

# WCC



## SUNY Poly's Writing and Communications Center

Newsletter, vol. 1, no. 1.

### Mission

Envisioning a Multiliteracy Center (MLC), such as SUNY Polytechnic's Writing and Communications Center (WCC), as its own unique activity system provides us with a framework useful in building a self-sustaining community rich in professional development and individual, instructional, and programmatic growth opportunities. Through this vision, the WCC serves the community of the university, strengthens composition principles among its consultants and the students they serve, encourages collaboration with colleagues, and cultivates solidarity among students and between academic departments. Thus, the WCC serves to build bridges within the university community—as well as the university's surrounding community—by fostering collaboration as we operate not only as a writing lab but a teaching lab as well.

**WCC Coordinator:** Don Moore

**Staff:** Alex Bulson, Lena Bertone, Kayla Blatchley, and Kathleen Taylor

### **Hours of Operation:**

- Monday -Thursday, 10 am - 4 pm
- Fridays 10 am - 12 pm

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## Our WCC Space



We have developed our temporary space in the library with three consulting tables, a desk for a desk clerk, and signage for easy recognition as well as a comfortable waiting area for students.

## Desk Clerk



Here, our Desk Clerk can help students sign up for a workshop, find their consultant, register with the WCC, or schedule an appointment. The Desk Clerk can also help direct students and faculty to their library destination.

### Presentation Practice Area



In our Presentation Room, equipped with a projector and cables to fit students' different laptop styles, students can practice their speeches and presentations for feedback with the consultant as an audience member.

### Conference Room, WCC Meeting Area, Study Library



With a quick change, our Presentation Room can also function as a WCC Conference Room or WCC Library Study Room.



Our in-house library offers students and faculty opportunities to learn!

## Meet Our Student Consultants

In addition to our Professional Consultants, we have also hired four Student Writing Consultants. Each of our Student Consultants are advanced students with varied backgrounds and experiences in writing and working with other students. Our Student Consultants will help us develop a student-centered ecology, which writing center pedagogy and principles recognize as a central tenet of writing center support. With our Student Consultants, we look to the future as many of our consultants may continue working with us not just as consultants but as workshop presenters, or as mentors to our new Student Consultants, thus, developing a self-sustaining community of young professionals.

**Lauren Taylor** is in her senior year of college here at SUNY Poly as an Interdisciplinary Studies Major. For the past few years, she has been conducting research and writing papers on various subjects focusing on History and Literature writing, as well as creative pieces. Lauren is very excited to be able to aid others in their college journey and can't wait to get started.

**Brianna Sadowski** is a Junior Mechanical Engineering student here at SUNY Poly. She enjoys writing as a fun hobby since there's so much creativity involved, plus, it gives good practice with conveying things clearly and interestingly! She hopes students have fun writing with the WCC!

**Eliot Szary** is a senior at SUNY Polytechnic Institute currently studying Interactive Media and Game Design. My love of creative writing and desire to help fellow students develop their writing skills makes me a great fit for the Writing and Communications Center.

**Kit Gullem** is an international student from the Philippines majoring in Psychology. Kit is currently an RA at Oriskany Complex and a student representative for the MSCHE. Kit also currently writes for The Factory Times.

## Meet Our Desk Clerks

WCC Desk Clerks are instrumental in setting the tone for students' WCC experience. Desk Clerks are likely the first face students will see when they enter the WCC, so their cordial demeanor welcomes students as they help register or direct students to their consultants. Desk Clerks also offer assistance to the Writing Consultants by making copies, helping students make appointments, and they offer assistance to students who may want to sign up for a WCC workshop. They are very important to our mission at the WCC!

