

Handbook

# THE U SEE I WRITE FACULTY WRITING INITIATIVE



# Table of Contents

- 01 Meet the Organizers
- 02 Rationale
- 03 The U See I Write Initiative
- 04 Formalities
- 05 Impact of U See I Write
- 06 Testimonials
- 07 Acknowledgments and Contact
- 08 References
- 09 Appendices



# Meet the Organizers

**Ilona S. Yim, PhD**

Department of Psychological Science  
ilona.yim@uci.edu

**Olga V. Razorenova, PhD**

Department of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry  
olgar@uci.edu

**Nina Bandelj, PhD**

Department of Sociology  
nina.bandelj@uci.edu

**Tonya Williams Bradford, PhD**

The Paul Merage School of Business  
twbrad@uci.edu

**Heidi Hardt, PhD**

Department of Political Science  
hhardt@uci.edu

# Rationale

Writing retreats are successful means to increase writing productivity (Grant & Knowles, 2000; Moore et al., 2010; Murray & Newton, 2009) – and they are so much more. Writing communities increase connection and well-being by ameliorating academic pressures, including isolation and conflicting work priorities (Eardley et al., 2021; Stanley et al., 2017), thereby playing an important role in improving climate. Importantly, writing communities can offer support to under-represented minority (URM) faculty, including women and faculty of color, and contribute to reconnecting faculty with their institution following the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the University of California, Irvine, we developed a faculty development initiative, called *U See I Write* (a play on words making reference to our campus' acronym, UCI). *U See I Write* is conceptually embedded in best practices and recommendations for supporting URM faculty from Daley et al. (2011) and Wright-Mair (2017). Daley et al. (2011) followed 30 URM faculty members over the course of ten years. Successful URM faculty cited “the presence of role models and mentors, peer networking and support, knowledge of institutional culture, and professional skill development” as relevant factors contributing to their success (Daley et al., 2011). Based on their findings, they developed a four-dimensional model of faculty success, emphasizing the importance of instrumental mentorship, networking, professional skill development, and understanding institutional culture. Similarly, Wright-Mair (2017) identified practices to support racially minoritized faculty at predominantly White institutions, including the importance of validating identities and strengthening community; providing opportunities for collaborations that forge allyship; humanizing environments, and fostering “meaningful relationships with peers [which provide] a sense of belonging and comfort in their setting” (Wright-Mair, 2017, p. 110).



Following Daley et al. (2011), and incorporating important elements proposed by Wright-Mair (2017), *U See I Write* provides **instrumental mentorship** through access to senior faculty in campus leadership roles who serve as group conveners; **networking** through formal and informal opportunities to forge within group and across group allyship, thereby strengthening community, meaningful relationships with peers, and a sense of belonging; **professional skill development** through coaching sessions on writing skills and strategies to protect writing time; and fosters an **understanding of institutional culture** through its strong alignment with productivity expectations for faculty advancement at research-intensive institutions of higher education. While the professional skill development components of *U See I Write* may primarily serve the career progression of participating faculty members, the components of **networking, instrumental mentorship and understanding of institutional culture may well be key pathways connecting *U See I Write* to a broader change in climate and work culture at UCI and the UC system.** Mentoring underrepresented faculty and providing them with the protected time and welcoming space to engage in activities that advance their own career is a way to give back to a group of faculty who have been unduly burdened and disadvantaged. It is also a way through which an institution can show faculty that they are appreciated, respected, and valued. In that regard, *U See I Write* provides a unique opportunity to foster URM faculty's careers, contributes to the development of an inclusive culture and sense of belonging, and thereby improves the work climate and very likely URM faculty retention at UCI and across the UC system.

# The U See I Write Initiative

## Background & History

*U See I Write* is a faculty development initiative that was founded at the University of California, Irvine (UCI) campus in 2016, with funding from the UCI Office of Inclusive Excellence. It implements many of the best practices and strategies for writing success taught by the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity's Faculty Success Program. Its major goal is to provide participants with protected time for scholarly writing within a supportive and inclusive community – not to teach participants how to write well or to provide feedback on their writing. **Initially, writing retreats were convened on a quarterly basis** throughout the Academic Year. Additional grant funding from the University of California, Office of the President, Advancing Faculty Diversity program allowed us to grow this program into a larger initiative, establishing a **year-long faculty writing cohort and a multi-day summer writing retreat**, and to grow this initiative internally and externally.

## Participants

To date, *U See I Write* has served 175 faculty at the University of California, Irvine. Typically, about 20-30 faculty are admitted per event. We are inclusive of all faculty (senate and non-senate; research and teaching focused faculty, including lecturers; faculty from across ranks and academic units), and include emeriti and visiting faculty if space allows. Because one of the central goals of this program is to build community among faculty, we do not admit staff members, postdoctoral researchers, or graduate students to these events. Even though *U See I Write* is open to all faculty, most of our first-time participants are untenured Assistant Professors. Because many faculty participate in our initiative's events consistently, the initiative now also includes a large number of Associate and Full Professors, promoted while participating in *U See I Write*. *U See I Write* disproportionately attracts women faculty and faculty of color, compared to their representation on our campus. Participants, however, come from virtually all Schools across our campus.



# Types of Events

## Quarterly Retreats

are offered throughout the Academic year, typically one in Fall, Winter and Spring quarter. Retreats are held alternately on or off campus. A separate application is required for each of these events and applications are invited about a month before the event. A typical retreat will run from 9am to 3pm, as we found that events lasting longer than 6 hours will result in participants beginning to engage in non-writing activities.

