

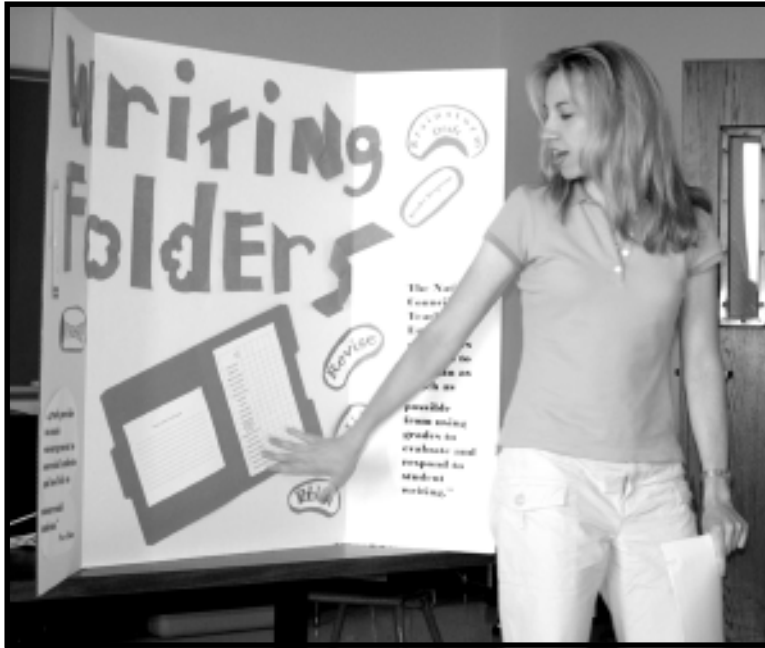


# Connections

Newsletter of the Western Massachusetts Writing Project

## Sharing Research Findings

2005 Summer Institute participant **Shaari Mersack** presents her inquiry project. For news of WMWP summer programs, see pages 2-3.



## Take our survey!

Tell us what's new in your professional life! Please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire on page 7, updating us on your job, your interests, and your accomplishments.

If you are a Summer Institute alum, we would also like to know how the SI has affected your teaching—and how our site can involve you in the future.

We look forward to hearing from you!

## How can WMWP connect with you?

By **Bruce M. Penniman**

Preparing for my third year as WMWP site director, I have been compiling the calendar for 2005-2006. I am awestruck by the amount and quality of work that our **teacher-leaders** are doing. View the full calendar on-line and see what I mean!

On page 4 you will find a listing of our fall programs, some of which are described in more detail elsewhere in this newsletter. Of special interest are the expanded **Best Practices in the Teaching of Writing** conference on October 1 (pages 5-6) and new **Stump Sprouts Writing Retreat** on December 2-4 (page 6). Also of note:

- Continuing this year are the very successful **Get Published!** series and the **Creative Journeys** writing workshop program, in which teachers can learn new

skills, create exciting opportunities for their students, and even earn a stipend!

- Former site director Charlie Moran will teach **Writing and the Teaching of Writing**, a core course in WMWP's graduate certificate program, on Thursdays this fall, and a new course on **Teaching with Technology** is in the works for spring.

- Supported by grants from the National Writing Project, WMWP is sponsoring **ongoing initiatives** in reading, technology, teacher research, and working with English Language learners.

- Starting October 3 the *Springfield Republican* will run **monthly features** on WMWP teachers and their students' work.

Which existing—or potential—programs will best serve *you* and activate *your* leadership potential? Let us know!

## Office News

**Cate Hunter** (photo), who has served ably as WMWP office manager for two years, has completed her M.A. and taken a conference planning position at Hotel Northampton. We know she's good at that kind of work!



WMWP's new office manager is **Amber Engelson**, a doctoral candidate in English. Welcome, Amber!.

## 'Making Connections' in Athol and Holyoke

By **Kevin Hodgson**

They arrived with only rudimentary understanding of technology and a bit of trepidation, but the 10 teachers from Athol and Holyoke who attended WMWP's new Making Connections program this summer came away with practical experiences in hyperlinking to web sites, using weblogs as a publishing tool, and creating ways to forge common bonds between middle school students.

