**2025 BCC Tutors’ Alliance Conference Call for Proposals
Friday May 2, 2025**



**Knowledge Keepers:**

**Peer Tutors Curating the Past, Envisioning the Future**

**(**An Open Letter from Peer Tutors Across the Curriculum)

Bronx Community College

North Hall and Library

2155 University Avenue Bronx, New York

**Proposals due by April 21, 2025**

**Keynote Speaker:**

**Dr. Andrea Efthymiou,**

**Queens College Associate Professor of English and Writing Center Director; NCPTW Treasurer, Co-editor WLN and 2022 Recipient of the Ron Maxwell. Award for Distinguished Leadership in Promoting the Collaborative Learning Practices of Peer Tutors in Writing.**

Light breakfast and Lunch Provided

Knowledge Keepers, according to Indigenous cultures, “[hold] traditional knowledge and teachings; they have been taught how to care for these teachings…. They are “gifted with their respective teachings by other elders or Knowledge Keepers, typically over years of mentorship and teaching,” (queensu.ca). Knowledge keepers are Elders who are entrusted with preserving knowledge and sharing that knowledge when appropriate.

 In our tutoring centers, peer tutors are Knowledge Keepers, entrusted to preserve what they know and obligated to pass on that knowledge. Ron Maxwell, late Penn State Professor of Composition, and founding member of the National Conference of Peer Tutors of Writing, understood that responsibility and obligation when he created Penn State’s course in peer tutoring in1981. He devised the Open Letter Project with the aim to shine a light on the multi-faceted journey of peer tutoring the new students were about to embark on. Jon Olson, Professor Emeritus of Penn State (2011), writes,

 Ron designed the tutor-training class on the principles of collaborative learning he had learned the summer before in Kenneth Bruffee’s Brooklyn College Institute for Training Peer Tutors. They designed a capstone assignment in which every member of the class[wrote] together an open letter to the students who [would] take the course the following semester” …to share the knowledge they created and the wisdom they gained in the course in a way that helps the new tutor trainees learn something they need to know… It [became] the most popular assignment in the class (NCPTW 2011 Conference Script).

The peer tutors were the Knowledge Keepers, taught “how to care for these teachings” (queensu.ca), the Open Letter Project serving to “guide individuals along the right path” (Springerlink 2009).

Ron Maxwell’s project is an example for all peer tutors everywhere, especially as we look ahead in uncertain times, and as many colleges are undergoing Middle States assessments. This conference invites all tutoring centers to devise an open letter to future generations of peer tutors. Let’s ask ourselves the difficult questions about how our centers are impacting student learning outcomes, how tutors learn to do the important work they do, and how we assess our work. Consider our histories, what we know and what we have learned about our work. Pass that knowledge on to future generations. Be Knowledge- Keepers.

**The following questions may serve as springboards for your proposal:**

**Curating the Past**

* What historical traditions do you want to preserve in your Center? How will you pass those on?
* What is the history of your tutoring center? How did it begin? How did it evolve?

 **Examining the Past and the Present**

* What makes your center unique? What do you love about your center that you want to share with all new peer tutors?
* What kind of peer tutoring classes are we offering? What new knowledge have we acquired about peer tutoring?
* What opportunities for self-efficacy are you providing for our students? Are our centers preventing students from dropping out of school?
* What stories of academically difficult tutoring sessions can you share? How are the challenges resolved?
* What have we learned about working with students with challenges such as mental health issues, housing insecurity or food insecurity? How can we pass on what we know?
* Bridging the gaps: What gaps do our students face? How are our Centers helping them to bridge those gaps? What are we doing and what can we do better to build trust between tutors and students or tutors and faculty?
* Friend or Foe? How are ChatGPT and other Ai platforms being addressed in our Centers?
* What have we learned about outreach and collaboration with departments across the curriculum or even out to our surrounding communities? What works? What doesn’t work?
* How do you market your center? How do you communicate what you do and the services that are available? Are you sharing your tutors’ backgrounds and experiences with the broader college community? Are you using visual techniques, such as slide shows, to draw students in?
* What do we know about appealing to the higher levels of administration? What obstacles do we face? What have we learned about coping with those obstacles?

**Envisioning the Future**

* What new ideas do we suggest future tutors should consider?
* What vision for the future do you have for your center?
* What new projects are you working on?
* What vision for the future of peer tutoring do we perceive? How can we ensure that those visions can come to fruition?

**Proposal Guidelines**

Successful presentations engage audience members in active hands- on learning which inspires dialogue and discussion.

Please prepare a 250-400-word proposal and a 75 word abstract for an individual presentation, panel presentation, poster presentation, roundtable discussion or interactive workshop.

**Definitions:**

**Individual Presentation**: 20-25 minutes.

**Panel Presentation**: 35-40 minutes. Panels should plan to reserve 10 mins for questions at the end of the session.

**Poster Presentation**: A poster session is an opportunity for you to get feedback on a work-in-progress or to share research that in the form of a visual poster presentation. Posters frequently include images, such as photos, charts and graphs, as well as explanatory text on the project or research. Posters may include current findings, future directions. Presenters may invite feedback or ideas on their posters.

**Roundtable Discussion**: 30 minutes. Up to 5 minutes of introduction by the leader on a specific theme or question, followed by a facilitated dialogue among participants.

**Workshop Session**: 30-45-minute interactive sessions that teach and engage participants through discussion, collaborative work, group activities, or other methods.

**Please include the following information in your proposal:**

1. **Title** of presentation, a 250-400-word **proposal**, and a 75 word **abstract** for inclusion in the conference program. For poster presentations, submit a 250-word proposal that includes a description of your project/research and justification for why the poster session is the best fit for your project.
2. **Type of session** (individual, group, poster, roundtable, workshop)
3. Specific **audiovisual and technical requests** (Please Note: Presenters need to provide their own laptops).
4. **Plans for encouraging interaction** and involving the audience.
5. Indication of one or more of the following **keywords** connected to your proposal: Tutors, Administrators, Bridging the Gaps, ChatGPT, Open letter, Peer Tutoring, Tutor training, Faculty, Academic Support, Engagement, Empowerment, Collaboration, Teaching and Learning, Research, Training, Diversity, Other Keywords…

Proposals will be evaluated primarily on the basis of relevance to the conference theme, originality of presentation format, degree of interactivity, and relevance/application to tutors and administrators.

**Submitting Proposals for Presentations and Poster Session**

All proposals should be submitted via the Google form link provided:

<https://forms.gle/pXjvnMWHbsUNxe7j9>

**More Information**

If you have any questions about the conference or submission process, please email Jan Robertson at Janet.Robertson@bcc.cuny.edu , or Kenisha Thomas at Kenisha.Thomas@bcc.cuny.edu.

718-289-5279

# References

Olson, J. (2011). Ron Maxwell's Legacy for Tutors: Teaching Tutors. In G. B. Jon Olson (Ed.), *Tutors, Tutoring and the Teaching of Tutors.* Florida International University, Biscayne Bay, Florida: The National Conference of Peer Tutors of Writing.

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University, Q. (2025). *Queens Univerisy*. (A. D.-T. kwunt, Editor) Retrieved March 5, 2025, from Office of Indigenous Initiatives: www.queensu.ca/indigenous ways/knowledgekeepers