Britt Starr, PhD
Writing Program Administration Statement

Through each area of my work--scholarship, teaching, mentorship, and administration--I apply feminist and antiracist rhetorical expertise and lived transcultural experience as a white woman to dismantle white supremacist patriarchy and co-construct more equitable systems.

As Assistant Director of UMD's award-winning first-year writing program, which serves a 47% minority undergraduate student body, I helped transform the program around core values of antiracism and the public good. I helped redesign the curriculum to center antiracist methods and methodology and then co-wrote the new textbook, mentored new faculty, and led professional development opportunities for the 60+ instructors who teach over 120 sections totaling over 2200 students per semester in the program. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, I supported our writing faculty as they transitioned suddenly to emergency online teaching by helping to quickly create virtual resources and train seasoned faculty. I also mentored first-time instructors in weekly meetings to help them enact the antiracist writing pedagogy online and prioritize student care while both the pandemic and civic unrest produced unique challenges. Each summer during the tenure of my PhD I have won funding to help the writing program continue to improve its transformative, exigent rhetorical education. In 2021, for example, I won a $1,000 grant from the Do Good Institute to develop a rhetorical reading curriculum, which I called, "Mindful Reading for the Civic Good." Prior to my doctorate at the University of Maryland, I ran the academic support services for multilingual students at Mills College and helped found the Center for Teaching and Scholarship at Mills College as well.

I believe it should be a university writing program's primary aim to prepare ethical, innovative co-creators of a more equitable future. To do this, writing centers must move beyond a narrow focus on perfecting academic forms of writing to instead cultivate in students an aptitude for diverse kinds of rhetorical analysis, persuasive multimodal composition, and digital techne using academic research habits and scholarly dispositions. I also think respect for diversity-- of ideas, of languaging practices, and of cultural perspectives-- is a necessity that the university writing center must model and teach.

One way I cultivate respect for diversity is by engaging students to get curious (and skeptical) about the dominant norms and values of academia they have internalized. I have published on white supremacy culture in graduate classrooms with the intention of provoking discussion and change in my field. My peer-reviewed publication, "Disturbing White Perfectionism in the Graduate Student Habitus," in the *Peitho Journal of the Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rhetoric & Composition* (Spring 2021) reflects my commitment to help transform the diverse spaces I inhabit.

I draw from my research and experiences at the University of Maryland and Mills College, as well as having worked outside of academia as well, I would bring administrative practices rooted in antiracism, intersectional feminist rhetoric, and critical digital studies. For example, I use Krista Ratcliffe's "rhetorical listening" framework to train tutors to be better readers of student writing, alongside frameworks of language diversity that refuse to uphold a single standard of "white" English as superior to other Englishes students may bring into the university setting. I also incorporate principles from critical digital studies, like algorithmic oppression, to ensure students have a functional understanding of how the digital tools like Google Search that we use to inquire about issues are never neutral.

Overall in my WPA work, I aim to use all the tools at my disposal to contribute to social transformation in and beyond higher education by equipping students with the tools and knowledges to engage ethically and effectively in conversations where livable futures are determined.