It’s a nicely cosmic bit of irony that, on the eve of my departure from academia, I’m facing down the exact problem I have helped so many students with: I don’t know what to write. However, unlike those students in first-year courses who are struggling to put fingers to keys, the problem isn’t that I have nothing to say (or that I slept through the class when I got the assignment); the problem is that I have too much to say.

How does one say goodbye to such an amazing group of students? To friends and collaborators like Dianne and Andrew? To alumni who have crossed the country and who are now using their tutoring backgrounds to thrive in corporate, academic, non-profit, and consulting fields?

To what has been, in all honesty, the best office job I’ve ever had? (Non-Center for Writing Excellence readers: right now the Writing Assistants and Graduate Assistant Directors are twitching at the long series of fragments they just endured. It’s my goodbye letter, and I’ll ungrammaticalize if I want to. Also, I will make up words.)

From the moment I set foot on campus and met amazing folks like Jordan, Alaina, Erin, Clare, Jacob, and the other writing assistants who introduced me to the center and UWEC, I realized what an incredible place this school really is and what a unique resource Dianne, Shevaun, and Blake had created. (The Nutella crepes I had at the Nucleus...
Best Wishes to Alan Benson!
continued from page 1

during that morning’s breakfast with Shevaun and Dianne also helped make Eau Claire’s case.)

In true writing center tradition, the CWE has constantly been in flux during my time in Eau Claire. Over the past five years we have moved our main offices into the Student Success Center, established new satellite locations, inaugurated an innovative collaboration with the library, expanded our Writing Fellows program, and tutored an ever-growing number of writers. We’ve also started sharing our uniquely talented writing assistants with the world. Since Fall 2012, we have sent undergraduates and graduate students to international, national, and regional academic conferences every semester. People from far-flung institutions have started commenting on our scholarship and realizing what I’ve known from my first moments on campus: the CWE is something special, and it’s home to some of the smartest people you’ll ever meet.

It has been an amazing five years and I can’t thank all of you enough for allowing me to work with you. I look forward to seeing how the center will continue to grow under Jonathan’s guidance, and I expect I will continue to hear great things from the CWE.

Farewell to GAD Jessica Moser
by Sara Mihor

It’s never easy saying goodbye to Writing Assistants, even when we know they are embarking on exciting journeys. Jess first entered UWEC as an undergrad in 2007 and graduated in 2012, before returning in the fall of 2015 for her Master’s degree in English. Jess was involved in the CWE as an undergrad, and she described coming back as a Graduate Assistant Director as, “Coming back to [her] family.” She has enjoyed working with the people in the CWE, claiming the people change as time goes on but they remain just as great and kind.

Jess has always been someone who likes to take on multiple projects at once, but doesn’t like to ask for help. The best advice she ever received to help her cope with this was from her dad: All you can do is what you can do. Jess kept this in mind as she juggled working in the CWE, attending classes, and completing her thesis, which is a full-length Young Adult novel that focuses on a teenage girl coming to terms with her mother’s passing.

When asked if Jess has any advice for her fellow WAs, she laughingly said, “This place runs smoothly without any advice from me.” Jess has many plans for her future now that she is graduating; her goal is to teach high school AP English courses, and she has been applying for positions in the Eau Claire area. Until then, she is excited to be marrying her fiancé Josh this summer.

The CWE wishes Jess an endless amount of success in her future. She will be missed, but will always be a member of the CWE family.

Meet Jonathan Rylander!
by Samantha Foss

Jonathan Rylander is the future director of the CWE, so we asked him to introduce himself before this fall.

After Jonathan completed his undergraduate work at the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota, he moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, to pursue a Master’s and Ph.D. in English with a concentration in Rhetoric and Composition at Miami University. This May he will receive his doctorate in English, with a certificate in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality studies.

When I asked Jonathan what he is looking forward to about UWEC, he said “its unyielding commitment to students, community, and inclusion.” Jonathan continued to say that he is excited to learn more about the important work his future colleagues are engaging in. He is also looking forward to expanding CWE campus and community involvement.

Originally from Minnesota, Jonathan says that being able to return to and work in the upper Midwest is a dream. With his love of northern lakes and rivers, Jonathan says “I’m simply lucky to call Eau Claire my new home.” We’re looking forward to working with you Jonathan and let us be the first to say, welcome home!

A full-length interview will appear in the Fall 2017 newsletter.
When Tim Allison, high school teacher and graduate student, began advocating for a literacy center at Memorial High School he envisioned a team of high school students helping their peers to overcome the obstacles that hinder many learning pursuits.

