Image Description: The cover of this report is a collage composed of 20 smaller images from 2024-2025, including bubble maps of hopes for CWPA in black and blue, images of the Executive Board posing together at a conference, flowers, and a post-it with handwriting on it. At the center of the collage is the title of the report: "Renewing Our Vows: Reflecting on a Year of Cultural Assessment Conversations."

Renewing Our Vows: Reflecting on a Year of Cultural Assessment Conversations

Prepared by Michelle Bachelor-Robinson, Jacob Babb, Kelly Blewett, Daryl Lynn Dance, Talisha Haltiwanger Morrison, Erin Lehman, Patti Poblete, Mary Lourdes Silva, and Darci Thoune

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to summarize and reflect on the Cultural Assessment Conversation series held by the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) in 2024-2025. These conversations explored different facets of the 2023 Cultural Assessment Report, which was prepared following the cultural audit of CWPA from 2021-2023. Each conversation explored a different theme, with facilitators inviting participants to offer feedback on those themes and on their relationship with the organization. CWPA officers and Executive Board members view these conversations as pivotal to rebuilding trust among organizational membership and expanding that membership by working toward a more inclusive and welcoming organization.

The report is divided into sections to provide readers with information necessary to see what CWPA has been doing since 2021 to address issues raised during the boycott and to show the organization's plans for moving forward. Here are brief summaries of the report sections:

- **Background:** provides an overview of what CWPA offers members as a professional organization along with a brief account of the composition of the WPA Outcomes Statement Revision Task Force and events leading up to and following the 2021 boycott.
- **Statement of the Problem:** highlights organizational efforts to address long-standing concerns about the demographic makeup of CWPA and the complications of attempting to build a more welcoming and inclusive organization in light of membership declines.
- **Proposed Solutions:** offers potential initiatives and actions for CWPA to address the problems described in the prior section, ranging from immediate actions to more long-term goals.
- **Realistic Limitations:** acknowledges the limitations of resources, both fiscal and human, given that CWPA is a volunteer-run organization.
- **Conclusion:** emphasizes the ongoing importance of CWPA's mission as the professional organization for writing program administrators, with this report representing both an ending of a reflective period and a beginning of a wayfinding period for everyone in CWPA.
- **Responses from Other Corners of CWPA:** shares responses from the Consultant-Evaluator Service, the current *WPA: Writing Program Administration* editors, WPA-Graduate Organization (WPA-GO) leadership, the current CWPA officers, and the incoming Vice President. These responses offer a broader range of voices beyond the Executive Board members who collaboratively wrote this report.
- **Appendices:** provides links to documentation, including the 2023 Cultural Assessment Report from One Eight Create; a timeline of events from 2021-2025; documents associated with the Cultural Assessment Conversations, including scripts used to conduct those conversations; and mini-reports and summaries of events from the year.

This image shows six smaller images framed like square photographs, which are set against a bright blue and pink backdrop. The smaller images show the following from left to right: a collage of stickers that CWPA distributed at a conference, a picture of quotes about hopes for CWPA ("Change CWPA for the better is visible at center), a Google doc with six participants writing together, a word cloud with the words "Welcoming" and "Inclusive" legible, a screenshot of six people on zoom, and a sticker of a cup of coffee running with the words "Council of Writing" legible at the top.

Background

Established in 1977, the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) is the foremost organization for those interested in any form of writing administration including, but not limited to, first-year writing, writing centers, writing-across-the-curriculum (or disciplines), service learning, and undergraduate and graduate writing programs. The organization provides position statements, a scholarly journal, workshops and conferences, and professional support for its members, who are generally administrators, faculty and staff, tutors, and graduate students.

Some of our activities include the Consultant-Evaluator Service, research grants to individuals in the field of writing program administration, publication of *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, faculty mentoring, sponsorship of sessions at the Conference on College Composition and Communication and Modern Language Association, and the creation of resolutions and position statements that impact writing program administration.

