WTS says goodbye to the Class of ’17

Nicole Krasean

Major: Journalism

How WTS affected me: Not only has WTS made me a stronger communicator, it has shown me how truly special it is to be able to mentor others. WTS also introduced me to some of the most brilliant minds at IU, whom I can now call my friends as well as my colleagues.

Plans after graduation: I plan on becoming a successful sports reporter and one day becoming rich enough to get WTS a space with a door ;)

Claire Beatrice Mullaney

Major: Biology (B.S.)

How WTS affected me: WTS has made me a better writer and teacher, given me some of my closest friends, and provided a supportive work environment where I am surrounded by an intelligent and motivated staff.

Plans after graduation: I recently accepted a summer internship with Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF) in Key Largo, Florida offered through the Our-
Claire continued...

World-Underwater Scholarship Society®. In September, I will move to Utah to begin working for Qualtrics, a research software company. After taking some time away from academia, I plan to pursue a graduate degree in marine resource management and work towards a career in marine policy and conservation.

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Leyla Rashid
Major: Neuroscience

How WTS affected me: WTS allowed me to help students in a way that I hadn’t yet before. By equipping students with the tools and skills to become stronger writers, we are able to become coaches rather than editors, and thus we both benefit from the tutorial!

Plans after graduation: After graduation, I’m taking a gap year and working as a pharmacy technician in Bloomington. Then, I hope to start pharmacy school at Purdue.
Katelyn Klinger

**Major:** English

**How WTS affected me:** Working for WTS has helped me to cultivate important concrete skills, such as explaining ideas with clarity and urging students forward in their own thought processes. It has also helped me realize that I want to make writing a lifelong priority, and has been the source of deep and meaningful friendships.

**Plans after graduation:** I’m staying in Bloomington next year to do some editing work for a professor while I apply to graduate programs. After next year, I hope to enter a program and study poetry.

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Ellie Young

**Major:** Health Management and Policy

**How WTS affected me:** My time at WTS not only made me a better writer and communicator, but it allowed me to meet some of the most extraordinary co-workers, many of whom I now call friends. WTS will always have a special place in my heart.

**Plans after graduation:** I plan to obtain my Masters in Health Administration from IUPUI and work in Indianapolis.
Vicki Consolvo

**Major:** Economics, Philosophy

**How WTS affected me:** I’ll definitely miss being a part of something bigger than myself, that has such weird, smart, beautiful people who have been just as much my teachers as my actual professors have been. I mean, we have a big book of dirty euphemisms on our shelf of resources...what more needs to be said?

**Plans after graduation:** I will be taking a job as a Research Analyst with the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland!

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Steven Impini

**Major:** Psychology

**How WTS affected me:** WTS helped me to see I can make a positive effect on the lives of others. Through working with tutees, I saw the importance of education, and through working with my fellow tutors, I learned more about various fields of work and how they all have a common interest in expanding one’s mind.

**Plans after graduation:** I will be entering into the business field.
Sarah Friedline

Sarah graduated from IU in winter of 2016, a semester earlier than her fellow senior WTS tutors. Therefore, her exit interview was more in-depth than her co-workers’.

Major: English Literature (concentration on Poetry and Poetics)

Favorite thing about IU: As far as the campus itself, I love the buildings at IU, especially in the Old Crescent. I spent a lot of my time as an undergrad finding sneaky study spots in the old buildings. In general, though, I think the best part of IU has been the friends I’ve made here and the cool people I’ve met.

How WTS affected me: I loved the other people I worked with! One of my favorite times at WTS was when I was in the peer tutor training class, and I got to hang out with Jo Ann and the other trainees for two hours a week! WTS tutors are a fun set of people who are always up for an interesting conversation about any number of strange topics, and I’m going to miss their company!

Biggest lesson learned at WTS: ALWAYS ASK WHEN THE PAPER IS DUE!!! I will never forget the time I counseled a student to substantially modify his thesis, only to find out the paper was due in 30 minutes, and he needed to leave early from the tutorial to make it to class to turn in the paper.

