As late fall approaches us in Eau Claire, I am filled with a sense of ease in reflecting on my first semester as Director of the Center for Writing Excellence (CWE) and new faculty in English. Originally from the upper Midwest, what a comfort it is to return to an area that means so much to me. I like the cold this time of year, the lakes, the access we find to culture and nature just steps away. Yet, what energizes me the most is the mission of this campus—our unapologetic commitment to students, to community, to creating a more inclusive learning environment. This mission is what drew me here after completing my doctoral work at Miami University last May.

In the CWE, I am grateful to work alongside Assistant Director, Andrew Suralski, and Program Assistant Dianne Lund. I am also fortunate to work alongside such a talented group of writing assistants and graduate student assistant directors. I am grateful for their encouragement and support these past months. The work of our entire staff inspires me. So, too, does the look and feel of our center every day. I see writing in motion, developing through active dialogue. Drawing from theories of writing centers, we perceive writing as a conversation, one that develops our ideas on the page as much as it does our identities as learners and as college students.

In these sessions, I see writing improve. In these sessions, I see student voices being heard.

Engaging our wider curricular role, I always envision this energy of one-to-one mentoring as relevant and translatable in larger campus partnerships we might foster. It should manifest in our work with faculty—in our efforts to advance their scholarship and classroom teaching. This spring, we will continue such efforts in expanding our writing fellows program, one which pairs specially trained writing assistants with professors to advance the teaching and learning of writing in specific courses. At the same time, we look forward to new partnerships with faculty to better
support their scholarship, teaching, and curricular goals. As we turn toward spring semester, we are also particularly focused on advancing more socially just campus and community spaces. Currently, writing assistants and I are preparing a conference presentation on the role of writing centers in supporting institutional commitments to equity, diversity, and inclusion—one we will bring to our region’s annual Midwest Writing Center Association Conference in March. We plan to emphasize the ways in which we are never collaborating with disembodied “writers”—rather, we are facing students with complex identities, backgrounds, and dreams. Now, more than ever, we must remember this reality.

In the months to come, I look forward to personally introducing myself if I have not already done so. I am eager to learn about your work and hopes for our campus. I am also eager to share with you more about my scholarship on rhetorics of identity and social change, including LGBT and queer identities. Most importantly, I am excited to work with you as we discover, together, new ways to ensure the success of all our students.

Warmly,
Jonathan

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CWE Celebrates 8th Annual National Day on Writing

by Maria Lynch

The Center for Writing Excellence had a wonderful National Day on Writing this year! On October 19th, we celebrated writing with a variety of activities at tables around campus, including Two Sentence Horror Stories in Hibbard, Haikus for Cookies in Davies, Shakespearean Insults and a Collaborative Story in McIntyre, and a #WhyIWrite photo campaign in Centennial. With all of these activities across campus, the CWE celebrated writing with students all over UWEC.

In Davies, students wrote haikus for cookies. Any college student can relate to these student pieces:

“Sleep Sleep I need Sleep
The life of a college student
Food Food I need food”

“I need some coffee
or anything with caffeine/
it’s an addiction.”

In Hibbard, between classes students celebrated writing by creating two-sentence horror stories. One UWEC student wrote:

“I stopped singing in the middle of a song and a strange voice finished the phrase. I was alone in the house.”

In McIntyre Library, students were brought together through Shakespearean insults and a collaborative story wall. Students combined phrases from Shakespearean plays to tell each other to “prick thy face” you “unable worms” and referred to one another as a “poisonous bunch-backed toad!” In the CWE location in McIntyre, students worked together to write a collaborative story on the glass walls of the CWE, taking turns adding sentences to create one story.

In Centennial, the #WhyIWrite table got a great collection of responses from students and faculty. People took their picture with a white board telling everyone what their “Why” was. Answers ranged from humorous to serious and personal to academic.

