



Purdue
Writing
Lab

Alumni Annotations

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

Spring 2018

Message from the Director



As this issue was going to press, the annual Oscar award ceremony was airing on television. Films that never seem to come to little ole Lafayette were up for best picture, and those that I wanted to see recognized weren't. Velvet jackets seem de rigor style choices for men and contemporary mermaid dresses seemed popular with women. Just as striking as what films made the cut and who was wearing what, the subtext of the Oscars spoke to diversity, protest, and a hopeful view toward change on the horizon. Time's Up and #MeToo hinted that perhaps change was afoot for the status of women, people of color, and other marginalized people. These dynamics of glittering Hollywood parallel our own in Heavilon, as we all come to terms with an ever-shifting world, how we respond to it, and what those reactions signify about us as we do.

In writing centers, writing labs, and writing studies, the ever-changing nature of college and university life is part of the excitement of teaching and learning in these spaces. Everyday, we experience students coming to terms with their voices, the politics of their expression, the negotiation of disciplinary ways of thinking and doing. We coach tutors to gain confidence from each session they experience, chalking up to deep learning all the interaction that's easy, challenging, and troubling. We bear witness to students' pain as they discover that the world on campus and beyond isn't nearly as charitable and kind as we wish it were. We share our students' alarm when cell phones flash with breaking news of another mass shooting on another campus. We join them in hoping, illusory as it might be, that never again will it happen, anywhere. We cheer their excitement as winter begins to turn to spring with the sprouting of job offers, to the first peeks of admissions to graduate programs, and to the long days of light inevitably leading toward the end of the semester and the academic year.

Now our thoughts begin to turn toward summer plans, study abroad, internships, and what dreams may come; the staff in the Writing Lab continues their fine work with students from across the disciplines and clients who represent the sheer diversity of academics and multilinguals at Purdue. Conference season heralds another positive turning point in the semester. This year, our tutors will be representing us well at the upcoming CCCC's conference, the East Central Writing Centers Association, and the Big Ten meeting at the Chicago conference center. Encouraging possibilities for challenging times.

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Associate Professor, English

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New Faces around the Lab



Top: Parker Beckman (UTA), Rachel Bremer (BWC), Carly Christiansen (UTA), Elenil Deypalubos (UTA), Erin Dubin (BWC), Jalyn Gearries (Student Receptionist), Marybeth Hobbs (BWC), Elle Huff (UTA)

Middle: Urvashi Karani (BWC), Caitlin Lee (UTA), Devyn Mangel (BWC), Caroline McMaster (BWC), Elizabeth Murray (UTA), Caroline Peterson (UTA), Bethany Simon (UTA)

Bottom: Megan Sommerfeld (UTA), Ryan Strelau (UTA), Shanjing Tang (UTA), Eliza Van (UTA), Shuting Yang (UTA), Sherry Zheng (BWC), Alyssa Zook (UTA)

Alumni Profiles

Vinh-Hoa Ngo, UTA, 2014 – 2016



In the fall of 2014, I applied for a position as a student receptionist in the Writing Lab, with no interest or knowledge about the Lab's services and mission other than to make a little more money on the side. On the day of my interview, Tammy suggested that I consider becoming an undergraduate tutor as she believed my multilingual and multicultural background would not only help bring diversity to the Lab, but also would allow me to assist other students, including those whose first language was not English. I had always lacked confidence about my writing skills and couldn't envision myself helping others. Nevertheless, I embarked on my journey to becoming an undergraduate teaching assistant. I believe working in the Lab has rewarded me with skills that are beneficial to any career path. The Lab has always stressed the value of understanding the writing process, and has taught me mech-

anisms to help others identify their potential areas of improvement, as well as ways to critique my own work.

Today, I am a Master's candidate in International Public Policy at University College London (UCL) in London, UK. This course is heavy on writing; in fact, there are no midterm exams or essays, no quizzes, and no homework. A single 3,000-word essay usually determines a person's grade for each class. The most important component of this degree is, however, the final 10,000-word dissertation. This system is demanding not only from a writing perspective, but also encourages students to develop critical thinking skills, to learn and apply research methods, and to express eloquent arguments through writing. The Writing Lab at Purdue provided me with a stepping stone to reach graduate school, where I continue to apply and develop writing skills that I acquired while an undergraduate tutor. I am eternally thankful for the opportunities the Writing Lab has given me and hope that my fellow Boilermakers feel the same.

Congratulations!



This month **Talisha Haltiwanger Morrison** plans to defend her dissertation, *Nooses and Balancing Acts: Reflections and Advice on Racism and Antiracism from Black Writing Tutors at Predominantly White Institutions*.



Beth Towle received the IWCA's Ben Rafoth Graduate Research Grant for winter 2018, which helps fund costs associated with her dissertation study, a cross-institutional examination of writing center-writing program relationships at small liberal arts colleges.

“peer mentor” or other common writing center staff titles have emerged along disciplinary lines. These debates have been fruitful areas of inquiry for the staff, and the engagement of the undergraduate tutors in these conversations demonstrates the need for collaborative decision-making in the Writing Lab.

OWL News

Trinity Overmyer, OWL Content Coordinator

While we are continuing to produce videos and develop some small projects, this spring we are primarily focused on copy editing and revising the current OWL content. Though the OWL staff updates and edits pages regularly as issues arise, this is the first time we have undergone such a comprehensive review. Because of the sheer size of the site, this is a big undertaking. However, we have already finished a large portion of this work with the help of our team of expert developers.

