CWE Presents at National Composition Conference

by Melanie Daas

The Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) is the world’s largest meeting of faculty who research and teach composition, taking place this year from April 6-9. Assistant Director Andrew Suralski and Writing Assistant Melanie Daas went down to present research projects they recently conducted here at UW-Eau Claire. Melanie shares her thoughts on the conference:

As others were returning to Wisconsin from their sunny Spring Break travels this year, Assistant Director Andrew Suralski and I were packing our bags to present research at the 2016 CCCC Annual Convention in sunny Houston, Texas. Following the conference’s theme, “Writing Strategies for Action,” we were selected to represent the Center for Writing Excellence (CWE) and UW-Eau Claire with a research poster studying the program VideoScribe and its importance in CWE practice.

VideoScribe is software that allows users to create online videos that include voice, text, and animation. After using the program in the CWE for only three years, Writing Assistants have created more than 30 educational videos on a range of topics such as rhetorical concepts, citation formats, and sentence structure. The main purpose of our research was to showcase how the program has been beneficial during one-on-one sessions, classroom presentations, and on social media.

Continued on page 2
Update: Partnership with Memorial High School Continues

by Emilee Grunow

In addition to attending the Midwest Writing Centers Association (MWCA) 2016 Conference in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Tim Allison, a high school English teacher at Memorial High School (MHS) and graduate student at UW-Eau Claire, has been busy preparing MHS for its own literacy center, including a writing center modeled after the CWE. MHS has officially approved the literacy center and formalized an official hired position for the director of the literacy center. Tim has contacted both the English Department staff as well as his own students to conduct outreach that will determine good candidates for Writing Assistants and generate interest among the student body. During a workshop where MHS partnered with UW-Eau Claire’s CWE to conduct sessions with Claire Gerber’s English 11 students, several future MHS Writing Assistants observed sessions, noting the methods that the Writing Assistants used and listening in to learn how to approach working with students’ papers. This summer there will be a class at MHS to train the Writing Assistants, who will then begin working with students in the Fall of 2016.

Spring Writing Contest

by Becca Anderson

The CWE is proud to announce that the Spring 2016 Writing Contest, co-sponsored with the Center for International Education (CIE), was our most successful yet, with over 20 participants.

Entrants from UW-Eau Claire and the greater Eau Claire community wrote on the theme of “Found in Translation.” Our panel of five faculty and staff judges read poems and prose pieces, both nonfiction and fiction, that celebrated diversity, language, travel, and multiculturalism.

“My Name” by Yia Lor won the grand prize. “Speaking to Garcia Lorca” by Yvette Viets Flaten placed second. “Who Was Gordy?” by Joe Morin was selected for third place. Winners were given an opportunity to read their pieces at an open read held at The Cabin on April 10.

We also partnered this year with NOTA, the on-campus literary magazine. “My Name” and “Speaking to Garcia Lorca” will be published in the Spring 2016 issue. In addition, all three winners will be showcased in The Foreword, the UW-Eau Claire English Department’s blog and newsletter.

We sincerely thank all of the poets, essayists, and short story writers who submitted to this year’s contest. Even though only three winners were chosen, we enjoyed and were moved by your exceptional writing. We also want to thank the CIE and NOTA for partnering with us on this contest, as well as the campus bookstore for providing prizes.
CWE Says Farewell to Three Graduate Assistant Directors

This May brings the unfortunate departure of three of our Graduate Assistant Directors (GADs). We took a moment to speak with our departing GADs about their time with the Center for Writing Excellence and their plans for the future.

Becca Anderson  
by Katelyn Sabelko

We’re bidding farewell to one of the greats this spring. Becca Anderson, veteran Writing Assistant and Graduate Assistant Director, will be missed by one and all. Becca has made many memories during her three years in the CWE. She’s appreciated, enjoyed, and helped to cultivate a sense of community and camaraderie in the CWE, as well as coordinated the 2016 writing contest. Over the years, the best writing advice she’s received is, “Your first draft is not your last draft,” meaning revision is an integral step in the writing process. And the advice she leaves for Writing Assistants? When you don’t know the answer, take advantage of the comfortable, safe community in the CWE and ask!

Though we’re sad to see her go, we’re excited about her future plans. After taking a year off, Becca plans to pursue an MFA in creative writing. We wish her all the best!