**Brianna Pert** is a First-year student at SUNY Poly majoring in Computer Science.

**Pranathi Pashikanti** is Master's student in Computer Science.

**Himajasri Rayapureddy** is a Master's student in Computer Science.

**Elijah Lamar** is a First-year student at SUNY Poly majoring in Mechanical Engineering.

**Michael Mattioli** is a Sophomore at SUNY Poly majoring in Civil Engineering Technology.

## MYWCONLINE—Thank you to the Foundation Board for your generous support!

The way we have configured our MYWCONLINE scheduling software allows us to determine who it is on campus that we are serving. When students register with MYWCONLINE and the WCC, they answer some demographic questions so we can collect their status as first-years, sophomores, juniors, seniors or graduate-level students, their native language, and from which college and programs they work within. This data informs us about our clients, but even more importantly, it lets us know who we *do not see* in the WCC, thereby, informing our outreach to those students we have not yet met.

Further, through MYWCONLINE, when a student receives their conference summary in their SUNY Poly e-mail inbox, they also receive a link to a 5-question survey about their session, which informs our professional development practices in the WCC. Also, at the end of each semester, we will deliver similar Likert-scale surveys to faculty members whose students we have served that will help us determine our successes and identify areas for improvement. MYWCONLINE will be a huge asset for the WCC, so thank you, again to the Foundation Board!

## Conducting Class Presentations

- Currently, we have spoken to 15 different classes ranging from First-year Seminars to Junior and Senior-level writing courses, and our presentations have been in front of Nursing, Sociology, Anthropology, Communications, History, English, Mechanical Engineering Technology Capstone II, and Accounting and Business students and faculty. Nonetheless, we continue to seek requests for class presentations as the semester continues and more writing assignments are required.

## Bookmarks and Flyers

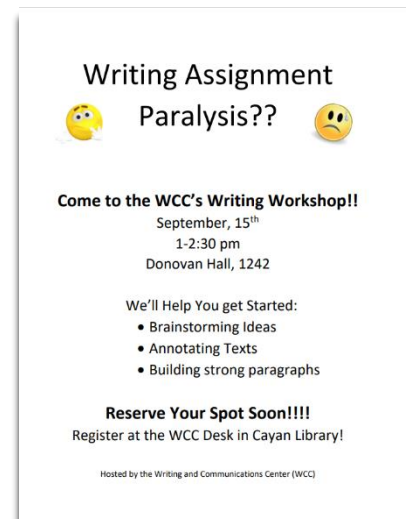
- During our class presentations, we distribute WCC bookmarks with a MYWCONLINE QR code so we can register students during our presentation! We show students how easy it is to schedule a conference, and we let them know what they should expect when they come to their writing conference: We ask that they bring their assignment descriptions with them as well as any drafts they have. However, we are perfectly ready to help students get started on their assignment too! We also let students know how our conferences may operate with discussions, in-session writing time, follow-up discussions, and that we offer them a conference summary that they may also request we send to their instructor, thus, developing a conversation between the student, their instructor, and their consultant.
- One of our aims is to develop the practice of returning clients, so we always aim to recommend “next strategies” at the end of our session as a way to develop our center’s retention of students.
- We also let students know that we have a private studio where they can practice giving a speech in front of their consultant to get feedback on presentation, design, and delivery of the speech.
- At the end of our presentations, we distribute flyers for our upcoming workshops and we direct students to our registered Engage page where they can see all of our upcoming workshops.

## Video Presentation for On-line Students

- With our distance learning students in mind, we have also developed a video for online presentations introducing the WCC which faculty may embed into their Brightspace course shell.

## Webpage

Currently, we have a draft page using Wordpress (<https://mywccas.wordpress.com/>) while our SUNY Poly web page is under construction!