The program is being funded by a \$15,000 Technology Initiative grant from the National Writing Project. The project has three main strands: to provide resources and professional development for teachers seeking to incorporate technology into the classroom; creating a virtual writing community for students in rural and urban environments where they can communicate and publish work through weblogs (provided by NWP); and to expand the scope of the WMWP into the field of technology.

During the first week of Making Connections, the 10 middle school teachers from Athol-Royalston Middle School and Peck and Lynch middle schools in Holyoke met with WMWP Technology Liaison Kevin Hodgson and co-facilitator **Tawyna Tiskus** to learn about how to use various facets of technology in the classroom and to develop a curriculum for the following week's summer

camp and a month-long fall initiative. (You can view their work at <http://blogs.writingproject.org/blogwrite256/>.)

The following week, teachers led the free summer camps for young writers at their respective schools, and approximately 20 students spent the week developing web pages, writing personal narratives, commenting on other students' work, and creating self-portraits.

The fall program will involve almost 200 students in Athol and Holyoke building a virtual writing community. The schools will be using four different weblogs, and elements of the program include connections to literature. Students will be reading short stories reflective of urban and rural experience and using the weblogs to respond to the readings. Some classes will be also reading the short novel *Seedfolk* by Paul Fleischman.

The main theme of the fall program revolves around the idea of a virtual community garden space (inspired by *Seedfolk*). Students will create their own Seeds of Understanding webpages then take ownership of a "plot of land" in a virtual garden that will symbolize this writing community being developed on-line.

Plans are in the works to expand Making Connections into other school. To read more, visit *WMWP News* at <http://blogs.writingproject.org/blogwrite60/>.

## Building WMWP's ELL leadership capacity

By **Lucia Spiro**

This summer, 11 teachers from western Massachusetts participated in the first ELL Leadership Institute created by **Wilma Ortiz** and **Karen Sumaryono**. In nine very full days in July, Karen and Wilma brought together ELL teachers with expertise in language acquisition and cultural issues but limited experience as professional development providers and WMWP teacher-consultants with strong presenting skills but limited expertise in the field of ELL.

The institute's goal was to teach the participants how to present ELL-related in-services courses. Through writing exercises, cooperative activities, lively discussions, and instruction each day came alive in the classroom at the Meline Kasparian Professional Development Center in Springfield. The institute was supported in part by a grant from the National Writing Project.

The institute was a most rewarding and educational experience because it provided the participants a great opportunity for professional growth. All the members were teachers of ELL students in elementary and sec-

ondary schools, so there was an opportunity for broad discussions on issues relating to different age groups with the same language needs. There were also representatives from six different school districts, which offered perspectives from different communities.

In addition, the institute provided an organized template for the participants to present other workshops, through the excellent modeling of the two knowledgeable and supportive instructors. It showed many activities and strategies for making workshops interesting, informative, and organized for adults.

Opportunities were incorporated throughout the two weeks for the participants to make mini-presentations, design a presentation, and learn the components of a good workshop. WMWP co-director **Susan Biggs** offered a valuable short workshop on the latter. The whole institute was most enjoyable because it not only had two great master instructors to learn from, but also a group of dedicated educators with similar interests and love for ELL students from whom to learn and with whom to engage in high level discussions.

## 'A Month in the Life': Summer Institute 2005

By Casey Burton and Jenna Kakimoto

The WMWP 2005 Summer Institute met for the first time, bleary-eyed and fire-worked on the morning of July 5. Our over-air conditioned room sat high atop Tobin, with a view of mountains in the distance as well as the various summer camps in progress on the sports fields below. Each day's meeting began with coffee, tea, and the extensive array of food participants took turns bringing. Participant-lead workshops, writing and response, and research filled the rest of each day.

A highlight of week one was an all-day writing marathon. We may have doubted we could spend so many hours writing, but we quickly learned we could. Groups spread across the UMass campus, with some spilling into coffee shops in downtown Amherst. One even made its way to the Duffy greenhouses. Not only did the marathon serve as an intensive initiation into the writing we'd be doing throughout the entire institute, it provided a chance to get to know the writing groups we'd be working with closely for the rest of the month.