In 2020, CWPA leadership established the Outcomes Statement Revision Task Force to revise CWPA's Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition (originally adopted in 2000 and revised first in 2008 and then in 2014) from an antiracism perspective. The Outcomes Statement is intended to be a living document, periodically revised to reflect new pedagogical practices and scholarly knowledge.[1] The people on the Task Force to create the Outcomes Statement 4.0 included the following:

- Beth Brunk-Chavez, co-chair
- Asao B. Inoue, co-chair
- Melvin Beavers
- Neisha-Anne Green
- Iris Ruiz
- Tanita Saenkhum
- Vershawn A. Young

When the Task Force, which consisted of mostly people of color, presented a draft of the newly revised outcomes to CWPA leadership, the members experienced resistance from the predominantly-white Executive Board. As the CWPA Executive Board at that time described in a [statement](#) written a few weeks later:

> When invited to ask the Task Force questions about the revised Outcomes Statement, Executive Board members adhered to many Whitely discursive norms that reflected our comfort in CWPA as a White-dominated professional space and failed to anticipate and acknowledge how those norms would affect the Task Force members. By jumping into critical questions about how WPAs would use the new statement without acknowledging

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[1] For more on the initial creation of the Outcomes Statement and its subsequent iterations, see *The Outcomes Book: Debate and Consensus after the WPA Outcomes Statement* (2005), edited by Susanmarie Harrington, Keith Rhodes, Ruth Overman Fischer, and Rita Malencyzk, as well as *The WPA Outcomes Statement: A Decade Later* (2012), edited by Nicholas N. Behm, Gregory R. Glau, Deborah H. Holdstein, Duane Roen, and Edward M. White.

the expertise and labor of the Task Force members, we enacted those Whitely norms. By allowing those critical questions to dominate our exchange, by focusing on the critiques the Task Force advanced of prior Statements, and by appealing to policy and precedent when it came time to move forward in the feedback and distribution process, the Executive Board fell into classic White supremacist power-hoarding/delaying tropes when faced with radical, and necessary, changes.

Led by Asao B. Inoue, some members of the Task Force and within the overall organization called for a boycott of the 2021 conference and the organization itself. In the 2021 CWPA Executive Board joint statement, which was a response to the call to boycott, the then-Board acknowledged that their conduct toward the Task Force was part of a larger pattern: "the Executive Board's conduct toward the Task Force reflects how BIPOC scholars have been treated in the CWPA organization and at CWPA events throughout the organization's history, which scholars of color have published on and have spoken about publicly, informally, and on social media."

In response to the boycott and the acknowledgement of this larger historical pattern, CWPA contracted with One Eight Create (OEC) in 2021 to assess the organizational culture regarding community, diversity, equity, inclusion, and growth. The assessment began with a survey, which allowed CWPA members to answer questions about feelings of belonging, expression of opinions, and CWPA values related to respect, availability of resources, diversity, fairness, and inclusion. After analyzing the survey data and information from focus groups and interviews, OEC identified four pivotal themes or topics that needed to be addressed:

- Belonging and trust
- Inclusion and validation
- Diversity identities and experiences
- Equity implementation

OEC summarized its findings in the 2023 Cultural Assessment Report (Appendix A). From August 2024 to May 2025, CWPA held a series of conversations to share findings from the cultural assessment and to receive feedback on each of the four themes. The conversations were free and open to the public, and every registrant received a link to a timeline that summarized events in CWPA from 2021 through the present (Appendix B). The conversations all followed the same script (Appendix C) and during each conversation, participants responded to the theme in both writing and discussion. After each conversation, a report was generated to capture participant information and themes that emerged through the conversation (all survey responses were inductively analyzed for themes by members of the Executive Board; to see all reports, see Appendix D). These conversations helped the CWPA Executive Board better understand what the organization needs to do to foster the values and implement strategies encompassed within the four themes offered by the 2023 Cultural Assessment Report. In addition to these online conversations, CWPA offered an in-person event at CCCC 2025 to discuss the 2023 Report and the conversation series, as well as a wrap-up conversation online (information on these sessions is included in Appendix D).

The members of the 2024-2025 Executive Board offer this document to reflect on a year of conversations and to share our developing thinking about where the organization needs to go in the immediate and long-term future. We have asked other corners of the CWPA community to respond to this report to align, connect, and move together toward becoming a more welcoming and inclusive professional organization.

Statement of the Problem

The organizational turbulence as described in the background, which had been present for years, intensified as a result of the public boycott of CWPA for participating in white supremacy culture. CWPA leaders and board members had long recognized that the organization struggled to increase diversity among its membership and leadership, but the boycott, along with the sociopolitical impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and nationwide protests for racial justice that began in the summer of 2020, made addressing aspects of the organization that contribute to participation in white supremacy culture a vital focus for CWPA leadership.

Historically, the demographics of CWPA membership have leaned predominantly toward white, middle-class women. One of the problems the organization has come to face in the past couple of decades is how to become a more inclusive organization–how to invite new members from different sociocultural, ethnic, racial, and institutional backgrounds to join CWPA. Given the organization's homogeneous membership, inviting those who may feel excluded based on those backgrounds has been a significant challenge. In effect, CWPA has long aimed to diversify its membership, but the lack of diversity in its membership has itself often stalled those efforts.

