

Summer/Fall 2011

ALUMNI *Annotations*

A NEWSLETTER FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF THE
PURDUE WRITING LAB

Message from the Director

It's moving into deep fall these days: fall break is over, leaves are falling, and the end of the semester is rushing at us. The "new" tutors are feeling less new, and the number of visitors to the Writing Lab keeps increasing. We've had 1,699 consultations so far this semester, as compared to 1,265 for the same period last year, and 2,271 total visits, as compared to 1,762 last year. We hold an ESL conversation group every day, and Matthew Allen, the current ESL Coordinator, has started assigning weekly topics for discussion. Our growing popularity is exhilarating, but it can be exhausting as well.

The growing number of international students at Purdue accounts for at least some of this increase, and we are exploring ways to offer Writing Lab tutors more training in working with second language speakers and writers. We are in the process of hiring an ESL/EFL specialist to develop a program to increase tutors' understanding, expertise, and confidence in this work.

I am not teaching this semester, and so Laurie Pinkert is teaching ENGL 502—the practicum for graduate tutors—and I am auditing it as a "student." The conversations and blog reflections are better than ever, and I've had the chance to see "my" course through new eyes, which has been a great learning experience.

Work with the Interactive web site for high school students continues—its name has changed from I-OWL to H-OWL to TOWN (Teen Online Writing Network). It's currently being pilot tested in high schools, and we plan to field test it widely in the spring.



*Dr. Linda Bergmann, Director
Professor of English*

NEW FACES AROUND THE LAB

GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Ashley Watson, Rebecah Pulsifer, Trey Gorden, Dan Kenzie, Mary McCall, Lydia Magras, along with Laurie Pinkert (Writing Lab Practicum Instructor, 3rd year Graduate Consultant)



ALUMNI PROFILES



Jodi L. Wagner-Angell, PhD, Assistant Professor of English
Marian University
Fond du Lac, WI
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I worked at Purdue's Writing Lab for two years (2005-2007) as a graduate consultant and have many fond memories of working in the Lab. The one-on-one consultations with students have greatly improved my teaching pedagogy in both my composition and literature courses. I love teaching and helping students get to the heart of their ideas and overcome any anxiety they may have with writing. In the Lab, I always looked forward to working on a paper with a student. Usually my favorite part of a consultation was having a conversation about what he or she wanted to say while I took notes. It never failed that after students were done talking, they were amazed at all the great ideas they had but were just too intimidated to write down themselves. After witnessing the benefit of such individualized instruction, I now incorporate several of the same strategies into my composition classes, such as Individual conference meetings and workshop days.

I am now the chair of the English department at Marian University in Fond du Lac, WI, where many students come in thinking they are horrible writers. I don't know how many times I have heard, "Just so you know, I hate English" or "I'm a terrible writer." One of the biggest challenges as an English professor is to help students overcome those attitudes. By incorporating strategies I used in the Writing Lab, I am able to get to know my students better and instill in them the confidence to take chances with their writing. They may not all end up loving English, but they are definitely equipped to tackle any writing assignment in the future.



Jodi tutoring in the Writing Lab

BWC TUTOR RETURNS AS GTA

I am returning to the Writing Lab as a graduate tutor. I had worked here once before as a Business Writing Consultant more than three years ago. I returned to many changes. First, the walls were painted white, covering the quotes of tutors past. Second, the pencils were no longer a neon green, but a white. Like the Lab, I was going through some changes. I reentered the Writing Lab having taught first year composition for three years. While there are similarities between tutoring and teaching, I have found that tutoring has exposed me to possible communication problems between my students and me. While working with students as a tutor, I have realized how instructors' language in course materials may confuse students, especially second language learners. Further, I have seen how instructors' comments in papers may be unclear or uninviting. Recently, I worked with a second language student who needed an instructor's comments, written in cursive, deciphered. Up to that point, I had written all my comments by hand and in cursive.

Working with students in the Lab has revealed to me the diversity of writers in our first-year composition classrooms and has pushed me to make my course materials and teaching more accessible.

While there have been some changes, the Lab's climate is the same. The other day a tutor-in-training commented, "Everyone in the Lab is so nice." Yes, it is true. The Writing Lab houses the nicest, most caring people you'll meet. This has not changed. Everything in the Lab is still a collaboration. We are helping each other answer OWL Mail, plan workshops, analyze problematic tutorials, and edit our own work for school. Overall, it is good to be back. I look forward to seeing in what other ways the Lab makes me grow as a writer, instructor, and tutor.



Ashley Watson, GTA

AROUND THE WORLD

Tammy Conard-Salvo, Associate Director, Writing Lab



I had a rare opportunity to spend seven weeks meeting with colleagues at the University of Dundee in Scotland this summer. The University of Dundee is similar to Purdue in its program offerings and foci, and what we would call a writing center is known as the Academic Achievement Teaching Unit (AATU). The professional staff at the AATU offers individual consultations and works with departments across campus to provide workshops and courses on writing and academic skills. I was warmly welcomed by Mr. Michael Allardice, Dr. Gordon Spark, and Ms. Amanda Whitehead. We exchanged ideas about how we support students' development as writers, and I even joined the AATU staff for a session about dissecting essay questions and procrastination for students participating in a program designed to prepare them for college.

