360 (\$20/hour for 18 hours)
 - This is an optional service that the Hill Student Center offers. The HSC is not an academic building, so the onsite committee will be less familiar with its technology than with the tech in Sterne and the CTL. Having an onsite AV technician available to troubleshoot problems would be advisable (at least during the keynote lunch).

One final note: The estimates provided throughout this section all reflect the original bids by the DoubleTree and UAB Catering. In other words, there has not been any attempt to negotiate prices.

Projected Costs, Other

Other costs include:

- Keynote Speaker
 - Honorarium: \$500
 - Travel: \$1,000
- Swag (tote bags/pens/mugs for 300 people): \$2,000
- Program printing (UAB Print Services—see attached estimate): \$2,250

Board Retreat & Dinner

If the conference is held at the hotel, one of the meeting rooms can be used for the board retreat. If the conference is held on campus, one of the two classrooms in Sterne Library would likely provide the best location. One classroom has a lecture-style setup, and the other has a group-work setup; we could decide which setup would be preferable given the retreat's goals.

For the board dinner, the Grill at Iron City would provide an ideal venue. The menu includes salads, sandwiches, and entrees; vegetarian and gluten-free options are available. The Grill is a 10-minute walk from the DoubleTree Hotel. The Grill offers group dining reservations for parties up to 50; reservations may be made up to three months in advance.

Travel and Lodging

Flying

Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport (BHM) serves four major airlines: American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Southwest Airlines, and United Airlines. The airport is a quick 15-minute drive from UAB's campus, and the DoubleTree hotel offers a complimentary shuttle.

The Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) offers another option. The airport is a 2 ½-hour drive from UAB. Groome Transportation offers daily round-trip shuttles between ATL and Birmingham.

Driving Times

From	Duration
Florence, AL	2 hours
Auburn, AL	2 hours & 15 minutes
Atlanta, GA	2 hours & 15 minutes
Oxford, MS	2 hours & 45 minutes
Nashville, TN	3 hours
Memphis, TN	3 hours & 30 minutes
Jackson, MS	3 hours & 30 minutes
Mobile, AL	3 hours & 45 minutes
Knoxville, TN	4 hours
Louisville, KY	5 hours & 30 minutes
Columbia, SC	5 hours & 45 minutes
Savannah, GA	6 hours
Charlotte, NC	6 hours & 30 minutes
Charleston, SC	7 hours
Orlando, FL	8 hours & 15 minutes
Raleigh, NC	8 hours & 45 minutes
Richmond, VA	10 hours & 15 minutes
Miami, FL	11 hours & 30 minutes

Rental Cars, Taxis, and Uber

Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport (BHM) has six rental car companies:

- Alamo
- Dollar Rent a Car
- Enterprise
- Hertz
- National Car Rental
- Payless Car Rental

Additionally, there are several cab companies in Birmingham. Uber and Lyft are also available. An Uber ride from the airport to the DoubleTree hotel costs \$13-\$17. The hotel also offers a free shuttle.

Lodging

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Birmingham (Conference Hotel)

- Quantity: Can block off 100 rooms
- Address: 808 20th Street South, Birmingham, Alabama, 35205
- Distance from UAB: on campus
- Parking: \$12 per day
- Transportation: free local area (including to/from airport)
- Rate: \$121

Residence Inn by Marriott Birmingham Downtown at UAB

- Quantity: Can block of at least 25 rooms
- Address: 821 20th St S, Birmingham, AL 35205
- Distance from UAB: on campus (right across from the DoubleTree)
- Parking: \$10 per day
- Rate: \$129-\$139

Homewood Suites by Hilton Birmingham Downtown

- Address: 1016 20th Street South, Birmingham, Alabama, 35205
- Distance from UAB: ½ mile
- Transportation: local area plus \$5 airport shuttle
- Parking: \$10/day self-parking and \$20/day valet
- Rate: \$122-\$151

Hotel Indigo Birmingham Five Points South

- Address: 1023 20th St S, Birmingham, AL 35205
- Distance from UAB: ½ mile
- Parking: \$3/day self-parking and \$22/day valet
- Rate: From \$177

Parking

Parking at UAB is a challenge. Public parking decks are located throughout campus, and all visitors can get one-day passes (<http://www.uab.edu/transportation/parking/visitors>). Even with these options, though, simply finding a parking space is difficult on our growing urban campus.