The 8th Annual National Day on Writing offered a fun way for UWEC to come together through writing activities and celebrations. Mark your calendars for October 20th, 2018, to celebrate with the CWE again next year!
New Graduate Assistant Directors Bring Diverse Experiences to CWE

Logan Frodl

My name is Logan Frodl, and I am a new Graduate Assistant Director for the CWE! I graduated from UWEC in May 2017 and immediately started working on my English Literature and Textual Interpretation MA in fall 2017. For my undergraduate degree, I majored in Critical Studies and minored in Women’s Studies, which strongly influences my work now.

My time at the CWE has been great so far! My favorite aspect is having sessions, specifically with seniors looking to apply to graduate school. I love hearing about their journey and sharing what I’ve learned in that process. In my free time, I am an avid indoors-woman. I love a good punchline. I enjoy watching Netflix (The Office, Forensic Files, and Arrested Development are a few favorites) and drinking coffee. If you have any pets, I would love to hear about them, and if you have pictures, even better. My favorite author is probably Stephen King, in the few spare moments I have. I look forward to continuing working with students and exploring how I can bring my discipline of English and feminist pedagogy to the Center and the campus.

AJ Kannal

Hello, my name is AJ Kannal, and I’m a new Graduate Assistant Director here in the Writing Center. I’m fresh off of a year of being in the workforce, and I’m looking forward to what the experience of graduate school has in store for me. I did my undergrad at Whitewater and achieved my bachelor’s degree in creative writing in the summer of 2016. I like to spend my downtime by reading, writing stories, playing video games, and fitting in the occasional nap when I find the chance. I also spend an inordinate amount of time looking at pictures of cats, but that’s neither here nor there. By working in the writing center, I hope to be able to expand my skillset while helping people understand just how fulfilling writing can be. In the long run, I want to be able to publish stories while applying myself in a field that utilizes the skills and knowledge that I’ve worked so hard to refine.

Zachary Peterson

My name is Zachary Peterson and I am one of the new Graduate Assistant Directors in the CWE. I grew up here in the Chippewa Valley, in nearby Chippewa Falls. For my undergraduate career, I went away, attaining a Bachelor of Arts in History from Ripon College in 2016. During my time as an undergraduate student, I was an intern in the alumni relations office at the institution, Chief Justice of the Student Judiciary Board, member of Ethics Bowl and student liaison to boards of Alumni and Trustees. I was also fortunate to study abroad through the Associated Colleges of the Midwest, studying art and architectural history in both London, England and Florence, Italy.

I am a first year graduate student in the History Program with an emphasis in Public History. During my graduate career here, I will be researching, in some aspect, how the stigma attached to mental health in the United States has affected the historical narrative of the “mental health institution.” Through my time in the CWE, I look forward to not only working with tutees and writing assistants within the center, but also conducting original research surrounding identity theory, the EDI movement and how it affects how we work with students in the center.
Take a walk down memory lane with me for a moment. It’s the fall of 2014, and I’m a sophomore. Like many second-year students, I’m still navigating the newness of college life. My love for writing is the one thing that hasn’t changed since college began, so I enroll in a class that trains students to work in the Center for Writing Excellence. I’m nervous, to say the least, but—spoiler alert!—it turns out to be one of the best decisions I’ll ever make.

It sounds cheesy, but it’s true: I didn’t know then that the CWE would become my home away from home and provide me with countless opportunities to excel as a writer and a student. It gave me a place to be 100% me, in all my nerdy glory. Today, around four years later, I look back with deep gratitude for the CWE—both the place and the people.

Now that you know a little bit about my connection with the CWE, I’m sure you can guess how honored I was to be awarded the first annual Lund Family Scholarship for Writing Center Studies. Each spring, the CWE awards one scholarship of $1000 to a writing assistant who exemplifies skillful tutoring and a dedication to writing center research. The scholarship is named after the impeccable Dianne Lund, the program assistant in the CWE and my personal style icon. It’s made possible by former CWE director Alan Benson, who is definitely not my fashion icon, but still one of the greats. The Lund Family Scholarship is just one of the many ways the CWE supports writing assistants.

I’m graduating in just a few short weeks, and soon I’ll say goodbye to the CWE. Time really does fly when you’re having fun, doesn’t it? In closing, I’ll just say this: the memories I made with fellow writing assistants will remain among my most cherished, and I’ll always have a little CWE-shaped spot in my heart labeled “home.”