## Monthly Retreats

are convened as part of a year-long faculty writing cohort. Participation consists of monthly half-day (3-hour long) writing retreats; weekly writing meetings in assigned small groups for continued accountability between monthly retreats; and a commitment to daily writing, five times a week, for at least 30 minutes. Each day, participants log their minutes spent on writing in an Excel spreadsheet. Each week, participants are asked to complete a short survey and report their cumulative weekly writing time, as well as their three biggest wins – which could be writing-related, other career-related or personal wins – back to the program organizers. The group's average weekly writing time (in hours/minutes) and the group's wins (consolidated into a word cloud) are reported back to all participants in aggregate form (see [Appendix A](#) for the survey and an example of a report). Applications for the annual program are invited in early Fall quarter.

## Summer Retreats

run over multiple days, each 3 to 4 hours long, and feature expert guest speakers from across campus who provide writing-related training and/or lead conversations about writing-related topics. Applications for this program are invited in Spring quarter.



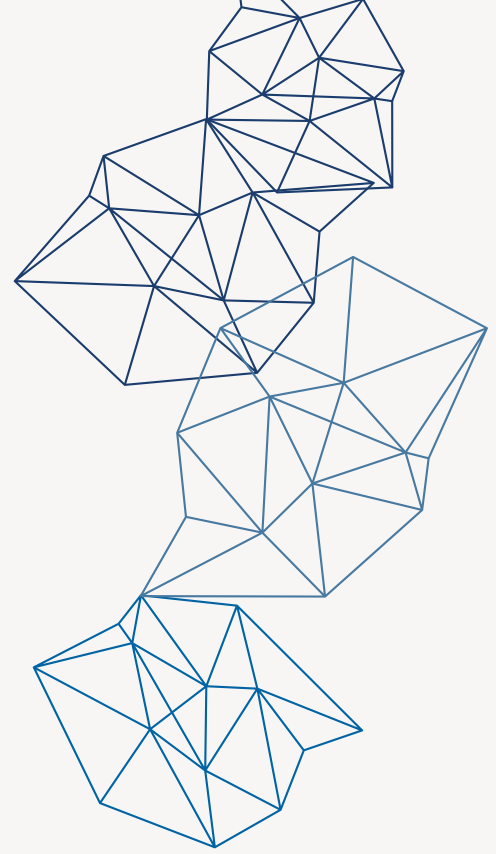
## A Typical Retreat Day

Our retreat days are scheduled to begin around 8:30am or 9:00am, as this timing allows parent faculty to bring their children to school and still make it to our event on time. A typical retreat day will begin with “Welcome, Introductions, and Writing Goal Setting,” followed by a series of “Writing Sessions”, intercepted by purposeful “Breaks,” and will conclude with “Evaluation and Next Steps.” A sample agenda can be found in [Appendix B](#).





## Welcome, Introductions and Writing Goal Setting



The first 30 minutes of our retreats are typically devoted to “Welcome, Introductions, and Writing Goal Setting.” For consecutive sessions in the monthly and summer retreats, this time is shortened to 15 minutes. During this time, catered breakfast is made available. We found this to be important because it sets a positive tone to begin the event, provides an initial opportunity to interact with others and takes away the tension of being in a room with many unfamiliar faculty colleagues from across campus. Events start by facilitators introducing themselves, providing an overview of the agenda, and orienting participants to the expectations surrounding the event and the writing sessions. We reiterate that our writing time is quiet writing time, that phones should be set on silent, and that any necessary conversations should be taken outside of the writing space. To that end, our writing locations have suitable space available to allow people to communicate with each other (e.g., an outside patio, an adjacent conference room). Faculty are encouraged to set an away message on their email account for the duration of the retreat, and to close down their email program at least during the writing sessions. To facilitate this, we have instructions ready on how to set vacation messages, as well as a template message that we share with participants: “I am attending the *U See I Write* Faculty Writing Retreat today, [Date], and will be responding to your message upon my return.” Having this information available allows participants to quickly set an away message and also serves as a means to advertise *U See I Write*.

Each participant is then asked to introduce themselves briefly to the group by stating their name, department affiliation and writing project they plan to work on. We model this to assure the brevity of the introductions.

Participants are then asked to set two to four writing goals. A goal sheet ([Appendix C](#)) is sent to participants with their admission letter and again in a reminder email on the day before the event. This allows faculty to set writing goals before the actual retreat day if they wish. Writing goal setting is an essential practice as it helps with getting organized, gathering needed materials, focusing on the task at hand, minimizing distractions, and feeling a sense of accomplishment at the end of the retreat day. We ask participants to make these writing goals very concrete – for example, instead of “make progress on manuscript” or “write on grant,” we encourage goals like “complete a solid first draft of the three first paragraphs of the introduction section” or “write a full draft of results related to Aim 1.” At our full-day quarterly retreats, we ask participants at lunch time to assess the degree to which they have accomplished their goals and to adjust them accordingly. We assess again at the end of the day whether goals have been achieved. At that time, we emphasize that not meeting a writing goal is not a failure, but provides an opportunity to reflect on why certain goals may not have been accomplished – Were the goals too ambitious? Did certain writing tasks seem smaller than they actually were? Did attention shift to other writing projects midway? We find that, over time, participants seem to get better at gauging what they can accomplish, reducing writing-related anxiety. We also emphasize the importance of setting writing goals beyond the writing retreat, and we encourage our participants to set writing goals at the beginning of each work week. In our annual cohort, we put this into practice by asking participants to report their writing goals to us weekly as part of the weekly survey.