Plans after graduation: A month after graduation, I’m joining a convent of Carmelite nuns out in Pennsylvania, where I’ll live way out in the country with a community of other women, pray a lot, sing a lot, read a lot of books from their very large library, raise miniature horses, and help tend several hay fields and a gigantic garden.
Meet John Paul
WTS welcomes to the family the new Campus Writing Program Director and Lead Instructional Consultant at the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning -- Written by Ellie Young

John Paul Kanwit started his position in August of 2016, but says he feels like he’s been here forever. Originally from Chicago, the Georgetown graduate completed a Doctorate in Victorian studies at IU before overseeing the Secondary English Education Program at Ohio Northern University. After relocating to Greenwood, Indiana, he taught at Franklin University, the University of Indianapolis, and IU before transitioning into this new role.

With a new role comes new responsibilities: Half of his time is devoted to the student-facing WTS side with which we are all familiar, and the other half is faculty-facing. This side of his domain focuses on integrating WTS into larger campus initiatives and working with faculty to incorporate campus writing program (CWP) themes in the classroom. That means leading workshops on how to design effective assignments, use rubrics, facilitate peer review, and craft letters of recommendation. One especially successful project this year has been the drive to help multilingual writers. In partnership with Katie Silvester, Coordinator of Multilingual Writing, John Paul has built workshops oriented toward creating stronger resources for multilingual students though specialized training for faculty and instructors.

But success doesn’t stop here. Collaborating with library leadership to create a better WTS working environment has been a top priority, and relocating a central printer and student congregation area has benefitted WTS tutors and tutees alike. Future initiatives include further modifying the WTS space, implementing technological updates for WTS use, and providing better CWP online resources for instructors. Eventually John Paul imagines an endowed writing program with the resources to support peer tutors, dissertators, and students with disabilities.

His vision? That the CWP and WTS will be nationally recognized for providing excellent consultation and tutoring services for diverse groups of instructors and students. To make these objectives a reality, John Paul will continue attending conferences to design new strategies and meeting with faculty to build the CWP. With so much success in such a short time, he and his team are sure to lead WTS toward a stronger, brilliant future.
Inside The WTS Jamboree Event

*Written by Lindsey Robinson*

Every year, Writing Tutorial Services hosts a Jamboree for tutor trainees to meet and compare expectations with a panel of more experienced tutors. Tutor trainees, or “baby tutes” as Jo Ann has affectionately nicknamed them, are given the chance to ask questions about their concerns – which usually revolve around ASC versus Well’s Library tutorial differences, tutoring multilingual students, and the rare but not unheard of nightmare tutorial.

The Jamboree not only gives baby tutes the chance to dispel unnecessary fears and swap strategies, but it is also their first opportunity to meet and get to know some of the established WTS tutors, both undergraduate and graduate students from a wide array of disciplines.

Jo Ann has described the Jamboree as an essential part of the training process for new peer tutors, which usually takes place three weeks or so before they begin their first tutorials. Complete with copious amounts of pizza and candy, the Jamboree is an event which has come to welcome baby tutes into the WTS family.

Undergrads Gain More Responsibilities

*Written by Steven Impini*

I can’t believe they gave me all this power. Keys. Passwords. Binders. I should have known it would go to my head. The administration should have known. But I didn’t; they didn’t; and now I look down at everyone from my ergonomic throne, my seat of power. Sure, the armrests are asymmetrical, but I won’t let trivial concerns of posture get in my way. I will schedule appointments. I will answer phone calls. And I will put your name on a list if you no-show three times. Don’t tempt me, because I would love it.

As you can likely tell by now, undergraduate tutors are now allowed to work at the front desk of WTS, inflating their egos with the intoxicating power of the position. Or maybe that’s just me.

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Since the summer of 2016, when the WTS administration was unable to find a graduate tutor to work at the front desk for the first 8-weeks, undergraduate tutors have been given the opportunity to take hours at the desk. It seems to have gone fairly well, except for a few scheduling mishaps here and there, and some – how should I put this – creative, organization of the cabinets. Undergraduate tutors chosen to work at the desk are given a one-hour training session, most of which consists of learning how to lock and unlock the aging metal cabinets used to store notepads, records, and other tutoring paraphernalia.