Additionally, in the aftermath of the boycott and the pandemic, membership in the organization declined from approximately 350 in May 2021 to approximately 225 members in May 2025. As a result, CWPA has had less funding through membership dues to explore different solutions, a limitation that we address later in this report. Also, since CWPA depends on volunteer labor from its members, lower membership has meant the organization has fewer individuals to contribute to the labor necessary to maintain and improve the organization.

In short, CWPA is committed to being welcoming and inclusive, and we recognize that this commitment requires resources, both human and financial, as well as a continuing recognition of organizational wrong-footedness. Shifting the organization in a more inclusive direction requires continued advocacy from organization leaders, public accountability for organizational missteps, and patience, since such transformations do not occur swiftly.

While we recognize the challenges to revitalizing CWPA and reiterating our mission to support writing program administrators–to renew our vows, to echo this report's title–we assert that such labor will ultimately lead to a flourishing future for the organization. To build a more inclusive organization, we also have to build and maintain hope that former members may return, that new members will join, and that the organization will subsequently become better equipped to support writing program administrators facing the significant challenges to our programs and higher education in general in the 21st century.

Proposed Solutions

Immediate Objectives

While CWPA already has a range of initiatives that support its membership, feedback during the cultural conversations indicates that information about these initiatives is not always readily available or easily found. We acknowledge that we need additional support in managing and promoting existing resources.

Website Management

To facilitate accessibility for all members of the CWPA community, survey respondents requested easier website access to existing materials, to advertising for workshops or other professional development, to conferences, and to other events. Additionally, the face and navigation of the website have not been updated for several years, which calls for revision and updating. To make this work possible, we recommend designating a website administrator from among the membership. Additionally, we would like to see the website as not only a place to manage our resources, but also as a space where we can do the following:

A. Increase the visibility of existing initiatives. This might include creating an archive of past workshops, professional development sessions, Executive Board work, conferences, conference panels, and communication from the president.
B. Increase access to existing materials such as position statements, white papers, and the Outcomes Statement.
C. Increase opportunities for communication between members.

Ongoing Professional Development

Those attending the Cultural Assessment Conversations reported that they appreciated the opportunity for discussion, indicating interest in regular discussion and professional development opportunities for a wide range of institutions and kinds of administrative work. We recommend continuing this year's emphasis on listening to our membership and encouraging the involvement of more voices and members of CWPA, especially those from minority-serving institutions (MSIs) and two-year colleges, in ongoing professional development. To accommodate participants from as many kinds of institutions as possible and to ensure that participants with limited funds can attend professional development, CWPA will continue to offer free events, especially ones relevant for folks serving at MSIs and two-year colleges, and we are also exploring mid-range and higher cost events for those who are interested in more intensive workshops, while paying facilitators for their time and expertise.

Investing in the Field

Given the current political climate and the precarious nature of many writing programs and many WPA positions, many survey respondents requested the creation and/or revision of additional resources such as position statements on DEI, tenure and promotion, and other statements that would help WPAs in their day-to-day labor. Foremost among the necessary statements is an updated Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition, which is currently being revised.

Additionally, one of our great joys in this year of reflection was renewing our connection with WPA-GO after WPA-GO voted to break formal ties with CWPA in 2021. We have formalized our support of WPA-GO by creating a structure for GO's annual budget, establishing voting rights for GO on the CWPA Executive Board, and creating a WPA-GO liaison role, all of which are detailed on the mutually agreed upon [Memorandum of Understanding](). Collaboration with WPA-GO is essential to growing CWPA and creating an inclusive organization. We recommend continuing work with WPA-GO to strengthen these renewed ties, including supporting their initiatives, collaborating on new initiatives, and creating reciprocal mentoring relationships.

Future and Ongoing Goals

Many of the suggestions during our online conversations centered on solutions that required additional resources. Therefore, it is pivotal for CWPA to prioritize fundraising as central to the next chapter. This goal needs to be ongoing and sustainable to support the organization's health. Because resources are central to so many other initiatives, CWPA needs to reimagine the financial health of the organization and identify ways to design both long and short-term campaigns to build annual security and reserve into the organization's financial portfolio.