Workshop Flyer

## Workshop Offerings for Fall 2023<sup>1</sup>

### Writing Consultant Professional Development Workshops

#### *Conducting a Writing Conference with In-Session Writing*

In-session writing, as a strategy for the one-on-one conference, is first discussed by Preston W. Search in 1894 in his article “Individual Teaching: The Pueblo Plan.” Thus, this pedagogy has been in practice since the development of laboratory teaching, which has, in turn, roundly informed writing center praxis. In this session, we will discuss ways the consultant can develop a set of best practices that guarantees the student time to write in-session during their consultation. This method of teaching during writing consultations offers students opportunities to develop their writing processes,

<sup>1</sup> Please look for our workshops in Engage or contact Don Moore at [mooredr@sunypoly.edu](mailto:mooredr@sunypoly.edu) or Kayla Blatchley at [blatchk@sunypoly.edu](mailto:blatchk@sunypoly.edu) for more information.

critical thinking, and task-specific focus while also offering the consultant opportunities to provide real-time and immediate feedback and reinforcement to student writing. In-session writing time for the student also allows the consultant opportunities for session reflection as they begin to draft their conference summary.

### ***Writing the Conference Summary***

In this session, we will discuss ways to develop the conference summary that articulates for the student, faculty member, and consultant the strategies the consultant has used in the writing session to assist the student. In this workshop we discuss devising a set of heuristics that may help the consultant develop a process for writing the summary while they also consider their audience for the summary. In our discussion, we will cover how the tone and language we use helps develop our ethos in the WCC, how we can use the summary to reinforce and remind students of our conference activities, and what we would like them to do in our follow-up session, thus, the summary is a way to develop the WCC's continual support for students. Further, in this workshop, we will discuss ways the consultant may use the summary as a means for their own reflection: what worked, what didn't, and what might I try next?

### ***Working with NES and ESL Students: What are the Differences and How do we Mediate those Differences?***

The WCC values our ESL students, so we need to be reminded that they may learn differently than our NES students. In this session we will discuss Directive and Non-directive approaches to teaching and what might work best when working with ESL students. We need to be reminded that ESL students are translating their second language internally while we are in session, so we don't want to overwhelm them with questions. Just as we may do with NES speakers, we need to offer time to answer the questions we pose, but viewing our ESL students through a lens that recognizes our cultural differences may go a long way in helping our ESL populations as they develop their written prose. To this end, modeling and explaining, rather than questioning may be a more appropriate starting point in working our ESL students.

### **Student Workshops<sup>2</sup>**

The WCCs recurring student workshops will offer students a wide array of learning opportunities to enhance their academic experiences, successes, and opportunities to look beyond their educational years and envision how they may employ significant learning experiences in their everyday life beyond the academy. For example, Reading Critically to Write Critically will introduce students to the logic of strategic information applications; Organizational Strategies for Writing will offer students ways to articulate messages for a wide array of audiences; and our Capstone Series will offer students ways to develop their senior portfolios that will enhance both their academic work and their professional opportunities. Thus, our student-centered workshops offer students ways to enrich their academic, personal, and professional lives as they look to their futures.

### ***Reading Critically to Write Critically: September 15th***

This workshop offers students strategies for notetaking and annotating as they develop their critical reading applications with an eye toward writing in the academy. With a strong focus on reading the academic article, students will learn how to read strategically and apply source material to support their writing. The workshop will demonstrate multiple annotation styles, and give students the opportunities to incorporate intentional reading strategies into their writing. In other words, students will learn to read for information, but they will also learn the value of reading texts as models for writing. With in-session writing an integral component of these workshops, students will gain a practical sense of how reading articles leads to writing articles and see source synthesis as both art and science.

### ***Developing a Thesis for the Essay it Embodies: September 29th***

Writing a thesis statement can take many forms, and it may differ in the academic context from how it was taught to students in high school. Where does the thesis go? What is a forecasting message? When is a forecasting message

<sup>2</sup> All student workshops take place in the in room 1242 in Donovan Hall from 1-2:30 pm.

appropriate, and when is it not? This workshop will help students determine some best practices for developing a thesis statement in their written work in different contexts, and for different audiences.

