Background of the Goal for Talk

Town Hall: Feminisms and Rhetorics Conference: Considering Challenges and Opportunities for Future Conferences

Co-sponsored by Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rhetoric & Composition and The School of Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication at James Madison University

Participants: **Tarez Samra Graban**, CFSHRC President
Lisa Mastrangelo, past CFSHRC President
Jen Almjeld, 2019 FemRhet Conference Co-Chair
Traci Zimmerman, 2019 FemRhet Conference Co-Chair and AUH of the School of Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication
Patrick Thomas, 2017 FemRhet Conference Co-Chair
Elizabeth Ann Mackay, 2017 FemRhet Conference Co-Chair

Abstract: As the Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rhetoric & Composition (CFSHRC) celebrates 30 years and with the historic 2017 conference marking 20 years for this conference, this Town Hall is intended as a working session for Coaltion members and conference attendees to discuss and address issues and opportunities for future FemRhet conferences. After hearing brief remarks from each panelist, participants will be invited to choose an "issue table to join. Each table will then create one or two action items that could inform the development of future FemRhet conferences. In the spirit of transparency, we hope attendees will find a space to constructively share ideas for making future iterations of this beloved conference even better and to use the conference as a way to intentionally grow our feminist community.

The six presenters on the panel will talk for no more than three minutes each and will cover specific components of the conference in order to offer session attendees some context before we break into small working groups to crowdsource ideas for future conferences.
Topics covered include: Coalition History; Coalition Core Values; Conference Values; General Budgeting Perspectives; Specific Budget Issues (space, food, etc.); and General "What Hosts Wish Attendees Knew".

After these very brief remarks, attendees will choose one of 6 tables to join to discuss one important factor when organizing the Fem Rhet Conference. (See Facilitation Plan for these areas)

Each of the six panelists will join a table and will also be joined by a student facilitator that will help guide discussion by emphasizing values related to each topic and also taking notes. The student facilitators will also be tasked with reporting out on each table's work.

Facilitation Plan

Town Hall: Feminisms and Rhetorics Conference: Considering Challenges and Opportunities for Future Conferences

Friday, November 15, 2019, Hotel Madison Ballroom
Session I 8-9:15 a.m.

Facilitation Team Contact: Dr. Rob Alexander, 303/818-0418

** Facilitators, dress is business casual and you should plan to arrive by 7:45 am at the latest
Notepads and copies of the Facilitation Plan will be provided for you

Panel Discussion 8-8:20 am (See page 1)
After the panel discussion, Jen Almjeld will provide instructions for attendees to select a table. Participants will begin their conversation at that table, but should follow the "law of two feet" and when so moved, join another table.

Facilitators will welcome participants and ask those gathered to follow some agreements.

Agreements:
You are gathered because this conference is important to you and valuable to you.

- Let's agree to engage in ways that keep this belief at the center.
- Let's commit to problem-solving and creative energy that seeks to address challenges.
- Let's agree to engage with different perspectives and learn from them.
- Anything else?

Facilitators will then help the group engage in discussion of the designated topic using the question prompts below.

Facilitators should take notes and capture questions and ideas, and at the end, several recommended action items.

Because not everyone can attend the Town Hall, we will disperse a digital set of notes from the event where those who could not attend can add their voices. We will also makes spaces available at the conference – via posters for comments – in the halls on Friday and Saturday. The contents of the poster comments will be gathered and dispersed following the conference along with notes from the Town Hall.

Facilitators, before leaving, take a few minutes to review your notes and add any missing words/thoughts. Then hand your notes to Harry Hudome who will work with Jen Almjeld to get these compiled and posted.

Topic/Facilitator	Questions to explore

Conference Values
Facilitator - Julia Mann
	• What values do you think underlie this conference?
	  ○ The planning?
	  ○ The conference experience?
	• What things that we are doing are "living" those values?
	• How can we better live these values?
	• What specific actions/ideas can you brainstorm for improvement?

Mentoring Facilitator – Ethan Barlage	• What is valuable about mentoring opportunities in the coalition/at the conference? Why is it something we value? • What does mentoring currently look like in the coalition or at the conference? • What does the Coalition/Fem Rhet Conference do well regarding mentoring? • What specific actions/ideas can you brainstorm for improvement?
Accessibility Facilitator – Bri Hamblim	• When you think of accessibility, what does that mean to you? • What is important to you about accessibility? • How does the coalition/conference live its values regarding accessibility? • What specific actions/ideas can you brainstorm for improvement?
Traditions – Elizabeth Donovan	• What conference traditions are valued the most? • Why do these traditions stand out? • What do these traditions highlight as our values? • If one of your favorite traditions were not to be continued, how would this impact your experience at the conference? • What specific actions/ideas can you brainstorm for improvement?
Time of Year – Erin Henderson	• What is affected by the time of year that conference is held? • What would the "right time of the year" look like? • What factors currently impact the time of year that this conference is held? • Which factors should play the largest role in decision-making and why? • What specific actions might you suggest for how decision-making about the time of year the conference is held?
Innovative Ideas – Abby Burch and Andre Moore	• What has been your favorite part of the conferences thus far? • What haven't you seen at a conference yet that you would like to see? • Are their things you have experienced or heard of at other conferences that you think would be valuable or interesting for Fem Rhet to add? • Money, nor time not a factor, what would you want to see the conference do? • What are one or two ideas that you would like to see explored for the next conference?