Developing a Strategic Plan

CWPA should begin the next chapter with an Executive Board retreat for intensive strategic planning for what programming will be implemented as we reconsider our organizational identity. We have spent the past year intensely engaging with the data from the cultural assessment report and member feedback on that report, and the goals articulated in this section come from our making meaning of the report and that feedback. As an organization, we are ready to move forward from facilitating conversations around the findings to making meaning from them, by moving forward and developing detailed programming. The first step in that programming is to appoint a subcommittee to design, compose, and propose a strategic plan and budget. The plan would require dedicated fundraising and strategic implementation and management.

Expanding Financial Resources

Initiating a capital campaign is a way of preparing to navigate our current fiscal year, while saving and planning for our financial security and reserve in the future. We would like to engage in financial consultation for effective means of fundraising on multiple levels: 1) increasing individual and institutional memberships, as well as creating a university/PhD program mentorship initiative that in exchange for membership, CWPA will provide professional development for enrolled graduate students; 2) selling CWPA swag; 3) a biennial banquet at the in-person conference of sponsored tables; and 4) grant writing. These are some ways to begin to generate funds from outside membership dues and enhance access to financial resources available to CWPA to support desired programming from our current and prospective membership.

Enhancing Membership Accessibility

The second greatest concern for those surveyed was to bring in new members from diverse identities and institutions and to make membership accessible for all potential members. Respondents were concerned about ways to create community for members to prevent isolation and attrition.

CWPA currently offers tiered membership based on income and status as a faculty member. However, in our next chapter, in addition to the tiered membership fees, membership will include options to join clustered communities within the organization. These clusters will be organized and supported by members of CWPA and EB and will be determined based on institutional affiliations: HBCUs, HSIs, tribal colleges, liberal arts colleges, R1s, R2s, etc. CWPA will also facilitate affiliate groups for pre-tenure, tenured, non-tenure track, and Writing Center specialists. These clusters will function as affiliate communities within the larger body of CWPA, creating the kind of community that many feel is currently lacking within our organization.

While we have plans to offer new kinds of membership clusters (above), we would also like to build off of the already existing good work of well established regional affiliates. Although the CWPA already provides some start-up funds for the creation of new affiliates, we will be investigating additional ways to support, develop, and expand opportunities for new and existing affiliates.

Ensuring Diversity of Institutional Representation in the Executive Board

A third concern expressed by respondents was ensuring the institutional diversity of leadership. Many members suggested that the organization historically favors faculty members from research-intensive institutions. In the next chapter, the Executive Board will revisit the organizational bylaws and revise them to include elected board members from designated and diverse institutional types (e.g., HBCUs, HSIs, tribal, community college, liberal arts, private, public, R1, R2, etc.). Creating this kind of diversity on the Executive Board will ensure that multiple voices are represented when decisions are made that are impactful across our discipline.

Realistic Limitations

Funding

The proposed solutions require expanding our financial resources. We will need to devote a tremendous amount of human resources to fundraising initiatives to fund subsequent initiatives and see them come to fruition. Understanding this commitment means we must spread the labor among our members and take caution against burnout, so that we have the energy to take on all of the worthy causes that we have proposed. One possible course of action is to create a fundraising committee, with representation from CWPA leadership and membership.

Resources: Time and People

As a volunteer-based nonprofit organization, CWPA relies on the commitment of time from its members, which we acknowledge as a constraint to many of our proposed solutions. WPAs are routinely overcommitted as it is, which makes our goals for expanding member involvement in the organization ambitious. Moreover, CWPA doesn't want to put the onus of diversity efforts on its BIPOC members, who are disproportionately called to do diversity work. Many members of CWPA may not be aware that everyone involved in the organization are volunteers, and perhaps this message should be broadcast more widely.

However, without more volunteers, we have to be realistic about what we can accomplish and how quickly we can accomplish our goals. Therefore, to accomplish the proposed solutions above, it is essential that we work to encourage members to become more actively involved in our recruitment and fundraising efforts.

Conclusion

This document is both an ending and a beginning. It is an ending of the work started in the summer of 2021 that resulted in the 2023 Cultural Assessment Report, as well as our yearlong synthesis of that document in 2024-2025. It is a beginning of us turning the page together, and determining a route forward to rearticulate our core mission and rethink how we can work together to achieve it. Incoming leadership is committed to taking this work forward, using this whitepaper as a guide to strategic planning for the future.

We are aligned in this belief: ***our mission matters***. Writing programs are facing unprecedented austerity, political pressure, and censorship. Navigating AI is another pressing exigence that puts WPAs into impossible positions–trying to make sure students are equipped with the abilities they will need to navigate the changing landscape of literacy while also preserving academic integrity and fostering critical thinking. In the midst of all of this, and because of all of this, WPAs remain susceptible to burnout.

