

Spring 2012

# ALUMNI *Annotations*

A NEWSLETTER FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF THE  
PURDUE WRITING LAB

## Message from the Director

Welcome to the spring issue of Alumni Annotations. We enjoy hearing from former tutors and staff and have featured two in this issue.

We are pleased, with assistance from the Muriel Harris Tutor Fund, to give travel scholarships to seven members of our staff who are presenting at the ECWCA Conference at IUPUI in Indianapolis on March 30-31. This money will go towards their registration and travel fees. The recipients this year are:

- ◆ **Matthew Allen** (GTA), and **Sung Jun Ma** (UTA), who will be presenting with me on "Responding to a Changing Population: ESL Activities and Generalist Tutors."
- ◆ **Dan Kenzie** (GTA), **Laurie Pinkert** (GTA) and **Rebecah Pulsifer** (GTA ) presenting "Learning from Other Disciplines: New Knowledge in the Writing Center."
- ◆ **Jacqueline Borchert** (UTA), who is presenting "Writing Centers and Multicultural Centers: How to Best Serve Underrepresented Students." along with Tammy Conard-Salvo, Associate Director of the Writing Lab, Angelica Duran, Associate Professor of English and **Lizzie Berkovitz** (UTA).

This fund is such an important part of the Writing Lab (see last page for details), and helps defray the costs of such conferences for our undergraduate and graduate teaching assistants. We are grateful to all who have supported this fund.



*Dr. Linda Bergmann, Director  
Professor of English*

## New Faces Around The Lab

Alissa Berger, UTA- Mech. Engineering  
Lizzie Berkovitz, UTA- English, Spanish  
Ross Blythe, BWC- Professional Writing/Philosophy  
Elise Crane, BWC- Professional Writing  
Carolynn Garthus, BWC- Professional Writing  
Megan Grassl, UTA- Pre-Pharmacy

Kimberly Hondorp, UTA- Professional Writing/English  
Xin Hou, UTA- Financial Planning  
Elizabeth Hudson, BWC- Professional Writing/  
American Studies  
Kenneth Kim, UTA- Neural Biology  
Katelyn Roberts, BWC- Professional Writing

# ALUMNI PROFILES



Barbara Kelb, Ph.D., graduate student tutor 1985-87

Since defending my dissertation in May of 1991 (seven months pregnant with our oldest daughter and totally unaware that she would arrive prematurely two weeks later), I have been pretty much just raising children, interrupted here and there by intermittent jobs of freelance editing. In some ways I regret not having been immersed in academia all these years, surrounded by supportive colleagues and teaching on a college campus somewhere, but in other ways I consider myself so fortunate for at least having experienced what I did over twenty years ago at Purdue. It was a transformational time for the field of Rhetoric and Composition, and we seemed to be at the center of it all.

Let me set the scene. Dr. Janice Lauer was running one of the premier Rhet/Comp programs in the country. Professor Mickey Harris had established herself as the guru of writing centers, and Purdue's Writing Lab was a model that administrators at other universities, colleges, and community colleges were trying to emulate. Professor Pat Sullivan had just started her career in the department, introducing everyone to the novel, yes, that's right, novel idea of using computers in the teaching of writing. Dr. Irwin Weiser, the current Dean of the School of Liberal Arts, worked tirelessly with many of us who were teaching English 100, mentoring and setting the finest example of how a dedicated and compassionate teacher should guide his students. All of us in the Rhet/Comp program were trying to grasp (from ancient to modern) the ideas behind the teaching of writing and the countless methods being used in the classroom that were generated by those theories. The English Department floor of Heavilon Hall was abuzz with and electrified by the current views on composing. We were devouring every issue of *Rhetoric Review* and *College Composition and Communication*.

