

In Writing

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New Department Chair, Patricia Clark

New Leader for Department

Hannah VanDenBerg

The Writing Department has appointed Patricia Clark as the new Chair this Fall 2013 semester. She succeeds Daniel Royer, who offered his service and leadership in the role for nearly a decade.

The 2013-2014 school year marks Clark's 24th with GVSU. She earned an MFA from the University of Montana, and a Ph.D. from the University of Houston. She also has four published books of poetry including *She Walks Into the Sea*, *My Father on a Bicycle*, *North of Wondering*, and *Sunday Rising*. Throughout her years at GVSU, she served as Poet-in-Residence, Full Professor, as well as Interim Chair in the Art Department in 2006 and 2007.

Because of Clark's accumulated years of experience, her decision to accept the position as Chair was natural. When asked about what she wants to accomplish in this new role, she took her time to respond.

"I would like a very open atmosphere, where people in the department feel free to provide new and fresh ideas," she said. "I would also like to have a focus on admissions and outreach."

For example, the Writing Department has made an effort to have more of an impact at GVSU's campus events by designing banners to recruit new majors, one of which includes a list of 30 jobs writing students can potentially pursue after graduation.

Her passion stems beyond students solely interested in writing, which is evident when she talks about the necessity to reach students beyond those just graduating from high school.

"There's a significant decline in the [upcoming] 18-year-old population," said Clark. "So it's very important that we are spreading the word about GVSU to other

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Roxane Gay Facilitates Discussion on Genre and New Media



Visiting Writer, Roxane Gay

Marie Orttenburger

On October 1, writer Roxane Gay visited GVSU as a part of the Writers Series to talk with students about craft and genre. Students who attended learned about the flexibility of genre and new opportunities in writing.

Gay is a writer of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, an editor at *PANK*, *The Rumpus*, and *Bluestem*, a professor at Eastern Illinois

University, and a blogger. She is the author of the novel *Ayiti*, and her work has been published in anthologies such as *The Best American Short Stories 2012*, *Hair Lit Vol. 1*, and *Best Sex Writing 2012*, as well as various literary magazines. Additionally, she writes cultural critiques for *Salon*, *The Rumpus*, *The Wall Street Journal* and others. Her diverse résumé is exemplary of her own flexibility in

the career of writing.

Gay's "Crossing Genres and New Media" discussion took place in the multipurpose room of the new Mary Idema Pew Library. Attendees filled the seats around the tables throughout the room and faced the front, anticipating Gay's arrival at the podium. When the discussion was set to start, Gay instead took her seat at one of the tables near the front of the room, was introduced by Associate Professor Chris Haven, and asked students what they wanted to talk about.

The casual conversation that followed focused heavily on social media and Twitter's role in new media. Gay, an avid user of Twitter, lauded the social media platform as a tool for writers, citing the inspiring conversations borne from the brief ideas shared via tweets. Gay presented Twitter as a way for young and minority writers to gain a following and level the playing field with literary heavyweights.

The discussion turned to the genre-bending capabilities of Twitter when Gay defended the social media network as a supplementary source of journalism. The group discussed her essay for *Salon* titled "When Twitter Does What Journalism Can't," and considered the ability of Twitter

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Annual Poetry Night Full of Reflections and Laughter With Lee and Rogers

Cara Medvedenko

Every year, GVSU hosts Poetry Night as part of the Fall Celebration of the Arts and invites two well-known poets to the university to read and talk about their work. This year, for the 12th Annual Poetry Night, Li-Young Lee and Pattiann Rogers came to share their work on Friday, October 25. Although Christian Wiman, former editor of *Poetry Magazine*, was originally scheduled for the event, he was forced

to cancel his plans earlier that week. Lee graciously stepped in at the last minute.

Fred Antczak, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, opened the night by welcoming the poets and the audience, as well as promoting the upcoming events in the Fall Celebration of the Arts. He expressed GVSU's commitment to bringing the arts to campus "in all its various forms." Antczak was followed by Patricia Clark, Chair of the Writing Department, who introduced Lee and Rogers by saying that

"to open a book of poetry is to look into the soul of the writer." As Lee and Rogers read their work, they lent a highly personal tone to their poems.

