Moving Forward In The CWE

This spring, I’ve been collaborating with Integrated Marketing to help the CWE more creatively communicate our mission to students—especially incoming students. I want to thank Becky Dienger, Jennifer Benike, Michael Knuth, Jesse Yang, and Denise Olson.

This group is working hard to re-design our website, develop a promotional video, and communicate a story of who we are—a Center here to support all writers; committed to the future of the teaching and mentoring of writing at UWEC; invested in scholarship and advancing the field of writing center studies.

At our last all-staff meeting, Ellayna Lyon, a junior double majoring in Spanish and Criminal Justice, presented her current research on outreach to post-secondary education students.

Spencer Schauer, a senior majoring in Biology and minoring in Philosophy, sought input on a piece he is writing regarding a more active role that writing centers might play in advancing the goals of a liberal education.

What a fitting project in the CWE—a space dedicated to assisting and employing students from diverse fields and interdisciplinary focuses. Graduate Assistant Directors (GADs), Logan Frodl and Colleen McCluskey and Undergraduate Writing Assistant (WA), Maria Lynch, received acceptance to present at the International Writing Center Association Conference this fall in Columbus, Ohio. More in our Fall newsletter!

As always, I appreciate your support of the CWE.

Jonathan
Maria Lynch, Lund Fund scholarship recipient.

From politics to shoes to the obnoxious amounts of snow in Wisconsin, we’ll be missing chats with Zachary.
- Rebecca Mennecke

Zachary Peterson has always been analytical. Once, he was driving past a local cemetery when he noticed a series of streets with no outlets. Curious, he got to thinking: What is the epistemology of “dead-end” streets? Though there may be many dead-end streets in Eau Claire, there aren’t many dead-ends in Zachary’s work with rhetorics, as he is graduating with a masters degree in writing this spring, with his thesis titled “Queering the Rhetorics of Insanity: An Exploration of the Northern Wisconsin Home for the Feeble-Minded and the Epileptic.”

He will be attending East Carolina University for a PhD in Rhetoric, Writing, and Professional Communication in the fall, with a full-ride scholarship and a job as a teaching assistant—where he will instruct two introductory courses (potentially in science and technical writing, and he can apply his passion for mental health and disability emphases). He is looking forward to working with a tight-knit faculty and colleagues as well as moving into his “hippy-dippy” apartment. He isn’t certain what he wants to do with his degree yet, but he knows his passions lie in teaching. It’s something he learned when he had the opportunity to teach ENGL 397 for a day last fall.

“It came very naturally,” he said.

His favorite moment from the CWE was on an ordinary, “dead as a doornail” Thursday night during walk-in hours where he said was “bored out of [his]

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gourd" and a woman came in looking for help on a rhetorical analysis of an image of a theater stage.

“She was glowing after she left,” he said.

One of the most important things Zachary learned from the CWE that he will carry forward is to be yourself and not separate yourself from your identity. He said you shouldn’t let who you are hold you back, but let it drive you.

We will miss more than simply Zachary’s contributions to the center through his work as a GAD, his numerous presentations at various conferences, and his day-to-day work as a Writing Assistant.

We will miss having 6 coffee mugs in Centennial, McIntyre, and the English department belonging to Zachary, the scent of Folger’s dark roast—“the darkest, blackest, sludgiest”—coffee filling the center, seeing his brown loafers and rolled-up jeans rushing from the English department to the writing center, and the sunny personality Zachary brings to every place he goes.

“I’m going to miss the chats," Zachary said.

From politics to shoes to the obnoxious amounts of snow in Wisconsin, we’ll be missing those chats with Zachary too.

We wish Zachary the best of luck in his many future endeavors.

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**Dr. Rylander … With The Coffee Cup … In The CWE?**

By Zachary Peterson

We didn’t exactly play *Clue* in the CWE this spring, but we did have a mystery themed writing contest that made us all aware of our surroundings just a bit more this semester.

Kicking off the contest with a co-sponsored free write event with the campus bookstore in February, students were invited to shake a story dice and play with magnet words to brainstorm story ideas.

