

# NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2026

VOL. 4

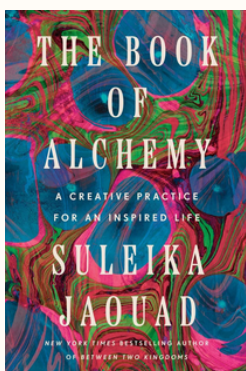


## SPRING WRITING INVITATION

1-WEEK MICRO-CHALLENGE:  
GRATITUDE AND GRIPES

Research suggests that micro-challenges are more effective than aiming to do a new habit forever, so join us in writing gratuudes and gripes in a journal for just seven days. If you need inspiration, check out **The Book of Alchemy** by Suleika Jaouad or the research on the power of gratitude and expressive writing for sustaining mental health:

- <https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/expressive-writing>
- <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6437090/>



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Summer Writing Camps (July 13–August 6)

We are offering six Summer Writing Camps this summer for 3<sup>rd</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders – two at the Allendale Valley Campus and four at the downtown City Campus.

### Invitational Summer Institute (June 15–26)

Help us recruit curious, fun-loving, committed teachers to be summer fellows!

<https://www.gvsu.edu/lmwp/summer-institute-2026-27.htm>

### Advanced Institutes (June 15 – 26)

Choose June 15 & 22, June 16 & 23, June 17 & 24, June 18 & 25, and/or June 19 & 26 to study, write, and share the genre of your choice. (See more info on page 2.)

LMWP 2026  
**POETRY**  
MON  
TOPICS: **WRITING MARATHON!**  
Experimenting with Structures  
Fig. Language Strategies  
Poetry March Madness  
JUNE 15: **WEEK 1: READ & WRITE**  
Mini Lesson: Eric Wilkinson  
Writing Marathon  
Share Ideas & Strategies  
WRITE/DRAFT IN BETWEEN  
JUNE 22: **WEEK 2: REVISE & SHARE**  
Revising Poetry Lesson  
Writing Groups (Feedback)  
Read Around/ Author's Chair  
DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS  
GVSU

LMWP 2026  
**NARRATIVE**  
TUES  
TOPICS: **NOVEL IN A MONTH?!**  
Fiction Tips & Tricks  
Engaging Reluctant Writers  
Building Writing Stamina  
JUNE 16: **WEEK 1: READ & WRITE**  
Mini Lesson: Dustin Morley  
Sacred Writing Time  
Share Ideas & Strategies  
WRITE/DRAFT IN BETWEEN  
JUNE 23: **WEEK 2: REVISE & SHARE**  
Revising Stories Lesson  
Writing Groups (Feedback)  
Read Around/ Author's Chair  
DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS  
GVSU

LMWP 2026  
**ARGUMENT & RESEARCH**  
WED  
TOPICS: **CROSS-CURRICULUM**  
Research & AI  
CER: connecting evidence to claim  
Socratic Seminars & Debates  
Applying Research to Self & Goals  
JUNE 17: **WEEK 1: READ & WRITE**  
Mini Lesson: Kaley Johnson  
Sacred Writing Time  
Share Ideas & Strategies  
WRITE/DRAFT IN BETWEEN  
JUNE 24: **WEEK 2: REVISE & SHARE**  
Revise: Learning from Mistakes  
Writing Groups (Feedback)  
Read Around/ Author's Chair  
DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS  
GVSU

LMWP 2026  
**ARGUE FOR CHANGE**  
THURS  
TOPICS: **LETTER WRITING**  
Persuasion vs. Argument  
Persuasive Techniques  
Addressing Difficult Topics  
Making Student Voices Heard  
JUNE 18: **WEEK 1: READ & WRITE**  
Mini Lesson: Patti Mapes  
Sacred Writing Time  
Share Ideas & Strategies  
WRITE/DRAFT IN BETWEEN  
JUNE 25: **WEEK 2: REVISE & SHARE**  
Revising Letters/Argument Lesson  
Writing Groups (Feedback)  
Read Around/ Author's Chair  
DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS  
GVSU

[WWW.GVSU.EDU/LMWP](http://www.gvsu.edu/lmwp)

# NEWSLETTER P. 2

## SHAPE OF THE ADVANCED INSTITUTE

The Lake Michigan Writing Project exists to improve the teaching of writing in West Michigan.