Li-Young Lee is the author of four critically acclaimed collections of poetry: *Rose*, *The City in Which I Love You*, *Book of My Nights*, and *Behind My Eyes*. He read four poems, some from his books and one not yet published. After reading his unpublished piece, he spoke about the tension he feels between writing and

Jenni Lamb Advises on Playwriting Improvement through Improv

Duane Emery

Imagine watching a police officer and criminal eating pancakes in a haunted house, a doctor and patient setting up a campsite, or competitive neighbors playing a game of pinball. These are just a few combinations given to playwright Jenni Lamb during her craft talk on playwriting as part of the GVSU Visiting Writers Series. She spoke on October 19 in the Pew Library multipurpose room.

“If you are going to be a writer or actor, take improv classes,” Lamb suggested. The problems writers run into often involve flat dialogue, lack of character, and being too quick in getting to payoff moments in stories. She said these can be avoided by remembering the fundamentals of improvisation: who, what, and where, which can be applied to all types of writing. A play succeeds when these essentials organically focus character and objectives in a way that is entertaining and real.

To demonstrate, Lamb asked the audience to participate in a quick writing assignment. By taking suggestions from the audience, Lamb made a list of several people, actions, and places and had everyone write a quick dialogue. The catch was that the stories had to start in the middle and characters were only allowed to talk about

where they were. She said using improvisation in this way helps teach writers how to create layered subtext and stories that will pop on the stage.

“Sometimes storytelling is thought of as a line, but I like to think of it like a sandwich. You want to layer things,” she said.

For writers who suffer from writer’s block, Lamb said improv helps her get out of her head.

She says to herself, “I am going to write the worst thing in the world,” and then forces herself to write something. If students find themselves suffering from writer’s block, Lamb offered the same advice: “Just write!”

Lamb discussed her own style of playwriting by saying that her scripts jump off the page because of comedy, but also cautioned that comedy can be difficult.

“In comedy, if you don’t get them in the first minute, you’ve lost them,” she said. Stage readings, then, are essential in getting the right kind of feedback. “You have to hear what jokes are working, not working, listen for laughter when you don’t expect it, and immediately start making cuts and changes, she said.”



Visiting Writer, Jenni Lamb

Lamb has been involved in improv and comedy for more than 20 years. As a playwright she has had several plays produced, including *Suicide Kills*, *Period Piece*, and *Memento Polonia*. She also has an upcoming play about Henry V, which has yet to be given a title.

publishing. Poems rarely feel finished when they go to the publisher, he said, but

“Poetry has a double life,” Lee said. “It goes into the market to be published and sold. But it has a second life: it helps the reader understand themselves and the world around them, just as it helped the author.”

be published and read.

“Poetry has a double life,” Lee said. “It goes into the market to be published and sold. But it has a second life: it helps the reader understand themselves and the world around them, just as it helped the author.” Although Lee says the publishing market feels constricting at times, it is a necessary part of the life of poetry.

Following Lee, Pattiann Rogers took the stage. Rogers is the author of 15 books of poetry, the most recent, *Holy Heathen Rhapsody*, was published in Fall 2013. Amid the several poems she read, she kept the audience laughing with the stories she told, many of which shed light on the themes in her poetry.

She shared that as an undergraduate, she

took one astronomy course, and it changed her perception of the world in a way that continues to impact her writing. She then read her poem “Rolling Naked in the Morning Dew,” and mentioned that there are groups—her only fan club, according to her—who meet annually to celebrate it. “I didn’t start this, you know,” Rogers said of the activity, “but I don’t discourage it!”

A classy reception and book signing followed the reading. Piano music played in the background as guests enjoyed pretty desserts and artisan cheese while they discussed the poetry. Lee’s and Roger’s books were available for purchase while the authors themselves signed books and chatted with guests.

without deadlines, few poems would ever

FMCWMA Hosts Michigan Writing Centers Association Conference

Rachel Amity

On October 12, the Fred Meijer Center for Writing and Michigan Authors (FMCWMA) hosted the 19th annual Michigan Writing Centers Association Conference (MWCA), bringing together nearly 300 writing consultants and writing center directors from universities across the state. This year's conference theme was "Creative Collaborations," paying homage to the collaborative possibilities of GVSU's new Mary Idema Pew Library Learning and Information Commons and its innovative Knowledge Market.

Patrick Johnson, assistant director of FMCWMA, said planning the conference began more than a year earlier.

"Our decision to host the 2013 MWCA happened just prior to the 2012 MWCA director's meeting," said Johnson. "Every year, one topic of discussion is 'who wants to host next year?' Both Ellen Schendel and I knew we wanted to host when the Mary Idema Pew Library opened, so we were happy to volunteer. The planning process began almost immediately."

