

Spring 2011

# ALUMNI *Annotations*

A NEWSLETTER FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF THE  
PURDUE WRITING LAB

## Message from the Director

The Spring semester is rushing by, as it always does. In addition to the usual Writing Lab busy-ness, I've become involved with a new and exciting project. I have been serving as Principal Investigator for a two-year project begun last Fall: the H-OWL. This project, funded by a large grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, involves creating and testing an interactive extension of Purdue's **Online Writing Lab**. The goal is to create an online tool to help high school juniors and seniors improve as writers and make the transition to college-level writing. The H-OWL will be designed for use by individual student writers rather than for coursework (although, like the Purdue OWL, teachers will be free to use it). The H-OWL will incorporate elements of social networking, gamification, and new media, drawing on the power of these new and rapidly developing technologies to help students become effective twenty-first century writers.

Purdue is partnering with the Center for Applied Special Technology in Wakefield, MA. and the Minority Student Achievement Network at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to design the new site, which will be tested in several school districts nationwide before it is more widely released. Other Purdue faculty and staff involved in this project are Janet Alsup, associate professor of English Education; Michael Salvo, associate professor of English and director of the Professional Writing Program; Patricia Sullivan, professor of English and director of the Rhetoric and Composition Graduate Program; and Samantha Blackmon, associate professor of English and director of Introductory Composition. Current graduate students participating are Caitlan Spronk, Alex Layne, and Ehren Pflugfelder.



*Dr. Linda Bergmann, Director  
Professor of English*

## NEW FACES AROUND THE LAB

### GRADUATE ASSISTANT

Tristan Abbott

### UNDERGRAD TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Megan Kee

Zherui Guo

Laura Stanley

Matt Hollars

Jacqueline Cassutt

Brandon Kresca

### BUSINESS WRITING CONSULTANTS

Leon Lim

John Miller

Sophie Teraoka

Meredith Pierson

Brittany DeSalvo

Kelli Barnett

# ALUMNI PROFILE

## It's not about Papers; It's about Students



**Teddi Fishman**

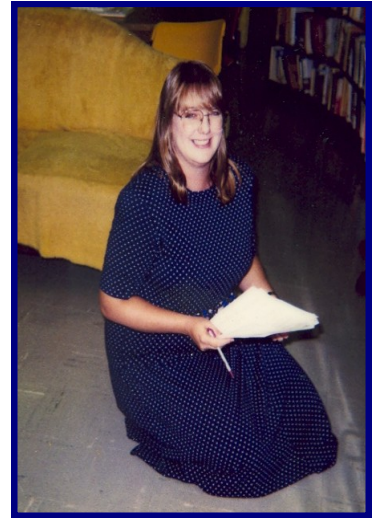
*T. Fishman, PhD*  
Director, International  
Center for Academic Integrity  
Fellow, Rutland Institute for Ethics  
Clemson University



[tfishma@clemson.edu](mailto:tfishma@clemson.edu)

I worked in the Writing Lab for several years, first as a tutor and later as coordinator of the OWL. It sounds corny, but the truth is that I learned so many important things there that still inform my teaching and work today that the experience transformed the way I think about education and what it means to be an educator.

The most important insight I brought from my experience at the Writing Lab to my current work as Director of ICAI is this: There is a huge disconnect between what students see as the goal of their assignments and what our goal truly is. Their goal is to improve the paper, while we (educators) assign the paper to improve our students. This fundamental difference in understanding is central to my current job of promoting academic integrity. If the goal were really just a finished paper or a completed assignment, choosing to take shortcuts or cheating might make sense. (Even though it's not what we want or expect, we can see where someone might be tempted.) If, on the other hand, we can help students come to see that their development is the real aim of their assignments, cheating instantly loses its appeal.



Teddi in the Writing Lab

Now, I'm the director of the International Center for Academic Integrity, in charge of a small staff, a website, and an annual conference. It gives me a much better understanding of the challenges Mickey Harris faced when she was at the helm (and makes me wish I'd given her less grief!) - Teddi Fishman, Former GTA & OWL Coordinator

*We'd love to focus on you as our next Alumni Profile, please send us an update about what your doing now, remembrances from your work with the Writing Lab, etc., including a picture of yourself—we may even find an old picture of you in the Writing Lab to add. Please send this information to Denise at [dmcknig@purdue.edu](mailto:dmcknig@purdue.edu).*

## OWL MAIL INSPIRES TWITTER FEED

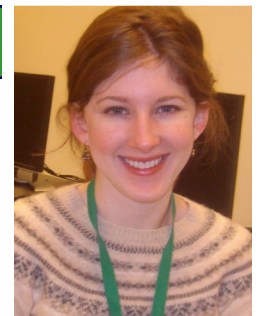
Owl Mail is still as popular and entertaining as ever. We receive a fair amount of requests for help with bizarre citation situations—needing to cite a nutrition label, a Hallmark greeting card, or a plaque on a university statue. These questions can lead us to intense debate, but also occasionally to groans and laughter. We've become quite familiar with the idiosyncrasies of common style manuals, and couldn't live without the APA Style Blog ([blog.apastyle.org](http://blog.apastyle.org)).