### ***Summary, Paraphrase, and Direct Citations...When and How to do Each: October 13th***

Different fields of study use different methods for summarizing, paraphrasing, and citing sources directly...when and how to do each of these can be confusing! However, understanding some simple best practices for managing source material can go a long way in helping student find academic success. Let us help you navigate the confusing world of source documentation and synthesis! This workshop will offer students clear directions on when and how to incorporate summary, paraphrase, and direct citations to develop scholarly works in writing.

### ***Capstone Workshop: October 27th***

If you are preparing to finish your capstone project, this is the workshop for you! We will take you through expectations your field of study may demand, provide you with specific details of presenting academic writing and research, demonstrate how to conduct robust research for your capstone project, and help you develop your portfolios that will prepare you for success! Specifically, we will help you develop practices for writing the technical researched scientific paper with a focus on clarity, conciseness, organization, and purpose. This is a workshop you will not want to miss!

### Faculty Workshops<sup>3</sup>

#### **Series: *Exploring Innovations in Teaching Composition***

This series of workshops for faculty, on the first Fridays of October and November, aim to present new and innovative ideas for teaching writing across the curriculum. These workshops look to define what “good” writing is, how it may be taught with multiple genres in mind, and why it is important to develop new pedagogies and methodologies for teaching writing in our ever-changing student body and academic landscapes. Each of our three workshops in this series will offer insightful presentations outlining strategies for teaching writing across the curriculum followed by robust discussions that will provide attendees progressive teaching strategies with a wide array of applications in mind.

#### **October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 – 2:30 pm: Steve Schneider. “Using and Teaching with AI.”**

In this talk, Steve suggests natural language models like ChatGPT can, and should be, harnessed to augment student and faculty performance in learning communities. Students should be empowered in ways that foster active learning and deeper exploration, cultivating critical thinking skills. After this talk, professors will be able to refine class objectives and goals, and to develop aligned assignments and rubrics, as well as engage the models to produce class presentation notes, outlines, and resource lists. The talk will feature specific examples of using ChatGPT to augment the learning community.

#### **November 3rd, 1:00 -2:30 pm: Kathleen Taylor and Don Moore. “Writing About Writing: A Methodology for Teaching Composition.”**

In this workshop, Kathleen and Don present their work in teaching composition through Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs’ pioneering Writing about Writing (WAW) approach. With the rationale that writing studies has the methodological and pedagogical pedigree to substantiate its stature as a field of study much like psychology, sociology, or any other discipline, the WAW approach tasks students with interrogating their understanding of writing through writing about their composing beliefs and in relation to the scholarship our field has to offer. Rather than developing students’ writing practices through composition courses with no particular content (or that which varies so widely between instructors), in a WAW course, writing is the content. Students learn to write in genre-specific traditions while gaining expertise in writing through studying what the last 100 years of writing scholarship has to offer. Hence, attendees of this workshop will leave with a sense of the enduring qualities that a writing course steeped in writing studies has to offer students.

<sup>3</sup> <sup>3</sup>All faculty workshops take place in the in room 1242 in Donovan Hall from 1-2:30 pm.

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### Recurring Faculty Workshops

Each of these monthly workshops for faculty looks to introduce ideas for teaching writing across the disciplines. Topics include Designing Discipline-Specific Writing Assignments; Developing Valid and Reliable Writing Assessments; Teaching Writing Strategically and Providing Feedback to Ensure Student Success. Our faculty workshops are both informative and practical meaning theoretical underpinnings of the pedagogy will be discussed, and roundtable discussions will provide faculty opportunities to brainstorm and envision how applications of the theory may look in their disciplines. Thus, faculty will leave each workshop with new ideas for employing writing pedagogies (large and small) in their disciplines.