Schendel—who remained involved in planning the conference despite

formally leaving FMCWMA this semester to assume a position as Associate Dean of the Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies—and Johnson knew that the Knowledge Market would naturally take center-stage at the conference, and they used it as the pinnacle of their planning.

"We had several goals for the conference, but we were most excited to share our experiences with the library Knowledge Market, which is why we selected library Dean Lee Van Orsdel as our keynote speaker, and to host a conference we knew we wanted to attend," Johnson explained.

Early on in the planning process, Schendel and Johnson asked senior Xinyi Ou, a lead writing consultant, to assist with preparations.

"We wanted conference participants to

feel hosted at our institution," Ou said. "For us, that meant being present and helping people from the moment they set foot on campus to when they leave. This motivated us to seek volunteers from our staff, and luckily, we had a large enough volunteer corps to staff every presentation room of the conference."

Dozens of FMCWMA consultants, adorned in iconic teal 'i heart writing'

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MWCA Program

Beer City Brewery Mixes in Poetry

Hannah VanDenBerg

This past November marks the one-year anniversary for Poetry & Pints, created by GVSU Adjunct Professors Michael Sikkema and Jen Tynes, and hosted by Harmony Brewing Company in Grand Rapids.

The purpose of Poetry & Pints is simple: community.

"We wanted to extend our relationships with poets from the interwebs into the real world," said Sikkema. "We also wanted to get to know the poets who are writing in Grand Rapids. We wanted our friends to come into town and read and sleep on our

couch. We wanted to hear our colleagues [from the various schools where we teach] read."

Poetry & Pints is held in a small back room of Harmony Brewing Co. once a month, excluding December and summer months. Everyone is encouraged to enjoy their handmade, wood-fired pizzas and, of course, seasonal small-batch brews, while hearing poets share their work.

Finding poets to read is a process of exploring and expanding the community. Tynes edits the poetry journal *Horse Less Review*, while Sikkema edits a small chapbook press called *Shirt Pocket Press*. Both publish plenty of poets, which is where the relationship begins.

"We invite poets we know or have been introduced to who are working and living locally," said Tynes. "Our out-of-town guests are usually poets who either live in the region or are traveling through as part of a larger reading tour."

"We also wanted to feature poets associated with colleges and universities in the area, as well as townie poets who are serious about their craft," said Sikkema.

Poetry & Pints is affiliated only with Harmony Brewing Co. and its founders.

"We are independent," said Sikkema. "We receive no funding, no team jerseys, no pennants, no pay." Although team jerseys could be a great idea, it's safe to say that in the end, it's all about community.

FMCWMA Consultants Present in Tampa

Rachel Amity

Nine writing consultants from GVSU's Fred Meijer Center for Writing and Michigan Authors (FMCWMA) traveled to Tampa, FL during the first weekend of November to attend the National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing (NCPTW). The four-day trip included two days of driving, two days of attending and delivering presentations, and a bit of sightseeing thrown in for good measure.

Each year, hundreds of writing consultants and writing center directors from around the country gather at NCPTW to share tutoring techniques that foster collaborative learning through panel presentations, round table discussions, and workshops. The nine attending FMCWMA consultants—Rachel Amity, Andrew Brown, Katie Conigliaro, Nikki Fisher, Joe Hogan, Kevin Joffre, Marissa Kobe, Lindsey Wolpert and Anna Worm—delivered six presentations, with topics ranging from self-efficacy and rhetoric to online tutorials and conversation strategies.

Conigliaro presented with Kobe on emphasizing conversation by removing the paper from the consultation. It was her first time attending NCPTW, and she was pleased by how their presentation was received.

"It just was an awesome feeling knowing that this method of consulting that we've been working with was something other people could not only see themselves implementing but were excited to try out for themselves," Conigliaro reflected.

Fisher presented with Worm, a graduate student, about navigating the differenc-

es between author- and audience-based content and form. Like Conigliaro, she was excited by the way the audience engaged with their presentation.

"It's nice to hear audience responses to the ideas you've developed, possibly with just one other co-presenter or on your own. I always get a little nervous beforehand, but the intrinsic reward is well worth the anxiety," Fisher said.

Between their own sessions, the consultants were able to attend nearly 150 presentations by other universities.