## Writing Sessions

During writing sessions, faculty write in silence. Depending on the length of the retreat, we include two to four writing sessions. Each session is between 60 and 90 minutes long, with longer sessions earlier in the morning, and shorter sessions in the afternoon. We typically set a timer that will go off with a chime at the end of the writing session.

## Coaching Sessions

For some of our longer retreats (e.g. multi-day summer retreats), the retreat organizers or other experts on campus occasionally facilitate a 20-minute coaching session. These training sessions build on strategies for writing success taught by the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity of which UCI is a member. Topics covered include strategic planning for writing success, creating a weekly and daily writing schedule, protecting writing time from competing commitments, setting writing goals, and building a mentorship network to support writing. On other occasions, we have instead convened brief breakout sessions in which participants have had structured discussions around these issues (peer coaching).

## Breaks

Writing sessions are separated by 10- to 15-minute-long stretch breaks and a 1-hour lunch break for day-long events. During the shorter breaks, participants are encouraged to connect with each other, and – in the case of the first few meetings of the annual cohort – to specifically connect with the other members of their small group. We typically begin the 1-hour lunch break with having participants assess how far they have come along in accomplishing their goals for the day, and making necessary adjustments. We then provide participants with a topic for discussion over lunch. Sample topics we have used in the past are “Protecting writing time from other professional obligations,” “Overcoming procrastination,” “Continuing to write when things get stressful,” and “Ideas for improving *U See I Write*.” During the last 15 minutes of the lunch break, we ask each table to share out, which serves to amplify ideas that were generated and to build community.

## Evaluations and Next Steps

Our retreat days conclude with a final check in, typically consisting of participants sharing with one another their writing accomplishments for the day, including an assessment of whether the goals that were set at the beginning of the day were accomplished. Participants are then asked to complete an online evaluation form for the event (see [Appendix D](#)). For the annual cohort and summer retreats, only a single evaluation form is completed at the end of the last retreat day. We observe that a greater number of faculty provide feedback and that more thoughtful feedback is given when the evaluation form is completed during the event, as opposed to sending out an evaluation request after the retreat. This time is also used to make announcements about upcoming events, or to engage with participants in informal conversations about ideas surrounding further growth and development of *U See I Write*.



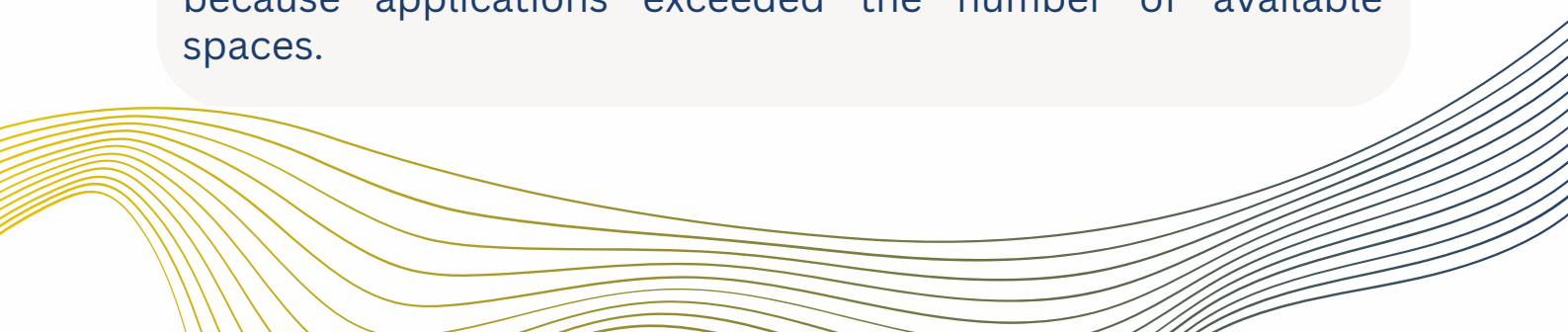
# Formalities

## Funding and Campus Support

Our quarterly writing retreats, which we have organized on campus since the initiative's launch in 2016, have been funded by UCI's Office of Inclusive Excellence (OIE), which also advertises our initiative on the OIE website. The website gives an overview of the program and its major goals, lists event dates for the upcoming year, and links to our application form ([Appendix E](#)). In the 2020/2021 Academic Year, we (Yim & Bandelj) obtained funding through an Advancing Faculty Diversity (AFD) Grant by the University of California, Office of the President. This additional funding allowed us to convene an annual program featuring monthly retreats and a multi-day summer retreat. With the launch of the annual cohort, our initiative was also advertised on the UCI academic personnel website and during academic personnel's annual, campus-wide new faculty orientations. An additional AFD grant awarded in the 2022/2023 Academic Year (Yim) allows us to further institutionalize *U See I Write*, and to extend its reach to other UC campuses.