Allison didn’t want the effort to be about him, but it was his collaboration with school officials that made the Old Abe Literacy Center possible. Allison wanted to start a helping-hand program, not for remediation, but a safe place for students to bounce ideas around that they could incorporate into their projects. This idea was sparked by Allison studying writing center pedagogy and practice in ENGL 597 in fall 2015.

Memorial High School officials agreed that a literacy center was worth pursuing, granting Allison one year to get it running. It was then that Allison began working with the Center for Writing Excellence on ways to move the idea from vision to completion.

Emily Grunow, Jessica Moser, Charlotte Kupsh, Danielle Rockwell, and Erica Nerbonne are CWE Writing Assistants who have visited the Old Abe Literacy Center in the last year to help high school student-assistants in mock writing sessions. Allison was amazed at how quickly the student-assistants adapted to helping their peers with writing projects. The first part of the literacy center is the writing component, which is successfully running.

Looking ahead, Allison wants to respond to other gaps in the learning process such as reading and speaking. Allison originally had cautious expectations about whether his ideas would take hold, but is now encouraged. He expects that with the current buy-in from students and faculty, the Old Abe Literacy Center will become part of the fabric and educational experience for Memorial High School students.

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On April 19th and 20th, I presented student-faculty collaborative research at the Wisconsin Association of Academic Libraries (WAAL) Conference with McIntyre Interim Head of Instruction Kate Hinnant, Interim Director Jill Markgraf, and fellow Writing Assistant (WA) and Peer Research Consultant David Kocik (who attended virtually via video). The WAAL Conference is an excellent opportunity for academic librarians to discuss their institution’s unique situation and provide new ideas about approaching complex issues within their departments.

We were curious about the levels of collaboration and communication that exist between the Center for Writing Excellence and McIntyre Library’s Research Center, along with the connections between the position of a WA and a Peer Research Consultant. Given that this kind of research had never been conducted, we began by exploring WA perceptions about the Research Center. We found that there is a wide mixture of how much WAs actually knew about the Research Center and Peer Research Consultants, despite how often these resources work together. With an intervention training session, we saw increased understanding of what the Research Center does, the crossovers between the two resources, and when to refer students to the Research Center.

Our research team then developed a referral system in order to track and encourage increased communication. It was beneficial and exhilarating to come to this conference with an outside perspective and have intriguing discussions with professionals. As a student representative of the CWE and a future student affairs professional, I provided new ideas for collaboration and learned more about how libraries are a vital piece to an academic institution’s success. This conference demonstrated how working together can only strengthen our efforts to create a better learning environment for everyone.
Alumni News

Each semester we reach out to UWEC Alumni who are former writing assistants. In this issue, Nathaniel Taylor and Daniel Altenburg tell us about what they have been working on since their time at UWEC.

Nathaniel Taylor

I graduated from UWEC in 2015 with a BA in philosophy and a minor in literature. I decided to pursue graduate studies and was accepted into the Ph.D. program in philosophy at Marquette University in 2015. As a Ph.D. student, I was hired as a research assistant and lecturer in philosophy.

My research has focused primarily on the thought of Thomas Aquinas—especially his metaphysics, logic, and epistemology. Generally, I’m interested in Ancient Greek philosophy, Medieval Latin and Arabic philosophy, Metaphysics and the history of logic. I have Dr. Sean McAleer at UWEC to thank for inspiring my interest in these areas. He does a lot of work on Aristotle, and he and I studied Aristotle’s virtue ethics together (an ethical theory focused on evaluating the character of a person rather than their obligations or the consequences of their actions). From this I started studying St. Thomas in my spare time, and I was impressed by the rigor and subtlety of ancient and medieval thinkers. I think in many ways we have not “caught up” with them in how we do philosophy today—St. Thomas was able to synthesize nearly 3000 years of philosophy, from Greece to Baghdad and Cordoba up to his own time in Paris, which is a formidable accomplishment. I was impressed by St. Thomas’s intellect and I wanted to learn more about him and to better understand philosophy in his time. This led me to study ancient Greek and medieval Arabic thinkers with whom he was acquainted. For the medievals and the ancients, the kind of ethical evaluations we make is determined by the way we answer certain metaphysical questions, and the way we do metaphysics is determined in part by Christine Berenz