"The best part of the conference was

"The best part of the conference was getting the opportunity to engage in ideas with fellow writing consultants in a non-classroom setting," said Fisher.

getting the opportunity to engage in ideas with fellow writing consultants in a non-classroom setting," continued Fisher. "I love having open discussions that have the dual purpose of training us to be better consultants."

Consultants at FMCWMA receive extensive training each fall, with supplemental workshops throughout the academic year to ensure they're prepared to work with all students and all genres of writing. Attending conferences like NCPTW, though, empowers consultants with new

perspectives and fresh ideas.

Joffre attended a session about writing consultants working with students in prison, which inspired him to consider ways that FMCWMA might better reach out to non-traditional students.

"For me, the best part of the conference was learning about the innovative ways that Writing Centers across the country are extending their services into non-traditional settings," Joffre explained. "For example, Goucher College in Maryland offers college courses in prisons, then sends in tutors to work with the students on the assignments for those courses. As a result of this presentation, and my hour-long conversation with the presenters afterward, I have been trying to figure out if community outreach is possible with GVSU's Writing Center."

In addition to networking and collaborating with consultants from other universities, the FMCWMA consultants were able to better acquaint themselves with another important group of people: each other.

"I think the most amazing part of the trip is how much closer I got to the co-workers I went with. I got to spend the weekend with people I rarely see otherwise, if ever, and it was just so great to get to know them better," said Conigliaro.

Although most of their time in Tampa was spent at the conference, the consultants ate at a tropical-themed restaurant and visited Tampa Bay.

"It was awesome just being in Florida with a group of friends," Fisher reflected. "Writing consultants are a bunch of kindred spirits, so I always enjoy hanging out with them—even if that means being stuck in a car [together] for 18 hours."

Writing Major Scholarship Applications Due March 1
<http://www.gvsu.edu/writing/writing-scholarships-87.htm>

Robinson Wins Prestigious Flannery O'Connor Award for Short Fiction

*Kaitlin Delehanty &
Grayson DeYoung*

One of GVSU's own writing faculty has recently been awarded the Flannery O'Connor Award for Short Fiction. The University of Georgia Press has recognized Affiliate Professor Monica Robinson for her collection of short stories, *Bright Shards Of Someplace Else*. The Flannery O'Connor award, established in 1983, focuses on encouraging gifted writers to showcase their talent and expose their work on a national level. We recently interviewed Monica to get her personal insights on winning the award.

IW: Can you tell us a little about your winning submission?

MR: There are eleven stories in my collection, *Bright Shards of Someplace Else*, and they are all different. There's a story about a blocked songwriter and his brilliant drug-addicted son, there's another about a biologist who becomes obsessed with the resemblance between abstract art and amoebas, there's another about a mysterious country woman who unsettles her neighbors, and so on. All of the stories are loosely about people who are obsessed with something—a hobby, a person, an idea—and how this passion both fuels and deforms their lives. Passion can be sustaining, but it can also really skew perceptions and behavior.

IW: What is your creative process like?

MR: I write in only two speeds—very slowly and extremely fast. Since I began my writing life as a poet, my MFA is in poetry, I'm obsessed with the sentence level and will often rewrite a sentence ten to twenty times. This does create good prose, but it doesn't get the story done. So, I started using deadlines—of contests, etc.—to force myself to speed up. The Flannery O'Connor Award deadline was one of many that I've used to get work done. Because I normally write so slowly, I often have only half the story written the days before a deadline. This means that I'm forced to write huge chunks of a story in one marathon sitting. Many of these sessions go late into the

night and sometimes into the next morning. It's uncomfortable, for sure. But the benefit of "extreme writing," as I call this method in my head, is that it forces me to make choices in my work and stick to them. Some of my best work has come when I commit to a concept, despite my reservations. That's where the skill and even the magic comes in—when you have to solve problems and plow through your own doubt.

IW: How did you find out you were a winner? What happened?

MR: I got a phone call from a strange number when I was driving to the chiropractor. I was about five minutes from there when the phone rang. I figured it was a telemarketer, but when I listened to the message, it was the University of Georgia Press, and they wanted to speak to me. My heart started racing, and I pulled into a credit union parking lot. I had the irrational thought that I needed to call them back now or somehow they'd change their minds. When I got a hold of them, I learned that I won. Then, the editor on the phone started asking me about my life and biography. I had so much adrenaline going that this was surprisingly difficult. I started rambling about my hometown, my old 4-H job, and horses, all in a non-chronological monologue. I hung up the phone and just sat there for a long few minutes. I was in shock about it for a long time, and it still doesn't feel fully real.