Josh Bauer  
by Naomi Hobbs

It is hard to find a stronger combination of kindheartedness and passion for creative writing than GAD Josh Bauer. Josh has been involved in the CWE as both an undergraduate and graduate student and is known by nearly every professor in the English Department, as well as by the many students he has helped. After high school Josh first attempted to go into the more lucrative career of computer programming, but creative writing was in his blood, so he came to UW-Eau Claire to start over with a new degree. According to him it was an easy switch: “I want to do what I love.” While he’s been here, Josh has made good use of everything the CWE could teach him, from tutoring as a Writing Assistant to helping with training and administration as a GAD. Upon graduation, he will have earned a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts in English-Creative Writing, and plans to teach creative writing and composition himself in a university, after doing some traveling. But no matter where he goes, the CWE will always hold a special place in his heart. “It’s a good community,” he says. “Everyone is friendly, open to working with everybody, and comfortable.”

Kelsey Gierach  
by Brenna Daley

Kelsey joined the CWE staff as a GAD in Fall 2015. She started her graduate program in English with an emphasis in rhetoric and composition in Fall 2014, after graduating from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities with a Bachelor of Arts in English and Italian.
The Center for Writing Excellence (CWE) contributed a sizable number of presenters to the Midwest Writing Center Association’s (MWCA) biannual conference. CWE Director Alan Benson; Assistant Director Andrew Suralski; Graduate Assistant Directors Becca Anderson, Josh Bauer, and Kelsey Gierach; Memorial High English teacher Timothy Allison; and Writing Assistant Emilee Grunow all travelled to Cedar Rapids, Iowa in early March to participate. Alan Benson additionally served as this year’s MWCA chair.

Alan Benson, Kelsey Gierach, Timothy Allison, and Emilee Grunow presented about their initial work on founding a literacy center at Memorial High School, while also discussing the possible future timeline. The presentation sparked a lively discussion about making connections between schools, finding funding sources for collaborations, and identifying solutions to common problems.

Becca Anderson and Josh Bauer gave a talk on research they had conducted about the opinions and perceptions of creative writers and the writing center. They were curious as to why creative writers tend not to bring their work to writing centers, even though the CWE supports this writing. After speaking with creative writing professors, they discovered a range of reactions: one professor actively suggested the CWE to his students, while another felt that her students were better off coming to her for advice. The range of reactions caught the audience’s attention, which led to a rousing discussion with other writing center directors and writing assistants alike.

The trip to Grand Rapids was not only a wonderful professional experience for UW-Eau Claire attendees, it was a chance to have fun and enjoy each others’ company while enjoying the solid fare of Iowa. A hearty “thank you” to the CWE and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) for making the trip possible!

CWE at Midwestern Writing Center Conference
by Kelsey Gierach

Left to right: Assistant Director Andrew Suralski; Graduate Assistant Directors Josh Bauer, Becca Anderson, and Kelsey Gierach; and Memorial High School English teacher Timothy Allison

Farewell to three GADs
Continued from page 3

One of the things that Kelsey loves most about the CWE is working with undergraduate students. She has always known that she wanted to teach, and working as a GAD allowed her to learn more about working with students. Kelsey has also pursued these passions by working closely with Memorial High School to create a literacy center which will help high school students with writing assignments for any classes, basic reading and comprehension skills, and college and job applications. She also presented at the Midwest Writing Center Association conference this spring.

Following graduation, Kelsey plans to move to Appleton, where she is hoping to teach at a small community or technical college, or to work in an administrative position at a similar educational institution.

Kelsey notes that her experience at UW-Eau Claire and working in the writing center is invaluable. She has enjoyed being able to put the material she was learning into practice and learning from other Writing Assistants as well. She appreciates how much the writing center encourages Writing Assistants to go beyond their basic responsibilities to conduct and present research that will prepare them for life beyond their undergraduate degrees. Kelsey also mentioned how much she will miss the writing center staff and the camaraderie that exists even within such a large group of people.
Every now and then we like to catch up on how our alumni are doing. This year we spoke with two alumni Writing Assistants and asked them how their careers have taken off since graduation.

Bill Brooks

I graduated from UW-Eau Claire in 2011 with an undergraduate degree in English Education and a minor in TESOL. My wife Heather and I were married in 2010, the summer prior to my super-senior year. We have two daughters, Adelaide and Vivienne. Adelaide is four, and she will be starting preschool next year. Vivienne is six months, and she just recently started on solid foods.

My degree and experiences as an undergraduate led me to my first job teaching English in a sheltered content model in the Twin Cities. Specifically, my experiences in student-faculty collaborative research projects and presentations with Dr. Kate Reynolds and Dr. Carmen Manning greatly increased my level of professional engagement within the field of teaching. In addition, my experience working with language learners in the Center for Writing Excellence, coupled with my experiences of being a student academic mentor for Dr. David Shih and Dr. Joel Pace, gave me an additional advantage while applying to my first teaching position. Underlying these opportunities, I also feel that the preparation I received in the College of Education and Human Sciences was aimed at equipping me with knowledge, skills, and dispositions that have served as a great foundation for me as I continue to grow and learn as a teacher.

