



ASSOCIATION OF WRITERS & WRITING PROGRAMS

AWWP

STRATEGIC PLAN

2026–2029

TABLE OF CONTENTS

From the Chair of the AWP Board of Directors	3
From the Executive Director.....	4
Mission & Vision	5
Strategic Focus.....	7
Strategic Goals	8



From Our Board Chair

Dear AWP Community,

As part of our ongoing work improving AWP, we proudly share this 2026–2029 strategic plan. Though this plan is forward looking, it also consciously builds upon many positive recent changes at AWP. In 2024, we launched a powerful redesign of the AWP website, an overhaul of our digital assets and activities, featuring enhanced member services alongside a new conference platform. In July 2025, the board hired Executive Director Michelle Aielli to support our mission, staff, and membership; a publishing veteran with more than twenty-five years of experience, Aielli has a clear vision for AWP stability and growth in both the near and long term. Our recent 2025 conference in Los Angeles was our most successful in recent history, with 10,000 attendees, 585 exhibitors, 375 on-site events, and more than 150 events across the city.

Next year in 2027, AWP will honor its sixtieth anniversary, celebrating this important milestone in Chicago for our annual conference. This anniversary represents six decades of serving students, teachers, and schools; supporting writers at the beginning of their careers and those well established; and promoting the work of editors, publishers, and booksellers that keep literature alive and available to readers. AWP is a member organization, so this work has only been possible thanks to the labor and support of generations of writers, teachers, and countless others who have supported AWP's mission to “amplify the voices of writers and the academic programs and organizations that serve them while championing diversity and excellence in creative writing.”

AWP's annual conference was last in Chicago in 2012, where, in the majestic Palmer House Hilton theater, keynote speaker Margaret Atwood told a packed audience of conference attendees—myself included—about the beauty and power of writing. I look forward to seeing our members there again in Chicago next year to celebrate sixty years of AWP history, share a rich diversity of literary art, and work together to strengthen and sustain writers and writing community today and well into the future.

Sincerely,

Travis Kurowski
Chair, AWP Board of Directors

February, 2026



Association of Writers
& Writing Programs

From the Executive Director

Dear AWP Community,

To fulfill AWP's mission, we must retool past strategies and address the current landscape that creative writers, academics, and writing organizations face. As a result, AWP must adapt to rapid changes in technology, demographics, and economics, as well as challenges such as book bans and threats to First Amendment rights. This strategic plan charts AWP's path forward, anchoring our mission to support and amplify the voices of writers, creative writing programs, and writing organizations, while championing growth, inclusion, equity, accessibility, belonging, and excellence in the field. The plan consolidates AWP's goals for the next three years and positions the organization to be a vital player in the twenty-first-century literary and academic worlds.

The current and future geopolitical landscape creates new obstacles to creative expression and writers from every culture. Employment pathways for writers—and supports for academic institutions—are shifting. Writers and writing programs face economic, geographic, and social marginalization; AWP is committed to their inclusion and development within the AWP community. The AWP Strategic Plan aims to place an even greater focus on access, inclusion, and helping the writing community face ongoing challenges such as artificial intelligence (AI). AWP recognizes that AI is a reality that all writers may have to contend with, but we firmly uphold our mission and believe that AI can be an effective tool only when the rights (and copyrights) of human writers are protected.

We are poised to drive meaningful change by offering educational programming, resources, advocacy, and discussions that empower our members and community to navigate evolving ethical and practical challenges, such as the adjunct crisis. Many graduate students, instructors, and adjuncts struggle with precarious teaching positions. Through member-driven initiatives and responsive programming, AWP can lead in shaping inclusive, forward-thinking strategies for the future of creative writing. This vision for action aligns with AWP's strategic planning objectives, where inclusion, equity, belonging, and technology become integral to employee goals and organizational priorities.