After stories were gathered and judged by a group of faculty and staff from across campus, Laura Wilson, a double major in Biology and English with a Minor in Creative Writing won with her piece, “Mirrored”, which began as work in a creative writing class of hers.

Her prose piece will appear in this spring addition of NOTA as a collaborative effort to celebrate the winner in the campus arts journal.
The structure and mission of the CWE aligns with how I teach writing to my middle school students today.

- Caitlin (Rathburn) Van Hefty

Alumni Spotlight: Caitlin (Rathburn) Van Hefty

Each semester, we reach out to CWE Alumni. In this issue, Caitlin Van Hefty and Lisa Zondlo tell us what they’ve been working on since their time at UWEC.

I graduated from UW-Eau Claire in December 2012 with a B.A. in English Education and a minor in Dance Studies. I completed my student teaching in Hudson, Wisconsin, at both Hudson Middle School and Hudson High School.

After graduating, I worked as a long-term substitute while I obtained my teaching licenses. My husband (also a Blugold!) and I then decided to move out west for some new adventures in Fall 2013.

I taught 7th and 8th grade Language Arts in the Denver Metro area for five years. During this time, I also earned my Master’s Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from University of Colorado-Denver.

This past summer, we moved back to the Twin Cities to be closer to family.

I now teach 8th grade Language Arts at John Glenn Middle School in Maplewood, Minnesota.

I look forward to new opportunities as a teacher, leader, and secondary curriculum developer!

I worked as a writing assistant at the CWE for four years, and loved every minute of it!

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I was “undeclared” for almost three years, and my experience as a writing assistant was a major factor in finally picking a major in education.

The structure and mission of the CWE aligns with how I teach writing to my middle school students today. I still use a lot of strategies that I used with students at the CWE:

- Asking Questions
- Prioritizing Concerns
- Writing Process Stages
- And more!

The CWE definitely gave me a broader understanding of writing across all disciplines and I couldn’t be more grateful. Write on!

Alumni Spotlight: Lisa Zondlo

Hola! My name is Lisa, and I loved UWEC so much that I graduated twice – in 2011 with degrees in English Literature and Spanish, and in 2014 with degrees in education.

I worked for the Center of Writing Excellence for 5 years and appreciate how the center became my home and my CWE colleagues became my family. After graduating from UWEC, I obtained a Spanish teaching position at Chippewa Falls High School and English summer school teaching positions with Eau Claire Area School District.

As an educator, I learned that my time with the CWE helped me develop and grow as a professional because it taught me how to mentor students one-on-one, how to plan and facilitate individual and small group sessions, and how to advocate for the needs of others.

While with the CWE, I collaborated with professors to found the Spanish Writing Center, and I continued this work in Denver by advocating for and initiating Spanish writing support in the University of Denver’s (DU) Writing Center.
Currently, I am working with schools in Guatemala and Mexico helping them write curriculum that focuses on critical thinking, socioemotional intelligence, and creativity as well as designing and facilitating teacher workshops. I may potentially make Guatemala my home as I have the opportunity to write grants for the non-governmental organization/school La Puerta. Along with professional writing, I am passionate about using writing as a medium for social justice and supporting others with getting their voices heard because writing is a powerful way to take action against social and political oppression.

In my spare time, I enjoy connecting with la madre tierra because nature is my way of emotionally resetting, and I recommend that all professionals and students find time for themselves to do something that relieves them from stress and helps them find peace and tranquility.

Writing Assistant Achievements

**Campus Leadership**

Grace Hanson is an RA in Sutherland Hall beginning Fall 2019; Laura Wilson is co-president of the Honors Student Steering Committee; Maria Lynch, John Paluta, Andrea Wendt, and Rebecca Mennecke are Senior Leaders in the Center for Writing Excellence; Spencer Schauer is the President of the Philosophy Club; Rebecca Mennecke is the Currents Editor at The Spectator and Emily Cramlet was elected Vice-President of Aspiring Educators at the state level.

