



2015 Duke AHEAD Grant Proposal  
Email to [kristin.dickerson@duke.edu](mailto:kristin.dickerson@duke.edu) by August 21, 2015  
(Limit 5 pages, does not include budget table or references)

**Title:** Writing Together to get AHEAD

**Principal Investigator/School/Department:** Duke AHEAD Writing Task Force (Linda S. Lee, Megan von Isenburg, Marilyn Oermann)

**Collaborator(s)/School(s)/Department(s):** Linda S. Lee (Master of Biomedical Sciences Degree Program, Duke University School of Medicine; Megan von Isenburg (Research and Education, Duke University Medical Center Library; Marilyn Oermann, School of Nursing)

**Focused question:** How can Duke AHEAD advance peer-reviewed publication of Duke AHEAD scholarship on teaching and learning? For Duke AHEAD members, can a program combining peer accountability, incentives, and professional editorial services increase the dissemination of scholarly publications on teaching and learning?

**Background:** (including brief review of prior research)

Writing for publication is a skill integral to the communication required to advance educational and clinical practice, and therefore patient care. Through journals, health professionals share research findings, new approaches, and lessons learned. In addition, publications are necessary for career advancement in health professions schools and other academic settings.

Efforts to foster writing skills among graduate students, health professions trainees and faculty encompass a variety of strategies, including writing assignments in courses, workshops, retreats, writing across the curriculum, formal and informal faculty development groups, writing groups, individual consulting and feedback, and “how to” articles and books (Cafarella et al., 2004; Friend & Gonzalez, 2009; Gasman, 2011; Hara, 2009; Oermann et al., 2015; Pololi et al., 2004; Williams, 2011). In 2014, the Duke AHEAD Writing Task Force launched an initiative to motivate and support faculty writing and publication by offering a “jump start” panel (“Get AHEAD on Your Writing”) followed by a structured Boot Camp designed to motivate writing through a sequenced, modularized approach to manuscript completion that included small group meetings and peer feedback over a four-month period.

Results of the Writing Boot Camp were mixed, as only a small number (9) of the original 20 participants completed a manuscript for submission by the end of the Boot Camp. Formal group sessions after the first two meetings were cancelled due to lack of interest. Our participant survey and debriefings at the conclusion of the Boot Camp indicated the following challenges:

- the perceived helpfulness of peer feedback was directly proportional to the peer's experience and success in scholarly writing
- use of resources, such as Boot Camp guides (the three Writing Task force members), handouts, outlines, review criteria, and timelines was inconsistent
- clinical schedules hampered the ability of participants to attend planned meetings
- reliance on the Boot Camp guides was much heavier than anticipated and labor-intensive
- deadlines helped some participants stay on track but were difficult for others to meet
- the School of Nursing editor was heavily utilized
- finding a time and place on campus for uninterrupted writing is difficult.

In summary, the Boot Camp approach, while beneficial to a small number of participants, was labor intensive for the organizers, failed to motivate and support the majority of participants to bring a product to completion, and was generally ineffective for the majority of participants in producing publishable manuscripts. Exceptions were those School of Nursing participants who benefited from in-house editorial support.

#### **Specific aims:**

The goal of this intervention is to increase the number of scholarly publications in health professions education innovations and research from Duke faculty members and staff.

#### **Methods:**

##### ***Description of educational intervention***

The "Writing Together to Get AHEAD" intervention will provide a semi-structured program for enabling scholars to write and submit a journal article within a 16-week period. There are several components to the program:

- Participants will be invited to join in semi-monthly "Shut Up and Write Sessions." These sessions will be held in the Medical Library room 212E at different days/times per group consensus. Participants will check in on arrival and will be expected to work on their writing projects: no email, pagers, phone calls, etc. are allowed.
- Participants will be enrolled in an online community of other scholars in health professions education at Duke working on writing projects. The online community will be created using the Sakai projects feature. Participants will be divided into pairs and will be required to share deliverables and deadlines with their partner. A standard protocol and schedule of deadlines for writing the manuscript over a 16-week period will be posted, as will additional resource materials. Discussion forums for all participants will be used and moderated by the principal investigators. Optional online office hours with principal investigators will be scheduled twice a month for synchronous discussion.
- Participants who attend 4 "Shut Up and Write" sessions or complete pre-defined tasks in the online community will receive editing assistance. Editing will be limited to 2-3 hours, and the type of editing will be based on participant needs.
- Participants will have 16 weeks to write their article. The project period is for 6 months. This allows some participant flexibility in start and end times.