When asked to comment, Anita King, the WTS site manager in charge of initiating this transition, said, “[The undergraduate tutors are] very reliable, and they have caught on very quickly.” She went on to emphasize that previously shy tutors “are not as shy after working the desk.” Jo Ann Vogt, WTS coordinator, added, “To be honest, I wouldn’t trust just any undergrad to staff the WTS desk because it can be a hectic, stressful, emotionally-demanding job. WTS undergrads are not just any undergrads though. They are exceptionally organized, thoughtful, and dedicated to WTS.”

Ava Dickerson, graduate tutor, commented, “Life is pain” – a sage reminder of the dialectical nature of good and bad. In this age of instant gratification and short-sighted pursuits of comfort, it is imperative we remember that pleasure must be tempered by pain in the red-hot forge of life. Working the front desk of WTS often serves as a microcosm of this dialectical struggle: the urge to sit back and be paid by the hour for doing homework must not take full precedence over the ethic of filing tutor evaluations and recording no-shows.

As the first undergraduate tutor to work at the desk, I have enjoyed getting to know the other side of WTS. While the tutoring side of the job is still where my passion lies, I have come to understand that it would be impossible for our tutors to operate at their best without the administrative infrastructure that supports them. Desk tutors have the important job of making sure that students are assigned to the tutors that can help them best, which is a necessary step toward maximizing the utility of each tutoring session. We also make sure that the tutoring area is as clean and quiet as possible so the tutors and students can do their work undistracted – a task that can be difficult at times considering that our current tutoring area shares a space with the public computers. These, and other functions performed by desk tutors, are invaluable to our success as a writing center, and I am glad that our undergraduate tutors have been given the opportunity to contribute to these efforts and have been so eager to rise to the challenges of working at the desk.
The Grammar Game

Written by Emily Wagoner

Everyone who has ever worked at WTS knows of the joys, challenges, and frustrations that come with tutoring multilingual students. This demographic accounts for about half of our tutorials, and the number of multilingual students at IU continues to grow. The W131 Multilingual program continues to change and evolve to keep up with student needs and with new research regarding language learning.

As tutors, we are likewise responsible for not only keeping up with these changes but also adapting our methods of tutoring these students to reflect the changes happening within the program. Early on in the 2016-17 school year, current WTS tutors had the privilege of engaging in a working group with Dr. Katherine Silvester, Coordinator of Multilingual Writing at IU.

As WTS tutors, we are always pondering and discussing the question, “how can we better assist multilingual students?” Dr. Silvester encourages tutors to continue to work on the sentence level with her students, because “international students want and need help with language.” In an email interview, she explained that during the revision process, W131 ML instructors primarily focus on language-specific feedback in the form of indicating errors but not fixing them. If this is becoming more and more of a primary emphasis in classroom revisions, how are we as WTS tutors responding?

This question brings the WTS policy about grammar help to the forefront of discussion. Although sentence-level concerns are not to be our primary focus, we cannot overlook grammar issues with these students, especially when the paper’s language inhibits readability. This laborious task must often take a special priority with such students that would not be appropriate with native English speakers. Over the past year at WTS, finding this balance has been a topic of major discussion at many working groups as the necessity for “grammar help” seems to grow.

Dr. Silvester explained that some instructors require students over the course of the semester to keep “language logs,” in which they identify indicated errors, look up the appropriate section in their text, and correct the error in a systematic format. As tutors, this could be a crucial tool for us moving forward. Silvester’s policy of grammar “revision” mimics the one that has always been held at WTS; however, a change we as tutors can make is to encourage students’ autonomy by asking to see their language logs. This step will promote accountability as well as interaction between the student, the tutor, and the W131 ML classroom.
Coral and Commas: Finding WTS in Marine Science Research -- Written by Claire Mullaney

I spent half of 2016 living on two very different coasts. From February to May, I was studying tropical marine ecology and conservation in Bonaire – a little island in the Dutch Caribbean, located about 50 miles north of Venezuela. I spent June to August feeling a little chillier, listening to much less reggaeton music, and living on the Oregon coast, where I was doing a summer fellowship with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) sponsored by Oregon Sea Grant.