Week one also taught us the complicated process of unlocking the computer lab as well as using the "usually-up-and-running" printer. Technology Liaison **Kevin Hodgson** introduced us to the NWP *E-Anthology* as well as the WMWP blog, returning a few times during the institute to patiently and expertly coach us through the various stages of web-posting and PowerPoint-creating.

Participant-led workshops were a major component of the Summer Institute. **Kathy Mounemneh** blazed a brave trail, guiding participants in rewritings fairy tales using various newspaper genres. Fifteen more great workshops followed. Here's a sample: **Barbara Bradbury** brought each of us personalized metacognitive toolkits. **Georgia Patnode** demonstrated an author study on Sharon Creech, awakening-or re-awakening-a desire in many of us to read more of her work. And **Momodou Sarr** inspired us with his passionate workshop on service learning as a way to teach social justice.

On the first morning of week three, **Lauri Shinkle** met us with blues music and a workshop on how she uses the blues as part of an integrated curriculum. **Anne Louise White** continued the musical theme that day with a workshop on integrating the arts (music, drama, photography) into the curriculum (and sharing with us her beautiful singing voice). Later on, **Michelle Bussiere** courageously engaged a roomful of non-math teachers in a little bit of applied math. Using an illuminating slide show history of children's literature in America, as well as an



*Sue Deputy signs in to start the day at the WMWP Summer Institute.*

impressive array of picture books that featured confident, strong females, tender males, and different cultures, **Burleigh Muten** discussed gender roles in children's literature. Burleigh also left us with an intriguing question: Would *Harriet Potter* be as popular as *Harry*?

The institute ended with more food and many guests, including administrators, colleagues, and friends. Participants shared their work and guests learned more about NWP and WMWP. The opportunity to write, respond to—and be inspired by—the writing of others, do research, learn new and exciting teaching techniques, and spend time with supportive, insightful, fun teachers and co-directors was a gift to all of us. We will return to our classrooms in the fall ready to share with our students some of what we learned and experienced this summer.

# WMWP Calendar for Fall 2005

(Please post! For complete listings and directions, visit [www.umass.edu/wmwp/](http://www.umass.edu/wmwp/).)

## Writing and the Teaching of Writing

Thursdays, September 8- December 8, 4-6:30 p.m. UMass, Bartlett Hall.

*English 712, a 3-credit core course in WMWP's Graduate Certificate in the Teaching of Writing program taught by Professor Charles Moran. The course will focus on questions such as: What is writing? Do writers "develop," and if so, how? Can we accelerate this development? What do we know about writing and culture? Writing and English Language Learners? Continuing Education tuition and fees: \$335. Register on-line at [www.umasslearn.net](http://www.umasslearn.net).*

## Writing-and-Response Group

Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., September 10, October 8, November 5, January 7, February 4, March 4, April 1, May 20. UMass, Bartlett Hall.

*Open to all K-13 teachers in western Massachusetts, the writing-and-response group provides time for writing and response in a relaxed setting. The sessions are led by Diana Callahan, co-director emerita of WMWP. Free.*

## Time to Write

Fridays, 3:30-6 p.m., September 23, October 21, December 2, spring dates TBA. Kasparian Professional Development Center, Springfield.

*A similar writing-and-response group for teachers in the Springfield area. This group is led by WMWP Executive Board member Charlotte Lak. Free.*

## Writing Matters Administrators' Conference

Friday, September 23, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. UMass, Bartlett Hall.

*This meeting will provide K-12 administrators the opportunity to reflect on the status of writing instruction in their schools and their teachers' professional development needs. Limit 20. Fee: \$200 (includes lunch and books).*

## Best Practices in the Teaching of Writing

Saturday, October 1, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. UMass, Bartlett Hall.

*See description on pages 5-6. 5 PDPs. Fee: \$25 (\$20 if mailed by September 20) includes morning coffee and lunch.*

## Links to Literacy: The Reading-Writing Connection

Thursdays, 3:45-6:15, October 6, November 3, January 19, February 16, April 6. Chicopee Elks.

