

Excerpts from the 2021 Report of the Workflow, Formats, and Processes Task Force Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition

Section 1: Recommendations for Expanding Antiracist, Inclusive Practices at Feminisms and Rhetorics Conferences

A major concern for the Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition (CFSHRC) is to guide and support Feminisms and Rhetorics conference (FRC) hosts in creating a conference that is invitational to a diverse body of attendees and that is overtly engaging in antiracist, inclusive conference practices. The committee understands antiracism as an “active dismantling of systems, privileges, and everyday practices that reinforce and normalize the contemporary dimensions of white dominance...[that] also involves a critical understanding of the history of whiteness in America” (Crenshaw, qtd in Shim Roth, 2020). Additionally, a priority here is to respond to concerns repeatedly raised in surveys and conference feedback that FRC and CFSHRC events often feel exclusive and insular and that they are overwhelmingly populated by white, straight, cis-gender, able-bodied women. The practices below work to cultivate a FRC that is antiracist, inclusive, and invitational. See Section 4 of this report that outlines how two committees—the FRC Host Committee and the CFSHRC Conference Committee—would take responsibility for these practices. Section 2 of this report offers specific recommendations for accessibility.

Proposed Antiracist, Inclusive Conferencing Practices

1. Create FRC planning structure that overtly foregrounds antiracist, inclusive priorities and initiatives.
 - a. The Call for Conference Hosts (CFH)/FRC host application should ask applicants to prioritize and identify antiracist, inclusive conferencing practices, such as featured events, conference themes, membership of the host committee, and programming relating to community engagement.
 - i. The CFH/host application should also prompt potential hosts to consider how they will engage the complexity of their conference location (campus, community, city; see Section 1.4).
 - b. The Call for Conference Proposals (CFP) should articulate and prioritize antiracist, inclusive themes and conferencing practices and advertise featured speakers, opportunities for emerging speakers, accessibility guides, childcare options, etc.
 - i. The CFP should overtly invite presentation/panel proposals that are exploring intersectional, antiracist anti-ableist concerns.
 - c. The FRC website should highlight antiracist, inclusive themes and BIPOC speakers; it should spotlight the FRC accessibility guide and offer clarity on childcare options and/or invitations for children to attend the conference; it should highlight “welcome/invitational” programming for attendees.
2. Advertise conference widely, ensuring that that CFP and conference announcements are shared with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), tribal colleges, Hispanic Serving Institutions, other minority-serving institutions, and community colleges.
3. Establish an antiracist, anti-ableist, inclusive review process for panel and presentation proposals.
 - a. A proposal review team should be established, and it should be diverse in its makeup in terms of races, genders, sexualities, abilities, institutions, and disciplines. Members should undergo training regarding how to read and assess proposals with respect for diverse language backgrounds, cultural knowledges, and teaching/research/activist interests.
 - b. The review team should cultivate a specific, empathetic process for rejecting and communicating rejections.
 - c. The accepted and rejected proposals as well as the entire proposal review

process should be assessed to ensure diversity among acceptances and care regarding rejections. This review should be archived and passed on to the next FRC Host Committee and the CFSHRC Conference Committee.

4. Engage the contemporary and historical complexity of the FRC location (campus, conference event locations, city, state).
 - a. Select locations that account for members' precarities.
 - b. Prioritize the safety and well-being of members with conference leadership openly acknowledging and naming past and present harms regarding the location that impact the conference attendees and CFSHRC membership.
 - c. Proactively and overtly address concerns participants might have about conference site. For example, the program might include opportunities to engage the conference site's community.
5. Compose and institute land/territorial acknowledgements that are accompanied with materials forms of redress (See Isador, Vowel).
 - a. Consult and compensate Indigenous scholar(s) with relevant expertise to author land acknowledgements that are substantial and accurate in naming the Indigenous groups local to the conference site.
 - b. Provide guidance to conference presenters who wish to write land acknowledgments related to their research projects.
 - c. Incorporate material forms of redress, such as
 - i. Donating to local Indigenous communities organizing for land justice,
 - ii. Establishing a CFSHRC tribal scholarship,
 - iii. Waiving conference registration for Indigenous attendees.
6. Invite and engage with BIPOC scholars to keynote events in ways that honor their distinctive intellectual/artistic/activist contributions and their preferred ways of engaging FRC attendees and CFSHRC membership.
 - a. Disrupt an extraction approach to engaging with BIPOC scholars—one in which conference planners and attendees invite BIPOC scholars as a superficial gesture to inclusiveness but do not substantively engage these scholars or their work.
 - i. Examples of substantial engagement can include:
 1. Explicitly assigning and circulating the scholarship/artistic/activist work of BIPOC keynotes as pre-conference activity; holding sessions for members to discuss the work.
 2. Asking BIPOC speakers if they would like conference organizers to set up a supplementary way for them to engage with conference attendees or certain populations within the conference population.
 - a. Speakers who elect to facilitate a supplementary engagement opportunity with conference attendees would be compensated for this additional labor.
 - b. Invite BIPOC keynotes to determine how they will engage FRC attendees and CFSHRC membership.
7. Offer guidance to attendees on antiracist inclusive strategies for conference sessions
 - a. Instruct panel chairs, moderators, and award presenters to ensure the correct pronunciation of names before introducing scholar-teachers-activists.
 - b. Encourage and circulate information regarding post-presentation "Question and Answer" strategies including "progressive stacking"—a pedagogical strategy that can be remediated for conferencing as it aims to ensure that voices that are often submerged, discounted, or excluded from traditional classroom discussions get a chance to be heard (see Gannon)
 - c. Craft and publicize guidelines for accessible presentation guidelines (See Wood & "Creating")
8. Establish and maintain connections to BIPOC scholar-teachers and organizations

