

Writing Instruction and Essay Awards Announced

May 4, 2017

The Writing Program Awards Ceremony honors award-winning teachers and students at the end of each year. The celebration is a recognition of writing faculty at CWRU which includes full- and part-time lecturers, SAGES Fellows, English graduate student assistants, disciplinary faculty, and other friends of writing at CWRU.

The English Department, SAGES, and the Writing Program are pleased to recognize this year's winners of teaching awards and student writing prizes.

The Jessica Melton Perry Award for Distinguished Teaching in Disciplinary & Professional Writing¹ recognizes outstanding instruction in writing in professional fields and/or disciplines other than English. This year's winner is **Vanessa Hildebrand**, Professor in the Department of Anthropology.



Pictured left to right, Dean Cyrus Taylor and Vanessa Hildebrand

No stranger to accolades, Dr. Hildebrand has been nominated for the Carl F. Wittke Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and the J. Bruce Jackson, M.D. Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Mentoring. Dr. Hildebrand has been described as “an unsung hero” in the Department of Anthropology in part due to her teaching and mentorship of student writers on both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

One of her capstone advisees explains that the power of her mentorship is in part rooted in her belief in each student's capability: “Dr. Hildebrand helped me through countless revisions of a fellowship proposal so I could go abroad for my research. Her immense patience, support, and above all encouragement have served as great motivation over the last year and a half. Part of what makes her such a wonderful advisor is her approachability and faith in her students.”

Another student describes Dr. Hildebrand's “unwavering commitment to her students, and her ability to foster a distinct desire to learn in her classes.” The student continues, “At the end of each course I took with Dr. Hildebrand, I was able to see a distinct change in the style, tone, and voice of my writing. More than just technique, however, the information I gained from Dr. Hildebrand's class readings directly influenced my viewpoint on a number of issues, and pushed me to look at my older writing through a new framework.”

Dr. Hildebrand encourages her students—whether undergraduates, graduate students, or the graduate teaching assistants that work closely with her—to view writing as central to the work

¹ The Jessica Melton Perry Award was established in 2009 by Edward S. Sadar, M.D. (ADL '64, SOM '68), & Melinda Melton Sadar (FSM '66) in honor of Melinda's mother, who worked in the Center for Documentation and Communication Research at Western Reserve University from the late 1950s into the late 1960s.

they do and to their budding professional identity. Her colleague, Eileen Anderson-Fye, praises Dr. Hildebrand’s ability to foster “communities of writers” both in her classes and among her advisees: “Students read each other’s work and learn how to assess good writing, which in turn makes them better writers. This process also teaches them how to be productive colleagues for a lifetime.”

The SAGES Excellence in Writing Instruction Award recognizes outstanding commitment to and success in teaching academic writing to Case Western Reserve University undergraduates in SAGES. This year, the winner is **James Newlin**, a Lecturer in the Department of English.

One of Dr. Newlin’s students praises his ability to understand his students and respond to their questions in engaging and effective ways. Dr. Newlin, the student explains, “invites the class to look at both sides of an argument thoroughly. Instead of just quickly answering a student’s question, he can teach an insightful lesson stemming from it and help students lead themselves to the answer.” The student continues, “his writing advice is incredible. He is always supportive, but not afraid to provide criticism where it is due. Dr. Newlin is the best writing teacher I have ever learned from.”

Dr. Newlin’s teaching embodies the philosophy of the SAGES program – a seminar-approach to writing instruction that challenges students not just to be better communicators but better thinkers who ask urgent, complicated questions about the world.



Pictured left to right, James Newlin and Peter Whiting



Pictured left to right, John Wiehl and T. Kenny Fountain

The WRC Excellence in Consulting Award recognizes outstanding writing instruction for students of the University and exemplary service to the Writing Resource Center during the academic year. This year, the winner is **John Wiehl**, Lecturer in the Department of English.

Many of John’s students were very enthusiastic about his instructional style. According to one of his students, John “took a million and one steps to make sure that my writing actually improved over the semester. He didn’t just tell me what he wanted, he inspired me to be better.”