I was impressed by the AATU's inclusion of academic study skills as part of the writing process. Too often in the United States, we separate the writing process from skills like time management and reading comprehension, which can be integral to students' transition to college life and coursework. I learned that students at both Dundee and Purdue face similar challenges

with preparedness, access to resources, and even language issues. However, both campuses demonstrate cultural differences in how writing is taught in the United States and in the United Kingdom. We are used to formal writing instruction in the U.S., while universities in the UK do not offer first year composition or advanced writing courses.

My time in Scotland allowed me to reflect on my own work as a writing center administrator and to rethink my approach to tutor training. I've brought back a few new ideas, and I hope to learn more as I stay in touch with my colleagues in Dundee. Experiences like mine can serve as opportunities for developing global perspectives to help students become better writers.

OWL NEWS

The OWL has expanded its multimedia resources with the Purdue OWL YouTube Channel (<http://www.youtube.com/user/OWL Purdue>). Currently, the YouTube Channel houses 10 vidcasts on memo writing, résumé writing, semi-colon use, and Writing Across the Curriculum. As of November 6, 2011, the YouTube Channel has 10,628 views and 170 subscribers. OWL staff and content developers are working to develop more vidcasts on a wide variety of writing topics. Subscribe either to the OWLPurdue Channel with your YouTube account or to the Purdue OWL News RSS Feed (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/feeds/purdueowlnews.xml>) to receive updates about new vidcasts. Stay tuned!



Liz Angeli
OWL Coordinator



Caitlan Spronk
OWL Webmaster

I'm a PhD student in Rhetoric and Composition, with specializations in Professional and Technical Writing and Rhetoric, Technology, and Digital Writing. In addition to working on the OWL, I teach technical writing. Before becoming the OWL Webmaster, I worked as a tutor in the Purdue Writing Lab and was the OWL Mail Coordinator. As the OWL Mail Coordinator, I really enjoyed interacting directly with users to help them answer their writing questions. Working on OWL Mail provided me with a problem-solving experience that I enjoyed, and seeing the wide variety of writing questions gave me a better understanding of the diversity of OWL users. I'm glad I'll be able to continue helping those users in a different way by keeping OWL resources usable, accessible, and up-to-date.

I've been working with websites since a summer camp class over ten years ago, and I am thrilled to be able to apply those skills to the OWL. My approach to web design favors usability, accessibility, and clean, semantic markup, and I hope to continue the tradition of upholding and improving those aspects of the OWL. As other Webmasters and Coordinators have stressed, users' needs drive our decisions about the OWL. As such, one area that I hope to develop more on the OWL is increased interactivity and using different media for resources, as we've already started to do with our YouTube channel.

WRITING LAB COLLABORATION

Once again, Writing Lab consultants and Associate Director Tammy Conard-Salvo worked with Dave Hobbs at Tecumseh Junior High School in Lafayette, Indiana, to judge entries for an essay contest. Mr. Hobbs began this contest as a way to encourage seventh and eighth grade students to think more positively about writing and to help prepare them for Indiana's ISTEP exam.

Students at Tecumseh are asked to respond to an essay prompt similar to what they might encounter when taking the ISTEP. Writing Lab "judges" read more than 90 essays and selected winners in both grades, as well as an overall winner.

The following graduate consultants, who are also teaching assistants in the Department of English, served as judges this year: Tristan Abbott, Matthew Allen, Patricia Poblete and Megan Schoen. The following undergraduate consultants also served as judges this year: Kim Adkins (Psychology), Kelli Barnett (Professional Writing), Laura Stanley (Apparel Design and Technology). Here is Kelli's take on the essay contest:

My name is Kelli Barnett, and I am a senior double majoring in Professional Writing and Japanese. I have been working in the Writing Lab as a Business Writing Consultant (BWC) since March, but I had been training in the Writing Lab since August 2010. A career in developmental editing interests me, so I'm very glad that I get to help others improve their writing every day.

Last spring, I was presented with the opportunity to help score the essays written by the Tecumseh Middle School 7th and 8th grade students. Along with others, I volunteered to help read the essays because I wanted to help students incorporate good writing techniques in preparation for high school. I really enjoyed reading the essays and was impressed with how well students were already writing. Overall, students seemed to have the basics of good layout and organization down pat, but needed work on elaborating ideas and explaining details. However, these are concerns for much older students and choosing the best essays was a tough call.

I also had the pleasure of presenting the winning students with their awards. On the selected day, a group of people who had participated in the scoring of the essays traveled to Tecumseh Middle School and met up with the students in the school's library. The students were very pleased to have won and each student was very polite and courteous. I was pleasantly surprised with how well all the students were doing with their writing and the behavior of this small selection of students. I hope that I can participate in the contest again this year.