In the midst of all this intellectual fury, some of us were lucky enough to secure tutoring positions in the Writing Lab. It was such an honor to work alongside Mickey and all the creative and dedicated graduate and undergraduate tutors. We sat at tables or hunkered down in frumpy stuffed couches with our tutees. We tried so hard to encourage that Freshman Composition 101 student whose desperate instructor's note read, "She's deathly afraid of writing, and I don't know what to do with her. Perhaps some one-on-one will help!" And, pressed beyond our own knowledge and skills, we assisted the graduate student from China in electrical engineering who hadn't the slightest idea how to write a master's thesis. With these and with countless others, we helped, but the learning was mutual—how in the heck does a writer arrive at what he or she wants to say?

I am not sure how the Writing Lab has evolved over the years, but I will bet that the same care and commitment goes into every session of tutoring. Mickey set the standard, and we have just tried to follow her guidelines: Make students feel comfortable; help them understand the writing process; equip them with tools they can use away from the lab; and, above all, be the consummate listener. I have not had the chance to use these principles in a writing lab since those years at Purdue, but I have used them over and over again with my own three children and other students with whom I have helped in our school system.

I hope everyone in the Writing Lab family has come or will come away with the same sense of appreciation for having been a part of something special. Many have walked through the lab door (students, tutors, faculty, and staff), and it has changed their lives—as teachers, as learners, and all as writers.

I was an Undergraduate Tutor from 2002-2004; I can't believe it has almost been ten years since I started! To this day I remain thankful for the opportunity Mickey Harris and Linda Bergmann gave me to work in the lab even though I was a science major. I remember how rewarding it was to work with students who initially came to the consultation looking for someone to proofread their paper and having them leave with new writing skills that could be applied to future writing assignments. It was especially rewarding when some students would come back for multiple visits throughout the semester, as this allowed me to witness firsthand their maturation as writers. I also had the opportunity to participate in the ESL Conversation Group, which gave me a fresh perspective on working with writers learning English as their second language. This is especially helpful since there are a high number of international scholars in my field.

I am currently a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Psychology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where I am studying neurobiological mechanisms that regulate impulsive decision making. I use the skills I developed in the Writing Lab while writing papers and grants, editing for colleagues and students, and acting as Editor-In-Chief of the National Postdoctoral Association's newsletter. The Writing Lab taught me that writing does not need to be intimidating or complicated. Most importantly, I learned that the best tutors are the ones who make students feel at ease, which facilitates learning and growth.



Mary Katherine (Katie) Kelm,  
PhD Postdoctoral Fellow  
Department of Psychology  
The University of North  
Carolina

# TUTORS AROUND THE WORLD

## A semester to write home about...

During the Spring Semester of the 2011 School year, I had the wonderful opportunity to study abroad in Seville, Spain. I think many times the experience of study abroad is viewed as a "time-out" from the rigorous educational curriculum that many of us face in college; however, I truly feel that I learned more in that semester about life, myself and my education than I could have ever imagined.

Previous to studying abroad I had had the privilege of leaving the country one other time. That experience with other cultures enthralled my curiosity and left me wanting to live differently, to live in and among a different group of people. Studying abroad gave me the opportunity to do this. Not only did I love the flavor of the food, become lost in the art of Flamenco and drink more café con leche than anyone probably should, but I felt like I was given four and a half months to become Spanish. During my stay I lived with a host family, who only spoke Spanish, and I went



to classes taught by teachers who only spoke Spanish. I went into the semester with an uneasy confusion as to why almost all the Spanish people I met had such strong Spanish pride, and yet somewhere in the middle of my time in Seville...I felt myself succumbing to this same place. I was proud to be a Sevillano, as the locals call themselves and loved every minute of it. My friends I made there became my family and the family I stayed with became my friends. It was definitely a semester to write home about.

Upon my return and lengthy reflection time I have had since my stay abroad, I have come to the conclusion that I miss it. There is a piece of my heart that will always be a Sevillano, and yet I am thankful and happy to be a senior at Purdue, in West Lafayette, Indiana, because of it. I appreciate English and being able to understand all sides of a language, but I loved learning Spanish. I appreciate the ability to communicate with friends and family easily, because they are on the same continent. I appreciate large coffee drinks, sometimes it's nice to super size.