*A series of workshops by WMWP teacher-consultants sponsored by the Pioneer Valley Reading Council. 10 PDPs. Annual membership fee: \$35. Individual workshop fee: \$15. A PVRC membership application is available at [www.massreading.org/Councils/PVRC/](http://www.massreading.org/Councils/PVRC/).*

## Get Published!

Mondays, 4-6 p.m., October 17, November 7, November 28, January 9 (snow date January 23), January 30, March 20, May 22. UMass, Bartlett Hall. **Application deadline: October 7.**

*A series of workshops for teachers who want to provide their students authentic audiences for writing. Led by Pamela Howes, Leif Riddington, and other WMWP teacher-consultants, participants will develop and implement classroom or school publication projects while learning teaching strategies and publishing technology. 30 PDPs. \$200 stipend. Details at [www.umass.edu/wmwp](http://www.umass.edu/wmwp). To apply, see page 7.*

## Creative Journeys

Wednesdays, November 2, December 7, 4-7 p.m.; Thursday, January 12, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. (snow date January 19). UMass, Bartlett Hall. **Application deadline: October 7.**

*A series of meetings designed to provide teachers with the resources, guidance, and time to plan writing workshops aimed at bringing their love of poetry, fiction, or non-fiction to students at their own schools. In addition, participants will be able to bring 20 of their students to WMWP's day-long student writing workshop. Led by teacher-consultants Sara Palmer and Pamela Howes. 12 PDPs. \$100 stipend. Details at [www.umass.edu/wmwp](http://www.umass.edu/wmwp). To apply, see page 7.*

## WMWP Task Force Meetings

Wednesdays, 4-5:30 p.m., October 19, January 25, April 26. Wistariahurst Museum, Holyoke.

*Task forces are planning groups of WMWP alums working in the areas of continuity (programs to support WMWP teacher leaders), in-service (programs for all teachers), and outreach (programs for youth and community). Membership on task forces is open to all WMWP teacher-consultants. E-mail [wmwp@english.umass.edu](mailto:wmwp@english.umass.edu) to join a task force.*

## Stump Sprouts Writing Retreat

Friday evening-Sunday morning, December 2-4. Stump Sprouts Conference Center, Hawley.

*See description on page 6. Fee: \$130 (includes home-cooked meals and bunkhouse lodging). Limit 25. Registration deadline (with payment in full): October 25.*

## Learn more on-line!

Visit [www.umass.edu/wmwp](http://www.umass.edu/wmwp) for more details on these programs and for previews of WMWP's exciting spring lineup, including **Writing, Teaching, and Technology**, a K-college conference on April 7-8, and **SummerWrite**, a workshop series for teachers who want to offer summer writing camps.

# Best Practices in the Teaching of Writing

*Workshops by Western Mass. Writing Project Teacher-Consultants*

**October 1, 2005**

**Bartlett Hall, University of Massachusetts/Amherst**

**\$25 fee (\$20 if sent by September 20)**

**5 PDPs**

Note: Fee is non-refundable, but registration may be transferred to another person.

WMWP's annual fall conference has been **expanded** this year to **13 workshops** by participants in the 2005 Summer Institute, ELL Leadership Institute, and Making Connections Initiative. Coffee and lunch are included!

## Schedule

- 8:30** Coffee & registration
- 8:45** A workshop sessions
- 10:15** Break
- 10:30** B workshop sessions
- 12:00** Luncheon, Pat Hunter Award, & presentation on WMWP programs
- 1:30** C workshop sessions
- 3:00** Closing & PDP certificate pickup

## A Workshop Sessions

**A1. Gender in Children's Literature: What's the Message Between the Lines?** *Burleigh Muten, The Common School, Amherst.* E/M/H. Gender messages are subtle and overt in our literature and our classrooms—no matter how hard we try to provide a nonbiased atmosphere. Participants will reflect on the messages they received as students and the messages they convey as teachers through writing, discussion, and viewing illustrations from children's books spanning the past 50 years.

**A2. Engaging Young Writers through an Author Study.** *Georgia Patnode, West Springfield High School.* E/M/H. Author studies help develop a community of readers and writers. During an author study, students examine the writer's craft in depth and come to view the author as a person. Participants will explore a sample author study on Sharon Creech and learn how to design author studies for their own classrooms.