# Participants

Our major means of recruitment is through campus-wide emails from the OIE, reaching all academics. We have supplemented this recruitment strategy with the creation of a listserv reaching prior *U See I Write* participants. We also contact leadership (e.g., Equity Advisors, Deans, Chairs) in each School and ask for their active engagement in identifying potentially interested individuals. Our recruitment emails include information about the nature of the event, eligibility criteria, event dates and locations, and a link to our brief application form ([Appendix E](#)). This information also appears on the websites of the OIE and the UCI Faculty Development website run by the Academic Personnel office. UCI has also, on occasion, highlighted our initiative in university-internal communications, such as a report about the first *U See I Write* retreat in 2016 and a feature of our Winter quarter 2023 retreat. The application form consists of a Qualtrics survey in which we collect information about participants' academic rank, their departmental affiliation, their previous participation in *U See I Write*, their reason for applying, the writing project they plan to work on during the retreat, and their most significant challenge in terms of writing. This information guides our choices in making decisions about discussion topics for lunch break, and helps with assigning individuals to small groups for the annual cohort. We also ask participants about whether they are able to attend the entire retreat or just a portion thereof, which helps with making admissions decisions when the number of applicants exceeds the number of available spots. Of note, we ask faculty to “apply” and not to “sign up” for the retreat, and we found that this approach increases the value participants see in attending the retreat. To date, in our seventh year of convening this retreat, we have had only one instance of having to turn away participants because applications exceeded the number of available spaces.



# Pre-Retreat Considerations

## Communication with Participants

Our engagement with participants begins before the day of the retreat. We describe the nature of the event in the call for applications, build upon those expectations in the admissions letter, and then get participants ready in the pre-retreat email, which is sent out on the day before the event. These communications provide structure and set expectations, making for a more successful retreat experience.

The **call for applications** is sent out to all academics on campus by the UCI Office of Inclusive Excellence. It provides the date, time and location of the event, mentions the retreat organizers' names, gives one of the organizer's email addresses as a program contact, and provides a link to the application form. It also specifically clarifies that the event "provides dedicated writing time as well as an opportunity to connect with other writers on campus," which has reduced the number of misunderstandings related to expectations about receiving feedback on writing. The application form is also available year round on the program website. The acceptance letter is sent out soon after the application deadline, and includes an agenda, detailed directions to the retreat site (including a map and parking guidance for off-campus events), and contact information for the day of the retreat ([Appendix F](#)). It also clarifies important formalities (e.g., availability of internet, food).

The **acceptance letter** is also an opportunity for us to clarify expectations: The idea of a writing retreat can evoke expectations of receiving concrete writing support in terms of being provided with instruction on writing skills, editing support or peer review of their individual writing. It is important to highlight before the retreat starts that the goal is to provide protected research writing time and a writing community, and that we will provide some coaching surrounding skills to maintain productive writing, but that the goal is not to teach participants how to write better manuscripts or grants. As part of the annual cohort, the admissions letter also informs participants about the membership of their small group of four faculty members who will engage in weekly writing between the monthly writing retreats. These groups, which provide additional accountability and networking opportunities between the monthly sessions, are built purposefully. We keep groups mostly uniform in terms of academic rank, discipline and gender; and none of the groups had only one underrepresented faculty member. These small groups are asked, before the first monthly retreat, to connect, and to decide on a weekly at least 1-hour long time slot to meet for the duration of the program.

On the day before each retreat, we send out a reminder **pre-retreat email** to all participants that includes time and location of the retreat, a reminder to come prepared with a writing project to work on, a link to the writing goal setting sheet ([Appendix C](#)), contact information for the day of the retreat, and any venue-specific reminders (e.g., internet log in, parking).



## What do we mean by “Writing”

When we first asked participants what they had planned to work on during the retreat, some of them answered that they were writing letters of recommendation for their students or writing a memo related to their departmental service. We therefore now clarify with our participants that by “writing” in the context of our retreat we mean scholarly writing or any activity that has a profound impact on their own success as a faculty member. We call it a “writing retreat” because for most faculty, this most impactful activity is writing (i.e., writing on a grant proposal, a research paper, or a book). For some faculty, however, the most consequential activity might be developing a choreography or composing music. We would still consider this activity “writing” because it advances this faculty member’s career. Conversely, we would not consider ‘writing a letter of support’ a writing activity in the spirit of this retreat. Even though the participant is engaging in the act of writing, this is not an activity that has a profound impact on that faculty member’s scholarly success. As such, we emphasize on our website: “As long as you engage in an activity that has **high priority for your scholarly advancement**, and you are able to quietly engage in this activity in a room full of people, you are welcome in our community, and we encourage you to apply.”







## Retreat Dates and Locations

To allow participants to plan, we set **retreat dates** for quarterly and monthly retreats at the beginning of the academic year and publish them on the *U See I Write* website, to allow participants to plan their attendance early on. At this time, all of our retreat events occur on Fridays, which is the day of the week when most of our participants (and the organizers) are available. The upside of being consistent with facilitating retreats on the same day of the week is that it makes scheduling easier and allows participants to plan ahead. However, it should be noted that some interested faculty have indicated that they can never participate because they have ongoing obligations on Fridays (e.g., clinical work, teaching obligations) that they cannot consistently cancel in favor of a retreat. In scheduling our retreats, we aim to avoid midterm and final weeks, holiday weekends, and other big campus events that may be in conflict with our events.