After working in that Twin Cities middle school for two years, I taught high school in a more rural location in Wisconsin before my family went international to Doha, Qatar. Currently, I am the Secondary Humanities Teacher Lead at an international school that exists specifically to serve English language learners with additional learning challenges. Next year, my team is tasked with aligning our grade 6-12 English and social studies curricula vertically to ensure the program grows and has continuity in the future. On top of that, I have been fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to earn my International Baccalaureate Certificate in Teaching and Learning through Bethel University, and I am currently pursuing my masters degree in English through Arizona State University.

While living here, we have been able to travel to Sri Lanka, Romania, and the UK. We also hope to travel to Oman and Germany in the near future. We have a great group of friends abroad, we have been able to host our families in a part of the world they never would have guessed they would visit, and we are living out an adventure on a daily basis.

Maura Dunst

I graduated from UW-Eau Claire in 2009 with an MA in English. From there I went to the University of Exeter in England, where I did a second MA, this time in Victorian Studies. I then began a PhD program at the University of Hull, also in England; my area of study was music in late-Victorian British women's writing. One year before I was set to defend my doctoral dissertation, my supervisor—whom I had gone to Hull specifically to work with—t ook a job at Cardiff.

continued on page 6
Goodbye to Departing Writing Assistants
by Josh Bauer

Every year we have to say farewell to familiar faces, so we’re celebrating the accomplishments of our departing Writing Assistants. We wish you the best—don’t forget to come back and visit!

Graduating

Becca Anderson is graduating with a Master of Arts in English-Writing. She is taking next year off before pursuing an MFA degree and is looking forward to reading books that aren’t for a class.

Josh Bauer is graduating with a Master of Arts in English-Writing and will be taking a gap year to teach and travel before applying to MFA programs.

Elizabeth Caldwell is an economics major and psychology and advertising minor. After graduation, she will be working for the Minnesota Alliance with Youth.

Brenna Daley is graduating with an English-scientific and technical writing major and a minor in organizational communication.

Sadie Falter is graduating with an English literature major, library science and media minor, and American Sign Language certification. She will be seeking a position in the public library system and continuing to study ASL to become an interpreter for theatre performance.

Kelsey Gierach is graduating with a Master of Arts in English-Writing and will be applying for both educational and administrative positions at colleges and technical schools in the Fox Valley area.

Mark Priebe will be attending graduate school at the University of Michigan for his master of public policy degree.

Lindsay Schleppeebach has received a graduate assistantship at UW-La Crosse for her masters in exercise physiology. Her end-goal is to work in cardiac rehabilitation.

Matt Swanson is an information systems major and computer science minor and will be working at UnitedHealth Group in Internal Information Technology Auditing.

Student Teaching

Abby Fell is a unified early childhood major and will be student teaching in a variety of placements next fall.

Jenna Gasner will be finishing her Spanish education major and history education minor and will be student teaching in the fall. After graduation, she plans to find a Spanish teaching position in the Twin Cities, or teach English in a Spanish-speaking country.

Jon Hamblin will be student teaching and finishing up his comprehensive English education major in the fall.

Grace Luebben will be student teaching in Prague, Czech Republic, in the fall, and then graduating in December. She intends to become a middle or high school English teacher in Wisconsin.

Krista Neyers will be finishing her Spanish education major and environmental science minor and will be student teaching at Eau Claire North High School in the fall.

Studying Abroad

Christy Thomas will be studying abroad in Winchester, England next semester and is super excited to travel around Europe, study British literature, and get to know new people.

Alumni News
Continued from page 5

University in the south of Wales. So, with the promise of a funding match, I transferred universities and completed my PhD at Cardiff.

During my years overseas I was able to travel widely around the UK and Europe and attend several international conferences in amazing places, including Romania and Malta. I also was able to do lots of archival research on authors whose papers would have otherwise been an ocean away.

Being a PhD student suited me incredibly well, but sadly all good things must come to an end, and I successfully defended my dissertation, passing with no corrections—the highest level awarded in the UK university system.

I then packed up and moved back to the US, where I took a job teaching in the English and Philosophy Department at UW-Stout. I love being back in this area and look forward to the new adventures that await me here.

For more information on the Center for Writing Excellence, visit our website at www.uwec.edu/Writing/

Also, be sure to follow us on Twitter and Facebook! (@uwec_cwe / UW-Eau Claire Center for Writing Excellence)