**A3. Metacognitive Tools: Making the Invisible Visible.** *Barbara Bradbury, Kelly School, Holyoke.* E/M/H. This workshop will explore ways to make thinking processes visible to students through the modeling and practice of using hands-on tools such as "think-aloud bookmarks" and "hand summaries." These metacognitive tools are applicable to all subjects.

**A4. Meeting Students on Their Own Turf.** *Ann C. Averill, Valley Christian School, South Hadley.* M/H. Participants will learn how to keep their students within their cultural comfort zones. The workshop will explore how to embed affective and cultural elements in lessons to enhance academic success for minority/ELL students. Examples of scaffolded lessons will be provided.

## B Workshop Sessions

**B1. Using Picture Books to Build Skills in Developing Writers of All Ages.** *Janet Andrews, Greenfield Middle School.* E/M/H. Teachers will consider the ELA standards as they explore the use of picture books for developing writers of all ages. Through personal reflection and small group participation, participants will gain appreciation for how these books can be used in all aspects of literacy learning, with a particular focus on composition.

**B2. Connecting Reading and Writing.** *Kathy Mounemneh, Agawam High School.* E/M/H. Writing can be connected to reading at various grade levels using a newspaper project. Participants will experience how students learn and practice various genres of writing based on a selected piece of literature as they become familiar with a newspaper and all it has to offer.

**B3. Mathematics Portfolios and Standards-Based Grading.** *Michelle Bussiere, South Hadley High School.* M/H. This workshop will examine one type of

standards-based grading system and combine that with some fun mathematics activities. Participants will explore how students can begin the process of assembling portfolios as a form of assessment and a powerful reflective and learning tool in mathematics (or any other discipline).

**B4. Working with English Language Learners.** *ELL Leadership Institute participants, led by Karen Sumaryono, West Springfield High School, and Wilma Ortiz, Amherst Regional Middle School.* E/M/H. This roundtable session will offer a series of small-group presentations and discussions on topics such as knowing your ELL students, effective teaching strategies, and the SIOP model of instruction. This session is relevant to teachers of all subjects.

**B5. Composing with Digital Images.** *Casey Burton, UMass Amherst.* E/M/H. Technology and digital image are currently expanding the possibilities of narrative in our classrooms. Participants in this workshop will use PowerPoint to experiment with some of these new possibilities and discuss the ins and outs of using PowerPoint and digital image in writing instruction. Knowledge of PowerPoint not required.

### C Workshop Sessions

**C1. Stepping Into Another's Skin: Bringing History to Life through Arts Integration.** *Anne Louise White, Fort River Elementary School, Amherst.* E/M/H. Songs and art works from the past are valuable artifacts that provide a special window into the lives of others and help us view history from multiple perspectives. Participants will experience hands-on activities using drama, creative writing, and music to explore the past.

**C2. How We Can Meld Mandated Programs with What We Know Are Good Writing Practices.** *Judith Breier, Boland Elementary School, Springfield.* E/M/H. This workshop will showcase ways to use data to

inform instruction and connect mandated programs with good writing practices. Participants will look at authentic student work to assess skills needed to be taught, determine a focus skill or strategy, and learn how to use the mini-lesson format to teach the skill.

**C3. Weblogs and Writing: Creating a Virtual Space.** *Making Connections Initiative participants, led by Technology Liaison Kevin Hodgson.* M/H. This workshop will explore the use of weblogs as a resource for publishing student work and encouraging interaction among writers from distant locations. Participants will learn about the Making Connections project, in which 10 teachers from Athol and Holyoke developed a curriculum using weblog technology; view samples of student work; and experiment with a weblog to get a taste of how technology can complement writing instruction.

**C4. A Forum on Collaboration.** *Jane Costello, Wildwood Elementary School, Amherst, and Chuck Edgerly, Deerfield Elementary School.* Classroom teachers and specialists are often expected to collaborate, yet the constraints of school culture can make it difficult. In this workshop, participants will have a chance to share their experiences in working with colleagues, consider the research into more effective collaboration, and modify some tools used by the presenters to improve their own collaborative efforts. The presenters are ELL teachers who collaborate with classroom teachers to provide sheltered instruction to ELL students.

