

By Our WTS

The Writing Tutorial Services Newsletter - Issue 16/1 - May 2023
Edited by Matthew Pollock



Our Fifth Annual Tutor Retreat

by Sean Sidky

On Saturday, April 15, 2023, WTS staff, tutors, and guests gathered for our fifth Tutor Retreat. The retreat is an annual, half-day professional development program in which faculty and staff from across IU Bloomington offer workshops and training in a wide variety of skills and topics relevant to the work of WTS tutors. We met in Hazelbaker Hall in the Wells Library. Prior to the workshop, tutors and guests enjoyed an incredible lunch catered by the

local Italian bakery, Piccoli Dolci, a favorite among the WTS staff and tutors. Presentations during this year's retreat focused on three topics that are consistently at the core of discussions among WTS tutors and staff: working with multilingual writers, writing in STEM, and communicating the skills WTS tutors gain while at the writing center when discussing post-graduation opportunities.

Our first presentation was from Dr. Debra Fried-

man, a scholar of language learning and teaching in the classroom and an Associate Professor in IU's Department of Second Language Studies. Dr. Friedman spoke about the particular needs of multilingual writers in the writing center, and the importance of recognizing the different paths that each writer takes as they gain confidence and skills when writing in a second, or even third language. During this

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Tutor Retreat, continued

by Sean Sidky

presentation, Dr. Friedman shared several example assignment prompts, and our tutors discussed different considerations and techniques for helping writers understand the task of the assignment and to ensure that the student is supported as they work through it.

The second workshop was led by Dr. Ben Kravitz, a scholar of climate engineering and Assistant Professor in IU's Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences. Using a case study from one of his Earth and Atmospheric Sciences Intensive Writing courses, Dr. Kravitz introduced tutors to the wide range of genres and modes of writing that students undertake in STEM courses. Tutors worked through a series of examples, from research papers to popular science articles to policy papers, discussing both the distinctive features of these genres in STEM and the similarities in the kinds of support students need between these and other genres. Dr. Kravitz, who has collaborated with the Campus

“At the core of discussions... [was] working with multilingual writers, writing in STEM, and communicating the skills WTS tutors gain.

Writing Program for several years, also presented a handful of assignments that utilize AI-writing tools like ChatGPT to build students' own writing and analysis skills.

The final workshop was a special treat: a panel of former WTS tutors who have since graduated and are pursuing various careers and graduate programs, and generally being incredible and inspirational. We asked them to talk about how they translate or use skills they gained and developed while working as a WTS tutor. Our panelists included: Chithra V. who is now thriving in the world of publishing; Grace M., who is an exceptional high school teacher; Haley

F., who is about to finish law school; Logan F., who works in student support services; and Sarah F., who is working on her PhD in Rhetoric and as a social media manager. Across the board they emphasized the importance of meeting people where they are, of engaging with a wide range of styles, voices, ideas, and perspectives, and of being adaptable and flexible to complex and sometimes challenging interactions. We were overjoyed to have these alumni tutors return, and we are so proud of them (and all our tutors)!

Finally, our special thanks goes out to our speakers, our wonderful caterers, our colleagues in the library (especially Alyssa Denneker, who always finds spaces for us), as well as to the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning and the Campus Writing Program and Writing Tutorial Services Foundation Fund for providing the funding to cater the retreat. We deeply appreciate our generous donors and all those who support WTS!

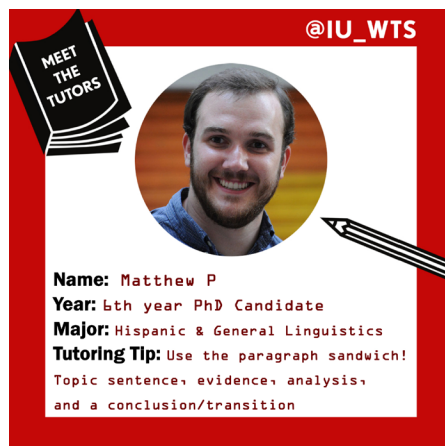
WTS Social Media Committee

by Matthew Pollock



Formed back in 2021, the WTS Social Media Committee (SMC) spent this 2022-2023 academic year developing the voice of the writing center online. With the invaluable contributions of Emily G., Gaya M., Tripp H., Maggie M., and Millie H., we continued to develop our presence across a variety of social media platforms, including Facebook (@IUBWTS), Twitter (@IU_WTS), Instagram (@iu_wts), and TikTok (IUB_WTS).

