

# Summer 2021 ACS Summer Writing Accountability Group Program: Final Report

## Contents

Program Description .....	1
Participants Who Completed the Program .....	1
Confirmation of Regular Virtual Meetings .....	2
Resources .....	2
Self-Assessment .....	2

---

## Program Description

"The price we pay for the practice of solitary writing is that we often doubt ourselves, we feel as if we lack courage or commitment, we find writing lonely and hard, we can't get into it. By [writing in community and] refusing the boundaries between individualism and community, between the public and the private..., we can ... forge new, more pleasurable and productive writing selves."

—[Barbara Grant](#), "Writing in the Company of Other Women," *Studies in Higher Education*, 2006

In most faculty members' long "To Do" lists, "Write that article!" is often pushed down when urgent but less important tasks emerge. Writing is thus perennially relegated to summer, traditionally the non-teaching months. However, during the summer of 2020, everyone was necessarily focused on learning to teach entire semesters in a pandemic, and research and writing fell completely off most "To Do" lists. The studies and headlines are confirming what we already know: "research productivity" has suffered in the pandemic, for some groups more than others.

We—Nancy Chick and Tara Strauch, Program Co-Facilitators—knew the summer of 2021 would still be a challenge, but we also knew there was hope for some space and time to write. We thus designed the ACS Summer Writing Group for faculty who think structure, accountability, and community sound like helpful writing assistants. We would help participants find accountability partners, develop a personalized writing plan, establish and celebrate specific milestones as they chart their progress, cultivate a writing practice they can live with, talk through moments of feeling stuck, and productively share drafts with relevant peers.

Ultimately, there were so many applicants that we updated our plans in order to support a cohort of five Writing Accountability Groups (WAGs) with one common WAG Program and adapted [Johns Hopkins University's model for Writing Accountability Groups](#) for our specific context. We kept the group size at no more than five per group because of the structure of the WAG meetings and the difficulties of scheduling synchronous meetings with larger groups.

## Participants Who Completed the Program

Below are the 5 Writing Accountability Groups, or WAGs. Each group, which chose their own name, combined faculty from different ACS campuses, met weekly, and tracked their goals and progress for 8 weeks this summer.

### *Caffeinated, Incorporated*

- Blake Robinson (Rollins) -- barobinson@rollins.edu
- Linda Boland (Richmond) -- lboland@richmond.edu
- Ellen Barnett (Trinity) -- ebarnet1@trinity.edu
- KatieAnn Skogsberg (Centre) -- katieann.skogsberg@centre.edu

### *The Ascenders*

- Juan Guevara Pinto (Rollins) -- jguevarapinto@rollins.edu
- Keely Sutton (Birmingham-Southern) -- mksutton@bsc.edu

- Courtney Hatch (Hendrix) -- hatch@hendrix.edu
- Kimberly Dennis (Rollins) -- kdennis@rollins.edu

#### *The Movers & Rakers*

- Kara Wunderlich (Rollins) -- kwunderlich@rollins.edu
- Delphia Shanks (Hendrix) -- shanks@hendrix.edu
- Jason Heaton (Birmingham-Southern) -- jheaton@bsc.edu
- Mei Li Inouye (Centre) -- meili.inouye@centre.edu
- Nancy Chick (Rollins) -- nchick@rollins.edu

#### *The Happy Hours*

- MacKenzie Moon Ryan (Rollins) -- mmryan@rollins.edu
- Kati Curts (Sewanee) -- kacurts@sewanee.edu
- Centdrika Hurt (Birmingham-Southern) -- cdhurt@bsc.edu
- Kip Kiefer (Rollins) -- kkiefer@rollins.edu

#### *The Cheerleaders*

- Matt Nichter (Rollins) -- mnichter@rollins.edu
- Stephanie Hansard (Birmingham-Southern) -- smhansar@bsc.edu
- Tara Strauch (Centre) tara.strauch@centre.edu
- Lizzy Wiener (Sewanee) -- ecwiener@sewanee.edu
- Kiyona Brewster (Centre) -- kiyona.brewster@centre.edu

## Confirmation of Regular Virtual Meetings

The entire cohort (all 22 of us) met in a kick-off Zoom session on June 3, when we shared goals and needs for the Program, and where participants first met their WAGmates to set their meeting schedules for the summer. After that, each WAG met via Zoom every week throughout June and July.

In addition, the entire cohort maintained a [weekly progress sheet](#) together, and each WAG maintained a weekly goal-setting sheet (the other tabs on the same Google sheet) for each of their Zoom meetings.