*Please copy this announcement  
and share it with your colleagues!  
All teachers are welcome!  
Please fill out and mail the form on  
page 7 or register on-line at  
[www.english.umass.edu/wmwp/](http://www.english.umass.edu/wmwp/).*

### **Give yourself a holiday present!**

**Come to WMWP's new  
Stump Sprouts Writing Retreat**

December 2 (evening) – 4 (morning).

Relax, write, and rejuvenate in the pines in Hawley. Led by co-director Tina Browne, this informal retreat will offer workshops and response groups, as well as plenty of time to hike, enjoy the fireplace, and write in solitude.

Fee: \$130 (includes savory home-cooked meals and bunkhouse lodging). Limit 25. Registration deadline (with payment in full): **October 25**. Register on-line or use the form on page 7.

Note: Registration fee is non-refundable, but your reservation may be transferred to another person.

# WMWP Teacher Questionnaire

### Questions for all teachers:

1. Are your name and address correct on page 8?  
If not, check here \_\_\_ and edit the mailing label.
2. Are you receiving WMWP e-mail bulletins? \_\_\_  
If not, would you like to? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Please enter current information for our records:  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Home telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
School \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_  
Position/grade/subject \_\_\_\_\_
4. Please list any leadership positions you hold at school or in professional organizations as well as any recent awards or publications:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What are your current professional concerns and interests? How could WMWP help?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. If you have not attended a Summer Institute, would you like to? \_\_\_ (Please note that applications for 2006 will be accepted starting October 1. See [www.umass.edu/wmwp/](http://www.umass.edu/wmwp/).)

### Questions for Summer Institute alums:

1. What year did you attend the SI? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How did attending the SI affect your teaching? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What WMWP activities have you been involved in since the SI? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Would you be interested in attending a reunion of the participants in your SI? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Would you like to be more involved in WMWP? How? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Would you attend an advanced summer institute on teacher leadership? \_\_\_\_\_

## Registration Form for WMWP Fall Programs

Name \_\_\_\_\_

- Please confirm (or add) your address on the back of this sheet. Also, please supply the information requested in item 3 above.
- Check the program(s) for which you are registering/applying:  
 **Best Practices:** \$25 (\$20 if mailed by Sept. 20). See box.  
 **Get Published!** See application process in box at right.  
 **Creative Journeys:** See application process in box at right.  
 **Stump Sprouts Writing Retreat:** \$130 (deadline Oct. 25).  
 **Other:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Make checks payable to the University of Massachusetts.
- Send this entire page to WMWP, 258 Bartlett Hall, University of Massachusetts, 130 Hicks Way, Amherst, MA 01003.

### Best Practices Conference

Please write in below your choice of workshops:

A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_

### Get Published! or Creative Journeys

Please write a paragraph explaining why you are interested in the program and get your principal's approval. Deadline: Oct. 7



Western Massachusetts Writing Project  
258 Bartlett Hall  
University of Massachusetts  
130 Hicks Way  
Amherst, MA 01003-9269

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*Expanded fall conference, student writing programs, and more! Details inside!*

Western Massachusetts Writing Project

Volume 13, number 1, September 2005

## **WMWP Checklist:**

- *Complete and mail the WMWP teacher questionnaire on page 7.*
- *Register for Best Practices by September 20 and get \$5 off.*
- *Apply to Get Published! or Creative Journeys by October 7.*
- *Register for new Stump Sprouts Writing Retreat by October 25.*
- *Submit entry to Teachers as Writers Contest by November 30.*
- *Join a WMWP task force, writing group, and/or workshop series.*

## **Teachers as Writers Contest**

WMWP invites all Massachusetts educators to submit manuscripts of up to 750 words in any genre to its second annual Teachers as Writers Contest.

**First Prize:** Publication in the WMWP February newsletter and on the website. The author will receive a full scholarship (double occupancy) to the WMWP annual writers' retreat at Jiminy Peak on May 12-14, 2005.

**Second Prize:** Publication on the WMWP website. The author will receive a \$50 credit to be used toward any WMWP Teachers as Writers program.

Only one entry per person. Entry must be typed (without author's name) and accompanied by a cover sheet with contact information. For complete submission guidelines, visit [www.umass.edu/wmwp/](http://www.umass.edu/wmwp/).

**Deadline:** November 30. Mail entry to address above.