**Scholarships**

Maria Lynch is the recipient of the Grace Shipley scholarship, the Nan Dougherty English Education scholarship, the Passion for Reading & Writing II scholarship, and the Lund Scholarship; Erica Nerbonne is the recipient of the Hilda Belle Oxby Scholarship for Languages; Laura Wilson was awarded the Ronald E. Mickel Honors Program Senior Scholarship; Rebecca Mennecke was awarded the Nadine St. Louis Creative Writing Scholarship and the Henry Lippold Spector Freelance Writing Scholarship; and Rachyl Hietpas was the recipient of the Dagny Midelfort Book Award from the Spanish section of the Department of Languages.

**Study Abroad**

Lauren Brooks is travelling to Spain; Grace Hanson is studying abroad this summer in Great Britain; and Nicole Lazo is travelling to Heredia, Costa Rica in Summer 2019.

As an educator, the CWE helped me develop and grow as a professional. It taught me how to mentor students and how to advocate for the needs of others.

- Lisa Zondlo
**Graduate Programs**

- Caroline Morris is starting Nursing School in Minneapolis; Jake Ratanawong is attending the University of Minnesota School of Public Health for Policy and Health Administration in the fall; Rachyl Hietpas is attending Penn State for her MA/PhD in Hispanic Linguistics; Brianna Wyss is attending UW-Madison for her MA in Library and Information Sciences; and Zachary Peterson is beginning his PhD program at East Carolina University in Rhetoric, Writing, and Professional Communication.

**Internships & Volunteering**

- John Paluta is the NOTA Prose Editor and the Vice President of the Student Ministry of Magic; Rebecca Menneck is the Editorial Intern at Volume One; and Andrea Wendt is a fourth year coach for the Eau Claire Curling Club Junior’s program.

**Conferences**

- Caroline Morris presented at UWEC’s CERCA for EDI research in the Sociology Department and Alyssa Huelsbeck presented in April at the Western Social Science conference in San Diego.

**Autism & Writing Centers Advocacy**

By Colleen McCluskey

I recently had the honor of speaking at the Autism Society of Wisconsin’s (ASW) Thirtieth Annual Conference, with a presentation on accommodation for neurodiverse students with autism in college and university writing centers, like the Center For Writing Excellence.

As an educator and an individual on the Autistic Spectrum, I’m a strong special needs advocate, particularly for individuals with mental health issues. The presentation, entitled “Use Your Words! Self Advocacy, Higher Education, & Academic Support Centers”, and was focused on self advocacy in academic assistance spaces, university sponsored out of class learning environment for students in select courses.

Its primary topic was elucidating how students on the autism spectrum can utilize the multidisciplinary writing centers of institutions of higher education to maximize academic success and communication skills. This is a particularly important and timely topic as when students on the autism spectrum make the transition from high school to the higher education environment, whether virtual or physical. As they make this leap, the supports upon which they have depended in high school may no longer be available.

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I co-presented with my mother, Betty McCluskey, a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). We provided user friendly advice based on personal experience and best practices. The goal in doing so was to enable students to take responsibility for their writing. Communication skills like this help students achieve the grades to propel them forward in the life of independence all parents strive for their children to attain.

In addition to focusing on how writing centers can be utilized in an academic sense, we also described their use as a positive socially based learning environment. Because writing centers have their basis in peer mentoring and dialogic tutoring, they also function to teach cooperation and perspective taking.

Our attendance was substantial, with approximately ninety participants in all, which was a great opportunity for networking. Attending this conference was a very rewarding experience overall!
CWE Summer Partnership With McNair Program

By Logan Frodl

This summer, we’ll be continuing work with the Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program. The McNair program is named after Dr. Ronald E. McNair, an American astronaut. The goals of the McNair program are to level the playing field for PhD students from minoritized groups. The CWE first gave a short presentation on Personal Statement tips in April. On May 30, the CWE will host Dr. Ka Vang and her students, who will bring drafts of their Personal Statements to workshop. It’s an exciting yet stressful time, and I love being able to walk through the process with students!
HAPPY SUMMER!

And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer.

F. Scott Fitzgerald

The Center for Writing Excellence wishes you a fun filled and restful summer! See you next semester!