Writing Tutorial Services may not seem to be related to crabbing regulations or coral reef health, but there are a multitude of links between WTS and my research experiences, many of which I did not realize until I sat down to write this article. I conducted independent research in both Bonaire and Oregon, and I then composed reports of my findings to be published in a student journal (Bonaire) and given to my supervisors (ODFW). Writing these reports put me back in the tutee’s chair for the first time since high school; my mentors gave me feedback on my work in varying stages of completion; I made changes that were met with even more feedback, etc. Being in this position greatly developed my empathy for the tutee (I forgot that I feel the same way about someone reading my semi-polished drafts as I would about leaving the house half-dressed) and reminded me how courageous it is to put your work in someone else’s hands. I now understand more clearly the importance of remaining on the tutee’s level. It is easy to feel self-conscious and vulnerable when someone reads your work, and – in my own experience, at least – collaboration and communication can help soothe these feelings of unease.

Studying and researching in Bonaire and Oregon also drew on my tutoring experience in unexpected ways. For example, while working with ODFW, I was researching recreational crabbing gear loss, and I collected my data by interviewing crabbers. At first, this was daunting to me; I don’t mind speaking with strangers, but the thought of repeatedly approaching fishermen – who already had their hands full tying up their boats, running to get their pick-ups, or celebrating their coolers full of freshly-caught Dungeness crabs – was intimidating. I quickly grew accustomed to this task, though, and I am certain it would have been much more difficult had it not been for my WTS experience. Gruff fishermen or fearful freshmen, it didn’t matter; I had experience getting strangers to like me in fewer than five minutes. This was an important skill for my job, because I needed sound answers to my questions.

cont. -->
WTS had a slightly more complicated relationship to my time in Bonaire, but this is also the connection that has always been most strongly apparent to me. The academic system in Bonaire consistently prioritized details and sentence-level concerns over content – more than any bad assignment sheet I’ve seen. Also, my research advisor, who was giving me feedback on drafts of my final report, had a tendency to focus on the negative and to demand rather than discuss. At the time, I saw these problems as irritating flaws in a semester abroad that was fulfilling and rewarding overall. Now, I see that my experiences with these flaws had benefits of their own. No, they are not as thrilling, or as obviously positive, as other activities on Bonaire – getting heaps of dive experience, learning the island’s language, and descending to depths of 500 feet in a submarine, for example. But it is these academic defects that made me a kinder, more communicative, and more thoughtful tutor.

Because of my time spent as a tutee during this semester, I now take extra care to let my own tutees know they are 110% in control of the direction they take their papers. I am more careful to slide in positive feedback amongst discussions about thesis statements and comma splices. I am able to listen better. And after six months away, it feels good to be back in the tutor’s chair.

Final Words From The Editor

Written by Nicole Krasean

Thank you for taking the time to read through this semester’s By Our WTS newsletter. I hope you enjoyed the articles as much as our tutors enjoyed writing them!

While my time as the BOW editor comes to a close with this edition, I know that the future of the newsletter is bright and that whoever my successor is will keep it in good hands. Keeping in touch with organizations like WTS is so vital, because these are the places where we discover ourselves at such a crucial age. College is not always a piece of cake, but having a place to hone our skills and create connections with peers and other academics is such a gift, one that we should never take for granted.

Endless thanks to Jo Ann for bestowing this position upon me two years ago, and good luck to everyone going forward in their endeavors. Thank you again for reading.
Our WTS Alumni Directory

Updated Jan. 7, 2016
Tutors listed by training year

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Over the years, we've lost contact with many of our friends from WTS as jobs have changed and moves have been made. If you know of a former tutor who's fallen out of touch, please forward this newsletter and have the alum email us at byourwts@indiana.edu.

Thanks!
Have you ever wished you could do more for Writing Tutorial Services even after leaving IU?

Writing Tutorial Services is an affinity group, just like a greek house or Little 500 team. As tutors, we come together with a common interest and shared pride in our school. (After all, we help our fellow students succeed!)

You can now directly support WTS with a contribution to the IU Foundation. Check out the link on the WTS homepage: www.indiana.edu/~wts

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.
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