## Resources

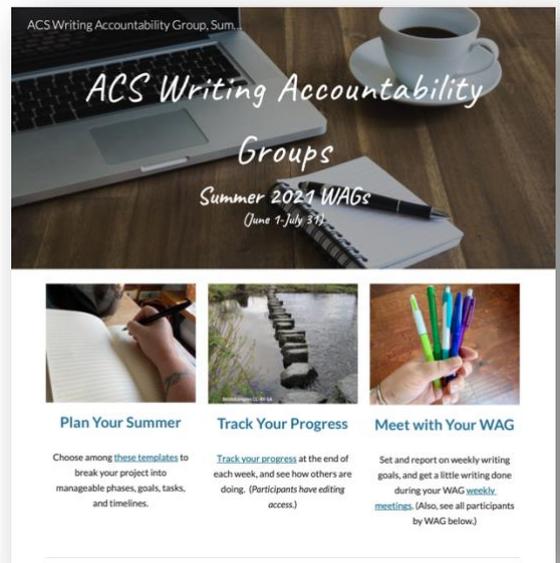
We created [this website](#) for the Program. (See screenshot to the right.) This site provided an easily accessible space for our colleagues to use whether they were in their office, traveling, or working from home. It contains some writing resources as well as our accountability sheets.

We invite the ACS to link to this site to showcase the Program.

## Self-Assessment

We did not do a survey at the end of the Program, so please go ahead and send one from the ACS.

Our three goals for this Program were to provide structure, accountability, and community to support ACS faculty in writing throughout the summer.



### **Structure**

Our Program provided plenty of structure for each of the WAGs and for individual faculty members in a few ways. Perhaps most importantly, we used a simple weekly rhythm for the eight weeks of the program. Each WAG determined its own weekly meeting days/times (which became routine of that group), and our [tracking sheet](#) was also organized by week. The Program co-facilitators sent an email to the cohort every Monday morning, and participants tracked their progress by the end of each week.

### **Accountability**

Accountability was the central piece of our Program; we designed the structure and community aspects of the Program to bolster the sense of accountability individuals felt as they went about their work. We asked our colleagues to track their weekly and summer goals in Google sheets as described above. Each WAG met weekly to discuss how the week had gone, to write together as companions, and to goalshare for the coming week.

These groups of faculty from different campuses were very successful. All WAGs met throughout the entire summer, which is particularly impressive given the continued pressures of the pandemic on everyone. While some groups were more successful and consistent than others, it was clear that individuals came to appreciate support from one another and to use the WAGs to hold themselves accountable.

However, this system wasn't perfect. For some individuals, the tracking sheets seemed to function more as bureaucracy rather than accountability, and we had to work hard to get some individuals to fill out the tracking sheets. Other individuals struggled to meet with their groups on a regular basis as other obligations took their time. Despite the challenges of working consistently with a group over the summer, however, the vast majority of our members participated regularly and ended the summer having met their goals.

### **Community**

Aligned with the goals of the ACS, we aimed to establish a sense of community across ACS campuses, so we formed each WAG with campus variety in mind. Participants commented on how much they appreciated these connections throughout the summer, and a few report that they will continue to meet in the future. In addition to continuing to support each other in accountability groups, it is clear that participants made new relationships with their peers at other institutions and should have more robust cross-campus relationships in the future.

Below are a few emails we received, as well as some screenshots from WAG meetings.

From: "Boland, Linda" <lboland@richmond.edu>  
Date: Wednesday, June 2, 2021 at 3:41 PM  
To: Nancy Chick <NCHICK@Rollins.edu>  
Subject: RE: ACS Writing Accountability Groups

I already love the organization of this.

-----  
From: Kimberly Dennis <KDENNIS@Rollins.edu>  
Date: Tuesday, July 27, 2021 at 7:54 PM  
To: "Tara E. Strauch" <tara.strauch@centre.edu>, Nancy Chick <NCHICK@Rollins.edu>  
Subject: Re: Final Week: Celebrate with your WAG

Hi Tara & Nancy,

I just wanted to thank you both so much for the groups this summer. You created the absolute perfect balance of structure and freedom to support participants' work without bogging us down or distracting us from things we needed to accomplish. I am a person who reflects constantly on my writing process, goals, time management, etc, and yet I still learned a lot this summer about myself, my efforts to balance my various responsibilities, and my aspirations.

I've heard administrators at Rollins say that Rollins faculty don't really need support for scholarship because research is not that important to us. But my research is where my 'soul' as a professor resides, and I am extremely grateful for gestures like this one that support me in valuing one of the things I value most.

If it would be helpful for you for me to elaborate more on my appreciation of this experience, I would be happy to do so.

Warmly,

Kim

Kimberly L. Dennis, PhD

Professor, Department of Art & Art History and Program in Sexuality, Gender & Women's Studies, Rollins College

-----  
From: Juan Guevara Pinto <JGUEVARAPINTO@Rollins.edu>

Date: Tuesday, July 27, 2021 at 10:30 AM

To: "Tara E. Strauch" <tara.strauch@centre.edu>, Nancy Chick <NCHICK@Rollins.edu>

Subject: Re: Final Week: Celebrate with your WAG

Hi Tara and Nancy,

Thank you so much for your dedicated assistance this past eight weeks. This was a great experience and it helped me advance significantly on my writing goals. The JibJab video was hilarious btw!

I hope both of you have a relaxing rest of your summer before the craziness of a new semester begins (if it hasn't already!).

Best,

Juan

Juan D. Guevara Pinto, PhD

Assistant Professor

Department of Psychology, Rollins College