Another student writes that “Dr. Wiehl has routinely provided me with reliable and straightforward advice on my writing for both his class and my other classes. He has helped me to greatly improve my style and I’ve grown into a

better writer and student.”

Yet another student writes that “Appointments never feel nerve-wrecking [sic] with John. He does a great job of guiding [you] while not doing too much so that it never feels like the work isn’t yours. He’s also just really funny and sweet and it makes writing fun, even [kinds of] writing that really shouldn’t be fun.”

The SAGES First and University Seminar Essay Prizes recognize the best writing that students produce in their First and University Seminars. These essays are chosen from those nominated by SAGES seminar leaders each semester.



Pictured left to right: Yiyang Wang, Zhihan Wang, Claire Howard, Jessica Nash, and Ondrej Maxian.

The University Seminar Awards are judged in September – and recognized at the Celebration of Student Writing in December of each year. The winners for Academic Year 2016-2017 are:

Katherine Steinberg for the essay, “**Translation in *Paradise*: The Intersection of Languages and their Impact in Gurnah’s East Africa**” written for USSY 285V: Castaways and Cannibals: Stories of Empire, led by Kristine Kelly

Erin Camia for the essay “**RBF and the Reluctance to Accept Women’s Anger**” written for USSY 289J: Beauty Myths Today, led by Megan Jewell.

Jessica Nash for the essay “**Re-fashioning the Field: On Gender and Computer Science**” written for USNA 287P: Women and Science, led by Barbara Burgess-Van Aken

Ondrej Maxian for the essay “**Conserving Culture: CBPR as a Framework for Group Research**” written for USNA 287K: Human Research Ethics led by Michael Householder

The First Seminar Awards are judged in January and recognized at the Celebration of Student Writing in April each year. The winners for Academic Year 2016-2017 are:

Zhihan Wang for the essay “**Myth Dismissed: A Case Study on College Students’ Perceptions of Sleep Deprivation**” written for FSCC 100: Social Meanings of Health, led by Mary Assad

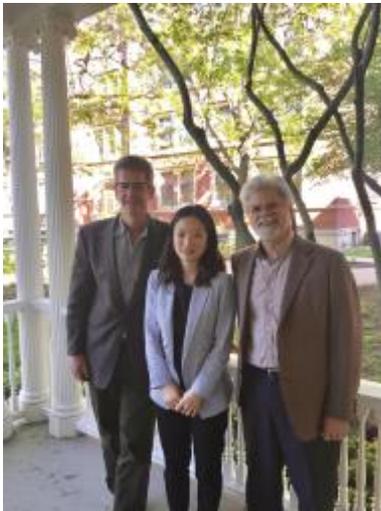
Yiyang Wang for the essay “**Two Sides of a Coin – Analysis of *An Unquiet Mind***” written for FSCC 100: Social Meanings of Health, led by Mary Assad

Claire Howard for the essay “**Unethical Behavior in the Wounded Warrior Project**” written for FSSO 119: Philanthropy in America, led by Barbara Burgess-Van Aken

You will be able to read all of these outstanding essays online this summer when the Writing Program publishes them online at writing@case.edu.

Thank You and Best Wishes to Dr. Hee-Seung Kang

The Writing Awards Ceremony also provided opportunity to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of a dear friend and colleague, **Dr. Hee-Seung Kang**. After five years of directing the ESL Writing Program in SAGES, Dr. Kang is moving on to a new position.



Pictured left to right, Peter Whiting, Hee-Seung Kang, and Christopher Flint

During a time of rapid increase in the number of international and multilingual students at CWRU, Dr. Kang has been tireless in her curriculum development efforts to support them, and she has recruited a dedicated and expert team of faculty to lead the ESL seminars. In addition, she has served as a mentor to faculty at all ranks, who have approached her for advice on how to support multilingual writers in their classrooms.

As a source of knowledge and a vital advocate for multilingual students both in and out of the classroom, Dr. Kang has transformed the ways we think about and talk about writing instruction at CWRU. She is also an award-winning teacher—last year’s recipient of The SAGES Excellence in Writing Instruction Award.