- beyond CFSHRC membership.
- a. Invite BIPOC organizations, interest/affinity groups in fields related to the CFSHRC to attend the conference.
 - b. Invite BIPOC organizations, interest/affinity groups to submit panels, workshops, roundtables, etc., and highlight these panels on the conference program.
 - c. Research the FRC location to determine if there are BIPOC communities that the conference can invite and collaborate with.
 - d. Advertise conferences that BIPOC scholars are putting on, encourage FRC attendees to submit individual presentations and panels, and offer to contribute to the work of the BIPOC-led conference.
9. Coordinate at least one panel or plenary event that spotlights emerging scholars, especially the work of the Nan Johnson Travel Award and the Shirley Logan Diversity Scholarship Award recipients.
- a. Designate these sessions within the program and CFSHRC Advisory Board members should be encouraged to attend these sessions and engage with presenters after the presentations.
10. Identify and institute publishing opportunities for FRC presenters, especially BIPOC, emerging, and disabled scholars
- a. Coordinate with *Peitho* editors to attend targeted sessions and talk with presenters about submitting work to the journal.
 - b. Create sessions dedicated to journal and press submissions that discuss revise and-resubmit processes, revision strategies, book proposal composition, etc.
 - c. Continue manuscript workshops and actively recruit BIPOC, emerging, and disabled scholars to participate as mentors and mentees.
11. Facilitate multiple opportunities at the conference for community building across membership.
- a. Create space and time in the FRC program for the Fellowship Pod Program so that attendees can meet up with their podmates during the conference period (see Appendix C).
 - b. Support meet-ups for affinity groups and first-time attendees (and develop new affinity groups that speak to diverse institutional, identity, research/teaching/service/activist investments) by identifying and offering space for these gatherings.
 - c. Create spaces of invitation and engagement for BIPOC scholars that include mentoring opportunities designed to help with the job market, publication, work life balance, tenure, administrative roles, etc.
 - d. Elevate poster sessions as a presentation mode for the conference.
12. Create a system for receiving feedback and addressing grievances regarding the conference.
- a. Institute a Rapid Response Team (RRT) that is tasked with collecting feedback and responding to grievances relating to antiracism, inclusion, and accessibility that may arise during the conference.
 - i. This team should be comprised of
 1. At least one CFSHRC Conference Committee member,
 2. One Host Committee member,
 3. One CFSHRC Executive Board member,
 4. One CFSHRC Past President,
 5. The Accessibility Coordinator (see Section 2.1).
 - ii. The RRT committee and contact information should be advertised on FRC website and program.
 - iii. The RRT would monitor and respond to concerns circulated via social media; the RRT would also set up and publicize an email account for the FRC as a way for attendees to report their concerns.
 - iv. The RRT would gather feedback from attendees about suggestions and grievances while the conference is occurring.
 - v. The RRT would create a forum to address these concerns at the

- conference or soon thereafter.
- vi. The members of the RRT would receive a waiver on their registration to FRC.
 - vii. The RRT would compose a report detail their activities at the FRC and submit it to the FRC archive (see Section 4.2).

