



Purdue  
Writing  
Lab

# Alumni Annotations

A Newsletter for Alumni and Friends of the Writing Lab at Purdue

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Fall 2017

## Message from the Director

Chilly mornings are beginning to happen a little more often this mid-October after what feels like an unusually warm start to the semester. Tomatoes continue to grow on our plants at home, and biking from campus in the afternoon remains a de facto workout. In the Writing Lab, we are fresh off Fall Break, so the pace of activity seems to be picking up as students, faculty, and staff alike sprint to the end of the term. Compared to last fall, appointments are up a healthy 7.7 percent.



Part of that uptick is the consequence of the arrival of three new graduate students from outside of the English Department and its graduate programs. Having tutors from outside English is relatively common in writing centers throughout the country, especially at research extensive institutions like Purdue University. For us, of course, Ryan, David, and Joel represent fresh voices and new experiences from which we're benefiting; they're pushing us to address questions from the perspective of experienced teachers in the humanities, and we're helping them test their assumptions about supporting learners, especially those from multilingual backgrounds.

Our ability to hire the graduate students from outside English came from an agreement ironed out over the summer between the College of Liberal Arts and the Graduate School. Last spring, representatives from the graduate student senate advocated for greater writing support for their constituents, with whom the Writing Lab has a long-standing relationship. We have been conducting workshops and writing groups across campus for years, but our ability to do that outreach is always finite and not without impact on our regular sessions. The more tutors we pull off the schedule for workshops and writing groups, the fewer slots we have available for clients. The addition of Ryan, David, and Joel allows us to free up experienced graduate tutors to conduct this outreach work, which will take the form of a faculty guide for graduate writers as well as targeted writing groups and workshops for the departments from which we see the greatest student traffic.

A culture of inquiry and research into our practices and on-going needs assessment drives this sort of programming, but it also creates opportunities for tutors to gain valuable professional experiences as they present their insights at conferences like the Chicago meeting of the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA). A bumper crop of tutors joins Tammy Conard-Salvo and me for an interesting set of presentations. Of course, we're fortunate that the conference is relatively close, which keeps travel costs in check considering the ever-increasing expense of registration itself. Regardless, the community and conversations that conferences offer empower students, staff, and faculty alike to connect our everyday teaching and learning to a larger context and complexity, all of which yield critical dividends on so many fronts.

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Purdue University • College of Liberal Arts • Department of English

## Alumni Profile

### Amy Ferdinandt Stolley

**GTA, ENGL 106 Liaison 2003 – 2005**

In the fall of 2015, I decided I needed a new professional challenge, so I cautiously went on the job market after having been at my previous institution for seven years. I was thrilled when I got a campus interview at Grand Valley State University and spent days preparing for my visit.



While I was on campus, one of the interviewers asked me to describe my pedagogy. Instinctively, I responded, "I'm a writing center person." I responded to my interviewer's quizzical look by explaining how my pedagogy was shaped by my two years as a graduate tutor in Purdue's Writing Lab. As a teacher, I ask students to examine their own writing processes and identify what is working and what isn't, and I teach them different strategies they might try to help them write more effectively. I learned to do this in the Lab. If you were to review the comments I wrote on student papers that I returned this week, you'd see a majority of my comments are questions: "What do you mean by this?" "Why did you choose to place this paragraph here?" "How could you develop this idea?" When I ask writers questions instead of just telling them what to change, they generate more ideas and develop metacognitive skills that will help them in future writing tasks. I learned that in the Lab, too.

My focus on students as individuals—and the individualized instruction that is a core component of my teaching philosophy—is inextricably tied to what I learned as a writing tutor at Purdue.

I got the job at Grand Valley, and I now direct a first-year writing program that teaches nearly 2,500 students each year. One of the hallmark features of the program (and one of my favorite parts of teaching here) is that there are imbedded writing consultants from GVSU's writing center, the Fred Meijer Center for Writing and Michigan Authors, in every first-year writing class. Five consultants come to work with students in our developmental writing classes once a week. Each section of our required first-year writing course is supported by a consultant who comes to our classes weekly, and instructors can request groups of consultants to facilitate peer review workshops with students. When I asked our first-year writing faculty this year what the most important parts of our curriculum are, everyone agreed that our relationship with the writing center is at the top of the list. We know that the peer relationship writing consultants offer students is different than what even the most student-centered instructor can provide, and we feel lucky to work in a program that recognizes and creates opportunities for this.

So, yeah. I'm a first-year writing teacher. I'm a writing program administrator. But at the core, I'm a writing center person, and I believe I've improved as a teacher because of it.