Given these challenges, an organization committed to connecting and equipping WPAs, using playful metaphors and real-time solutions that help WPAs navigate the complex and often inequitable systems of academia, work from shared values, and get credit for their work is more important than ever. ***We are that organization***–not just the Executive Board, but also WPA-GO, the journal, and the Consultant-Evaluator service. As an Executive Board, we commit ourselves and our future iterations to this mission. We hope that by working together toward that mission, CWPA can offer meaningful and inclusive community, much-needed refreshment, and crucial resources designed to assist WPAs in the years ahead.

Image Description: This image shows six smaller images framed like square photographs, which are set against a bright blue and pink backdrop. The smaller images show the following from left to right: a sticker of a white cat with the words "CWPA CCCC 2025" above it, a picture of the CWPA table at a conference covered in handouts, a picture of half of the executive board smiling at a conference, a picture of quotes about hopes for CWPA ("Build Community" is legible at center), a graphic of a checklist with the headline "4 Ways to Connect with CWPA at CCCC," and a post-it with handwriting on it.

Responses from Other Corners of CWPA

- Responses to be added from other corners of CWPA, including the C/E service, WPA-GO, the Journal, the officers, and the incoming VP.

Image Description: This image shows six smaller images framed like square photographs, which are set against a bright blue and pink backdrop. The smaller images show the following from left to right: an image six members of the Executive Board writing together on Zoom; an image of the feedback that CWPA received at the CCCC session; a Word cloud with the words "Supportive," "Welcoming," and "Inclusive" legible; an image of a puzzle piece slotting into place; an image of a word bubble collage with the phrase "Address tensions" in the center; an image of an iced beverage on a wooden table.

Appendices

Appendix A: Cultural Assessment Report:

- [2023_CWPA_CulturalAssessment](#)

Appendix B: CWPA 2021-2025 Timeline:

- [CWPA 2021-2024 Timeline_5.28.2025.docx - Google Docs](#)

Appendix C: Sample Conversation-Guiding Script:

- [Sample Conversation Script.docx - Google Docs](#)

Appendix D: Cultural Assessment Conversation Reports and Summaries:

- Theme One Report (August 2024): https://docs.google.com/document/d/11BHY0NJY9nY5E85lTo7Zag5A5PpVl0FV/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=103942176112702864055&rtpof=true&sd=true
- Theme Two Report (November 2024): https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DknFFPekzmuK8M3nG9D_ER5xBnN3UwW3/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=103942176112702864055&rtpof=true&sd=true
- Theme Three Report (January 2025): https://docs.google.com/document/d/17vD4zRCZJhRUYDzMhP3s9eNpn3yLm-bm/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=103942176112702864055&rtpof=true&sd=true
- Theme Four Report (March 2025): https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pMOMtOpzYRT9CScIpMm5KW91-PIp2Umi/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=103942176112702864055&rtpof=true&sd=true
- Roundtable at CCCC Summary and Slides (April 2025):
  - *Summary:* On 4/11/2025, Kelly Blewett, Jacob Babb, Michelle Bachelor Robinson, Talisha Haltiwanger Morrison, Patti Poblete, Mary Lourdes Silva, and Darci Thoune presented a roundtable at CCCC to share the work with the Cultural Assessment Conversation Series that was undertaken this year. 26 people attended the roundtable, and 15 submitted responses to a Menti poll that the Board used to dialogue with the audience. Poll results indicated that the audience was grateful for the work of the board, was glad to hear their personal stories of why they got involved with CWPA, and felt more hopeful about the future of the organization.
    - *Slides:* https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Z7e9aBscGWQFixqRfrnyyqHercxVk6ig/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=103942176112702864055&rtpof=true&sd=true
- Conversation Five Summary and Slides (May 2025):
  - *Summary:* On 5/9/2025, Kelly Blewett and Michelle Bachelor Robinson led an online discussion of the cultural assessment conversation series overall. Like the other events in the series, the discussion, titled "CWPA

Cultural Assessment Report: Bringing it All Together," was promoted on the CWPA website, Facebook page, and Writing Studies listserv. Members and nonmembers could register and attend. 26 folks registered for the conversation, and about 15 attended. Kelly and Michelle did not use survey tools for this conversation; instead, they modified the presentation from CCCC and took turns presenting the slides to the group. At the end, they opened the floor for conversation and posed a few optional guiding questions (slide 16). The conversation broadly explored how CWPA could show up for teacher-scholars in the field who need this organization to provide resources and validate their work.

- *Slides:* [CWPA Final Cultural Assessment Conversation.pptx - Google Slides](#)