Resources Consulted

Gannon, K. (2017, October 20). "The Progressive Stack and Standing for Inclusive Teaching." *The Tattooed Prof.* <https://thetattooedprof.com/2017/10/20/the-progressive-stack-and-standing-for-inclusive-teaching/>

"Creating Accessible Presentations": NCTE/CCCC's set of guidelines for accessible presentations. <https://cdn.ncte.org/nctefiles/groups/cccc/convention/2017/accessible-presentations.pdf>

Isador, G. (2019, August 9). "Indigenous Artists Tell Us What They Think about Land Acknowledgements." *Vice*. Retrieved March 20, 2020 from https://www.vice.com/en/article/j5yxbd/indigenous-artists-tell-us-what-they-think-about-land-acknowledgements?fbclid=IwAR1tqCg3BOd_Y-N9iMwbanyr2rcn-Wj73N1gs3YzR-mmzmbw3O49AtHjxk

Shim Roth, M. (2020, July 6). "What Anti-Racism Really Means -- And How to Be Anti-Racist." *Good Housekeeping*. <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/a32962206/what-is-anti-racism/>,

Vowel, C. (2016, September 23). "Beyond Territorial Acknowledgements." *âpihtawikosisân*. <https://apihtawikosisan.com/2016/09/beyond-territorial-acknowledgments/>

Wood, Tara. "Preparing an Accessible Presentation." Retrieved March 22, 2021 from <https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/u.osu.edu/dist/6/27808/files/2015/12/Wood-Preparing-a-Presentation-2.28.13.pdf>

Section 4: Recommendations for Conference Committees: Responsibilities, and Composition

The planning structure for the Feminisms and Rhetorics conference (FRC) has historically been one in which the local host has taken on the majority of the conference work with the Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition (CFSHRC) offering minimal assistance through an ad hoc committee (the Liaison committee). This structure enabled the conference host the opportunity to direct and support feminist scholarship and practice in our field while making significant contributions to the life of the CFSHRC. However, with this opportunity for the local hosts comes great responsibility and labor, even more so as the FRC grows. Our committee has identified the need for more clarity and transparency as to the roles of the host and CFSHRC committees, and we see the need for CFSHRC to take on more labor and responsibility, especially as conference planners work to implement the new guidelines outlined in this report pertaining to antiracist, invitational, accessible, and affordable FRC practices.

With the aim of creating more equitable, sustainable, and affordable conference hosting, we propose that CFSHRC create a permanent, standing Conference Committee (CC) to share the work of conference organizing and hosting. The CC would be made up of Advisory Board and CFSHRC members and the term of appointment would be three years, so that the CC could act as a bridge from one FRC and HC to another. This section outlines proposed roles for the CC as well as the conference Host Committee (HC). These roles should be discussed and clarified

once the host site and HC are selected. While HC should retain responsibility for the conference theme, day-to-day planning, logistics and any number of other conference-specific tasks, we suggest the CC play an integral part in conference planning, hosting, archiving, and post conference reflection.

Proposed Responsibilities for CFSHRC Conference Committee (CC)

1. Actualize antiracist, inclusive, accessible, affordable conferencing practices for the FRC
 - a. Craft the Call for FRC Hosts to underscore the value of antiracist, inclusive, accessible, affordable conferencing (see Section 1.1 & 1.4; Section 2.2; Section 3.4).
 - i. Circulate Call for FRC Hosts to diverse audiences and institutions.
 - ii. Identify and recruit potential hosts and sites that embody and reflect the antiracist, inclusive, accessible, affordable practices identified in this report.
 - b. Select conference hosts and sites, paying particular attention to how the potential hosts will incorporate anti-racist, inclusive, accessible, affordable approaches to conferencing.
 - i. Confirm the appointment of the HC Access Coordinator (see Section 2.1).
 - ii. Set up training for HC Access Coordinator.
 - c. Offer guidance and support to HC regarding antiracist, inclusive practices (see Section 1), especially
 - i. antiracist, inclusive, anti-ableist proposal review process (see Section 1.3);
 - ii. selection of and engagement with keynote speakers (see Section 1.6);
 1. Establish equitable pay rates for keynotes that are consistent across FRCs.
 - d. Offer guidance and support to HC regarding accessibility services for the conference (see Section 2).
 - i. CC via the CFSHRC should ensure funding for both the Access Coordinator, CART services, and ASL interpretations.
 - e. Offer guidance and support to HC regarding FRC budgeting to maximize affordability (See Section 3).
 - f. Create a Rapid Response Team (RRT) that is tasked with collecting feedback and responding to grievances relating to antiracism and inclusion as well as accessibility. (Section 1.14 & Section 2.7).
 - g. Coordinate conversations between the HC and other CFSHRC committees (such as Alternative Initiative committee) to help identify invitational and mentorship opportunities for the conference.
 - h. Collaborate with the HC regarding accountability and responsibility if/when issues arise at the FRC. The CFSHRC should share responsibility with the HC.
2. Create opportunities for information sharing and structural support that recognizes HC labor and enables streamlined, consistent labor practices from across conferences. (a) Archive conference materials such as the program; proposal review process documentation; conference innovations and workarounds; feedback from conference attendees; reports from Access Coordinator, RRT, and Proposal Review Team, as well as HC reports, assessments, and especially financial reports.
 - i. This archive should make clear the topics, themes, and speakers that have been represented in the past, providing insight regarding the