So, one may ask, what does writing have to do with any of this? Well, writing is one of the few things that helps to flood my heart with all the memories I made there and perhaps the best medicine to reflect on my semester of a lifetime. Writing can bring experience back to life, and that is why I so strongly believe in helping students understand that. Writing opens doors of education but it also builds houses of memory. What I learned while studying abroad is that writing never stops being important.

Mackenzie Lechlitrner (UTA) Senior, English Education / Spanish Minor

*Writing opens  
doors of  
education, but it  
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houses of  
memory...*

## ECWCA & the Conference on College Composition & Communication

### ECWCA, March 30-31, Indianapolis, Indiana

"Writing Centers and Multicultural Centers: How Best to Serve Underrepresented Students" is a panel composed of Tammy Conard-Salvo, the Associate Director of the Purdue Writing Lab, Angelica Duran, co-founder of the Latino Cultural Center and Associate Professor at Purdue, Jacqueline Borchert, Undergraduate Tutor and concept creator, and Elizabeth Berkovitz, a new undergraduate tutor with experience working at this new location. The panel will present on the new satellite lab location located at the Latino Cultural Center. We state increasing the visibility and accessibility of writing centers to underrepresented students (URS) is challenging yet of vital importance, and many times advertising is simply not enough to reach out to URS. We share the example of a recent initiative at Purdue to set up a satellite writing center at the Latino Cultural Center to reach a specific group of URS.

"Responding to a Changing Population: ESL Activities and Generalist Tutors", presented by Linda Bergmann, Director of the Writing Lab, Matthew Allen, graduate tutor and Sung Jun Ma, undergraduate tutor. Sung states that he interviewed one-on-one with a number of international students from various countries. He'd like to investigate the areas in which students with a certain nationality tend to struggle commonly, why these areas might be particularly difficult in terms of students' cultural, educational backgrounds, and what resources the students wish to see for a better transition to U.S. academia.

### Conference on College Compositions & Communication, March 21-24, St. Louis Missouri "Writing Gateways" (a brief summary of a few of our presentations are below):

Cristyn Elder's presentation is on: Tools of Engagement: What Online Tutoring Can Tell Us About Writers' Concerns' based on her dissertation "*Dear OWL Mail*": *Writer Inquiries as a Window Into Writer Concerns*. Her dissertation arises from her experience as the Lab's OWL Mail Coordinator and responding to online writers through the Purdue OWL. This empirical study seeks to better understand writers' concerns in relation to various stages of the writing process and the possible resource needs of users of an Online Writing Lab. She examines nearly 1,400 randomly selected emails (from a total of 14,812 emails) submitted over a four-year period (2006-2010) to Purdue's OWL Mail. She identifies 61 categories of writers' specific concerns, which will be useful to the Lab in its efforts to strengthen its online resources and prepare writing center consultants to address writers' needs.

## CCCC's continued

### Ethics and the Writing Center

Tutors often encounter situations where they must make decisions about how to guide a tutorial or what advice to give a writer. (Should I work with a writer whose approach to a topic is offensive? Should I work with a writer whose text may not be her own? Should I let the writer's desires determine the tutorial agenda?) In spite of useful tutoring guides, advice from colleagues, or valuable past experiences, tutors may still feel unsure about how to respond to certain scenarios and may feel that their decisions have ethical implications. This presentation explores such scenarios through a discussion of the relationship between ethical and professional behavior in writing center.

My presentation at CCCC's is "Minding the Gap: Results of a Survey of Graduate Student Writing Experience." The abstract is as follows: "In spite of continued calls for curricular commitment to graduate writing (Sullivan, 1991; Dobrin, 1993; Rose and McClafferty, 2001; Micciche, 2011; et al.), we lack recent data on the existence of writing courses across disciplines or across institutions. This presentation responds to this need for research on graduate writing courses by discussing the methods for and preliminary results of the first phase in larger study of graduate writing courses. The larger study employs mixed methods to investigate graduate writing courses across over 75 disciplines at one large Midwestern research university and across U.S. universities in selected disciplines. The study adapts questions from Alan Golding and John Mascaro's (1987) survey on "the extent and range of graduate writing courses nationwide and the rationale for offering them" (p. 167) and collects syllabi as their study did. Unlike like their study, however, this project includes graduate students as participants in both surveys and in focus groups." Laurie A. Pinkert

