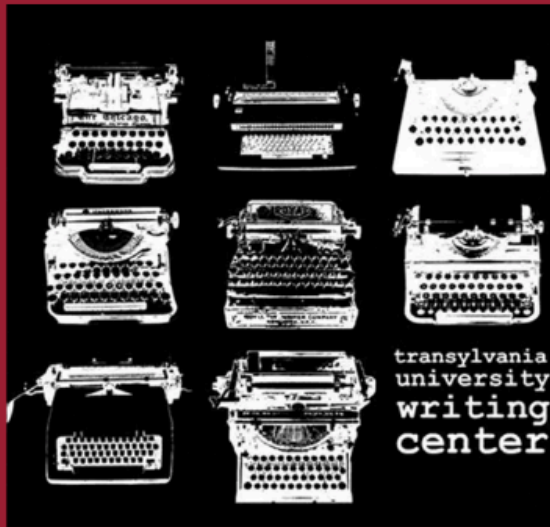


The Margins, a TUWC Alumni Newsletter

Editor: Josie Grant

Winter 2025



The Writing Center Emblem: represented by typewriters

Welcome to, The Margins

The Transylvania University Writing Center welcomes you to The Margins, a newsletter by staff for alumni and allies. Being a TUWC staffer over the past three years, I've gained confidence as a writer and mentor. Connecting with patrons every week, from across all majors and grade levels, the Writing Center provided a space on campus where I could engage in open dialogue. Brainstorming and

fostering creativity strengthened my understanding of rhetoric, with sessions continued to put me into exploratory conversations. Exceeding the expectations of being a consultant in the TUWC and having staff who work with, collaborate, and uplift their students.

As part of my senior seminar project, I composed a newsletter that reached out to alumni who worked here as staffers and community members who want to stay involved. It is designed to showcase the excellent work in this space and highlight how alums are implementing the skills and values of a liberal arts education. We hope to publish two issues per academic year, focusing on TUWC's individual and collective accomplishments and post-graduate experiences.

In a space dedicated to collaborative learning, the Margins extends a link between friends, staffers, and potential mentors. The largest part of the TUCW community is its alumni, with whom current staffers have no current way to engage. To fill this gap, The Margins ask that you contribute to making this workspace for all staffers, past and present, by continuing to be involved.

By sharing the inspiring and even unlikely stories from alumni and staffers, we hope to create a window into the impactful work of the TUCW, and its continual effect.

To stay active in the TUCW Community, please contact SWhiddon@transy.edu email to share fond memories, professional accomplishments, and how the TUCW has given you the tools to write your life post-graduation. Follow the TUCW Instagram [@transywritingcenter](https://www.instagram.com/transywritingcenter) to get updates and new posts regularly.



Senior staffers Savannah Kinster, pictured left, and Josie Grant, right during a collaborative sessions

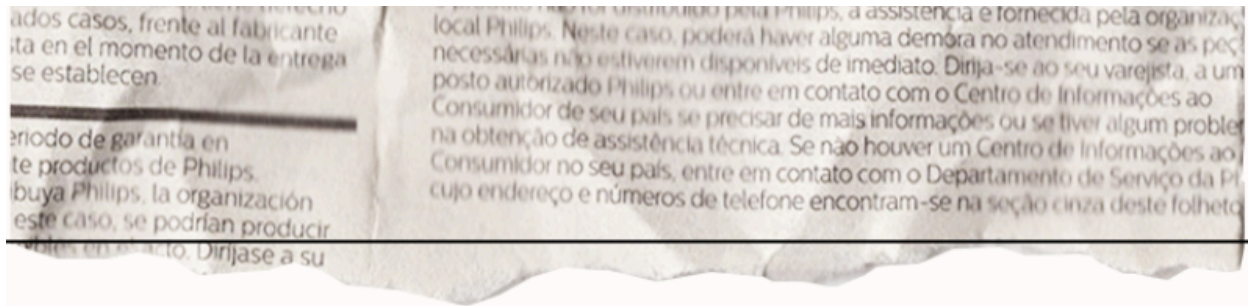
A New Hue of the Writing Center

Lexington's downtown has become home to over 50 art installations and murals in the past decade. The vibrant and imaginative art-splattered streets caught the attention of senior staffer Savannah Kinster. As an artist, Savannah was inspired by the bold colors and illustrations. She saw an avenue for community building and became eager to tackle the challenge of putting art into the public sphere. Savannah began her first self-directed public art project in the summer of 2024. Reflecting on her time at Transylvania, there was no place better than the Transylvania University Writing Center to house it.



Photographed is TUWC Senior, Philosophy, Politics, & Economics (PPE) and Studio Art double major, Savannah Kinster

The Writing Center, located in the basement of the Library and to the left of the Academic Center for Excellence, now houses Savannah's latest installation: a mural that takes up the entire back wall of our space. It has been a space for growth and connectivity through collaborative projects between the staffers and all who utilize it. When inspiration struck, Savannah directed fellow staffers, FE scholars, and faculty to implement her vision. The mural became a platform for participation by facilitating the project through the various campus communities in her life. As the creative director, she managed the budget, coordinated schedules, and designed the visuals. The mural's vibrant use of primary colors like red, yellow, and blue draws people into the space, catching their eyes as the first student-designed mural around campus.



At the heart of the mural sits a typewriter, a representative of the hand-made work the TUWC has highlighted through its practicum and sessions. The circle designs in their primary hues offer the audience a window into the TUWC experience. With a vibrant invitation, the space reflects the friendships and learning experiences through the space.