#### **Designing Discipline-Specific Writing Assignments: September 22nd**

This workshop looks to provide attendees with innovative ideas for developing writing assignments that will help students meet writing demands in their field of study. Simultaneously, these assignment ideas are tailored to meet the demands of faculty. This is to suggest that writing assignments may take place during class, or they may occur between groups of students with the faculty member acting as a facilitator during in-class composing practices. Writing assignments offered during this workshop may also be comprised of low-stakes writing assignments that incrementally prepare students to write high-stakes writing assignments that their field of study values. Attendees will leave this workshop with writing assignment ideas that will help their students prepare for writing in their field while offering faculty members the flexibility their schedules demand.

#### **Developing Valid and Reliable Writing Assessments: October 20th**

Continuing our Writing Across the Curriculum discussion, all writing assignments need valid and reliable assessment measures. Generally, in composition studies, assessment embodies a holistic approach to assessing writing programs through assessing student writing in those programs. However, looking at writing as a micro-system of activity, this discussion focuses attention on assessing writing assignments. As we look to prepare and equip our students for a continually-evolving democratic space, this workshop utilizes L. Dee Fink's Significant Learning Experiences in order to develop assessments in accordance with the outcomes we wish our students to achieve through their writing assignments.

#### **Teaching Writing Strategically and Providing Feedback for Increased Student Success: November 17th**

This workshop looks to develop the practice of workshopping in class to increase students' rates of success. Workshopping in class may take multiple forms with students working in small groups, larger groups or even individually: the mini conference between the student and the faculty member. Facilitating discussions and asking students questions about their work while they are engaged in it provides students with real-time suggestions for improving their work while also offering instructors valuable teaching moments and opportunities to develop their curricula. Similarly, this workshop will discuss formative and summative feedback, line-editing, and comments in the margins as we determine which feedback strategies may fit our needs.

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## Special Events, Fall 2023

Through our Special Events page, students, faculty, and the larger SUNY Poly community can find opportunities to come together to interact and engage in lively discussions on a level playing field. We try to curate special events focusing on our students' intellectual growth, but we also consider culturally diverse programs to bring the student body together. We also offer faculty and staff opportunities to be a part of our student's development in new ways. Through conversations as people inhabiting the same space, we naturally learn from one other with such opportunities. This is what we hope our Special Events offer.



### Shared Reading Series (SRS): October 6<sup>th</sup> and November 3<sup>rd</sup><sup>4</sup>

The WCC's Shared Reading Series is an opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to come together for informal yet stimulating conversations. Each month's readings offer intellectually compelling and culturally relevant fiction and non-fiction readings!

With a new reading each month, these in-person discussions provide opportunities for us to share responses to the readings, discuss new ideas, and to ask each other questions. All students, staff, and faculty are invited to join us in lightly guided conversation, in which all participants contribute as equals. The SRS will take place in a designated area within the WCC space at Cayan Library. Here are the dates for our upcoming readings!

Reading One: October 6th @ 1 pm

Reading Two: November 3rd @ 1 pm

### Spooktacular Open Mic Night!

For this event, students and faculty can bring their spooky poetry, short stories, spoken word, instrument playing, juggling act, or comedy for your 15 minutes of fame! Everybody who signs up will have 15 minutes to present one long piece or three short pieces of their favorite works. Presenters can offer well-known works, lesser-known works, or original works.



## The Future

In our immediate future, we look to hire Student Consultants to enhance the student-centered ecology of the Multiliteracy Center. Student Consultants offer their fellow students opportunities to work with peers as mentors with the byproduct of Student Consultants strengthening their composition principles while developing the same skills in the students they serve. Simultaneously, this work allows our Professional Consultants opportunities for professionalizing their work as mentors to our Student Consultants. Thus, we fulfill our mission of building a self-sustaining apparatus for professional development, and we cultivate teaching in the laboratory space of the writing center. We operate not only as a writing lab but a teaching lab as well where professional growth is a valued commodity.