Sincerely,
Michelle Aielli
Executive Director



Association of Writers
& Writing Programs

Our

Mission

& Vision

AWP *amplifies* the
VOICES OF WRITERS
and the *academic programs*
and *organizations*
that serve them while
CHAMPIONING DIVERSITY
and **excellence**
in **creative writing.**



AWP's Strength Has Always Been *Its Members*

This strategic plan highlights our vast resources for educators, students, and dedicated supporters, demonstrating the diversity and depth of experience within our board, staff, and membership. Our redesigned website, launched in 2024, offers a new digital foundation for connecting with members and expanding AWP's impact. Together, the AWP Board of Directors and staff commit to a shared vision that unites our community under a collaborative and inclusive future.

2023 CONFERENCE
& BOOKFAIR

Health & Safety Protocols

Protect the health & safety of
your fellow attendees with these
recommendations:

AWP strongly encourages attendees who may have a health concern to do so early. Attendees who are unable to attend are not considered a priority or guaranteed to receive a refund unless they are:

• With your health provider and have your name on the list of attendees
• Unable to attend in-person
• They cannot attend in-person & you are being refunded

AWP strongly encourages all attendees

to wear masks.

Seattle
2023

A woman with dark curly hair is reading a book into a microphone. She is wearing a white t-shirt and denim shorts. A teal rectangular overlay covers the right side of the image, containing the title and a paragraph of text. In the background, a sign for 'AWP SAN ANTONIO 2020' is visible.

Strategic Focus for 2026–2029

AWP's wide membership drives our mission and fuels our evolution. Over the next three years, AWP will continue to strengthen our role as a convener, facilitator, advocate, and supporter for the literary community, offering space for reflection, discussion, and creative expression. Our strategic focus aims to enhance our support of individual writers, academic institutions, and writing programs; expand membership and elevate member engagement; focus on AWP's development and financial sustainability; and establish AWP as a leader in the literary arts community.



HEN
ER

SAN ANTONIO
2020

Goals & Objectives

STRATEGIC
GOAL

#1

SUPPORT INDIVIDUAL
MEMBERS AND CONNECT
THEM TO THE BROADER
LITERARY COMMUNITY.

Objectives

1. Provide pathways for individual writers to engage with the literary landscape.
2. Provide professional resources for MFA students and graduates.
3. Develop educational programming, resources, and advocacy initiatives that address the adjunct crisis and other precarious employment issues facing MFA graduates and part-time instructors.



Goals & Objectives

STRATEGIC
GOAL
#2

STRENGTHEN OUR SUPPORT AND
ADVOCACY FOR ACADEMIC WRITING
INSTITUTIONS, CREATIVE WRITING/
WRITING ORGANIZATIONS, AND
LEARNING COMMUNITIES.

Objectives

1. Sustain and provide new, clear, and significant benefits to institutional membership.
2. Invest time and energy on much-needed data collection and data-driven support.
3. Place a continued focus on support for K-12 programs.
4. Enhance offerings to institutions and programs at and around the conference.



Goals & Objectives

STRATEGIC GOAL #3

ENSURE ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCY THROUGH EFFECTIVE FINANCIAL ANALYSIS AND OVERSIGHT ALONGSIDE STRENGTHENED MISSION-BASED STEWARDSHIP AND PHILANTHROPY.

Objectives

1. Hire a development associate to focus on initiatives including fundraising, sponsorships, grants, donations, and major gifts to ensure the financial sustainability of the organization.
2. Engage a specialist to focus on creating new relationships with institutions and organizations and securing more sponsorships for conference.
3. Comprehensively review and analyze programs and operations to identify actions that will better align revenue and costs in order to achieve and maintain financial sustainability.
4. Grow membership and bolster member engagement.
5. Implement a clear PR/communication strategy for member engagement, new members, and public awareness of AWP.
6. Create and execute a plan of action to forge new and mutually beneficial relationships with book publishers of all sizes and other organizations in line with AWP's mission.



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