Inspired by the myriad of citation questions we receive, Steve Gooch, one of our graduate tutors, created a Twitter feed for a faux citation authority. The Lafayette Citation Authority (<http://twitter.com/fakecitations>) is the source for everything you ever wanted to cite but didn't have directions for. Resources covered include clothing labels (not so far from a nutritional label) and university regulations:

Citing clothing: don't forget material, country, and approximate hourly wage of the worker. E.g., T-shirt. Gap. Cotton. Malaysia. \$0.11.

To cite university regulations: First fill out Form 23, then go to the Office of External Citation, there you will receive Form A-7, then...

Possible future topics to tackle include how to cite parade floats and public protest signs. The Twitter feed doesn't contain a great number of posts yet, but receiving fan response might encourage the production of more outrageous citations. Of course, you can always contact us by OWL Mail. Bonus points for creative questions ;)



Caitlan Spronk  
GTA & Owl Mail Coord.

# KEYNOTE: “Harbors and Seas: The Both/And of Writing Center Work”



**Allen Brizee, PhD**

Asst. Professor of Writing  
Loyola University Maryland

2010 International Writing Centers Association-National Council of Peer Tutors of Writing Conference, Baltimore, Maryland, Nov. 4-6

Allen Brizee, PhD, (English, Rhetoric and Composition, 2010) is an Assistant Professor of Writing in the Department of Writing at Loyola University Maryland. He teaches undergraduate first-year composition, rhetoric, and technical writing, as well as graduate professional communication in the Sellinger School of Business. He was the Purdue OWL Coordinator from 2007-2010 and tutored in the Purdue Writing Lab from 2008-2010. He lives in Hampden, Baltimore, with his Pekingese, Daisy, and his Rottweiler, Ginny. Here is the summary of his keynote:

Baltimore—also known as the Charm City—is a quirky place; it’s a messy mash up of brazen kitsch (John Waters), glitzy tourism (Inner Harbor), super rich (Roland Park), and communities so challenged that blocks of row houses sit gutted while schools reel beneath endless budget cuts. The city is a place of both/and’s: both charming and challenged. It’s this both/and that I tried to capture for my keynote address at the 2010 IWCA-NCPTW conference held in Baltimore last October. I was compelled to focus on the both/and of Baltimore and the both/and of writing center work because of my civic engagement and community-based research.

The conference was titled Safe Harbors or Open Seas? Navigating Currents in Writing Center Work, and I suppose the ornery academic in me sniffed out the either/or, and I began thinking how I might complicate this binary. The metaphor that invited deconstruction was a place-based play between Baltimore’s Inner Harbor and the open waters of the Chesapeake Bay. The harbor-sea trope asked attendees to connect the location of the conference with the tension between traditional writing center work and risky efforts that resist tried and true approaches to consultation and administration.

Given this, I asked keynote attendees to consider the space between nurturing pedagogical places and the risky open seas of engagement and empirical research. I suggested that writing centers, and their stakeholders, benefit from safe harbors, but that they also thrive when administrators and tutors venture into open seas to embrace risk. The direction of this risk taking, I posited, is a more participatory approach to engagement with other campus organizations, marginalized populations, and local communities. To communicate this, I recounted my experiences as a writing center tutor, Online Writing Lab (OWL) researcher/coordinator, and activist.

I began teaching writing as a peer tutor in the Northern Virginia Community College (Annandale Campus) writing center in 1997. I was nudged into this position by my first-year writing professor, Dr. Dorothy U. Seyler, who was a real sergeant of a teacher. I recall Dr. Seyler saying “Don’t bother knocking if you’re late because I lock the door when class begins.” Some students rebelled, but I embraced the discipline. It was good that I did, because without Dr. Seyler’s strong will, I wouldn’t have taken the risk of becoming a peer tutor when she suggested on a term paper, “You should consider tutoring in the writing center.”

During my keynote, I built on this story to suggest that taking risks might actually be second nature for writing center folk: students don’t have to become peer tutors; they can bail before the first consultation, after what always seems like too brief a training period. Sticking with it can also be risky. After a couple of successful sessions, a tutor is apt to stumble, and it takes moxie to continue after a tutee asks “Why is it ok for William Shatner to use a split infinitive [...to *boldly* go where no man has gone before] and I can’t?” But we keep going back, because I contended, writing center folk are risk takers by nature, and we like to help people.