## Retreat Dates and Locations

Our guiding principle in selecting **retreat locations** is that the venue should be at an appealing location with access to the outdoors, away from faculty offices. This choice reduces the likelihood that participants will step away from the retreat for a meeting or other obligation and are able to fully focus on the writing retreat experience. Over the years, we have selected locations on and off campus, and our participants' feedback indicates a strong preference for off-campus locations. Participants have reported to us a sense of appreciation for the university making that investment in them. Off-campus locations (hotel conference rooms, community centers, etc.) are, however, approximately two to three times more expensive and require significantly more time investment from the organizers to work out quotes, menus, parking, and other details. Also, retreat locations have to be secured many months ahead of time, whereas on-campus retreats allow for more flexibility. Thus, we typically convene one of our quarterly retreats off campus and two of our quarterly retreats on campus; our annual cohort (monthly) retreats are always convened on-campus. However, even when on-campus, we aim to choose varying locations that are in fairly remote areas of campus, so that participants get a sense of being away from their offices. Our summer retreats typically occur off campus. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we held our retreats on Zoom. Participants were asked to keep their cameras on to the degree possible, to establish a sense of community similar to that of an in-person meeting, and most participants did. While no amount of engagement can replace direct in-person interactions or the intangible benefits of spending a day together at a retreat, participation rates and participant satisfaction were comparable to those of in-person retreats, with the caveat that most participants noted that they understood the need for the current remote format and were highly anticipating the return to an in-person format.

## **Additional Strategies for Success During the Retreat**

### **01: Room Setup**

We typically set up the room offering alternative seating arrangements for participants, as we have found some prefer sitting together in groups of four to eight faculty, others prefer to sit in a U-Shape for group community, and yet others prefer to sit at a desk by themselves. Whenever possible, we aim to provide at least one or two stations where participants can write at a standing-height desk. Logistically, it is also important to provide a sufficient number of power outlets, and we often bring extension cords to allow participants to recharge their laptops as needed. We have had locations with and without reliable internet access, and there is an upside to both. At locations without internet access, participants have reported that they appreciated working free from distractions, but an obvious downside is the lack of easy access to online resources. Either way, it is important to let participants know about the situation on site so that they come to the retreat prepared.

### **02: Food**

Food plays an important part in the success of a retreat. It serves as a small incentive and reflects an appreciation for participation. It contributes to creating an environment that is inviting and welcoming, and it provides an opportunity to socialize. We offer catered breakfast for all of our retreats and serve catered lunch for our full-day quarterly retreats, including vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free options. In our application form, we ask participants about food allergies and dietary restrictions. For on-campus events, we sometimes supplement the catered options with snacks from local grocery stores.

### **03: Materials Provided**

Aside from catering, we typically bring to our retreats a printed agenda, adhesive name tags, and several bold markers, pens, extension cords to charge laptops, and on occasion a small gift, such as a book about writing productivity or work-life balance.



