Western States Rhetoric and Literacy Conference
Matter and Mattering.

Keynote Speakers: Donnie Johnson Sackey, Wayne State University
Garrett Avila-Nichols, Bridgewater State University

Date: November 2-3, 2018
Location: New Mexico State University (Las Cruces, NM)

Call for Proposals

In histories traditional and nontraditional, rhetoric has long been concerned with the process of mattering: how can words come to matter? What makes arguments, images, performances, or emotions have a force in the world? How can the claims of an affronted party be realized? How do identities, values, and dreams materialize? In the digital age, these questions do not dissolve but multiply: how do digital causes and communities shape the course of the world in new, networked ways? How do digital movements come into “concrete” being on the streets?

In recent years, resonating with many indigenous and nonwestern discourses, rhetorical and literacy studies have taken up the question of mattering more literally. Scholars draw on diverse sources and methods to explore how material realities unfold not only through human words and ideas, but also through affect, emotion, sensation, bodies, performance, animality, environments, land, things, and more. This intimate embrace of matter and mattering has surely deepened our understanding of rhetorical and rhetorical mechanisms of change. But what can those intimacies do? What, for instance, do they indicate about how rhetoric and literacy connect to justice and power; oppression and discrimination; ethics and care? How can close attention to material life reveal rhetorical options and participate in making better rhetorical futures? What insight can it offer on what matters?¹

We invite proposals that call upon rhetorical and literacy studies to examine varied political, ethical, environmental, and creative approaches to what matters. Proposals may explore why it is important to pay attention to mattering in any of the arenas of rhetoric and literacy, such as:

- Social and environmental justice movements and rhetorics
- Rhetorics of “nationalism,” “heritage,” immigration, and race
- Digital activism and social media justice campaigns
- Rhetorics of identity, difference, and (non)belonging
- Indigenous and nonwestern knowledges and rhetorics
- Infrastructure studies
- Community and local literacies
- Rhetorics of health and medicine
- Writing practices, especially as they manifest in public arenas and extend from classroom to civic settings

¹ We’d like to thank our mentors and colleagues who inspired these questions, including Julie Jung, Angela M. Haas, and Maureen Goggin.
We are particularly interested in work that moves across academic and civic boundaries, as well as research that draws on underrecognized sources, indigenous knowledges, and nonwestern perspectives. In addition to standard conference papers, we welcome creative and experimental formats.

Please submit:
- A cover page that includes the title, speaker/s, address/es, email/s, and phone number/s, along with a brief 25-50 word description of your presentation. Please note any A/V needs.
- A one-page abstract identifying the format of the presentation as:
  (a) a 20-minute paper  
  (b) a 75-minute panel limited to 3 speakers, including time for discussion  
  (c) a 75-minute roundtable (focused discussion/performance encouraging audience participation)  
  (d) an experimental or creative piece with description of format, duration, etc.

Deadline:
Proposals must be postmarked or sent via email by March 2, 2018 to wsrl2018@gmail.com

Questions?
Questions may be directed to Dr. Kellie Sharp-Hoskins via email: wsrl2018@gmail.com