## New Faces around the Lab



Top: Bridget Cavanaugh (BWC), Colleen Denunzio (BWC), Coby English (BWC), Hope Fortner (UTA), ELiza Gellis (GTA), Joel Johnson (GTA), Andrew Lee (UTA), Amy Li (UTA), Katelyn Meza (UTA), David Midtvedt (GTA).

Bottom: John Milas (GTA), Heather Murton (GTA), Trinity Overmyer (OWL Content Coordinator), Adrianna Radosti (GTA), Ruben Ramanathan (BWC), Ryan Schnurr (GTA), Derek Sherman (GTA), Liz Walker (UTA), Chloe Weber (UTA), Hannah White (Student Receptionist).

## Tutor Spotlight

### Austin Steinman, UTA

As a mechanical engineer pursuing a minor in Global Engineering, I am looking forward to a future of international travel and collaboration with people from a diverse set of cultures and backgrounds. That being said, I was recently provided with the opportunity to study abroad in China for a total of three weeks teaching fourth graders about the basics of programming.



Now, my final paper for ENGL 390 was over the cultural differences between American and Chinese educational structures, so I had a little experience going over with what to expect within the classroom; however, that did not prepare me for the monumental task of constructing and executing a lesson plan from scratch. My partner and I started from the basics of deciding what fields we wanted to discuss, and then developing activities and lectures around them. Designing and discussing all the different options was fun, but we were constrained to make the lesson plans as flexible as possible on the off chance that we were be-

hind or ahead of schedule. This was one of the times I drew upon my experience as a Writing Lab tutor because in a session I must be flexible with time and what is discussed. Sometimes I need to focus longer on the core concepts of the paper, and other times the client understands easily, so we are able to move onto other areas of the paper.

Another time I drew upon my experience was when I taught the students. There was an obvious language barrier, so I relied heavily on a translator, but I explained the concepts in different ways whenever clarification questions were asked or I was met with blank and confused stares. One example comes from teaching the students about flowcharts. At the end of that lesson, we gave them a small quiz, and about half of the students were lost, so on the spot I was able to come up with an example utilizing doors. After that, most of the students were able to understand the concept and follow the continued lesson. Being a UTA taught me to improve my communication and adapt to the variety of learning styles that is unique to each client.

Overall, the trip was a fantastic experience. I was able to get global experience and prove to myself that I may know more than I think because some of my experiences (in this case the Writing Lab) provided me with skills I did not necessarily know I possessed.

### Visiting Scholar: Violeta Molina-Natera



When I was hired as a professor at my university in 2007, the task was one: create a writing center. As the first writing center in South America, there was nothing before in my region and I had to start researching about writing centers in the U.S. The first writing center that catches my attention was Purdue Writing Lab and the OWL, and I remember that I said: "I wish someday to know that writing center and then help mine to grow up on that direction". After some conferences and meeting Harry at some of those, he opened the door to Purdue and invited me to stay and interchange experiences.

As a Ph.D. in Education student, the first place that I thought for my research internship was Purdue and its Writing Lab. My investigation seeks to know and understand the theories, practices and administration of writing centers and writing programs in Latin America. I have information from eight different countries and I am trying to make sense of the data I have collected so far. Also I want to interchange experiences and ideas from and to my writing center (Javeriano Writing Center). This has been not only a dream-come-true experience, but also an opportunity for enrichment professionally. I am learning from Tammy how to handle everyday situations at the writing center, and how to connect theory with practice. Long conversations with Harry have opened my eyes about my assumptions, beliefs and fundamentals about writing centers.

I have felt welcomed and accepted in a warm and friendly place that at the same time has allowed me to move forward with my dissertation. Purdue Writing Lab has the experience, recognition, and the people to become a learning space for visitors from other places who want to know how do you do what you do great. In my case, as a former president of the Latin American Writing Centers Association, I want to spread the voice of what I am learning here and tell them that we have a lot of things in common, despite differences. In Purdue I found a place for collaboration and professional interchange that I always will remember as one of the best experiences in my life.

## Multilingual Matters

### Vicki Kennell, ESL Specialist

As recent alumni will remember, about five years ago the Writing Lab began offering tutors extensive training for working with multilingual writers. Part of this training addresses issues related specifically to second language writing—common grammatical errors, unfamiliar organizational structures, the need for increased vocabulary—but part of it also addresses the interpersonal aspects of tutoring. What do tutors need to know about intercultural communication in order to successfully tutor multilingual writers? What sort of intercultural communication skills do they need to possess? This intercultural/interpersonal facet of tutoring is currently the focus of my training module development work, so for this newsletter, I want to share some recent material on the subject. What follows are brief explanations of two of the newest books in our tutor training library, which our current tutors will encounter during the spring semester. Those of you who work in cross-cultural settings or whose daily interactions include intercultural communication—or those of you who just miss engaging in that intensive spring training—might find these resources of interest.