# Impact of U See I Write



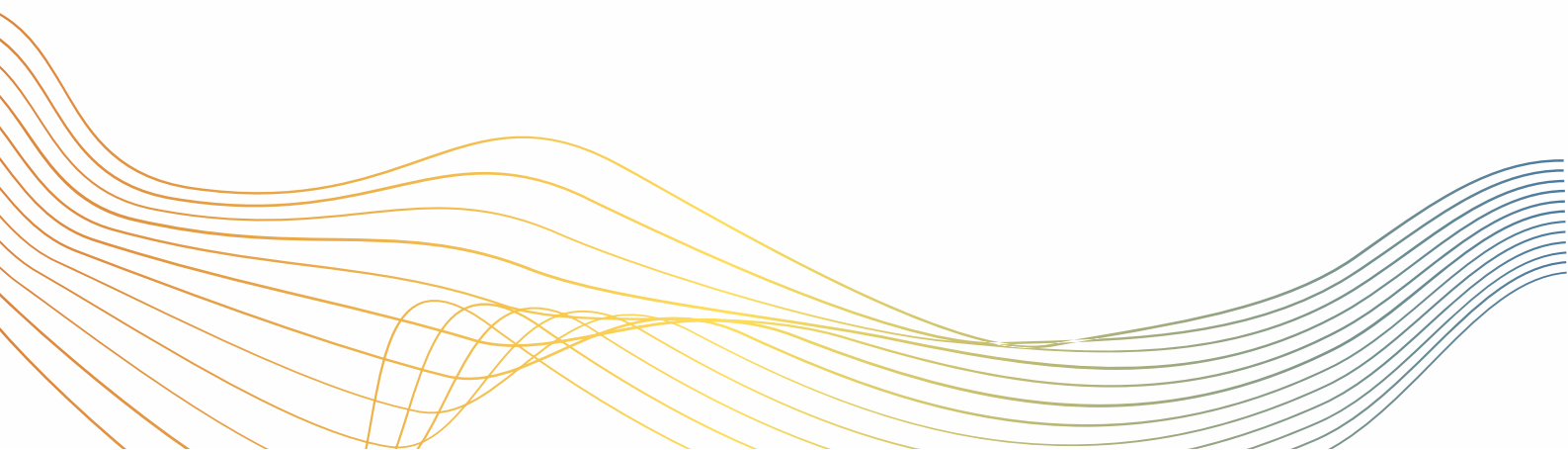


## Impact on Participants

*U See I Write* supports scholarship in terms of coaching faculty on strategies to protect writing time and using available writing time efficiently. On the whole, this supports research productivity, required for successful faculty advancement. This is particularly important within a COVID-19 context, where service, teaching, and mentoring demands, along with caregiving commitments, have gone significantly up, in particular for women and faculty of color. Moreover, *U See I Write* builds a sense of community among URM faculty and between URM and non-URM faculty in a setting that is not obviously racialized, but instead emphasizes a shared need and desire to improve writing skills, and solidarity in working toward similar goals. Our prospective research data show statistically significant improvements in self-assessed writing and work engagement, and the publication of these data (Yim et al., in press) will allow other interested institutions to replicate our successful efforts. Our direct participant feedback is overwhelmingly positive. Faculty most frequently report that they appreciate the protected writing time inside a supportive community, promoting motivation to focus and positive peer pressure to write. Off-campus locations are strongly preferred, and many faculty members mention that they appreciate the campus making this investment in them. Faculty also appreciate the community and the networking that is possible during breaks. They often report that they improved their writing skills – making writing a daily priority, and regularly setting writing goals to stay on track. Our participants' appreciation of *U See I Write* is also highlighted by the fact that the majority of faculty are repeat participants, and many have begun to see *U See I Write* as part of their regular writing routine: Faculty use it to get re-inspired to write, to re-invigorate their writing, to feel more motivated again, or to tackle those difficult writing tasks that require a chunk of uninterrupted time.

## Impact on on the Campus Community

Several of our participants have created their own, smaller scale writing retreats across the campus, including faculty writing retreats in individual schools, small writing groups that meet weekly, multi-day writing retreats at off campus locations, and regular graduate student writing retreats. This shows that *U See / Write* has grown beyond the boundaries of our initiative and is positively impacting productivity, a sense of community and belonging, and overall climate on our campus. The benefit of *U See / Write* is therefore not limited to improving individual faculty members' productivity. Instead, the benefit is institutional. By enhancing the feeling of community belonging, in particular for groups historically underrepresented in academia who tend to be more represented among participants in this initiative, *U See / Write* contributes to the improvement of institutional climate and thus is likely to increase faculty retention.



# Testimonials

***"Comfortable writing space away from my office. Food and coffee meant I did not have to leave."***

– Cindy Thomas Archer, PhD, Professor, School of Law

***"It makes me feel accomplished and gives me some momentum to keep going in the near future."***

– Rachael Barry, PhD, Assistant Professor of Teaching, Department of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry

***"My only suggestion is to have more of these!"***

– Patrick Bergemann, PhD, Assistant Professor, The Paul Merage School of Business

***"I like the solid block of time dedicated to writing. I like the community of writers with similar goals. I liked the comfortable room with good meals provided."***

– Suzie Bohlson, PhD, Professor of Teaching, Department of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry

***"I appreciate the accountability measures like the google chart."***

– Isabela Quintana, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Asian American Studies

***"I really liked reconnecting with people that I have met in previous retreats. Also, I really enjoyed to meet new people."***

– Isabela Quintana, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Asian American Studies

***"Seeing a number of colleagues from different schools/fields and different ranks come together to work and also receive mentorship along the way is deeply motivating. I've come to meet some of the most wonderful colleagues from my small group and those from other groups I'm in, like Writing in Color."***

– Brenda Nicolas, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Global and International Studies

***"I continue to use the strategies I have learned from the retreat when I am doing my own writing."***

– Roberto Tinoco, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry

***"This was the most productive that I have been in ages! I will sign up for every one of these from now on. It was even better than I could have imagined!"***

– Libby Weber, PhD, Associate Professor, The Paul Merage School of Business



# Acknowledgments and Contact

The *U See I Write* retreats are funded by the UC Irvine Office of Inclusive Excellence with additional support through grant funding from the University of California, Office of the President, Advancing Faculty Diversity program to Ilona S. Yim and Nina Bandelj. We are thankful for the generous support and encouragement we received from both offices. We are most grateful to those faculty colleagues who have participated in our initiative. Our gratitude also goes to Peiyi Wang, our graduate student researcher, for her many contributions to the success of *U See I Write* and for her indispensable assistance in creating this handbook. We finally acknowledge *U See I Write* itself, as it has provided us with protected writing time during which much of this handbook was written.

For questions regarding *U See I Write*,  
please contact Ilona Yim at [ilona.yim@uci.edu](mailto:ilona.yim@uci.edu)

# References

- Daley, S. P., Broyles, S. L., Rivera, L. M., Brennan, J. J., Lu, E. R., & Reznik, V. (2011). A Conceptual Model for Faculty Development in Academic Medicine: The Underrepresented Minority Faculty Experience. *Journal of the National Medical Association*, 103(9), 816-821. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0027-9684\(15\)30435-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0027-9684(15)30435-1)
- Eardley, A. F., Banister, E., & Fletcher, M. (2021). Can academic writing retreats function as wellbeing interventions? *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 45(2), 183-196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2020.1744542>
- Grant, B., & Knowles, S. (2000). Flights of imagination: Academic women be(com)ing writers. *The International Journal for Academic Development*, 5(1), 6-19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/136014400410060>
- Moore, S., Murphy, M., & Murray, R. (2010). Increasing Academic Output and Supporting Equality Of Career Opportunity in Universities: Can Writers' Retreat Play a Role? *The Journal of Faculty Development*, 24(3), 21-30.
- Murray, R., & Newton, M. (2009). Writing retreat as structured intervention: margin or mainstream? *Higher Education Research and Development*, 28(5), 541-553. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360903154126>
- Stanley, I. H., Hom, M. A., Chu, C., & Joiner, T. E. (2017). Increasing Research Productivity and Professional Development in Psychology With a Writing Retreat. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology*, 3(3), 249-256. <https://doi.org/10.1037/stl0000089>
- Wright-Mair, R. (2017). *A Phenomenological Exploration of How Campus Environments Shape the Success of Racially Minoritized Faculty at Predominantly White Institutions* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver]. <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd/1262>
- Yim, I. S., Bandelj, N., Razorenova, O. V., & Wang P. (in press). Writing communities to (re-) engage faculty: The [initiative name] initiative. *To Improve the Academy. A Journal of Educational Development*