We have a specific aim to create a space that students want to be in – not just “for help” but to be a part of a community. To this end, while we are currently in the process of developing our fall workshops, we are actively discussing student and

<sup>4</sup> The Shared Reading Series will take place in the WCC space in Cayan Library.

faculty workshop options for the spring semester. In doing so, we look to develop a trajectory for our students and faculty alike by not only considering ways to build onto our previous workshops but how we might develop our Student Consultants as facilitators of workshops. We would like to offer student-led workshops focusing on developing study habits, interpreting assignments, or public speaking.

Additionally, much like our fall workshops, that take students, sequentially, from one phase of the writing process to the next, in the spring, we look to offer student workshops that will enhance the skill sets that we have begun to help students develop. Among our considerations for spring workshops, we have identified *Technical Writing*, *Writing the Researched Scientific paper*, and *Professional Writing* as possible workshops that may build onto our previous fall workshops.

Similarly, in the spring, we will continue to challenge faculty to consider how writing assignments may be administered in their curricula by offering workshops that will assist us in cultivating a culture of writing on campus. Through our fall workshops, we hope to spark interest in developing a unified writing program across campus; therefore, throughout the course of the fall semester, we will extend invitations to our faculty to lead spring workshops that may offer new ways of thinking about composition within their discipline. Currently, Steve Schneider is on the spring schedule to present his reflections on integrating “Writing for Wikipedia” into his first-year Digital Media and Information in Society course. In addition to Steve, we hope to include more faculty-led presentations in the spring.

With the writing program an extension of the WCC, we will work with Joanne Joseph during the spring 2024 semester to pilot a section of ENG 308 in conjunction with CBH 340. This collaboration will enable us to assess and develop our writing program in coordination with the nursing program, thus, refining writing offerings while adhering to Gen Ed and program requirements. We are hopeful this essential work enables more faculty to see the WCC as a hub of writing activity as we look to build more collaborative relationships across campus. Therefore, developing an archive of resources—handouts and assignments; especially those that speak to the demands of GEN ED competencies i.e., Critical Thinking and Information Literacy—will further our endeavors of building a unified writing curriculum at SUNY Poly.

Additionally, in our efforts to bring students and faculty together in a non-hierarchical environment, this fall, our Shared Reading Series begins with James Baldwin’s “A Talk to Teachers” because we believe Baldwin’s essay challenges us to think about what education means. This discussion is not just among faculty, but invites students to participate as equals. We believe Baldwin’s essay may very well open our regular opening of the Shared Reading Series year after year. As each year brings new challenges, Baldwin’s essay may elicit discussions of race, equity, and equality this semester, while next year, the discussion may focus on our democratic polity and its effects on higher education. For these reasons, we believe Baldwin can help shape each year’s emerging discussions in the Shared Reading Series, thus, building consistency and continuity while, at the same time, allowing us to articulate new challenges that students and faculty share. Our discussions from Baldwin help us offer consecutive readings that inform, enlighten, and further challenge our Shared Reading Series participants.

Finally, one of our primary responsibilities is to continue to develop students both academically and professionally; therefore, we will continue to find ways to obtain and retain more students as both consultants and learners. Part of our strategy, here, is to continue to engage with events like the Information Fair and actively develop our presence through social media and SUNY Poly’s Engage forum. We also seek to foster relationships with other student organizations, thus, becoming not only a hub of writing activity but a hub for social activity as well. To end our spring semester, we are planning a National Poetry Month Extravaganza in April with a guest speaker who, we’re hoping, will not only read from their works prior to our National Poetry Month Open-Mic but will also offer a writing workshop earlier in the day.

Speech?

Paper?

Presentation?

Application?

Cover Letter?

Report?

Summary?

Review?

**Want  
Feedback?**

**Schedule An  
Appointment**

[wccas.mywconline.com](http://wccas.mywconline.com)

**Walk In**

*First floor, Cayan Library*

**Write Well  
Speak Well  
Do Well**



**SUNY POLY**

Writing and  
Communications Center

**Monday**

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**Tuesday**

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**Wednesday**

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**Thursday**

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**Friday**

10 a.m. - noon



WCC





The Writing and Communications Center