Writing Instruction and Essay Awards Announced
April 27, 2016

Pictured from left to right: Peter Whiting, Director SAGES; Christopher Flint, Chair of English Department; Hee-Seung Kang, Director of SAGES ESL Program; Eric Chilton, Lecturer, English; Georgia Cowart, Professor of Music; Dean Cyrus Taylor.

The Writing Program Award 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, 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 Writing* recognizes outstanding instruction in writing in professional fields and/or disciplines other than English. This year’s winner is Georgia Cowart, Professor in the Department of Music. Dr. Cowart has received numerous teaching and research awards, as well as fellowship support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Council of Learned Societies. She also has the unique distinction of being the first two-time honoree for the Writing Program: in 2014, she received the SAGES Excellence in Writing Instruction Award.

* 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.
In the Department of Music, Dr. Cowart is known not only for the “routine transformations” she is able to bring about in her students’ writing, but also for her collegiality and mentoring of her colleagues and students. David Rothenberg, Chair of Music, describes her approach to disciplinary writing instruction this way: “Through close conversation, careful reading of their work, and judicious criticism, she inspires her students to think of writing as a skill that must be constantly honed and customized for various contexts. She helps her students see that a dissertation, a scholarly article, a lecture-recital, and a grant application are all equally important for a successful academic career but require very different approaches to writing and must speak to different audiences.”

Her students demonstrate the effectiveness of her approach: they go on to publish projects begun under her guidance in top-tier journals, present papers at national and international conferences, and earn prestigious grants and scholarships, including two who recently received year-long Fulbright research fellowships in France. One student writes, “Like all good teachers, Georgia is tough when she needs to be, for she knows that higher expectations lead to higher achievement. However, her kindness, wit, and indefatigable enthusiasm for good writing inspire self-assurance rather than self-doubt.”

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 Hee-Seung Kang, an Instructor in the Department of English and Director of the ESL Writing Program. This award provides us with an opportunity to highlight the rapid growth of our international student population. The number of matriculating students enrolled in our ESL writing courses this fall was 200% higher than it was just five years ago. Dr. Kang has been tireless in her curriculum development efforts to support our multilingual writers, and she has recruited a dedicated and expert team of faculty to lead the ESL First 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 students in their classrooms.

Dr. Kang was nominated for this award by a record number of individual students this year. They speak warmly of her attention to their writing and speaking needs, and they praise her generosity. One writes: “Professor Kang teaches in a way that is more detailed, closer and clearer than any other language teacher I have ever seen.” Another comments, “She tried really hard to create a sense of hospitality inside class hours through multiple cultural activities as well as academic ones.”

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 winners are Jessica Birch, Lecturer in the Department of English, and Eric Chilton, Lecturer in the Department of English.

Jessica Birch, according to her students, “has a passion” for writing instruction. They praise her willingness to “adapt her teaching approach to [their] learning styles.” In her own words, “consulting in the writing center functions as an extension of and addition to teaching writing, operating in the liminal spaces between teaching and mentoring. As a consultant in the writing
center, I begin by establishing the unique needs of each student, centering the session in the expressed individual goals of the student.”

**Eric Chilton** is often described as “patient, kind, helpful, and knowledgeable.” His students praise his care and attention to all aspects of their writing projects. One comments that “He doesn't make me feel like he is rushing the whole process … but truly wants to make sure that I get the help I need. Working with him on my paper is a very comfortable experience.” Eric enumerates the values he deems essential to a successful writing consultation this way: “a focus on who students are, respect for what they are writing, and a willingness to ask why it matters.”

**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.

**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 2014-2015 are:

**Adam Gleichsner** for his essay “Setting the Internet on Fire: #GamerGate, New Games Journalism, and the Discourse Surrounding Sexism in the Gaming Industry” written for USSO 290H (“The Social World of YouTube”) led by Georgia Cowart.

**Rana Ulhman** for her essay “America Against the Islamic World: Creating a Radicalized Other in the Minds of U.S. Citizens” written for USSY 290Z (“Secularization and the Culture of Belief”) led by Scott Dill.

**Lauren Whitehouse** for her essay “Fair Use in a New Cultural Paradigm: Amateur-Produced Appropriative Works on YouTube” written for USSO 290H (“The Social World of YouTube”) led by Georgia Cowart.
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 2015-2016 are:

Aya Bahij for her essay “My Life as a Palestinian Refugee from Lebanon” written for FSNA 161 (“Making Sense of Place”) led by Eric Chilton.

Amalia Donastorg for her essay “Simulation and Place” written for FSNA 161 (“Making Sense of Place”) led by Eric Chilton.

You can read all of these outstanding essays in the booklets available on the Writing Program website: [http://writing.case.edu/writing-awards/](http://writing.case.edu/writing-awards/)