Writing Assistant Receives Lund Scholarship
by Katelyn Sabelko

CWE Alumni Update: Where Are They Now?

Each semester, we reach out to CWE Alumni. In this issue, Ivanna Boychuk and Amanda Fay tell us what they’ve been working on since their time at UWEC.

Ivanna Boychuk
by Sara Ann Mihor

Many of the writing assistants who work at the CWE eventually seek further education after receiving their bachelor’s degree, and Ivanna Boychuk was no exception. After graduating from UWEC with a philosophy major and sociology minor degree, Ivanna moved to New Hampshire to pursue a law degree. Ivanna ended up falling in love with New Hampshire—which allowed her to be close by the ocean, lakes, mountains, and Boston—so when she earned her Juris Doctor, she took and passed the bar exam for the state of New Hampshire.

Currently, Ivanna is an attorney at Black, Vitelli & Pennock in Nashua, New Hampshire. The firm is smaller with only eight attorneys, and Ivanna specializes in family law—divorces, parenting petitions, post-divorce modification, and...
enforcement actions.

There are many things Ivanna misses about the CWE, including her coworkers, the peers she helped, and the peers who exposed her to a different perspective in a variety of genres. She enjoyed brainstorming with her peers and allowing herself to think about a writing assignment from different angles and perspectives.

Ivanna left the current and future writing assistants with some advice, which was, “Looking back, I’d recommend choosing classes of interest that also focus on developing practical skills (whether it’s writing, communication, business, etc.). It’s hard to develop and follow a career plan without knowing where life will take you after graduation, but the skills you’ll gain will be transferable.”

I graduated from UW-Eau Claire in 2010 with a BA in English Education. I had a wonderful internship at South Middle School in Eau Claire with the amazingly talented Ken Szymanski, which wholeheartedly prepared me to lead my own classroom. Shortly after graduation, I took a job teaching 7th grade English at Chippewa Falls Middle School in next door Chippewa Falls, WI. During my time at CFMS, I began working with educational technology in my own classroom. This led to me helping others in our district with educational technology in their classrooms. In addition to this, I began attending and presenting at conferences about my work.

After four amazing years at CFMS, I took a job in Prior Lake, MN, a suburb of the Twin Cities, as a Technology Integration Specialist at Twin Oaks and Hidden Oaks Middle Schools. This job involves taking part in leading the educational technology team for the district, planning and implementing professional development, and my favorite part: working with teachers and teaching teams to plan innovative programming, such as student-centered and project-based learning. In addition to this co-planning, I get to co-teach these units with our awesome and innovative teachers. I have been working on my Masters in Educational Leadership through Minnesota State Mankato for the last 18 months, and I will be graduating with my masters in November 2017.

I credit so much of what I've done and where I am today to my time at UWEC, the Colleges of English and Education, and my time working for the Center for Writing Excellence. These strong programs and amazing mentors really helped to prepare me for everything that was to come, taught me how to excel, and reminded me to always put relationships first.

If you're interested in following my professional journey, follow me on Twitter: @fayal555

Amanda Fay
Interviewed by Cassie Hampshire
On October 11-13th, Jonathan Rylander, Andrew Suralski, and I went to Long Island, New York for the National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing at Hofstra University. The conference, which is held every year, promotes the teaching of writing through collaborative learning. The theme this year was “Reaching Out: Revising Writing Center Spaces and Identities,” so most of the panels focused on how writing centers can reach out to stakeholders across campus.

In keeping with this theme, my presentation was about reaching out to creative writers and encouraging them to come to the writing center. During my fifteen minute talk, entitled “From There to Here: Reaching Creative Writers,” I talked about strategies for working with a variety of writers across campus. Specifically, I talked about reenvisioning writing centers as more than their physical locations—as communities that support all types of writing, including creative, on- and off-campus.

In addition to my presentation, Jonathan, Andrew, and I also got the chance to attend presentations from writing center administrators and tutors across the country, including panels about gender and race, graduate-level writing, and empirical research in writing centers.

We were excited to network with writing center professionals and learn about new developments in the field!