Participants in the program must be Duke AHEAD members, Distinguished Members, or Steering Committee Members. Enrollment will be capped at 20.

### ***Outcomes and measures***

The effectiveness of the writing program will be measured by the:

- Number of scholarly publications submitted by participants in the program. This will be compared to the number of submissions from participants in the 2014-15 Duke AHEAD writing "Boot Camp." The types of manuscripts (e.g., databased, descriptions of educational innovations, interprofessional education initiatives, etc.), journal to which submitted, and length of time for participants to complete their manuscripts will be tracked.
- Total number of participants who attend the semi-monthly "Shut Up and Write Sessions," mean number of sessions attended, and timing of those sessions (e.g., day of week, time of day).
- Extent to which participants submitted their deliverables by the due dates (established in the online writing community).
- Satisfaction of participants with the online community, process used for establishing the community, use of Sakai projects feature, deliverables and deadlines, 16-week time frame for writing and submitting the manuscript, resource materials, discussion forums, and strategy for determining editing assistance. Satisfaction will be assessed with a short questionnaire.
- Number of participants who join the optional online office hours and mean number of times they participate.
- Types of editing services requested by participants (e.g., developmental, copyediting, etc.); mean number of hours of editing received/participant and total; and cost of editing.

### ***Data management and analysis***

We will track participation in the online communities, the in-person "Shut Up and Write" sessions, and receipt of professional editorial assistance. We will also track the milestones achieved by participants, particularly focusing on article completion, submission, and acceptance. This information will be stored in a secure Box folder that is accessible only to the three investigators. Analysis will focus on whether participation in the online community or in-person sessions or receipt of professional editorial assistance facilitates article completion, submission, and acceptance. The analysis also will include participant satisfaction with the intervention (mean scores on the questionnaire). Data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics.

### ***IRB status***

The Institutional Review Board application will be submitted if the project is funded.

### **Challenges:**

The challenges include participants not attending the "Shut Up and Write Sessions," meeting the deadlines as established in the online community, and completing the manuscript within 16 weeks. Other challenges are different levels of writing experience and skill, varying

commitment to the program and completing the manuscript, limited time for writing, competing priorities, and different levels of editing needed by participants.

### **Sustainability:**

In an effort to be more sustainable, we will endeavor to use Sakai instead of purchasing new software. Sakai is a familiar and freely available tool to many Duke faculty and staff. If funded, we will closely investigate whether Sakai can meet our online community needs. If it cannot, we will license Basecamp for one year. Contracting with outside editors, however, comes with a cost. This project seeks to assess the value of this service in an effort to help Duke Medicine units determine if this editorial expense is worthwhile.

### **Opportunities for subsequent scholarship:**

This project will provide information and data for a number of scholarship opportunities. These include articles for journals in nursing, medical, and health professions education in addition to descriptive posters for regional and national professional meetings.

### **Broader Impacts:**

The project will provide data to inform future discussion about strategies for expanding the dissemination of the scholarship of teaching and learning by Duke faculty and staff, and of scientific editing services.

### **Timeline:**

- November 2015 – Further investigate Sakai capabilities to confirm that it can meet the needs of the online community. Explore Basecamp software as needed. Complete IRB. Finalize Sakai versus Basecamp decision
- November 2015 – mid-January 2016 – marketing and enrollment
- Mid-January 2016 – launch program
- January 2016 – June 2016 – Participants complete 16 week program. “Shut Up and Write” sessions take place in the Library. The online community is active.
- July 2016 – August 2016 – Principal investigators analyze data
- September 2016 – report to Duke AHEAD and develop manuscript based on results

### **Resource needs and budget:**

		Estimated Cost
PI Effort		\$0.00
Consultant Costs	40 – 50 hours @ \$50-\$100 per hour, based on type of editing and editor	\$4000.00
Equipment		\$0.00
Computer	Hardware (\$1500/laptop)	\$0.00

	Software – annual license to Basecamp (if selected)	\$240.00
Supplies		\$0.00
Travel	(1,000/trip)	\$0.00
Other Expenses		\$0.00
<b>Total Costs for Proposed Project</b>		<b>\$4240.00</b>

### References:

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