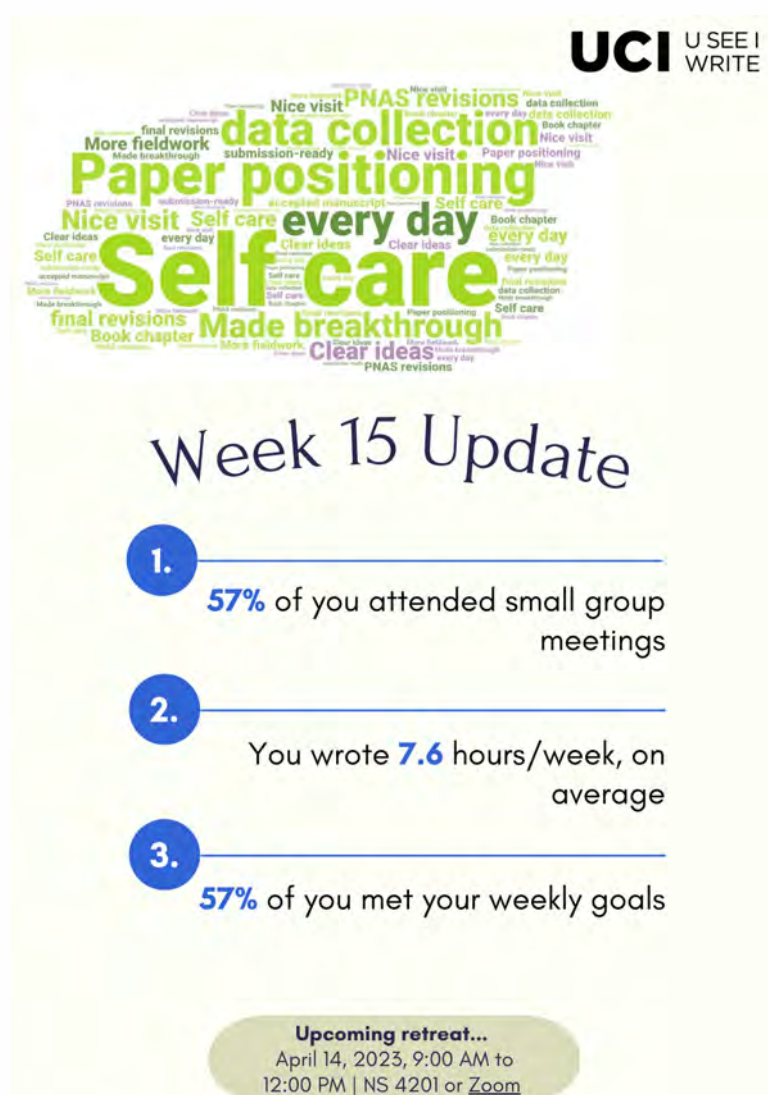
# Appendices

# Appendix A: Weekly Check-in Survey and Weekly Feedback to the Annual Cohort

## Weekly Check-in Survey.

1. Did you attend your weekly small group writing meeting this week? Yes/No
2. How many hours did you spend writing this week? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Did you meet your writing goals for this week? Yes/No
4. What are your writing goals for next week?
5. What were your three wins of the week?

## Weekly Feedback to the Annual Cohort



# Appendix B: Sample Agenda

U See I Write

UCI Faculty Writing Retreat – Winter 2023

[date, time]

[location with link to map]



## Agenda

9:00-9:30 Welcome and Introductions, Goal Setting  
*Breakfast will be served*

9:30-10:45 **Writing Session #1**

10:45-11:00 Break

11:00-12:00 **Writing Session #2**

12:00-12:45 Lunch Break  
*Lunch will be served*

1:00-1:55 **Writing Session #3**

1:55-2:00 Break

2:00-2:45 **Writing Session #4**

2:45-3:00 Evaluations, Debrief, and Next Steps

*If you need to reach us on the day of the event, feel free to contact  
[name] at [cell phone].*



# Appendix C: Sample Goal Setting Sheet

## WRITING GOALS

Instructions: Set up achievable writing goals. Break down your writing tasks into smaller blocks. Instead of setting the goal “work on the book” or “make progress on the grant”, set up more specific and achievable goals, e.g. “write two paragraphs of introduction covering X”, “compile and edit Figure 1”, or “draft the outline for Specific Aim 1.” You don't need to come up with exactly four goals, you can have as many as you think are achievable today.

<b><i>Today's writing goals</i></b> (Complete this column the day before the retreat or the morning of the retreat)	<b><i>Assess and Adjust</i></b> (Complete this at lunchtime)	<b><i>What got accomplished today?</i></b> (Complete this at the end of the day)
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.

