Empowering Teacher-Leaders as Writers and Writing Instructors

The Center for the Liberal Arts in partnership with the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia is pleased to invite Central Virginia K-12 teachers from all disciplinary backgrounds to apply for the 2016 Summer Writing Invitational Institute, under the auspices of the Central Virginia Writing Project (CVWP) in collaboration with the National Writing Project. The goal of the Institute is to support and empower teacher-leaders as change agents within their classrooms, schools, and school divisions by developing their knowledge and skills in writing and writing instruction, giving them a forum to take risks as educators, to test out ideas, and to get feedback from knowledgeable professionals. Additionally, national research studies confirm significant gains in writing performance among students of teachers who have participated in National Writing Project programs.

More specifically and in response to local school divisions’ increased focus on digital writing and overall digital literacy, teachers will reimagine writing with a culturally diverse lens in order to strengthen their students’ voices and writing skills needed to successfully navigate an information-saturated and technology-rich 21st century. Exploring ways to use writing as a tool not only to learn content but also to understand differing cultures across the curriculum will serve as a guiding theme throughout the two-week program. In addition to developing teachers’ disciplinary areas of expertise through writing, an important objective of the Institute will be to develop the teachers’ capacity to offer professional development for others within their schools and/or school divisions. The Institute will be facilitated by Dr. Natasha Heny, Assistant Professor of English Education at UVA, and Ms. Lisa Harman, an elementary school teacher in Albemarle County Public Schools and previous Institute participant and site co-director.

During Fall 2016, teachers will participate in continuity work groups comprised of their Institute peers geared toward supporting teachers’ implementation of their newfound writing knowledge and skills in the nuanced contexts of their classrooms and student demographics. These study groups will be facilitated by two writing instructors from the Department of English in the College of Arts and Sciences at UVA for approximately 18 hours of program follow-up support.

How do I apply?

Please email the following two application components to Becky Abell Yancey at rla@virginia.edu by May 31, 2016:

1. Application Letter
   Write a one-page (450 words or less) letter describing what your students do as writers on a typical day, what you do as their teacher, and why you would like to attend the Summer Writing Invitational Institute. Please also include the following contact information: name, address, phone number, email address (that you check regularly and during the summer), school name, school division, grade(s) and subject(s) taught.

2. Letter of Reference
   The letter of reference should be written by either your principal or instructional administrator at the school division level. The letter should address the following questions: What are the strengths of the applicant as a classroom teacher? How do you see the applicant as a teacher-leader in your school/school division? How will you support this teacher in taking on a leadership role for writing instruction in your school/school division? How do you think this teacher will contribute to the Central Virginia Writing Project (CVWP) professional learning and writing community?

Application Deadline: May 31, 2016
If you have any questions, please contact Becky Abell Yancey at 434-982-5205 or rla@virginia.edu. Letters of acceptance will be sent no later than June 15, 2016.