I next discussed *how* we help people, and specifically, I suggested that we can resist the “either safe harbor or open seas” narrative by using *both* pedagogy *and* empirical research to engage with other campus organizations, marginalized populations, and local communities. For me, this process began in 1998 at the Virginia Tech (VT) writing center where I tutored students with learning disabilities. Despite the wonderful training tutors received at VT, our center lacked resources. So as a semester intern project, I composed a handbook for tutoring students with learning disabilities. To complete the handbook, I conducted textual research and empirical research by

interviewing staff at the VT disability resource center. After relating these experiences, I asked keynote attendees to consider ways their writing centers might also collaborate with other campus organizations—if they weren't already—to better serve students.

I continued my talk by explaining my outreach work with marginalized populations as a PhD student when I worked on the Purdue OWL Usability Project with Dr. Michael Salvo, Dr. Linda Bergmann, Tammy Conard-Salvo, Dana Driscoll, Morgan Sousa, and Karl Stolley. As we conducted usability tests to revise the Purdue OWL, we realized that some of our users had not been represented in our research participant pool. So for the second half of our project, we surveyed Purdue OWL users who utilize assistive technologies to surf the Web and use the Purdue OWL. This research garnered valuable data regarding the usability and accessibility of the Purdue OWL. Our participants found the Purdue OWL's revisions useful, but we discovered important parts of the Purdue OWL that were not as usable or accessible as we had thought. As the new Purdue OWL Webmaster, Jeffrey Bacha helped the team make necessary changes to the site, and during this process, we formed valuable connections with the Purdue disability resource center as we worked with two students with blindness/low vision for the last generation of usability tests.

The final part of my keynote address dealt with community engagement as I discussed the outreach project my colleague, Jaclyn Wells, and I completed for our dissertations. The Community Writing and Education Station (CWEST – pronounced “quest”) partnered the Purdue Writing Lab with two community organizations to help develop writing resources for adult education. We worked with the Lafayette Adult Resources Academy (LARA) to compose GED writing material, and we worked with Indiana's state employment agency, WorkOne, to compose resources for writing cover letters and résumés. What was unique about this three-year engagement project was its approach: we used a rhetorical and empirical research-based methodology to collaborate in a participatory manner with LARA and WorkOne to develop, test, and evaluate the project and its deliverables. To complete our research, Jaclyn and I conducted interviews, observations, case studies, and usability tests that incorporated qualitative and quantitative methods.

The CWEST project, I pointed out, serves as a good example of both/and because the methodology helped us—we hope—pull down the Ivory Tower a bit to work in the middles between campus and community, and it helped us take some pretty big risks that ended up helping a lot of people: LARA teachers and students; WorkOne staff and job-seekers, and global Purdue OWL users who may now access CWEST material in the new Engagement area.

I reminded attendees that resisting safe harbors and taking risks on the high seas would not have been possible, however, without the nurturing support we receive from our writing centers. But at the same time, I explained that the work Jaclyn and I completed outside the Purdue Writing Lab, while time consuming and often stressful, fostered invaluable experience. Moreover, by following the both/and of pedagogy/empirical engagement, the CWEST project garnered generous support from Purdue via awards, grants, and scholarships. Likewise, the scholarly community has supported the project through international, national, and regional conference presentations, a journal article, and a book chapter. So while engaging other campus organizations and marginalized communities might call for extra effort, the benefits for stakeholders make the labor worthwhile. Through both/and work, tutors gain experience and writing centers build close working relationships with outside organizations, which in turn leads to positive press and often helps fulfill strategic plans of university institutions.

I also asked attendees to consider ways *they* might complete the both/and of writing center work. After all, not all writing centers have the same missions or resources. By asking, *how might we?* instead of just saying, *we can't*, both/and work is possible regardless of mission or available resources. I suggested conducting an asset assessment to begin this process. I suggested that attendees determine what types of resources they *can* use once they've decided to tutor *and* engage. Writing centers might work with service-learning centers or disability resources centers; writing centers might work with high school students for one hour per week; writing centers might help judge one high school writing contest per year (the Purdue Writing Lab does this); and writing centers might work with local literacy initiatives.

I concluded my keynote by asking attendees to consider the following: when you find yourself in a safe harbor, nurture that space, but also look at ways to venture into the open seas and foster work outside writing centers, because both spaces benefit. By teaching, researching, and engaging in multiple spaces, I believe we can move toward a both/and approach to writing center work.