Over the course of the year, we shared tutor spotlights, celebrated holidays, and provided infographics about topics like writer's block that are integral to writing. I also have to shout out the key role Maggie and Millie in particular have played in the SMC by



single- (double-?) handedly keeping our social media presence going over the last two summers!

“We shared tutor spotlights, celebrated holidays, and... [discussed] topics like writer's block.”

The SMC had a great opportunity last October to lead a WTS working group. Spreading the word about the committee's goals, we gathered writing tips, asked tutors to help with content creation, and collected tutor info to develop spotlights throughout the rest of the year. We also passed out a survey, finding out about writing topics close to tutors' hearts, as well as the challenges they had

overcome in their own lives as writers.

I joined WTS upon arriving at IU to begin my PhD in the fall of 2016. With the completion of my degree this summer, I will be stepping down as head of the SMC after two years, and leaving WTS after seven. The university I will be joining, Louisiana State University in Shreveport, does not yet have a writing center, although plans are in the works. In addition to teaching, I am excited to lend a hand to develop this new project, using the skills I have learned here at WTS!

Meanwhile, I look forward to seeing the WTS SMC grow in the coming years, spreading the word about our awesome tutors and the importance of writing!



Farewells

Six Tutors Graduate, Move On



Megan Bankowski



Megan Bankowski is graduating with a major in public management and leadership and a minor in urban planning and community development from

the O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs, as well as a certificate in political and civic engagement from the College of Arts of Sciences. She adored her time as a tutor and appreciated the wealth of knowledge she gained from this experience. After graduation, she is returning to IU to pursue a Master of Public Affairs at the O'Neill School with a concentration in policy analysis.

Betty Fall



Betty is an English (Creative Writing) and Media (Narrative Filmmaking) major who doesn't have a proper plan for post-grad yet. Betty most enjoyed helping

students make their work the best that it could be at WTS, and had a nice time helping students understand what exactly they were aiming for with assignments. Betty's major piece of advice is to have patience, because sometimes that's exactly what you need.

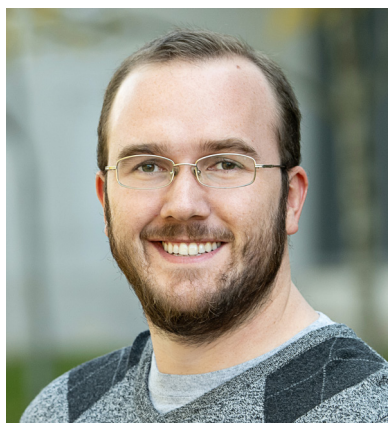
Lizzie Gaugel



Lizzie is graduating with a BA with Honors in English and a minor in Medieval Studies. This year, she was the recipient of the J.A. Work award in the English

Department, as well as the Shirley Cox Undergraduate Medieval Studies award, among others. She will be taking a year off to work before applying to English PhD and Masters in Library Sciences programs in the fall. During her nearly four years at WTS, one of Lizzie's favorite things was getting to meet students where they were in their writing process and helping them to be excited to work on their next steps. She is also very grateful to have been able to present at this year's ECWCA conference on deep accessibility in the writing center.

Matthew Pollock



Matthew received a dual PhD in Spanish and General Linguistics, with a Minor in Germanic Studies, in July of 2023. Starting in August, he begins teach-

ing Linguistics and Spanish as an Assistant Professor at Louisiana State University, Shreveport. He will always remember his

seven (wow!) years working at WTS, beginning in 2016. During those years, he tutored online, at La Casa, and in Wells, led dissertation writing groups, assembled BOW since 2021, held the position of Interim Assistant Director of WTS during the fall semester of 2021, and helped the WTS Social Media Committee spread the word about our awesome tutors and center since 2021. To all our incoming tutors and to all of those who remain, have a great academic year, and never stop being so friendly and helpful!