Tutor Spotlight

Beth Towle, GTA, Business Writing Coordinator

For the last two decades, the Writing Lab has had two distinctive staffs of undergraduate tutors—Undergraduate Teaching assistants (UTAs) who specialize in first-year writing and Business Writing Consultants (BWCs)—who have separate coordinators, staff meetings, and tutor education courses. Over time, though, the distinguishing line between the two staffs has become thinner as changes such as the movement to online scheduling, the ever-increasing number of graduate students and international students coming to the Lab, and administrative interests have occurred over the last few years. As a response to these changes, we have been considering consolidating the two staffs into one undergraduate tutoring staff. However, it has not been an easy decision, as the issue of titles, graduate coordinator roles, and tutor education models are all affected by this decision. The administrators and coordinators have invited the UTAs and BWCs to discuss these issues with each other both formally and informally. The UTA and BWC staffs, as well as the Lab’s administrators and coordinators, have discussed what it means to be a specialist in a center where distinct roles are largely invisible to clients. Debates about pedagogy and professionalization have emerged as the main concerns of change. Both tutoring staffs have largely and happily accepted the possible change, but some issues have arisen. In particular, tutors are concerned that their various preparations and previous writing course experiences remain part of their identities. Additionally, debates about whether “tutor,” “consultant,”



Although copyediting remains mostly invisible to our users, this maintenance is integral to the effectiveness of the site. We plan to have the revisions finished over the summer, when we will begin another year of new projects and resources.

Presentation and Publications

Hadi Banat, Anthony Paul Sutton, and Carrie Kancilia: "Writing Centers and WAC: Faculty and Student Resistance." Presentation, IWCA Conference, November 2017.

Tammy Conard-Salvo and Richard Sévère (Purdue Writing Lab '05 – '09, Valparaiso University): "Debunking the Myth of the Safe House: Strategies for Addressing Bias." Presentation, IWCA Conference, November 2017.

Vicki Kennell, Amy Elliot, and Josh Weirick: "Tinkering with Comments: Tailoring Practice by Spying on Written Artifacts." Presentation, IWCA Conference, November 2017.

Talisha Haltiwanger Morrison: "Extending the Conversation: Black Tutors at Predominantly White Institutions." Presentation, IWCA Conference, November 2017.

Beth Towle, Eugie Ruiz, Elizabeth Geib, and Carrie Kancilia: "Institutional(ized) Identities: Graduate Students, Writing Centers, and Advocacy." Presentation, IWCA Conference, November 2017.

Liz Walker: "Exploration of Expectations and Attitudes of Online Tutoring." Presentation, IWCA Conference, November 2017.

Current Tutoring Staff

GTAs

Rachel Atherton—Rhetoric & Composition

Hadi Banat—Second Language Studies

Amy Elliot—Victorian Literature

Gabriela Garcia—Fiction

Elizabeth Geib—Rhetoric & Composition

Eliza Gellis—Rhetoric & Composition

Talisha Haltiwanger—Rhetoric & Composition

Joel Johnson—Philosophy

Carrie Kancilia—Theory & Cultural Studies

Lindsey Macdonald—Rhetoric & Composition

John Milas—Creative Writing

Heather Murton—Theory & Cultural Studies

Adrianna Radosti—Literary Studies

Eugie Ruiz—Rhetoric & Composition

Ryan Schnurr—American Studies

Derek Sherman—Rhetoric & Composition

Rebekah Sims—Rhetoric & Composition

Beth Towle—Rhetoric & Composition

April Urban—Theory & Cultural Studies

UTAs

Taylor Barnett—Computer Graphics

Parker Beckman—Brain & Behavioral Sciences

Mackenzie Chapman—Biology, Spanish

Carly Christensen—Creative Writing, Professional Writing

Elenil Deypalubos—Pre-Athletic Training

Sydney Dolan—Aerospace

Adlina Fauzi—Chemical Engineering

Hope Fortner—Creative Writing

Elle Huff—Public Relations

Caitlin Lee—Psychology, Linguistics

Amy Li—Accounting, Dance

Skye Li—Accounting

Nathan McBurnett—Anthropology, Philosophy

Isha Mehta—Brain & Behavioral Science

Katelyn Meza—Professional Writing, Creative Writing

Elizabeth Murray—Law & Society

Caroline Peterson—Biochemistry

Claire Shelby—Elementary Education

Henry Shi—Industrial Engineering

Bethany Simon—Sociology

Megan Sommerfield—English, Political Science

Austin Steinman—Mechanical Engineering

Ryan Strelau—Aerospace Engineering

Shangjing Tang—Industrial Engineering

Martin Tuskevicius—Computer Science

Sydney Vander Tuin—Psychology, Creative Writing

Eliza Van—English, Human Services

Liz Walker—English, Professional Writing

Chloe Weber—Communications, Human Resource Development

Shuting Yang—Aeronautical & Astronautical Engineering

Alyssa Zook—English

BWCs

Rachel Bremer—Accounting

Bridget Cavanaugh—Aerospace Engineering

Colleen Denunzio—Computer & Information Technology

Erin Dubin—Biology/Pre-Dental

Anisha Dutta—Management, Finance

Coby English—Professional Writing, Political Science

Marybeth Hobbs—Accounting

Urvashi Karani—Supply Chain Information & Analytics

Devyn Mangel—Professional Writing

Caroline McMasters—Professional Writing

Ruben Ramanathan—Supply Chain Management

Megan Smith—Professional Writing

Sherry Zheng—Professional Writing



Food and conversation at last semester's all-staff meeting.

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 as 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

Our Alumni Annotations newsletter is published and emailed 2-3 times per year. If you are not receiving the Alumni Annotations newsletter as an email PDF file, and would like to or would like to contribute to our publication, please contact our secretary Chris Voeglein at cvoeglei@purdue.edu.