

Call for Proposals

# **On the Isthmus: The Midwest Writing Centers Association Conference in Madison 2011**

**October 20-22, 2011**

**The Pyle Conference Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison**

**Hosted by the Writing Centers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Edgewood College, and Madison College**

**Keynote Speaker: Professor Eric Darnell Pritchard, Department of Rhetoric and Writing, University of Texas at Austin**

Here in Madison, we make our lives on and around an isthmus—which, for those of you who might need to dust off the old geology book, is a narrow strip of land connecting two larger, otherwise separate areas. An isthmus is a rare geologic feature that arises through natural forces. These forces may be subtle and slow (plate tectonics resulting in erosion or deposition) or sudden and dramatic (an earthquake or volcano). The result is a type of “land bridge” that allows individuals to cross over and inhabit new areas.

Those of us hosting this conference know that modern life on an isthmus can be frustrating, especially in terms of traffic and congestion. On the other hand, we love this feature of Madison. Our isthmus gives us solid ground from which to admire Lake Mendota to the north and Lake Monona to the south. Moreover, we see our isthmus as a beautiful passageway, connecting two vibrantly distinct parts of our community.

We invite you to join us in Madison, on the isthmus! Spend some days together with us, nestled between the shimmering lakes, as we focus on writing centers and writing center work. Feel free to consider your work through the metaphor of an isthmus: drawing boundaries, intervening, connecting . . . centrality, crossroads, in-betweenness. Or feel free to resist this theme! All proposals are welcome.

## **PROPOSAL DEADLINE**

**Friday, March 11, 2011**

## **POSSIBLE TOPICS**

- administration
- assessment
- case studies
- examining our practices
- innovative practices
- narratives and counter-narratives
- peer tutoring
- politics
- posing new research questions
- the profession
- questioning received wisdom
- social justice
- space/location
- technology
- tutor education
- WAC/WID and writing centers
- writing fellows (curricular-based peer tutors)
- writing center research
- writing center theory

## **POSSIBLE FORMATS**

Proposed sessions may take any number of forms:

- individual presentations (20 minutes)
- panel presentations (3 speakers followed by Q+A)
- workshops (one or more specific activities for participants facilitated by presenters)
- roundtables (discussion among 3–5 featured participants, including time for audience participation)
- fishbowls (session leaders begin discussion but rotate off panel, replaced by audience participants)
- performance pieces (up to 75 minutes)
- posters (displayed during a scholar-to-scholar session)
- lightning talks (5-minute presentations by 3–5 presenters, followed by break-out discussions)
- special-interest groups, or SIGs (narrowly focused discussions hosted by participants)

## **PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**

Proposals, which include a 50-word abstract and a 500-word narrative description, will undergo blind review. Proposals should be submitted using the “proposal submission” feature at [c4w.cla.umn.edu/mwca](http://c4w.cla.umn.edu/mwca). Proposals should be as specific as possible about the role of the presenters, the participation of others in attendance, and the contribution the session makes to writing center studies. The conference website includes annotated samples of successful proposals from previous MWCA conferences. The deadline for proposal submission is Friday, March 11, 2011.

Questions about the call for proposals may be directed to Katie Levin, Chair of the Executive Board of MWCA and Assistant Director of the Center for Writing at the University of Minnesota, [kslevin@umn.edu](mailto:kslevin@umn.edu), 612.624.7720.