As noted by Godhe, when spaces are comfortable, safe, and supported, they reflect the thoughtfulness of the work done within. Utilizing the 8ft by 16ft wall, the mural has heads turning toward the TUWC. Stopping to admire the art, viewers leave with a new experience of the space. Reflecting on how art cultivates community, we “see what creativity can do when we feel motivated to write and pursue artistic practices,” said Savannah. In the Writing Center, she found a space where faculty and fellow staffers have inspired a better version of herself.

Transylvania University art professor Kurt Godhe - who offered consultation and support throughout the process - believes art fosters communities and communication in a world where life is group work. As noted by Godhe, when spaces are comfortable, safe, and supported, they reflect the thoughtfulness of the work done within. Fully utilizing the eight-by-sixteen wall, the mural has heads turning toward the TUWC. Stopping to admire the art, viewers leave with a new experience of the space. Reflecting on how art cultivates community, we “see what creativity can do when we feel motivated to write and pursue artistic practices,” said Savannah. In the Writing Center, she found a space where faculty and fellow staffers have inspired a better version of herself.

Creating the mural was a small way to give back to her community. And give back she did, for peer and faculty kids who put their handprints and names beside the mural. Extending the invitation for future communities to be engaged and leave their mark on the space of acceptance for all Transylvanians.



To the right, you can see the handprints of faculty and peer kids

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The designing, sketching, and painting process of the new TWC mural



Beyond the Page: The Impact of Collaborative Writing at the TUWC

At the recent 2024, International Writing Centers Association (IWCA), full-credit Practicum staffers presented their research on required tutoring partnerships and sessions. In an online session, over 10 Writing Center directors across the US were eager to learn from TUWC staffer's experience and analysis. Their study demonstrated that students required to visit the WC consistently outperformed their counterparts in-class writing assignments. For staffers involved, it became more than showcasing the importance of collaborative projects and conversations within liberal arts colleges. It became a reminder that the work happening in the TUWC is not only important to patrons but can also bring fulfillment into staffers' lives.

Over the Winter 2024 semester, a group of 11 staffers met each Wednesday, for decision-making, drafting, revising, and collaborating, each bringing something unique to the table. The practicum course explored the foundations of writing, drawing on a diverse range of fields like rhetoric, composition studies, and digital rhetoric, equipping staffers from across disciplines for their role as a peer-consultant.



Staffers and co-authors of *A Survey-Based Study Exploring Required Writing Center Visits at a SLAC*. To read the full article visit the TUWC site and click the research tab.



Seated is a staffer and patron during their session

Working within each other's approaches and styles of writing, "helped staffers understand and challenge their learning boundaries so they could leave them and grow", said staffer Caroline Host. The collaborative space alleviated the stigmas of group work, creating a comfortable environment to challenge and be challenged by others' ideas. The process created a community between the writers, each continuing to keep the ball rolling, said senior staffer Eve Brunell. This brought a sense of pride she had not expected in undergraduate, being "noticed and credited for her work." Inspiring confidence going into the future—whether in the

workforce or a graduate program, learning how self-sufficiency and feedback fuel meaningful creation.

The practicum course and approaches go beyond giving patrons answers, staffers are supplying a tool to uplift students' ideas. During sessions, staffers can't be prepared for every question, but the improvisation that comes in a session prepares them to continue looking to the future. Throughout the practicum course, staffers juggled their processes and collaborated in the writing and research process, grounding their training on the real impact their work has on their community.

Shaping a Culture of Writing, Scott Whiddon's Impact on the Transylvania University Writing Center



TUWC director and WRC professor Scott Whiddon

Coming to Transylvania, Scott Whiddon recognized the value of working with people who lead spaces that foster an all-inclusive campus community. When he was offered the TUWC director's position, it was a uniquely distinct job on campus which included designing the Writing, Rhetoric, and Communications major in 2006 in collaboration with other faculty members, and moving the Writing Center to the Library in 2017 to enhance its collaborative foundation. These decisions helped shape the culture of writing at Transylvania, establishing it as an "enhancer of creativity, moving the things we do toward hope" by utilizing the fortress of student-staffed support in the TUWC and ACE. By addressing the needs of Transylvania's faculty, staff, and students, the TUWC became a space dedicated to fostering creativity, collaboration, and community building.

Whiddon worked with faculty to recruit staffers from various majors, serving writers across backgrounds and disciplines—bridging diverse people, ideas, and skills to create connections that can be carried into their world post-graduation.

Working with WC directors from other small liberal arts colleges to rethink and formulate staffer development, Whiddon equipped staffers with the nuts, bolts, and ideology of the WC. The Writing Center and Practicum Course offers two courses, a half and full credit that run concurrently, introducing new staffers to various approaches and techniques. The full-credit course provides an avenue for staffers to share their work through undergraduate journals.

Following the leadership of the previous Writing Center director, poet, and activist Martha Garringer, Whiddon extended her welcoming nature to reach more students on campus. The Writing Center has implemented targeted programs designed to build confidence in service to diversity, equity, and inclusion for students. Our Writing Partnerships program each Fall semester, for example, allows 30-40 self-selected first years to work weekly with a staffer to strengthen writing skills and engage in the revision processes through individualized feedback. Whiddon designed and implemented a (Course Embedded Consultant) Program to better reach and meet the needs of first years. Select First-Year Research Seminar courses work with Scott and the Writing Center, assigning staffers who engage in class readings and assignments to follow patrons as many complete their first research essay.

The CEC program earned the Martinson Award for Excellence in Small Liberal Arts Writing Program Administration in 2018 and the Southeastern Writing Center Association Achievement Award in 2022. The Writing Center's accomplishments underscore the values of liberal arts education, cultivating an environment where outcomes become meaningful by engaging in difficult questions and learning what it means to be human.

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