## IT'S IN THE GENES



Ross Blythe, BWC  
Senior, Professional  
Writing/Philosophy

### The Family Profession

My father, Stuart Blythe (now an associate professor at Michigan State University), was a graduate student at Purdue University in the Rhetoric and Composition department in 1995-97. He worked at the Writing Lab running the program I am a part of, namely the Business Writing Consultants. When I told him I was applying to be a BWC he said that he remembered having to write to the management school to secure payment for the tutors.



Stuart in the Lab

Working in the Writing Lab has been a great experience so far. I enjoy working with my fellow tutors, discussing OWL mail questions and anything else that catches our collective fancy. The Lab itself is a very comfortable place to be. I'm tempted to joke that it's like a second home, especially since my father used to work there. If there is a family profession, I'm happy to be carrying it on.

My dad worked to establish the OWL as an online component to the Writing Lab. The OWL has since become a repository of information on citations, grammar, structure, resume and cover letter writing, just to name a few areas. I'm always proud when professors from other classes reference the OWL. I've had the opportunity to contribute to the OWL through the previous webmaster, Jeff Bacha, when taking his Computer Aided Publishing and Multimedia classes.

When talking to my dad I realized that we have had similar conversations revolving around what the Writing Lab is and does and how that fits with the OWL. He wondered during his time helping set up the OWL (moving from the older Gopher language to HTML) what being online would mean for the Writing Lab:

"What happens, for example, to people's senses of their roles as writers, students, and instructors when working with various online technologies? How do networked technologies fit in with, or alter, a writing center's mission? Should the OWL replicate the Writing Lab? That is, should it enable students to do online what they could already do face-to-face? Or should the OWL be an adjunct to the Lab, a way of accessing information created by Lab personnel, but not something meant to replicate face-to-face interactions?"

(from an article by Stuart Blythe, in process)



Marybeth, Ross & Stuart Blythe

We still have these conversations about collaboration. The conversations about how we want to approach writing hasn't changed, even in a generation. We want to work with those who come to consult with us. We don't want to be grammarians or copy editors, but tutors. Questions posed in the OWL's founding haven't gone away. We need to re-ask them, and will have to do so again when my son works for Purdue's Writing Lab.



# WRITING LAB COLLABORATION

Kelli Barnett, Tammy Conard-Salvo, and I have been visiting Tecumseh Middle School to help approximately 20 students on the ISTEP test's writing sections. Currently, these students went through practice exams, with our help side by side. I very much enjoyed tutoring 8th graders as the atmosphere of tutoring sessions tends to be much more casual and entertaining. My only minor challenge was that my small group of students tended to talk about Britney Spears and other artists, while I tried to help them focus on tasks in front of them. I also had to remind them that my name is not Jason, but Sung. Other than that, I am eagerly looking forward to going back to the school for more tutoring sessions with students!

Sung Jun Ma (UTA), Senior, Pre-Med/Math



Sung Jun Ma (UTA), Dave Hobbs, and Kelli Barnett (BWC)



# CONGRATULATIONS



Jacqueline Borchert  
UTA Coordinator

I am extremely honored to be the Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching Assistant of the fall semester. I am graduating this year, my third year, majoring in linguistics and minoring in Asian American studies and English. I have been fortunate enough to participate in research projects in English Education and Native American Studies. I also co-authored in three pending publications. My first year at Purdue, I played harp in the Purdue orchestras and marched sousaphone in the All-American Marching Band where I met my husband.

The Purdue Writing Lab has proven to be a phenomenal and crucial force in my life. In the unique environment it offers, I not only enjoy work but am inspired to go above and beyond in any way possible. The people in the Writing Lab are all so dedicated to their roles as director, staff member, UTA, BWC, graduate tutor, or even student. Everyone in this environment is going above and beyond the necessary to create the award-winning Purdue Writing Lab. I have sought to contribute as much as possible to this amazing environment in many ways in 2010-2011 as a UTA and this academic year as UTA Coordinator and peer tutor.