How do we do that?

The first step is gathering. The second step is listening. The third step is reading and writing. And the fourth is designing and experimenting with approaches in our own classrooms.

The Lake Michigan Writing Project is only as strong as our community's participation. It takes teachers showing up for teachers — sharing their wisdom — for us to fulfill our mission.

So we sincerely invite you to give two days of your summer. Or four. Or six. Or eight. Come to the Institute. Share and listen. Encounter new ideas for facing new contexts.

Existing research was written under former conditions, and the conditions within which we teach writing are changing at an astronomical pace. As I tell colleagues across campus: we are trying flying the plane (writing in a digital age) while it's being built. We are developing methods of teaching writing in a rapidly evolving cultural moment while the tools themselves evolve beneath our feet. We need conversations that ground us in purpose and discover methods and strategies worth sharing.

Please join us this summer for an Advanced Institute built around listening, reading & writing, and developing plans to innovate a new approach in your own classroom.

This year's structure honors how busy you are. Come for two days, four, six, eight, or ten — with a weekend in between topics for drafting.

- 2 Mondays — Poetry as a teacher of craft: concision, precision, the principles that make writing strong.
- 2 Tuesdays — Fictional narrative: how reading novels and short stories can become a method for writing chronologically & how drafting can build students' literary understanding of assigned reading.
- 2 Wednesdays — Writing across the curriculum: integrating writing into AP Psychology, AP History, and other content area classes; working alongside colleagues to weave writing into every discipline.
- 2 Thursdays — Argument and purpose: writing letters to people in power = writing to change the world.
- 2 Fridays — Writing for an audience of teachers: structuring and delivering professional development, composing multi-modal texts — spoken, written, visual — that share the insights you're developing.

The purpose of writing is to know oneself — and to know others more deeply. Come join us. And be known.

Choose two consecutive Mondays (June 15 & 22), two Tuesdays (June 16 & 23), two Wednesdays (June 17 & 24), two Thursdays (June 18 & 25), and/or two Fridays (June 19 & 26) to study, write, and share. The day of the week will determine the genre.

## REGISTER HERE FOR THE ADVANCED INSTITUTE

OR NAVIGATE THROUGH [WWW.GVSU.EDU/LMWP](http://WWW.GVSU.EDU/LMWP)

LMWP 2026  
**PD & CONFERENCES**

**TOPICS** PRESENTATIONS  
Presentation Tools  
PD/Conference Structures & Tips  
Addressing Staff  
Using Research & Data

**JUNE 18** WEEK 1: READ & WRITE  
Mini Lesson: Kaley & Eric?  
Sacred Writing Time  
Share Ideas & Strategies

WRITE/DRAFT IN BETWEEN

**JUNE 25** WEEK 2: REVISE & SHARE  
Feedback: What do teachers need?  
Writing Groups (Feedback)  
Read Around/ Author's Chair

DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS  
GVSU

LAKE MICHIGAN WRITING PROJECT  
2026

M-F JUNE 15 - 26  
9AM - 5PM

DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS GVSU

**POETRY**  
Power of Poetry  
Week 1: Experimenting with Structures  
Week 2: Revising Poetry  
WRITING MARATHON KICKOFF DAY 1!

**NARRATIVE**  
Power of Narrative  
Week 1: Novel in a Month  
Week 2: Revision Fiction

**CROSS-CURRICULAR**  
Writing/Research Across Curriculum  
Week 1: AP Psych CER  
Week 2: Learning from Mistakes

**ARGUE & CHANGE**  
Argument Letters  
Week 1: Writing for Activism  
Week 2: Revising Argument

**PD**  
Presentations  
Week 1: Presentation Tools & Data Use  
Week 2: What do teachers need?

ADVANCED: **CHOOSE YOUR GENRES!**  
NEW FELLOWS: ATTEND FULL 2 WEEKS

[WWW.GVSU.EDU/LMWP](http://WWW.GVSU.EDU/LMWP)

# NEWSLETTER P. 3

## MEET THE LMWP SUMMER LEADERS

JESSIE BELOTE (2025 cohort) will be co-leading a middle school Laker Writing Camp in Grand Rapids. She currently teaches 7th grade ELA at Duncan Lake Middle School. Fun fact: Jessie sings soprano in the Grand Rapids Chamber Choir.

