

Grand Valley State University
The Fred Meijer Center for Writing and Michigan Authors
Special Project Graduate Assistant
Social Justice in Writing

Title

Graduate Writing Consultant Assistant: Special Project in Social Justice in Writing

Terms

This 9 month Special Project Graduate Assistant (SPGA) position is an academic year full-time (20 hours per week) graduate assistantship. This position includes a \$4,000 stipend and tuition waiver for up to 9 credits for the fall 2017 and winter 2018 semester. The funding for this SPGA position is subject to the July 2017 budgetary approval by the GVSU Board of Trustees.

Background

Writing consultants for the Fred Meijer Center for Writing are passionate individuals who utilize their love for writing, talking about thoughts and ideas, and collaborating with others so as to guide writers toward personalized goals. A peer-mentorship opportunity like this is not only flexible with your schedule and professionally transferrable, it is also intellectually fulfilling and creatively engaging. This highly rewarding job allows for writers and consultants to walk away from consultations with skills gained, knowledge learned, and confidence instilled.

Through the process of peer mentorship, the Fred Meijer Center for Writing provides a safe space for analytical dialogue, wherein writers develop strategies and skills for building awareness of and confidence in their own writing process. Safe spaces, as defined by the Writing Center, are environments cultivated by extending empathy, dignity, and curiosity for all writers. In this mission, writing consultants must rely on a devotion to social justice and inclusion so as to actively promote and empower all writers.

The Center considers writing a powerful vehicle for self-expression, community engagement, and social mobility. By promoting and empowering all writers with confidence and skills, writing consultants provide peer mentorship that guides writers toward greater visibility in their own world as well as access to other communities. Writing consulting, therefore, is social justice work.

In order to better represent this mission to the rest of the university, the Writing Center aims to pursue internal training, external relationships, and data-driven assessment regarding social justice efforts. It is through these three efforts that the Writing Center hopes to focus attention on cultivating a relevant and productive safe space for writers from any background at the university. The SPGA, therefore, would be instrumental in assisting the Writing Center with these tasks.

Responsibilities

The SPGA will be responsible for filling two roles: (1) to work 2/3 of their hours as a Graduate Writing Consultant, and (2) to spend their remaining 1/3 hours fulfilling the Special Project component of the SPGA role with regards to social justice in writing.

1. Writing consultants work face-to-face or online with writers at any of our locations where the content of this time will be generated from the writer's needs. These needs relate to writing at any stage in the writing process. Writing consultants are responsible for meeting writers where they are and guiding them toward writing-related goals. The SPGA may work with undergraduate, graduate, or faculty writers on a variety of topics, genres, and formats at a variety of stages in the writing process.
 - a. The SPGA will be obligated to attend two full days of training/orientation on August 24 & 25, occasional professional development seminars, and regular staff meetings.
 - b. The SPGA will be required to audit the 1-credit course WRT 306: Seminar for New Writing Consultants. This course will be offered at multiple times and at different locations so as to accommodate all new consultants.
 - c. The SPGA will be expected to work at least 2/3 of their allotted 20 hours toward assisting writers at any of our locations.
2. The SPGA Social Justice in Writing component will be fulfilled by this individual creating relevant resources for the Writing Center staff, by providing specific training, and by acting as a liaison between departments at GVSU
 - a. Potential topics related to Social Justice in Writing include but are not limited to: linguistic diversity, institutionalized racism shaping language expectations, people of color's experiences with writing at GVSU, and writing as a tool for social mobility.
 - b. Questions guiding the SPGA's working include but are not limited to: How can the Writing Center provide ethical and equitable support to all writers? What do writing consultants need to know in order to advocate on behalf of writers on campus?

Qualifications

Required Qualifications

- Full year of availability
- Competent in written & oral communication
- Commitment to assisting writers at any stage of the writing process and from any discipline

Desired Qualifications

- Previous consulting, teaching, or mentoring experience
- Enthusiasm for the subject
- Background in linguistics and/or social justice
- Collaborative spirit
- Personable
- Flexible & adaptable
- Willingness to learn
- Confidence in ability to perform desired tasks

Supervision

The SPGA will be directly supervised and assessed by the Director of the Writing Center. Furthermore, the SPGA will be mentored by the Writing Center administrative team, including the Director of the Writing Center, the Writing Center Coordinator, and the Writing Center Office Coordinator.

Selection Process

The SPGA will be selected after the following steps are completed and approved:

- Submit an application and two writing samples (one with research)
- Complete a face-to-face interview with the Writing Center administration
 - Meet the required qualifications
 - Demonstrate someone of the preferred qualifications
- Provide references and/or CV upon request if needed

Contact Information

Patrick Johnson, Director of the Fred Meijer Center for Writing and Michigan Authors
 Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies
 Grand Valley State University
 119 Lake Ontario Hall
 Allendale, MI 49401

johpatri@gvsu.edu

Office Phone: [616-331-8077](tel:616-331-8077)

Dept. Phone: [616-331-2922](tel:616-331-2922)