Clayon Slake, Overall Winner, 7th grade (middle); Andrew Walter, 8th grade; Natalie Carrero, 7th grade; Hannah Mowery 7th grade, Teeny Siddiqui, 8th grade.
Pictured with Tammy Conard-Salvo, Matthew Allen, Laura Stanley and Kelli Barnett

WELCOMING FRESHMAN AT BOILER GOLD RUSH

The Writing Lab was well-represented at the Boiler Gold Rush, University Resource Fair at the Purdue Memorial Union on Wednesday August 17th. Tammy Conard-Salvo, Associate Director; Laura Stanley, Undergraduate Teaching Assistant; and Leon Lim, Business Writing Consultant were there to welcome new freshman and to hand out Writing Lab materials.



Laura Stanley, Undergraduate Teaching Assistant



Leon Lim, Business Writing Consultant
& our photographer for this event



Tammy Conard-Salvo, Associate Director



Enthusiastic freshman Writing Lab prospects

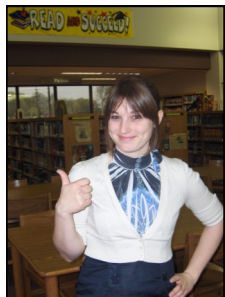
CONGRATULATIONS



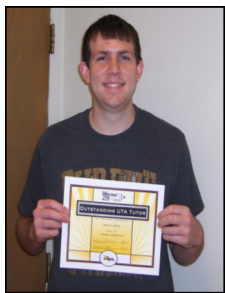
Cristyn Elder received the 2011 Committee for the Education of Teaching Assistants Excellence in Teaching Award.



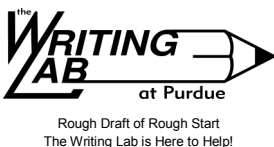
The Tutor of the Year Award was earned this past year by Laurie Pinkert. This is an English Department teaching award, traditionally presented at the second faculty meeting of the year.



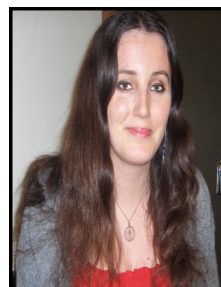
Kelli Barnett, Outstanding Business Writing Consultant in the Writing Lab for the Spring semester. Kelli is a senior getting her Bachelor of Arts in both Professional Writing and Japanese and is involved with the Professional Writing Club as President. She hopes to pursue a career in developmental editing after she graduates, and hopes to use her Japanese language skills in the process. Her hobbies include reading historical fiction and enjoying Japanese cinema. Kelli has been working in the Writing Lab since spring 2011 and enjoys working with other students immensely.



Matthew Hollars, Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching Assistant in the Writing Lab for the Spring semester. Hailing from Danville, Indiana, Matthew is currently a junior at Purdue studying Mechanical Engineering. He is involved with the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and the mechanical engineering honor society Pi Tau Sigma, where he takes on the responsibilities of the Industrial Relations Chair and the Social Chair. He also serves in TA positions with the Artisan and Fabrication Lab, the Writing Lab, and with the Personal Finance class at Purdue. Although his years here at Purdue keep getting busier and busier, he is really enjoying his college experience and the network of contacts he is making. He still is deciding what he wants to do after he gets done with his undergraduate program. His choices so far include pursuing a Masters in Engineering or an MBA, or trying to find a job straight out of college. He still is not quite sure what the future holds for him yet, but he is looking forward to whatever life may hold after his time at Purdue.



Julie Ranslant is the winner of the Writing Lab's Catchy Phrase contest, in celebration with the National Day on Writing and Liberal Art's Month. Julie came up with the winning Writing Lab's Catchy Phrase: Rough draft or rough start, the Writing Lab is here to help you! Julie is an exchange student from Strasbourg, France. Her major is History. She would like to be a journalist when she is finished with school. She enjoys reading, writing, history, cinema and sports.



Muriel Harris Tutor Development Fund

The fund was established in honor of Muriel "Mickey" Harris, who founded the Writing Lab in 1976 and retired in May 2003. The fund recognizes the groundbreaking work Mickey achieved in building an international writing center community.

Your tax-deductible gift to this fund enables tutors in the Writing Lab to pursue professional development, and helps foster Mickey's longstanding philosophy of encouraging both undergraduate and graduate tutors to participate in conferences, presentations, and workshops

How to give to any of our funds:

If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution, please make checks payable to the Purdue Foundation, with either The Writing Lab, OWL (Online Writing Lab) or Muriel Harris Tutor Development Fund in the memo line. Checks should be mailed to the following address:

Purdue Foundation
403 West Wood Street
West Lafayette, IN 47907-2007

If you're not receiving the Alumni Annotations as an email PDF file, and would like to, please contact Denise McKnight, secretary for the Writing Lab at dmcknig@purdue.edu