KIM BOLT (2005 cohort) will be co-leading a middle school Laker Writing Camp in Allendale. She currently teaches first year writing classes at both GRCC and GVSU. When she's not teaching, Kim enjoys all things travel or spending time with her nose in a book.

ERINN CALEY (2015 cohort) will be co-leading an elementary Laker Writing Camp in Allendale. She teaches a variety of writing courses at Byron Center High School. At home Erinn enjoys spending time with her two mischievous cats or baking.

CLAUSENE CARLSON (2017 cohort) will be co-leading an elementary Laker Writing Camp in Allendale. After teaching for 32 years, she has retired and enjoys substituting at schools in the West Michigan area. Clausene loves being a part of the summer camps because "Writing has become a source of relaxation, joy, and reflection."

TARYN EVA (2016 cohort) will be co-leading the elementary Laker Writing Camp in Grand Rapids. She currently teaches 4th-6th grade at North Park Montessori. Taryn is passionate about teaching all aspects of writing and helping her students find their unique voice.

AMANDA FISCHER (2010 cohort) will be co-leading a middle school Laker Writing Camp in Allendale. She currently teaches a variety of 9th grade writing classes at Grandville High School. Amanda enjoys helping young people find their voices through writing.

KALEY JOHNSON (2021 cohort) will be co-leading a middle school Laker Writing Camp in Grand Rapids as well as co-leading the Summer Advanced Institute. She currently teaches 9th grade ELA and AP Psychology at Northview High School. Kaley enjoys an exciting game night with family and friends, playing with her cat Taco, and binge-watching the latest Netflix/Hulu dramas (or rewatching *Hamilton* again).

LAURA KOZMINSKI (2018 cohort) will be co-leading the Write Your College Essay Workshop in Grand Rapids. She currently teaches at Catholic Central High School. Laura loves teaching writing and enjoys writing her own poetry and short stories.

SUNDAY LOPEZ (2015 cohort) will be leading an elementary Laker Writing Camp in Grand Rapids. She teaches at North Point Christian Elementary. Her many hobbies include cooking and eating healthy foods, walking, running, biking, camping, and traveling.

PATTI MAPES (2019 cohort) will be co-leading the Summer Advanced Institute. She teaches English at City Middle High School. In her spare time she travels with her husband, plays with her two perfect dogs, and reads.

DUSTIN MORLEY (2016 cohort) will be co-leading a middle school Laker Writing Camp in Allendale as well as co-leading the Advanced Institute. When he's not teaching, Dustin enjoys going on adventures with his family, reading, writing, playing strategy games, being outside, baking anything with chocolate, and drinking coffee.

ANN OOSTERHOUSE (2015 cohort) is the summer Laker Writing Camp Coordinator. She currently teaches at Grandville High School. Ann loves helping young writers find their voices and also realize that the English language is more accessible than they think.

ERIC TOWER (2004 cohort) will be co-leading the Write Your College Essay Workshop in Grand Rapids. He currently is the Department Chair for the English Department at Grandville High School. When not teaching and presenting, Mr. Tower can be found directing high school theatre, running errands, checking in with his three adult children, or falling asleep on the couch when he should be doing one of those other things.

ERIC WILKINSON (2012 cohort) will be co-leading the ISI and Advanced Institute. He teaches mostly English and occasionally math at West Ottawa High School. Fun fact: he's attempting to run a marathon in all 50 states.

### 2026 CAMP SCHEDULE

Camp Locations	Grade in Fall 2026	Date	Time
ALLENDALE (GVSU Main Campus)	3-5	July 13-16, 2026	9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
ALLENDALE (GVSU Main Campus)	6-8	July 13-16, 2026	9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
GRAND RAPIDS (GVSU Pew/Downtown Campus)	3-5	July 27-30, 2026	8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
GRAND RAPIDS (GVSU Pew/Downtown Campus)	6-8	July 27-30, 2026	8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
GRAND RAPIDS (GVSU Pew/Downtown Campus)	9-12	July 27-30, 2026	8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
WRITE YOUR COLLEGE ESSAY (GVSU Pew/Downtown Campus)	12	August 3-6, 2026	1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.