My largest and certainly most long-lasting contribution to the Purdue Writing Lab is my work on creating a satellite lab in the Latino Cultural Center, just in time for the LCC's 10th anniversary in 2012. Being able to have the opportunity to turn my 390A final project proposal into a reality is just another example of how the Writing Lab helps me extend my passions and skills.

When I first entered ENG 390A, I had no idea how much the Writing Lab would become such a crucial part of life. Without exaggeration, I can say that I wish I could work here my whole life. Though my major does not reflect it, I hope to someday get a further degree that would allow me to work in a Writing Lab. I truly believe my life direction has been changed because of my time here.

*Congratulations to Jacqueline also for most recently winning the ECWCA Tutor Leader of the Year Award!*

Leon Lim was honored with Outstanding Business Writing Consultant of the fall semester. Leon is currently completing his degree in management with a concentration in marketing and a minor in psychology. Hailing from the tropical country of Malaysia, his surprise at how cold the weather can get in Indiana is matched only by his surprise at receiving this award. As a tutor, he operates under the strict philosophy that if you give a man a fish, he eats for a day, but if you teach a man to fish, he eats for a lifetime. An avid fan of video games, Leon also enjoys reading, drawing and sculpting, and is constantly looking for more ways to exhibit his creativity. Having enjoyed his time in the Writing Lab, it pains him to think about leaving the lab upon graduation. However, Leon hopes to one day work in a marketing or advertising firm within the entertainment software industry.



Leon Lim  
BWC Coordinator



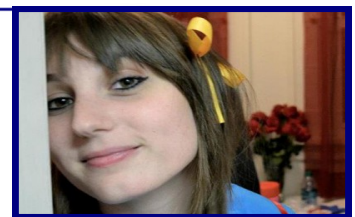
## SPIRITMAKER

**Elizabeth Hudson, Business Writing Consultant** just celebrated being 1 of 5 students who were nominated for Purdue Spirit Maker, see <http://www.purdue.edu/fivestudents/spirit-makers/ HUDSON.html> for more information. An excerpt of her piece follows: As a dean's ambassador for CLA I tell prospective students: "Purdue can be anything you want it to be. There is history, pride and passion in what we do that unites us." As an Honors student I also discuss the advantages of an honors education with incoming students. In regards to being a Boilermaker through and through she follows to say "You have a passion and love for everything Purdue does. You go to the games, you find ways to influence others in everything you do, and you are part of the community. You consider Purdue as home so

much, that when you are away from campus, you ache to be back."



Six Boilermakers are spending their Spring Break on an all-expense-paid study tour in Japan and one of them is **our Business Writing Consultant, Kelli Barnett**. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology is centered in Japan and has invited 200 students from around the world to participate in a study tour in Tokyo March 7-19, and in the Tohoku Region this year. Of these 200 delegates, only ten, including the six from Purdue are American. This tour is being held by the Japanese government to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the 2011 earthquake that shook Japan in the Tohoku region. The purpose of this study program is to understand the revival process after a large-scale natural disaster, in addition to making connections with Japanese people and culture. Tohoku University asked the Purdue study abroad office to select around five students to make the tour. The Japanese department interviewed about twenty individuals who showed the qualities needed to participate in this program: advanced Japanese language skills and a passion for Japanese culture and customs. Initially, three Boilermakers were chosen for the trip; that number later increased to six.



"I was really shocked when [the ministry] chose 6 people from Purdue and that I was one of them. I was also really excited because, although I'm majoring in Japanese, I had never visited Japan before. Being one of 10 people representing America, out of 200 people worldwide, is really an honor and I'm excited to meet the other students," Barnett said. See more details: [Exponent— Six Boilermakers to tour Japan on break](#), By EMILY THOMAS Staff Reporter | Posted: Monday, March 5, 2012

Perhaps Kelli will fill us in on her trip in the next Alumni Annotations newsletter!

# TUTOR DEVELOPMENT FUND

## 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](mailto:dmcknig@purdue.edu)*