Holliday, A., Kullman, J., & Hyde, M. (2017). *Intercultural communication: An advanced resource book for students*, 3rd ed. New York, NY: Routledge.

This book offers a detailed look at intercultural communication as a field of study, but the authors do an excellent job of including real-life examples to illustrate their points. What happens, for instance, when a refugee from Somalia meets a doctor in the U.K.? One member of the intercultural conversation is waiting for the person in charge to simply do what needs to be done, tell her what she needs to do, and solve the problem of her baby's illness. The other is trying to elicit patient involvement in her own care. Sounds a little bit like a cross-cultural tutoring impasse, doesn't it?

Gamble, T.K., & Gamble M. (2017). *Nonverbal messages tell more: A practical guide to nonverbal communication*. New York, NY: Routledge.

The Gambles' book is not only a practical guide but also a fun read. Have you ever wondered what your choice of clothing or furniture is saying to everyone around you? Do you think you are really bad at "reading" other people? All of that falls into the realm of nonverbal communication, and this book will give you plenty to think about in that respect, from the very first axiom—"You cannot not communicate" (p. 7) because

everything from the way you stand to your appearance says something to others—all the way to the final details of how culture affects the way we segment time, how close we stand to other people, and whether or not giving someone a thumbs up is a good thing. While illustrated with specific examples (during a study conducted at a playground, American parents touched their children much less frequently than French parents), the book nevertheless avoids reducing cultures to sets of uniformly-applied practices; instead, it offers a plethora of possibility, of things to think about when communicating with anyone, and of how, sometimes, those things might be culturally-determined.

Happy Reading!

## OWL News

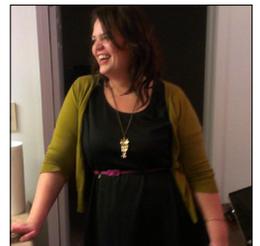
### Trinity Overmyer, OWL Content Coordinator

In addition to heading up content development at the OWL, I serve as the Assistant Director of Rhetoric and Composition here at Purdue. In my doctoral work, I specialize in professional writing, digital rhetorics and design; methodologies; data visualizations; and university-community engagement. I currently teach the senior-level Multimedia Writing course in the Professional Writing major. As Content Coordinator for the OWL, my goal is to cultivate a deeper sense of community and support among our developers, and identify future OWL content that can be generated from the innovative work of the graduate students, faculty and staff in the English Department.

Throughout the Summer and Fall of 2017, the Purdue OWL has completed a number of projects, including a resource for tutors working with lab reports to augment our other work with genres in STEM disciplines, a page on Critical Disability Studies, and a multi-page source for instructors, which outlines how and why we should incorporate a translanguaging approach in our classrooms. We are also updating The Chicago Manual of Style resources in the wake of the new edition. We have several new developers this semester, including experts in translanguaging and second language writing, professional writing, and two graduate student developers with professional experience in publishing and editing.

We are currently working on several large-impact projects as well. Very soon the OWL will release a resource on the

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history and value of using gender neutral pronouns, backed by the APA and other language associations. We are also working with researchers from Purdue's Engineering Education program to develop materials that demonstrate the value of writing and knowledge making and help Engineering instructors incorporate more writing into their courses.

Finally, the OWL is redesigning our video model. Our current instructional videos tend to take the form of slides with voiceovers or live action video. Based on an analysis of multimedia trends and user analytics, we have redesigned videos to include more dynamic examples, pop media artifacts and more engaging speakers. We are also introducing OWLettes—an ongoing video series offering 60 second videos about writing when it shows up in pop culture. We hope that OWLettes will help students relate the work they do in class to the world at large and emphasize the importance of writing in their lives beyond the classroom. In the wake of this new video model, we are also creating the opportunity for our developers to learn professional video production and editing, and to participate in collaborative development teams. Keep an eye on our YouTube channel as the semester progresses for both OWLettes and new in-depth videos: [https://www.youtube.com/user/OWLPurdue/videos?view=50&shelf\\_id=7&sort=dd](https://www.youtube.com/user/OWLPurdue/videos?view=50&shelf_id=7&sort=dd)

## Presentations and Publications

**Many of us are also making the short trip up I-65 to present this year at the IWCA Conference in Chicago. Make sure to stop and say "hi" if you're also attending!**

Hadi Banat: "Multiculturalism and Multilingual Writers." Presentation, CCCC Convention, March 2017.