Lane Shamp



Lane is graduating with a BS in Neuroscience and a minor in Classical Civilizations. Lane will be working in Bloomington and taking a gap year before applying to a

Physician's Assistant program. While at WTS, Lane enjoyed being able to connect and have fun with other tutors in the bullpen.

April Urban

April is graduating with a Masters in Library Science from IU, and previously earned a PhD in English Literature from Purdue University. She worked as the Dissertation Writing Group Coordinator at WTS for the 2022-2023 academic year and tutored students since the start of her MLS degree in 2021. April had worked at other writing centers previously and was happy to continue this work at WTS. She especially valued getting to know graduate students in her writing groups and celebrating their progress. April will be starting a position as Research Librarian for the Digital Humanities and African American Studies subject library at the University of California Irvine in July 2023. She is excited about starting this job and looking forward to enjoying the California weather and landscape.



WTS Coordinator moving on

WTS' Programming Coordinator since July 2022, Sean will be leaving WTS just after his 1-year anniversary in that role to take up a postdoctoral position with IU's Borns Jewish Studies Program.

Sean joined WTS in 2019 as a graduate writing tutor, working as a tutor and writing group facilitator through the pandemic. In 2021, he served as the Dissertation Writing Group Graduate Assistant and facilitated the scholarly write-in. As a GA, he also collaborated with staff in the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning on a series of instructor-facing workshops on student mental health, and co-organized a Graduate Student Learning Community to better understand the academic and professional support needs of graduate students in terminal Masters degrees. In the meantime, Sean completed his PhD in Comparative Literature and Religious Studies

In 2022, Sean stepped into the role of Programming Coordinator, which



involves managing WTS' primary location in Wells Library, coordinating the tutoring schedules, administration for the program, and generally serving as a resource and mentor to tutors. Sean ran several working groups for WTS tutors, as well as assisting Mary Helen in facilitating the peer practicum for trainee peer tutors. In this role, he co-organized and facilitated several CITL workshops on topics such as syllabus language, meaningful writing, and quite a few on Chat-

“Self-care and care for others is also a critical part of ... writing”

GPT. Sean also co-authored several pedagogy articles with Sarah Pedzinski, an instructional consultation with CITL, drawing from their experiences as instructors and with WTS. The two are currently writing a book chapter on *The Princess Bride*.

During his time at WTS, Sean most enjoyed the chance to work with students and other tutors one-on-one, and to give them the space to explore their ideas and writing. Sean's best piece of advice is: too often, college can be isolating and make us feel like we aren't living up to its impossibly high standards. Tutorials are a unique opportunity for us to make sure that the folks who come to WTS are seen and heard, and have their ideas and voices taken seriously. Make sure to use some of the tutorial time, even if just a minute or two, to create that comfortable space, because self-care and care for others is also a critical part of building a good, healthy, and sustainable relationship with writing.

New Faces

Eleven Tutors Join the Staff After Spring Training



Rachel Dwaram



Rachel is an incoming sophomore majoring in Psychology B.S. with a minor in Human-Computer-Interaction/Design. She is interested in a career as

a UX/UI Designer and working to make products and digital technologies more user-friendly! She loves performing, cooking, and cosmetics/skincare. She's also very curious-minded and enjoys asking questions. She looks forward to meeting new people and learning something new every time she works with a student!

Lydia Layden



Lydia is a rising junior with a major in Contemporary Dance and minors in arts management, creative advertising, and psychology. Lydia loves sharing

her passion of communicating whether it is through dance, writing, or art! Her favorite things include traveling to new places near and far, photography, Disney, music (specifically Taylor Swift), her family, her friends, and her dog. Lydia cannot wait to meet new peers and help them become stronger writers.

Katherine Egan

Katherine is a junior with a passion for foreign language. She is double majoring in East Asian Language and Culture, concentration in Mandarin, and in Spanish literature with a minor in German. She hopes to live abroad after graduating, likely doing translation work in the public sector. If she's not working, she's likely participating in the Chinese Flagship or independently studying other foreign languages. She is looking forward to helping students build their academic support system through the writing center!

Laurel Morton



Laurel is a rising sophomore double majoring in English and history and double minor in Spanish and law and public policy. In the future, she hopes to

become an attorney. When Laurel is not working, she is probably reading, playing the oboe, or watching historical romances (especially *Pride and Prejudice*). She is so excited to help writers grow in confidence and improve their writing skills and she cannot wait to join the WTS staff this fall.