Spring Writing Contest

by Christine Berenz

In 1916, the National Park Service was established, the Chicago Cubs first played in Wrigley Field, and the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire embarked upon its journey to enlighten students with higher education. Nevertheless, for Natalie Hegna, these milestones are miniscule in comparison to the most important event that occurred in 1916: the birth of Dorothy Zempel. Natalie is the winner of this year’s writing contest put on by both the Center for Writing Excellence and NOTA. In honor of the University’s centennial, the theme of this year’s contest was to tell us about all things centennial. Contestants could submit anything that commemorated this hundredth-year celebration or portrayed their interpretation of a centennial for a chance to win generous prizes sponsored by the bookstore. The winning piece, written by Natalie, was a tribute to her grandmother, Dorothy Zempl, who would have been a hundred years old this year. “To me, a centennial should be a milestone celebration of the people and the memories that filled it,” Natalie explained when divulging her inspiration behind the winning piece, “whether they are here with us or not, remembering them keeps their story alive.” Hopefully Natalie’s piece and this year offer occasions to reflect upon and rejoice in the hundred wondrous years that have passed since Dorothy was born.

Centennial is a broad theme that yields an abundant range of interpretations; however, it does leave a writer a bit conflicted when deciding what exactly they should write about. One of the second-place winners, Brianne Ackley, recounted the process of writing her piece by highlighting the fact that “Centennial is so broad.” Ultimately, she chose a piece that she described as ‘unconventional’ and merges a personal piece with an insightful comparison of changes throughout time. For Brianne, the centennial is a time to “link the past to the present” and she uses this idea to show that “there is a constancy to being human.” Both Brianne and the other second-place winner, Sara Mihor, are writing assistants in the Center for Writing Excellence. Each of the centennial compositions written by our winners are available in the Spring edition of NOTA. Be sure to grab a copy and experience the connections between past and present for yourself.

In this issue, Nathaniel Taylor and Daniel Altenburg tell us about what they have been working on since their time at UWEC.
by how we do logic, so I gravitated to those underlying issues more than the issues of moral philosophy.

I think about my time as a writing assistant all of the time—after all, I’m writing all of the time! I use a lot of the skills I developed as a WA on myself frequently—especially when I have reached a block. Whenever I’m having trouble with a project, I start asking myself the questions I would ask writers with whom I worked in the CWE. I’ve also learned to ask for help or an outside opinion when I’ve reached a block—the very first thing I learned as a WA is that it is okay to ask for help when writing.

Writing is so much more than just putting pen to paper—it’s a process by which you gain the confidence to use your own voice to engage with others, craft your own arguments, and articulate yourself. A noble task, no doubt!

**Daniel Altenburg**

Unsurprisingly, I studied English at UWEC, with an emphasis on creative writing. I thought I wanted to be the next big American novelist, but poetry won my heart. After graduating in 2009, I continued my academics, receiving my MFA in Creative Writing - Poetry from the University of Arizona in 2011. Afterwards, I took a break from school, working as an adjunct, but continually found that I was reading scholarship and writing essays, mostly for discussion with my peers and for my blog. Yes, no one was really reading those posts, but it felt good to further hone my analytic and writing skills. In light of this, I decided to return to school in 2015. I’m currently at the end of my second year in the University of Louisiana at Lafayette’s English Ph.D. program, specializing in poetry. Along with studying, I teach freshman-level composition and am a poetry editor for Rougarou (www.rougarou.org), the university’s graduate journal.

I’m in the process of prepping for comprehensive exams for next semester, so my current research interests are essentially those four areas: Modern American Literature, Modern British Literature, Speculative Fiction—particularly science fiction—and Creative Writing Pedagogy. Specifically, though, something that’s always guided my research is poetry’s place in the contemporary world. I’m curious about why the general American doesn’t read poetry, especially because a number of middle school and high school students do dabble in both writing and reading it. Likewise, I’m interested in poetry’s ability to change and persist in the ever-digital age. Essentially, what about it makes it worth reading/writing/pursuing? I think I’m interested in this because I didn’t like poetry in high school. It wasn’t until my junior year of college—in Max Garland’s poetry workshop—that I discovered what contemporary poetry is. While contemporary poetry has just as many obstacles and expectations as contemporary fiction, I find it serves a different purpose. For me, contemporary poetry enacts emotion. One is free to live in the emotion of the speaker, free from the necessity of exposition or plot or even dialogue, as sometimes emotion can be enacted by the simple arrangement of words or by a singular word itself.