Harry Denny: "The Aim of Out in the Center: Cultivating Change through Public Controversies and Private Struggles." Workshop, CCCC Convention, March 2017.

Harry Denny, Tammy Conard-Salvo, Talisha Haltiwanger-Morrison, and Elizabeth Geib: "Coding, DeCoding, and ReCoding: Content Analysis of Alumni Tutor Survey for Program Development." Workshop, IWCA Collaborative at CCCC Convention, March 2017.

Elizabeth Geib: *Writing Centers, Postmodernity, and Intersectionality: A Study of Tutor Training Guides*. MA Thesis.

Eliza Gellis: "Historicizing Feminist Rhetorics and Activism Through Christine de Pizan's *The Book of the City of Ladies*." Presentation, Feminisms and Rhetorics Conference, October 2017.

Lindsey Macdonald: "Using Corpora to Investigate the Impacts of Assignment Variation on Student Approaches to Writing." Presentation, CCCC Convention, March 2017.

Talisha Haltiwanger Morrison. *Black Lives, White Spaces: Toward Understanding the Experiences of Black Writing Tutors on Predominantly White Campuses*. PhD Dissertation.

Liz Walker: "112 Years of Bad Hair Days." Book chapter, *More Than a Memory: Exploring Purdue University's History Through Objects*, 2017.

## Current Tutors

### GTAs

Rachel Atherton—Rhetoric and Composition

Hadi Banat—Second Language Studies

Amy Elliott—Literature

Gabriela Garcia—Creative Writing

Elizabeth Geib—Rhetoric and Composition

Eliza Gellis—Rhetoric and Composition

Talisha Haltiwanger Morrison—Rhetoric and Composition

Joel Johnson—Philosophy

Carrie Kancilia—Theory and Cultural Studies

Lindsey Macdonald—Rhetoric and Composition

David Midtvedt—Philosophy/Literature

John Milas—Creative Writing

Heather Murton—Theory and Cultural Studies

Adrianna Radosti—Literature

Eugie Ruiz—Rhetoric and Composition

Derek Sherman—Rhetoric and Composition

Rebekah Sims—Rhetoric and Composition

Beth Towle—Rhetoric and Composition

April Urban—Theory and Cultural Studies

### UTAs

Ara Adaramola—Chemical Engineering

Taylor Barnett—Computer Graphics

Mackenzie Chapman—Biology; Spanish

Sydney Dolan—Aerospace Engineering

Julia Donnelly—English

Adlina Fauzi—Chemical Engineering

Hope Fortner—Creative Writing

Gail Fukumoto—Materials Engineering

Assem Imangaliyeva—Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences

Andrew Lee—Supply Chain Information and Analytics

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Amy Li—Accounting; Dance

Skye Li—Accounting

Nathan McBurnett—Anthropology; Philosophy

Isha Mehta—Brain and Behavioral Science

Katelyn Meza—Professional Writing; Creative Writing

Mina Mohsenian—Mechanical Engineering

Hetal Rathore—Aerospace Engineering

Claire Shelby—Elementary Education

Henry Shi—Industrial Engineering

Austin Steinman—Mechanical Engineering

Martin Tuskevicius—Computer Science

Sydney Vander Tuin—Psychology; Creative Writing

Liz Walker—English; Professional Writing

Chloe Weber—Communication; Human Resources

**BWCs**

Kayla Beland— Health Sciences (Pre-Professional)

Bridget Cavanaugh—Aerospace Engineering

Colleen Denunzio—Computer and Information  
Technology

Anisha Dutta— Management; Finance

Coby English—Professional Writing; Political Science

Daniel Miller— Professional Writing

Jasmin Osman— Political Science; Professional Writing

Ruben Ramanathan—Supply Chain Management

Evan Swasey—Management; Economics

**40th Anniversary Fund & Other Gifts**

In 1976, the Writing Lab was founded as a one-room space with only three consultants. Since then, we've expanded our space and our services and served as a model for an international community of writing centers and composition scholars. Your tax-deductible gift will help us better serve Purdue students on campus and beyond, as well as serve our global friends online who use the OWL (Online Writing Lab).

If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to the Writing Lab 40th Anniversary Fund, or to the OWL, [click here](#).

You can also make checks payable to the Purdue Foundation, with either "Writing Lab 40th Anniversary" or "OWL (Online Writing Lab)" in the memo line. Checks should be mailed to the following address:

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

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