# WRITING LAB STAFF NEWS



Hsiao-Ming Tong has retired after 15 years of loyal service to the Writing Lab. We are all grateful for her hard work and dedication over the years and—we'll miss her!

Hsiao-Ming came to the Writing Lab in 1998, and she immediately felt a connection and acceptance. She began her goal of helping to promote the mission of the Writing Lab and became involved with the growth of work-study students, tutors, and herself.

Hsiao Ming received her MSW degree from the University of Maryland. She has one son who graduated from Purdue and a daughter who took an honors class at Purdue. Her late husband Yu Lin (Larry) taught at Purdue for more than 34 years. She still keeps in touch with a few work study students. "The world is big—the past work study students are scattered everywhere, but the world is also small. I've experienced hearing or meeting them in some unexpected situations."

*If you want to contact Hsiao Ming, email Denise [dmcknig@purdue.edu](mailto:dmcknig@purdue.edu) in the Writing Lab for her address. Hsiao-Ming said, "if an alum is in town, let me know—I'd love to treat them to dinner."*



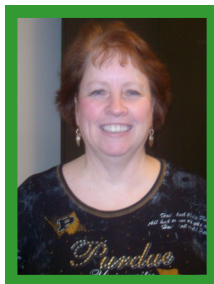
## New Staff



Receptionist Kris Hoggatt joined the staff of the Purdue Writing Lab in January 2011, after being a stay-at-home mom for five years, but she is no stranger to Purdue. She had previously worked on campus from 1983 to 2005, beginning her Purdue career as a desk clerk at the Purdue Memorial Union (PMU), while simultaneously working on her Bachelor's Degree in Computer Technology. During the course of her undergraduate studies, she also worked in business offices in PMU and in Chemical Engineering.

Upon completion of her degree, she spent a few years working as a programmer at Arnett Clinic, after which she returned to serve as systems coordinator for the Materials Management and Distribution Department. In 1998, when that position was eliminated as a result of a major restructuring of Physical Facilities, she was hired as the information technology manager for the Office of Indiana State Chemist, a state regulatory agency located at Purdue.

Kris has lived in Lafayette since 1973, has one daughter, currently a high school senior, six cats, and four really big goldfish.



Part-time Secretary to the Gates-funded H-OWL, Patty Zies joined the staff of the Purdue Writing Lab in December 2010, and typical to a true "Hoosier", she was born in Indiana and grew up in several towns throughout the state. In 1968, she began working at the registrar's office at Purdue while her first husband worked for his degree. In 1988, she took several courses at Purdue hoping to finish an elementary education degree. Despite the fact that she won the Kneale Award for creative writing, Patti decided to drop out in order to help her three children go to college.

She has four adult children: Brian-41, Bruce-38, Beth-35 and step-daughter, Heather-35. Her grandsons are Caleb-15, Nick-12, Hendrix-4 and Christian Jack-2. Aside from raising her children, she has been a day-care provider, church secretary, Title One tutor at Klondike Elementary School, secretary for the Tippecanoe School Corporation superintendent's office, secretary at Klondike Elementary School, a mural painter, and previously a secretary for the Educational Psychology faculty at the College of Education at Purdue.

She was recently married (2 years in June) and her husband, Marty, is retiring from Northwestern High School this year after teaching German and English for 34 years. Her interests and hobbies are crafting, jewelry making, painting, jig saw puzzles, decorating, parties, traveling, and enjoying family. "I'm also enjoying my new job, while working with great people".

## CONFERENCES

The International Writing Centers Association National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing Conference (IWCA) was November 4-6, 2010, in Baltimore Maryland. Presentations from the Writing Lab staff included:

- ✦ Creating Safe Cultural, Emotional, and Physical Spaces for Diverse Students in the Center—Tammy Conard-Salvo
- ✦ Sounding in the Open Sea: Connecting Writer and Consultant in Spoken, Asynchronous Response—Zachery Koppelman
- ✦ Special Interest Groups: Online Writing Centers—Tammy Conard-Salvo
- ✦ Making Writing Centers a Safe Harbor for Speakers of World Englishes—Cristyn Elder
- ✦ Navigating Technology and Innovation in Writing Centers—Tammy Conard-Salvo

East Central Writing Centers Association Conference (ECWCA) was held in Kalamazoo, MI March 3-5. Presentations from the Writing Lab staff included:

- ✦ Assessing our Connections: Bringing Writing Tutors Together—Megan Schoen

Megan Schoen, Laurie Pinkert, Cristyn Elder and Zachary Koppelman would like to thank all donors to the Muriel Harris Tutor Development Fund for their assistance in costs for recent conferences.



## 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

If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution, please make checks payable to the Purdue Foundation, with 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

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*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) or call 765-494-7268*