

Greetings from the 2016 PROGRAM CHAIR



Linda Adler-Kassner
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Welcome to CCCC 2016! More than 600 sessions included in this year's CCCC provide an enormous range of ideas through which to engage the conference's theme, "Writing Strategies for Action." The ideas exchanged in these roundtables, concurrent sessions, and workshops will be generative, I'm sure—and so will be hallway conversations, SIGs, committee meetings, and the other opportunities that CCCC provides us to think together about the challenges and opportunities that we face as people who care about writing and writers, whatever our formal (or informal) roles and whatever titles we are assigned or we assume: instructors, researchers, program or center directors, chairs, administrators.

The chance to come together to use writing as a strategy for action arrives at a fortuitous time. Discussions about writing and writers both within the profession and outside are everywhere—but sometimes, they don't seem to intersect with one another. At the K–12 level, for instance, many schools are in the midst of implementing new writing curricula in English language arts, social studies, and sciences shaped by the Common Core Standards. At the postsecondary level, a number of institutions and states are developing new approaches to writing instruction that span the continuum from courses explicitly focused on writing as a subject of study on the one end to competency-based curriculum assessed through standardized exams on the other—with many, many points in between. Outside of the classroom, too, we know that discussions of writing are all around. I hope that CCCC 2016 provides us an opportunity to think about how to talk about writing as a subject of study and to use writing as a strategy for action.

At the same time, when I identified "Writing Strategies for Action" as a theme for CCCC 2016, I had no idea of the challenging and tragic year that was to come. We've seen civil rights violations; gun violence in schools, workplaces, and communities; actions that seem to be intended to foment distrust and turn people against the very idea of building alliances around and among individuals and groups. Given this background, I hope that CCCC 2016 is also an opportunity for us to reflect on how we can come together and think strategically, about how we can use writing to work collectively toward a brighter future.

CCCC is *our* disciplinary organization, a place for us to consider how to use writing as a strategy for action. To do so, though, we need to identify how to engage writing as an activity and a subject of study, and what issues we want to act on. The various elements of CCCC 2016 will provide these opportunities.

- **Concurrent sessions, roundtables, and meetings** are spaces where we can hear from others about the important questions they've asked, the research they've conducted, and what they've learned.
- **Special Interest Group (SIG) and Caucus meetings** will meet on Thursday and Friday evenings. Take advantage of the opportunity to talk with others who share your interests or affiliations.
- The **Taking Action Workshops** (each of which is offered two times on Thursday and Friday, free of charge, no additional registration required!) provide opportunities for us to develop systematic strategies to address concerns that we have.
- **Action Hub.** Located in the Hilton Grand Ballroom D–F, the Action Hub includes multiple opportunities for you to develop and practice strategies to participate in public discussions about writing.

As you travel through sessions, the Taking Action Workshops, and the Action Hub, I hope you'll also **identify issues or actions you think important for CCCC to identify and prioritize, and share what you've learned about effective strategies for action.** When you do, please share these via the CCCC Twitter feed (#4C16) and/or on white boards posted in the passageways between the Hilton and the George R. Brown Convention Center and throughout the conference space. We've got volunteers ready to gather and analyze these during the conference to identify themes among them. The last session of the conference, Saturday 12:30-1:45, will be a plenary where we will draw on the concerns you've tweeted, posted, or otherwise made visible to contribute to CCCC's agenda moving forward. We'll consider, together, how to address these issues as we consider how CCCC as an organization can draw on strategies from the Taking Action Workshops, as well.

I want to thank the Taking Action Workshop facilitators, all of whom have put enormous effort into designing workshops that aren't quite like anything they've done before. I also want to thank the group of colleagues who constituted the informal Taking Action workshop ad hoc planning group, thinking through the very *idea* of Taking Action workshops, their structure and organization, and the ways in which they're arranged at the conference: Carolyn Calhoun-Dillahunt; Darren Cambridge; Dominic Delli Carpini; Jay Dolmage; Candace Epps-Robertson; Chris Gallagher; Ben Kuebrich; Steve Parks; Bob Samuels; Jen Wingard; and Morris Young.

Of course, none of this would happen at all without the local arrangements committee, chaired by University of Houston's Jen Wingard, to whom we owe an enormous debt of gratitude. It also wouldn't take place without NCTE, our parent organization, and NCTE staff. Thank you to Eileen Maley, who saw us through the first half of conference planning; and Amy Stark, who was able to step in after Eileen's retirement, and to Nancy Johnson, the new CCCC convention director. Thanks, too, to CCCC Stage I and II program reviewers, the CCCC Executive Committee and officers, and a special thank you to Elizabeth Narvaéz, CCCC Program Assistant, whose strategic thinking about everything from program arrangement to space has added immeasurably to the experience that we will all share here at CCCC.