1. choices made by conference planners.
- ii. This archive should catalog ideas for managing HC workload (including building connections to course offerings, advocating for course reassignment, arranging student worker support, etc.).
- iii. This archive should also provide space for ideas to increase/better enable antiracist, invitational, accessible, and affordable conference practices (see “Ideas to Increase Accessibility, Equity and Welcoming” starter draft in Appendix).
- b. Coordinate meeting(s) between past and present HCs to share ideas and ask questions.
- c. Create a sustainable portal for FRC proposal submissions that can be used for numerous conferences and by numerous HCs.
- d. Coordinate vendors for the FRC and/or identify a more productive role for publishers at the FRC such as their participation in panels on dissertation-to-book revisions, book proposal submissions, revisions to manuscript post-review, etc.
- e. Write letters for HC’s annual review file to acknowledge host(s)’ labor and document such work as scholarship as well as national service.

Proposed Composition of the CC

3. Composition of the CC should represent the variety of CFSHRC members who participate in the FRC. We suggest the CC include:
 - i. one former HC member,
 - ii. one graduate student,
 - iii. one non-tenure track or adjunct faculty member,
 - iv. one tenure-track faculty member,
 - v. one member of a future/potential HC,
 - vi. one member of the CFSHRC Executive Board.¹
4. To the extent possible, CC members should serve for 3-year terms and those terms would stagger so that returning and new members could overlap.
5. One goal of this committee is for emerging or interested CFSHRC members or feminist scholars to gain insight on conference planning; membership in this committee could be seen as a kind of feminist mentorship.

Proposed Responsibilities for Host Committee

6. Take lead on and consult with CC on antiracist, inclusive conferencing recommendations (see Section 1).
 - a. Assume responsibility for antiracist, inclusive conferencing practices related to the FRC theme and Call for Proposals; keynote speaker invitations and engagement with these scholars; conference location reckoning; land acknowledgment statements; spotlighted sessions; name tag/badge creation; community outreach; affinity group meet-ups; childcare options; and Q&A guidelines.
 - b. Identify one HC member who will be a part of the Rapid Response Team (RRT) (see Section 1.13).
7. Take lead and consult with CC on Accessibility recommendations (see Section 2).
 - a. Identify Access Coordinator within HC (see Section 2.1).
 - b. Collaborate with Access Coordinator in establishing robust access services related to creation of conference texts; amplification of disability as focal point for conference; conference space planning; communication support (CART/ASL

- interpretation); mentorship and networking (see Section 2).
8. Create a proposal review team that will select presentations and panels based in antiracist, inclusive, and anti-ableist values (see Section 1.3; Section 4.1.c).
 - a. This team should compose a report that is archived by the CC and used by future FRC Host Committees (see 4.2).
 9. Host an annual Town Hall session at FRC that invites all conference attendees to discuss issues of concern related to the FRC.
 - a. Compose a report on that Town Hall that is submitted to the CC archive (see 4.2).
 10. Compose and archive a final report on FRC planning and execution as well as a reflection on the HC's FRC that includes recommendations for future practice (see 4.2).

¹ These roles can overlap. For instance, the TT member might also be a member of the CFSHRC Executive Board, or that the NTT member might also be a future HC member

Proposed Composition of the HC

11. Cross-Institutional Host Committee: The HC is traditionally composed of feminist scholars at the singular institution hosting FRC. We suggest cross-institutional hosting, with membership and leadership of the HC coming from different institutions in the same general geographic location. Such cross-institutional leadership could open up possibilities for collaboration among HBCUs, tribal colleges, other minority-serving institutions, and community colleges.
12. Diverse Committee Membership: We advise the HC to be populated across rank and identity, with the most responsibility falling on tenured faculty.
13. The HC should also include the appointed Access Coordinator (see Section 2.1) and a member should also serve on the Rapid Response Team (See Section 1.14).

Additional Suggestions for the Coalition Conference Committee

The responsibilities outlined above require changes to the current FRC workflows, formats, and processes, as well as the following suggestions regarding additional finances, personnel, resources, and actions.