Kate Myers



Kate is an incoming junior majoring in Elementary Education with a minor in Gender Studies. She is extremely passionate about teaching and the pro-

cess of helping students reach their unique academic goals. Outside of the classroom, her favorite pastimes include journalling, all things outdoors, and searching for the best coffee shops in town. Kate can't wait to help other IU students develop their writing skills at WTS!

Shireen Sahrawat



Shireen is a rising sophomore double majoring in Finance and Accounting, with a minor in Creative Writing. She enjoys all works of writing and hopes to publish her own book one day. When she's not working or in class, you can find her reading, spending time outside and hiking, or finding new coffee shops where she loves to study. She is very excited to help her fellow students improve their writing skills, and improve her own by working with others!

Sydney Peterson

Sydney is a rising junior from Racine, WI, studying Classical Double Bass Performance in the Jacobs School of Music. Outside of music, Sydney enjoys knitting, birdwatching, and studying Spanish. In the future, she hopes to have a large, K-12 private music studio and is excited to develop her one-on-one teaching skills through tutoring at WTS.

Rachel Stratton



Rachel (she/her) is a rising junior with a double major in Contemporary Dance (B.F.A.) and Intersectional American Power Dynamics (Individualized

B.A.). She is passionate about performing, choreographing, and increasing accessibility to the arts in underserved communities with the hopes of eventually starting her own dance school and company. When she isn't working, you can find her cooking for her family and friends, indulging in reality TV, or listening to Taylor Swift with her sisters. She is very excited to work with her fellow students to help them develop the skills and confidence to be the best writers they can be!

Donya Zandi



Donya, an Iranian woman and first generation American, is an incoming junior, double majoring in Political Science and Criminal Justice, with a certificate in Po-

litical and Civic Engagement and a minor in Music. She is passionate about helping others and hopes to become a civil rights attorney upon completing her educational career. In her free time, Donya can be seen snuggling her newly adopted dog, Oliver, playing the piano, or singing. Additionally, Donya is excited to begin tutoring at WTS, as she loves not only helping people, but also meeting and connecting with new individuals. She looks forward to starting this new experience and helping writers shine!

Also joining WTS:

Clem Ledbetter

Clem is a rising sophomore, double majoring in English with a concentration in Creative Writing and East Asian Studies with a concentration in Japanese.

Navita Gupta

Navita is a rising sophomore, majoring in Finance and Accounting with a minor in Business Analytics.

WTS Alumni Spotlight: Samantha Demmerle



The current Assistant Director for Graduate Writing and Support at the University of Kansas Writing Center, Samantha Demmerle was a WTS writing tutor for 4 years, and loved every moment of it!

Samantha joined the WTS team in 2017, and built up her skill set tutoring, facilitating graduate writing groups, and then taking a program leader role as the Graduate Assistant to the Campus Writing Program (CWP) Director. She advocated for and created the GA positions with John Paul Kanwit and Cody St. Clair for the CWP as a way of investing in the success of WTS and the continued support of Graduate Students at IU. There was a magical moment in 2019 when she also realized that all of the Writing Center work she had been doing could become a career. Like most graduate students, Samantha pursued her degree with the idea of becoming a tenure-track faculty member. She loved her research and talking about Shakespeare's anonymous minor characters (the topic of her dissertation), but working one-on-one with students,

developing graduate writing resources and programs, and empowering writers at any stage in the writing process was her passion! She pivoted her career path to Writing Center administration, with a focus on Graduate Writing support, and got very lucky when the University of Kansas was hiring a full time Graduate Writing Support specialist!

Samantha misses WTS terribly, and knows that she would not be in the position she is now without the sup-

“There was a magical moment in 2019 when she also realized that... Writing Center work... could become a career.”



port of Jo Ann Vogt, John Paul Kanwit, Mary Helen Truglia, Katie Kearns, Cody St. Clair, and Sean Sidky, among so many others!

Writing is, and will always be a communal effort, and her best piece of advice is to let others help. We do not succeed in this world on our own, and the connections we make help to make us who we are. WTS is special because it is filled with wonderful people who want to help, and if we can connect with students through their writing, we can show them that they are not alone!