I’m in my eighth year teaching, and I still use a lot of the techniques I learned from the CWE. And though, as an instructor, I can (and often must) be more directive in the classroom, I still try to employ non-directive learning when meeting with students in my office hours. It shouldn’t surprise that the ideas students self-generate are not only retained better, but that their subsequent analysis and application of those ideas are better developed and more inspired. In regards to both teaching and my own writing, the CWE instilled in me the idea that good writing is a process. From creative to formal writing, brilliance is not born overnight. I try to remember this when I’m editing my eighth draft of a twenty-line poem, when I’m reworking my topic sentences in a seminar paper, and when I’m organizing a syllabus around drafting and revision.

Two additional things, one shamelessly self-involved and one not: The first, I ask that any reader further interested in my poetic pursuits go to my website: www.lettersofwreck.com. The second, I would just like to thank the faculty of UWEC for instilling in me a lifelong love of learning. Higher education is often seen as a means to an end; however, it is much more than that. It is boundless critical thinking, self-discovery, and unique opportunity. And a special thank you to Dr. Blake Westerlund, my ENGL 110 professor. I still keep in touch with him, cherishing his insight to life and learning, and model my ENGL 101 classes after his.
Good Luck and Congratulations to these Writing Assistants!

by Samantha Foss

Good luck our Writing Assistants as they start new adventures and congratulations to those being recognized for their hard work:

Graduating
Courtney Mensink is graduating with a degree in Creative Writing and Psychology.

Melissa Earth is graduating with a degree in Psychology and Creative Writing, with a certificate in American Sign Language. She will be continuing her education at St. Catherine University in St. Paul where she will become a certified ASL Interpreter.

Shae Gilleland is graduating with a degree in English, with an emphasis on Critical Studies and Political Rhetoric.

Deanna Kolell is graduating with a degree in Creative Writing and Integrated Strategic Communications.

Student Teaching
Samantha Blom will be student teaching in the fall of 2017.

Achievements
Taylor Allen will be interning at Steinthafels this summer.

Christine Berenz will be volunteering and teaching English as a second language in Venezuela.

Victoria Beckmann will be travelling abroad as part of the Central European Travel Seminar this summer.

Naomi Van Dyke will be teaching at UWEC’s immersion day camp this summer, Bilingual Beginnings.

Hannah Apold will also be joining the team at Bilingual Beginnings this summer.

Brianne Ackley will be presenting research with a group at the Research Society on Alcoholism in Dever, CO this June. Their research, “Rescuing the Overpoured Effect: The Impact of Perceived Drinking Situation on Fluid Poured in a Simulated Alcohol Free Pour Task,” determined that college students pour drinks differently depending on the situation. Brianne will also be doing research this summer with Dr. Matt Waters on Mark Antony and Cleopatra.

Katelyn Sabelko worked with Assistant Professor Amanda Profaizer to create a display and presentation of 19th-century style costumes that were part of the UWEC fall 2016 production of “In the Next Room.” The display was on the first floor of McIntyre Library from April 3 until the presentation on April 6.

Jake Ratanawong is a Fellow with the 2017 Atlantis Project, an international undergraduate pre-med fellowship in which he will be shadowing physicians in Lisbon, Portugal this summer. While there, Jake also plans to tutor in English and writing.

Awards and Scholarships
Katelyn Sabelko was the first recipient of the Lund Family Scholarship for Writing Center Studies. The “Lund Fund,” as it is affectionately called, was created by Alan Benson in honor of longtime CWE program assistant, Dianne Lund.

Kezia Jenkins was awarded the Ailes F. Barcelo Women’s Studies Memorial Scholarship.

Carly Kuran was awarded the Nadine St. Louis Scholarship for Creative Writing.

Samantha Blom was awarded the Maurice and Alma Swan Scholarship for future teachers of English.

Christine Berenz was awarded the Roma Hoff scholarship for Spanish majors or minors.

Courtney Patri also received the Roma Hoff Scholarship for Spanish as well as the Walter M. Reid Multi-Disciplinary Scholarship from the Department of Mathematics.

Josh Bauer, a former GAD, was honored with the Distinguished Master’s Thesis Award. He presented his thesis, “Through the Portal: Narratives of Loss and Connection,” on May 2 to faculty, staff, and students of UWEC. Josh has been working at UWEC in LTS and as an adjunct teaching first-year composition.

For more information on CWE staff projects, or to view any of our available resources, please visit: uwec.edu/writing

CWE Summer Hours:
By appointment - Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

You can also follow the CWE on social media:
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