IW: What does this award mean to you?

MR: Winning the Flannery has already dramatically changed my writing life. I spent six years working on it, and I assumed I'd have to spend a few more shopping it around to publishers. But now that it's truly finished, I'm free to do whatever I want next. That's been exhilarating. It's been wonderful to take a break from fiction and explore other interests. I just finished a screenplay adaptation of a play I wrote, and it's been exciting to work on something that's lighter and more comedic. Winning the Flannery has also created a new interest in my work. I've had several stories accepted for publication since the win, and I've met many people online who know about the



Award Winner, Monica Robinson

award and reached out to offer congratulations. That's been nice, and it's a good reminder of how supportive and open the writing community can be. Writing fiction can be isolating work, so meeting people and getting feedback has to be one of the most gratifying parts of the experience.

IW: Where can we find your book?

MR: *Bright Shards of Someplace Else* will be available for purchase in October of 2014. You can also read a few free online stories by visiting my website, monicamcfawn.com, where I have links to previously published work.

IW: Do you have any advice for students trying to get published?

MR: The best advice I have for students who want to publish/pursue writing is... don't get too caught up in publishing too early on. The most important thing is to work on your writing and pursue ideas that interest you, even if they don't interest anyone else at first. Just experiment with your writing, and push your own boundaries for a good long while before focusing on publishing. Any time spent writing isn't wasted, even if no one else sees what you write.

CLARK continued from page 1

age groups as well, including our veterans who are interested in continuing their education.”

In addition to admissions and outreach, Clark has plenty to keep her busy. In Fall 2012, the Writing Department launched a new curriculum, which was a six-year process to implement. The curriculum now uses a modular approach and requires students to complete an internship. Clark pointed out that although it is her job to oversee a smooth transition, the new curriculum was not assembled by any one person.

“We all worked on the new curriculum as a team,” she said.

Clark’s strong sense of teamwork surfaced many times. She credited the strength of faculty and staff as a whole for accomplishments of the Writing Department. In her eyes, they all strive to better the Department together, for the greater good of current and future students, faculty, staff, and everyone else involved.

“One of the biggest challenges [of position as Chair] is juggling workload issues: emails, my own classes, faculty needs, events and meetings to attend, and issues that come up suddenly,” said Clark. “But you have to be prepared. Something goes wrong or you get in a rut, and we all have to be ready to work together and figure it out.”

Finally, Clark is planning on adding to the tenure-track faculty. The Department is searching for a driven individual to teach creative writing courses. Clark and the committee will be detailed and thorough in their search, allowing only the best candidates to join this tight-knit faculty.

The Writing Department has made a wise decision in appointing Clark, and it will be exciting to see what she does in her position in years to come.

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to draw attention to stories that the mainstream media isn’t covering.

Attending students wanted to hear Gay’s advice on how best to develop a readership and achieve publication. Gay encouraged students to have a diverse background by writing in different genres and studying different styles of writing. As far as using social media to gain a readership, Gay advised students to use only the forms of social media they want to use. She stated Twitter accounts, blogs, and Facebook pages can be helpful, but only if writers enjoy using them to connect with their readers.

The discussion ended with a conversation about how best to go about breaking the constraints of genre. Gay shared her personal experience with experimenting with the boundaries of fiction and nonfiction genres.

Gay admitted that she considered herself first and foremost a writer of fiction, and that when it came to nonfiction, she thought:

“I have no idea what I’m doing, so I’ll do whatever the hell I want.”

She felt the need to establish herself as a writer of fiction before she experimented too heavily with the genre.

Gay expressed that experimenting with genre is best achieved when a writer shows an understanding of the rules. According to Gay, playing with genre requires “knowing when to play by the rules and knowing when to break them.”

She advised writers to develop self-control and a reputation in a given genre before experimenting too heavily with genre boundaries.

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t-shirts, volunteered their Saturday to help at the event, staffing conference rooms, information and registration tables, and circulating throughout both the Kirkhof Center and the Mary Idema Pew Library. Some consultants, like senior Writing major Nathan Holtrey, also presented research.

“The setup of the presentation was in two parts,” Holtrey explains. “In the first part we discussed what we do here at Grand Valley to promote a “writing center culture” across campus. The second part was a group discussion where we asked attendees what they did at their centers. We spoke in depth about what they did, how they set it up, and what the effects of the outreach had.”