For most conference attendees, the best option will be to park at their hotel and walk or take shuttles or Uber to other conference events. All hotels are within one mile of the Hill Student Center and Mervyn Sterne Library (about a 15-minute walk or a \$10 Uber ride). Additionally, the DoubleTree and Homewood Suites offer complimentary shuttles.

Projected Program Schedule

The projected program below would build space for approximately 234 presenters plus poster sessions (13 concurrent sessions X 6 sessions X 3 presenters). If some of the sessions were workshops with more presenters, we could make space for even more attendees to present.

Wednesday, February 19		
Time	Event	Additional Information
1:00 PM-5:00 PM	Board retreat	
6:00 PM-8:00 PM	Board dinner	The Grill at Iron City
Thursday, February 20		
Time	Event	Additional Information
8:00 AM-9:00 AM	Concurrent Session A	7:30 AM-5:00 PM: Registration
9:15 AM-10:15 AM	Concurrent Session B	
10:30 AM-11:30 AM	Concurrent Session C	
	Board Committee Meetings	
11:45 PM-1:15 PM	Welcome Luncheon	Optional: Plenary
1:30 PM-2:30 PM	Concurrent Session D	
2:45 PM-3:45 PM	Concurrent Session E	
4:00 PM-5:00 PM	Concurrent Session F	
6:00 PM-8:00 PM	Dinner on your own	List of restaurant suggestions will be provided. UAB is within walking or short driving distance of Five Points and Downtown, as well as a short drive or Uber from Avondale.
Friday, February 21		
Time	Event	Additional Information
8:00 AM-9:00 AM	Concurrent Session G	7:30 AM-5:00 PM: Registration
9:15 AM-10:15 AM	Concurrent Session H	
	State Rep Meetings	
10:15 AM-11:00 AM	Poster Session	
11:00 AM-11:45 AM	State Network Meetings	
11:45 PM-1:15 PM	Keynote Luncheon: Dana Driscoll	
1:30 PM-2:30 PM	Concurrent Session I	
2:45 PM-3:45 PM	Concurrent Session J	
4:00 PM-5:00 PM	Concurrent Session K	
6:00 PM-8:00 PM	Dinner on your own	
Saturday, February 22		
Time	Event	Additional Information
8:00 AM-9:30 AM	Awards Breakfast	
9:45 AM-10:45 AM	Concurrent Session M	
11:00 AM-12:00 PM	Concurrent Session N	

Projected Registration Rates

- Pre-deadline
 - Student member: \$100
 - Student non-member: \$115
 - Professional member: \$150
 - Profession non-member: \$180
- Post-deadline
 - Student member: \$135
 - Student non-member: \$150
 - Professional member: \$185
 - Profession non-member: \$215

Projected Timeline

Dates	Tasks
Sept-Nov 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft and revise host proposal• Begin contacting vendors
Feb 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue applying revision requests
April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SWCA Executive Board visit
May 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Announcement of CFP• Registration available• Begin collecting proposals
Sept 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reserve hotel rooms• Continue collecting proposals• Begin reviewing proposals• Secure commitments of vendors/sponsors
Oct 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design program (UAB's Professional Writing Club)• Begin drafting program• Continue collecting and reviewing proposals
Nov 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finish reviewing proposals• Compile tentative program• Confirm reservations for all locations
Dec 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Send notifications of accepted proposals• Continue refining program
Jan 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distribute program to participants• Send information to vendors/sponsors
Feb 2020	Conference!