



Comments from Postgraduate Writers' Conference Participants

The overall atmosphere and community really blew away my expectations. Welcoming, supportive, relationship building—you guys rocked this!

—*Jeremiah Hakundy (2013)*

Hey, I'm a writer, but I can barely describe how wonderful this Conference was.

—*Elizabeth Bales Frank (2013)*

I was surprised by how quickly I felt at home; after the very first night, I felt like I was rejoining an old community that I hadn't realized I'd left. I appreciated the continuous stimulation from workshops, classes, readings, etc. I can carve out time to write anywhere, but I can't have those other things anywhere, including at some other writing conferences.

—*Justin Sikes (2013)*

I met so many phenomenal new colleagues, but in a casual environment without all the "buzz." The intimate size of each workshop and the group overall created a community of writers that felt like family.

—*Lisa Lopez Snyder (2013)*

What a wonderful experience. It really felt like a conference of peers. Everyone seemed to have shaken off the ego and concentrated on the writing and sense of community.

—*Nathan Long (2013)*

My workshop members were truly interested in improving my work and totally open to my making suggestions that might improve theirs. Our level of discourse was way above that which I have encountered in other conferences. As a writer, I often find myself in the role of teacher when I attend conferences. Here I got as good as I gave.

—*Dahlma Llanos-Figueroa (2013)*

I really appreciated the professionalism that VCFA brought to the table, while my cohorts brought their A-games, both in terms of writing and critique. I found colleagues who will be my pre-submission readers for life.

—*Jon Ricci (2013)*

The atmosphere was one of generosity and enthusiasm for the work and for one another. There is a spirit of camaraderie—a lack of competitiveness and genuine openness—that is unique to this conference.

—*Jia Oak Baker (2013)*

I was flabbergasted by how inclusive the atmosphere was and the fact that I was constantly having casual conversations with so many amazing writers, people who I would probably have been far too shy to ever consider approaching out in the real world.

—*Ali Oliva (2013)*

Imagine being in an impossibly quaint village where everyone you encounter is pre-qualified to in some way improve, encourage, warmly challenge and/or inspire your writing. Add to this scenario a reverse Babel where the languages of genres mix freely and, particularly in the craft talks, shake something new out of each other. Imagine, further, a place where there's a party every night populated only by people you can't wait to talk to.

—*Dave Barnette (2013)*

Having attended many conferences over the years, this continues to be my favorite. An inspiring, stimulating, emboldening week.

—*JJ Penna (2013)*

I came away with my batteries recharged, eager to write from a deeper place.

—*Jennie Helderman (2013)*

PWC was a breath of fresh air that is now at my back as I return to my manuscript.

—*Kevin O'Keefe (2013)*

Of the many workshops I've attended in almost two decades, the VCFA conference beats all the others put together. The entire experience was off-the-chart amazing.

—*Bren McClain (2012)*

The interdisciplinary nature of the Conference, with poets and fiction writers and nonfiction writers all rubbing shoulders, made PWC stand out. The common concerns were those of writers with no walls between us. I learned a lot, both in and out of the classroom.

—*Sean Elder (2012)*

Once again, the atmosphere was charmed. I thought last year had to be as good as it gets, and guess what? It got better. There is something magical going on up there. You have created this safe and nurturing environment that also manages to be challenging and rigorous even as we're having the time of our lives. I think you have perfected the writers' conference as we know it.

—*Lisa Hartz (2012)*

I had a great experience. It was—honestly—the best workshop I've been in. We've all been writing—no one was there to restart their writing after a layoff after grad school, but to sharpen our eyes, have some new company on the journey, and above all KEEP GOING.

—*John Walker (2011)*

Best week of my writing life thus far, and I've had many good ones.

—*Ann Carson DeWitt (2011)*

The six-person workshop size was perfect. And my one-on-one consultation was worth the cost of tuition on its own.

—*James Pounds (2011)*

I had a wildly exciting group—multi-generational, multi-faceted, multi-experiential. And the atmosphere and sense of community at VCFA is simply mind-blowing! The sense of safety, too, for people to open themselves up and be comfortable in their vulnerability speaks volumes about the core values VCFA fosters.

—*Ingrid Silverstein (2011)*

I arrived at the Conference excited, but apprehensive. I left relaxed, positive, energized . I also left feeling a part of something bigger—the VCFA writing community.

—*Lauren Lee Norton (2011)*

I had an amazing experience. Simply put, the conference changed my writing life.

—*Bernard Lumpkin (2010)*

As always, what benefits me most is to be in an environment where I feel seen, heard, understood, known. It's so easy out in the wide world to forget why I fight for writing in my life, why I write; so easy to be watchful for who's getting published, who's won competitions, who's getting jobs. When I come to Vermont, I remember why I do this. I remember what matters.

—*Dawn Haines (2010)*

I can summarize my experience in a word: magical. The conference was everything I'd hoped for and more. I felt completely supported and welcomed by the conference staff, the faculty, and my fellow participants. We worked as equals—there were many highly accomplished faculty and students, but thankfully, no “stars.” There was none of the competitiveness or elitism that one finds in many MFA programs, conferences, and similar gatherings. The conference gave me the sense of “we’re all in this together as writers” that I’ve long sought but never found. It’s an experience that has already had a profound effect on my writing and my view of myself as a writer.

—*Marcia Trahan (2009)*