Holtrey said his presentation seemed to resonate with those in attendance. “Several students from other schools spoke to me about what their schools were doing, and they were excited about the events we talked about. By sharing in that group environment, I like to think that I have affected possible outreach events at other schools as well,” he reflected.

The conference was highlighted by a Keynote address by Lee VanOrsdel, Dean of University Libraries, who spoke about the merits of collaboration in teaching and tutoring.

“Overall, the conference was a tremendous success,” said Johnson. “We distributed a survey to attendees and received strong feedback across the board. One of my lingering reflections is that I was extremely impressed with our staff of consultants and how they conducted themselves at the conference. Not only did we create a good environment for people to engage with each other, but FMCWMA did an amazing job representing our program and GVSU. Hearing from consultants, students, librarians, and deans that they enjoyed the conference made it all worthwhile.”

InWriting

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Opportunities Abound in the New Mary Idema Pew Library

Cara Medvedenko

Since opening in summer 2013, the Mary Idema Pew Library Learning and Information Commons offers new and exciting opportunities for writing majors and minors. Some new features include the Knowledge Market, a cafe, collaborative areas, and performance space.

Library faculty and staff members are thrilled with the new building and services they offer. “One of the coolest things that I’ve seen since the library opened is how the space has changed the way students use the library as a resource and how it can accommodate all of their different needs,” said Hazel McClure, Library Liaison for the Writing Department.

The Knowledge Market is one of the most visible new spaces on the main floor. The space brings Writing Center consultants together with speech and research consultants for the first time. Whether writing students are researching a topic, seeking feedback or guidance on a paper, or are preparing for a presentation, highly trained peer consultants at the Knowledge Market can help at any stage of the process.

“Being involved in the Knowledge Market has allowed us to work with students in new ways,” said Writing Consultant Rachel Amity. “In the past, writing consultants played all three roles: we worked not only with writing, but also with conducting research and composing speeches. It’s great to be able to refer students to research and speech consultants and know they’ll get specialized help. It’s definitely worth any writer’s time to come to the Knowledge Market.”

The Knowledge Market operates Sunday through Thursday from 6:00pm to 12:00am. Their evening hours make it easy for most students to receive help when working on projects. “We’re open until midnight now, and honestly I didn’t think anyone would come,” said Amity. “But we have students coming as late as 11:45pm asking for help.”

The library also houses the first Argo Tea to open in Michigan. The tea and coffee shop offers a cozy, bustling spot where students can grab a tasty drink as they settle in to write or head off to class. Argo

Tea also specializes in wholesome, healthy snacks, making it the perfect spot to order a snack or light meal on a busy day.

Throughout the library, moveable furniture allows students to create spaces that meet their study needs. Many areas of the building are designed for collaboration. With rolling whiteboards, chairs, and desks, students can assemble a seating area to fit their group’s size and purpose. Large computer monitors are available on the upper floors where students can connect up to four laptops and switch between screens, allowing them to share and discuss work. The library also houses dozens of desktop computers, as well as hundreds of outlets that make it easy find a favorite corner, plug in a laptop, and write.

While the library strives to meet the changing needs of students, it retains traditional functions as well. Although much of the building is designed for collaboration, ample space for quiet study can be found in the Northeast corner of the upper levels. The open shelves in these areas hold about 150,000 print items, with an additional 180,000 housed in an automated storage and retrieval system. While the library’s online collection continues to grow, the print collection is being constantly updated as well to serve as a valuable resource for writing students.

The library offers writing students new settings for sharing their work. The glass-enclosed exhibition space is perfect for student readings and small performances. The Learning Alcove on the main floor currently features videos such as TEDTalks, but in the future students may have the opportunity to share their work, possibly including drama and visual poetry.

“What’s really inspiring about the new library,” said McClure, “is that it embodies such balance; the resources that writing majors have always needed and always will need, like books, research databases, and journals, are here in full force, and there’s also space for collaborative and solitary creation and even performance and sharing of creative and intellectual work. Every decision made in the design of this library was made with the students’ needs in mind, and that really comes through in the ways I see students using it every day..”

As a whole, the Pew Library Learning and Information Commons is an exciting, innovative space for writing students. Whether they are seeking help with a paper, need to meet for a group project, want a quiet space to curl up for a long writing session, or are looking for ways to share their work, the library offers services to meet the dynamic needs of writing majors and minors.



WRT 455 students collaborating on a project in the new library