14. Increased Finances for HC: The conference seed money for the HC from the CFSHRC should be increased to \$5,000. Discussion with recent conference hosts suggest the current seed money is insufficient to cover often-required deposits for conference space and technology, up-front mailing or tech support costs and other inevitable expenditures that arise very early in the conference planning process.
15. Suggested Resources: To assist future local conference host committees, the CC should create the following documents:
 - a. Local HC guidebook (as an update to current Host FAQs);
 - b. Revise HC application and Call for FRC Host to reflect investments reflected in this report relating to antiracist, invitational, accessible and affordable conference practices (see Sections 1-3).
16. CC Responsibility: The CC should take on greater responsibility through increased presence, guidance, and labor for the next FRC. Doing so, we believe, will demonstrate the CFSHRC's commitment to responding to and addressing criticisms raised at previous conferences and in organization surveys as well as to test the newly established guidelines and processes we detail above and in Sections 1-3.

Resources for Conference Workload and Transparency

Almjeld, Jennifer and Traci Zimmerman. "Invaluable, but Invisible: Conference Hosting as Vital

but Undervalued Intellectual Labor.” *Journal of Multimodal Rhetorics*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 32-44.

Appendix C

Proposal for the Establishment of the Fellowship Pod Program

The Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition (CFSHRC) will establish a non-hierarchical fellowship program to foster substantial and long-term community building among its membership. The program is designed to respond to members’ calls for a re-imagining and re-organization of coalition networks and address critiques that the organization has fostered a culture of charismatic leadership, elitism, and bias.

Goals

- To disrupt charismatic models of leadership/mentorship in the coalition.
- To encourage participants to establish and maintain relationships with the CFSHRC membership beyond the confines of the Feminism and Rhetorics conference (FRC).
- To foster membership collaboration on research, teaching, and community engagement & social justice projects.

Specifications

- The program will run from July through May every year. Every July, program participants will be assigned to a pod by the CFSHRC’s pod coordinator. Pod size will be determined by program enrollment; yet, the coalition aims to keep the pods intimate.
- In their first meeting(s), pod members will determine the anticipated topics and activities that will animate their year-long dialogue and will coordinate their meeting/interaction times. Pod members will also co-construct their group’s accountability and confidentiality policies, including their rules for dismissing members who enact harm that can not be mediated.
- At the end of the program year, each pod will reach consensus regarding *if* they will share their pod activities with the larger coalition membership. Pods are not required to share, and the coalition understands that some discussions might be of a sensitive nature.
- Although program participants will be encouraged to maintain relationships with their pod mates, recurring participants will be asked to consider consenting to a new pod assignment each year of their participation. This request is intended to encourage diffuse community-building among the coalition. Of course, the coalition will honor requests to keep pods intact and understand that some projects will require more than a year to complete.
- Additionally, the coalition will honor requests for identity-based, career-specific pods, and themed-pods. The coalition asks that interested parties inform the pod coordinator of their interest in such pods so program participants may elect to join them during the July enrollment period. As a note, members may join more than one pod.
- Participants will be encouraged to share any grievances with the Coalition’s pod coordinator. The pod coordinator will consult the executive board concerning issues that extend beyond simple logistic issues.

Pod Coordinator Responsibilities

- Works with advisory board members and social media coordinator to recruit participants among coalition members.

- Coordinates composition of pods (initial Pod Person will likely need to create some general guidelines for composition)
- Conducts regular check-ins with pods to ensure participants' needs are met, and makes recommendations for changes accordingly
- Invites pod participation in the FRC, OR works with CFHRC's Conference Committee to create opportunities for pod participation at the FRC
- Reports to advisory board on the needs of pods
- Links pods to advisory board and resources to promote pod efforts

Citation Statement:

Hearing the concerns of the coalition's membership regarding leadership hierarchies in the organization, Mudiwa Pettus offered the "Fellowship Pods Program" as a way for the coalition to partially address its organizational issues. Mudiwa would like to credit Tina Chen, Associate Professor of English and Asian American Studies, for modeling inclusive multi directional mentorship during her time at Penn State

(<http://english.la.psu.edu/graduate/mentoring-program>).

Additionally, she would like to credit the invaluable mentorship she has received from Black scholars, particularly members of the NCTE/CCCC Black Caucus, through whom she has learned of the radical possibilities of scholarly community-building. This proposal is the outcome of collaboration among Jennifer Almjeld, Jessica Enoch, Ruth Osorio, Mudiwa Pettus, Sherita Roundtree, and Patrick Thomas.