# Appendix D: Retreat Evaluation Form – Quarterly Retreats

## Part 1: Progress on Your Writing

1. What writing project did you work on today? (check all that apply)
- ☐ Empirical Paper   ☐ Review Paper/Meta-analysis   ☐ Book Chapter   ☐ Book Proposal or Book
- ☐ Grant Proposal (Internal)   ☐ Grant Proposal (External)   ☐ Other, Specify:
- \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please list the writing goals you set for yourself this morning and indicate for each goal whether or not you achieved/completed it.

Goal 1: _____	Achieved? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> partially <input type="checkbox"/> no
Goal 2: _____	Achieved? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> partially <input type="checkbox"/> no
Goal 3: _____	Achieved? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> partially <input type="checkbox"/> no
Goal 4: _____	Achieved? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> partially <input type="checkbox"/> no

3. If you did not or only partially achieved your goal, please briefly reflect on why that was the case (e.g., underestimated time, changed to different goal throughout, unable to focus).

4. In terms of your writing productivity, and compared to a day of uninterrupted writing time in your office, would you say today you accomplished
- ☐ A lot more   ☐ A little bit more   ☐ About the same   ☐ A little bit less  
☐ A lot less Please briefly describe why:

# Appendix D: Retreat Evaluation Form – Quarterly Retreats (continued)

## Part 2: Retreat Experience

5. Participating in the writing retreat was worthwhile and met my expectations.  
☐ Yes, very much   ☐ Yes, for the most part   ☐ To some extent   ☐ No, not very much
6. The retreat provided sufficient time for engaging in a writing project.  
☐ Yes, very much   ☐ Yes, for the most part   ☐ To some extent   ☐ No, not very much
7. The retreat provided a comfortable environment for focused writing.  
☐ Yes, very much   ☐ Yes, for the most part   ☐ To some extent   ☐ No, not very much
8. The retreat was conducive to developing connections to build community to support my writing.  
☐ Yes, very much   ☐ Yes, for the most part   ☐ To some extent   ☐ No, not very much
9. Would you recommend this retreat to your colleagues?  
☐ Yes   ☐ Maybe   ☐ No
10. Which aspects of the retreat did you like the most?
11. What improvements would you suggest for future retreats?
12. What kind of support would you like to continue your writing productivity? (e.g. additional structured writing time; accountability buddy)
13. Is there anything else you would want us to know about your experience today?
14. For those of you who have previously participated in a U See I Write Writing Retreat: Has participation in the retreat had lasting benefits for your writing productivity (i.e., between retreats)? If so, how?

# Appendix E: Application Form

1. Which program are you applying for? [multiple answers allowed]

- ☐ Fall Quarter Retreat
- ☐ Winter Quarter Retreat
- ☐ Spring Quarter Retreat
- ☐ Annual Cohort (Monthly Retreats)
- ☐ Summer Retreat

2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Email: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Academic Rank

- ☐ Assistant Professor/Assistant Professor of Teaching
- ☐ Associate Professor/Associate Professor of Teaching
- ☐ Professor/Professor of Teaching
- ☐ Other: (Please specify – note that only senate and non-senate UCI faculty members are eligible) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Department: \_\_\_\_\_

6. School: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Have you previously participated in a U See I Write Faculty Writing Retreat (quarterly retreat, annual cohort or summer retreat)? Yes/No

8. Please describe why you are interested in participating in this writing retreat?

9. What writing project(s) do you plan to focus on during this retreat (i.e., a paper, a grant, book chapters)? What do you hope to accomplish?

10. What are the most significant challenges in terms of your writing?

11. If admitted, will you be able to stay for the full duration of the retreat?



# Appendix F:

## Sample Acceptance letter

Dear Writing Retreat Participant,

It is our pleasure to inform you that your application to participate in the Winter Quarter 2023 *U See I Write* Faculty Writing Retreat has been approved. The retreat will be held on [retreat date and time] at [retreat location]. An agenda is attached.

As usual, we have a wonderful group of writers from across the campus coming together. You will have large blocks of time to write, and there will also be some time to connect with other writers. To make the retreat as successful and productive as possible, we recommend that you do the following:

- 1) ***Come prepared with a specific scholarly writing project*** in mind that you plan to work on. Ideally, choose a writing project that ***is of high priority to the advancement of your career***, for example a research paper, a book or book chapter, or a grant proposal.
- 2) ***Set two to four writing goals*** that you would like to achieve on the day of the retreat. We recommend you do this before coming to the retreat, but we will set aside some time for this on the day of the retreat as well. You can access the goal setting sheet here [add hyperlink]. Your goals should be concrete, achievable goals with measurable outcomes. For example, instead of setting the goal “to work on a paper”, you could instead set the goal “to finish a solid first draft of the introduction section.” (Please note that all participants can access the sheet and see what you write).
- 3) ***Set an away message on your email***. One of the biggest distractions for writing is incoming email. We encourage you to turn off your email program during the retreat (or at least throughout the writing sessions), and to set an away message for the day. A sample message could be “I am attending the *U See I Write* Faculty Writing Retreat today, and will respond to your message upon my return to the office”. Unsure how to do this? Here are instructions [add hyperlink] on how to set a vacation message in UCI Gmail.
- 4) While this may seem obvious, ***don’t forget your laptop and charger***, as well as any other materials needed – papers, notes, datasets. There is no printer on site, but internet access will be available through your regular UCI access.
- 5) And finally, come hungry. We will be serving you breakfast and lunch at the retreat.

Again, a very warm welcome from all of us, and we look forward to seeing you Friday morning. Please be in touch with [name (email)] if you have any questions.