Local Arrangements Committee Welcome



Jennifer Wingard

Local Committee Chair
University of Houston, TX

Welcome to Houston! To many, Houston represents big oil, big houses, and big opportunities. And that's exactly the reputation many Houstonians like to cultivate about our fair city. But there's a lot more to Texas's biggest city that doesn't get into the papers. And lucky for all of you, you now get to explore and experience some of it! For those of us who are non-native Houstonians, which is the majority of the city's population, we have grown to love the contradictions that comprise the soul of our city. In fact a famous Houston-transplant, poet Mark Doty, writes of Houston as a city of big skies, no zoning, confusing planning, continual construction, and cultural hybridity. He reminds us that here on the oil-rich Gulf Coast, everything is built for the culture of the car, leav-

ing Houston to sprawl like a suburb—not really a city at all—taking on a “new kind” of American urban identity. Houston is “polyglot, open ended, divergent, entirely unstuffy, and appealingly uncertain of itself.” For Doty it is economic opportunity coupled with cultural diversity that allows Houston to continually renew itself. History is in the past, and Houston is always looking forward.

I have yet to find a better description of Houston and its rich cultural offerings and economic commitments. Like most large cities, you can find almost anything here in Houston—James Beard Award-winning restaurants, miles of well-maintained green space, high-end fashion and shopping, and an internationally recognized museum district. But unlike most larger cities, all of these amenities are offered without pretense—fine dining is found in strip malls or converted warehouses; high-end couture is sold at the mall; and folks enjoy a Sunday of grand opera in jeans and t-shirts.



Right in Downtown and across the street from the Hilton of the Americas—the conference hotel—you will find Discovery Green, a 12-acre LEED certified oasis in the middle of the city filled with art, activities, and fine locally sourced dining at the Grove. In a short bus, light rail ride, or brisk walk, you will find historic Market Square Park filled with entertainment, trendy



bars, and eateries. And one of the last stops on the Greenlink (downtown’s free bus service) is Buffalo Bayou Park—a terrific 10-mile stretch of car-free green space with paved running and biking trails that can lead you to both the Heights and Montrose neighborhoods filled with shopping, dining, and nightlife.

The Montrose is Houston’s historic LGBT neighborhood. And as such, it is full of businesses that support if not champion future efforts on behalf of the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO). The Montrose is nestled right next to Houston’s Museum District, and both offer a variety of eclectic shops and dining. The Heights is one of Houston’s fastest growing historic neighborhoods (how’s that for contradiction!). It now rivals The Montrose as Houston’s “hippest” neighborhood with upscale ice houses, award-winning restaurants, and artisan shopping on trendy White Oak Drive, 19th Street, or the Washington Corridor.

Each of the neighborhoods mentioned above are within a quick METRO (Houston’s public transit) or cab ride from the conference hotel, but if you are more adventurous and want to rent a car to explore more of the greater Houston area, there are many worthy destinations “outside the loop,” as Houstonians would say. Just outside the 610 Loop to the East is Houston’s Chinatown, said to rival Los Angeles in its diversity of offerings. Near Chinatown is the Mahatma Gandhi District offering



food, shopping, and a cultural hub for Houston’s South East Asian population. To the west, in addition to wide-open swaths of farmland, you can find one of Texas’s top-rated barbecue joints—Killen’s BBQ in Pearland is not to be missed by the carnivores amongst us! To the south,

you can find Houston’s celebration of its commitment to NASA—Johnson Space Center. It’s a wonderful museum and educational center dedicated to all things space. If you keep going south on I-45, you will end up at the Gulf Coast on Galveston Island. In addition to lovely beaches, Galveston is full of historical landmarks, excellent seafood, and entertaining activities for

adults and children, too. To the north is one of Texas’s earliest planned communities—The Woodlands. What began in the 1970s as an environmentally conscious suburban community has grown into a premiere site for shopping, dining, and an excellent example of suburban planning.

As a large city, Houston does indeed sprawl, but it is that space that allows for a multitude of offerings, opinions, and openings for change. In fact, it is Houston’s



ability to continually re-invent itself that is central to the city’s identity. And this continual renewal allows for continued discussion and change on important issues for those of us who live here, such as the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO), even after the votes have been cast. Houstonians know that change will come; it’s just a matter of knocking down some walls to do it.

So welcome and enjoy exploring Houston. Before you arrive, stop by <http://www.visithoustontexas.com/> on the Web to help get the lay of the land. And once you have arrived, please be sure to visit the Hospitality booth and pick up a local guide or visit us on the Web at <http://4chouston.com>. We have detailed information about all the locations mentioned here and many, many more (including a listing of HERO-supporting businesses!). You can find most anything you look for here in Houston, and often you will find a few surprises as well.

The Local Committee is glad you are here!



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