

The Margins

The TUWC Alumni Newsletter

Winter '26

Editor- Dylan J. Howell



TO STAY ACTIVE IN THE TUWC COMMUNITY, PLEASE CONTACT SWHIDDON@TRANSY.EDU EMAIL TO SHARE FOND MEMORIES, PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND HOW THE TUWC HAS GIVEN YOU THE TOOLS TO WRITE YOUR LIFE POST-GRADUATION. FOLLOW THE TUWC INSTAGRAM @TRANSYLVANIAWRITINGCENTER TO GET UPDATES AND NEW POSTS REGULARLY.

Welcome to Volume 2/Issue 1 of The Margins -- A TUWC newsletter. For this issue, we wanted to spotlight some alums, current staffers, and faculty allies who help make this place special. We'd love to hear from alums -- what you're doing, writing/making, and more. We hope you enjoy this new issue!

wh **A** **t** **s**
N **E** **X** **T** ?

Keep up for updates about TU Alumni Weekend!!!

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Dr. Paden's: Writing the sides of the coin Academic and Creative Writings

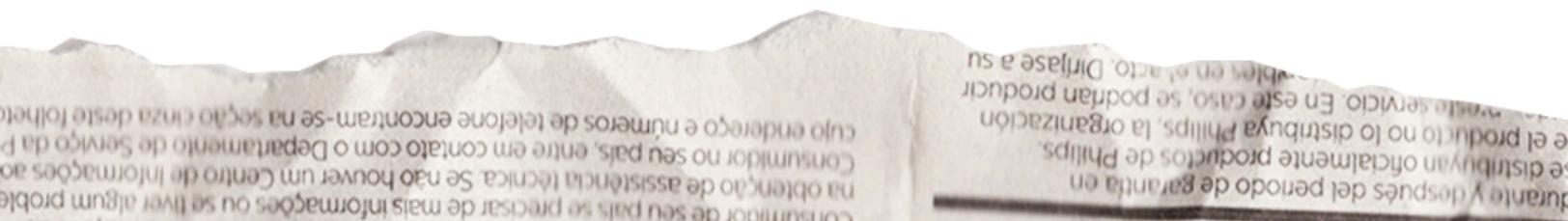
At the Margins, we like to spotlight Transylvanian professors who are supportive of student writers and are writers themselves. Last year, the Margins interviewed art historian Prof. Emily Goodman and visual artist Prof. Grace Ramsey. For the first issue of this academic year, we turn our eyes on Prof. Jeremy Paden – a Spanish professor and the Chair of Humanities at Transylvania University. His seventh book of poetry, *How to Recognize God's Chosen*, was released in August of 2025. The first poems that became a part of this work were written ten years ago. As Prof. Paden notes,

D r . J e r e m y P a d e n



“My book of poems that came out is an exploration of spiritual poetry. It is structured as a gospel. It’s a fragmented narrative through lyrical poetry, but it tells the narrative of someone who is referred to as God’s Chosen, or as the beloved, and when not referred to by either of those kinds of titles, is referred to with non-gendered pronouns. God’s chosen are the marginalized and society’s scapegoats. We have the beginning of the story all the way to the death of that character. You have this interaction between those who refer to themselves at times as the faithful, but who end up creating barriers for others, who end up also splitting and dividing among themselves and infighting.”

In his other works, Prof. Paden tends to focus on home or a search for home, while exploring Latin America, the cultural importance of food – as he does in his book *Prison Recipes*, or the 2010 mine accident in Argentina in his book *Ruina Montium*. In terms of process, Paden might not know what his core themes and ideas are at the beginning of a project; over time, though, he realizes that several poems focus on a centralized theme and then develops new work.

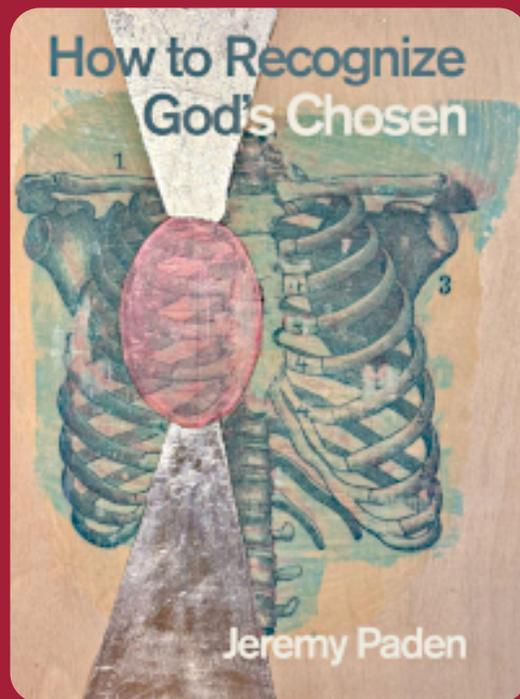


In regard to his academic works, he has a varied range: “My Ph.D. is in early modern, my doctorate itself was on the poetry and plays of Lope de Vega, who was a 17th-century Spanish poet and playwright. Contemporary of Shakespeare. And then Juana de la Cruz a Mexican poet and playwright, writing at the end of the 17th century. I’ve written on 16th and 17th-century travel literature, natural history, and poetry.” These fields of research and teaching focus make their way into his creative works: “I would say that this collection of poems, [World as sacred burning heart], it really is a kind of bringing together both of that creative and scholarly part of me, because these are all poems coming out of that engagement. In fact, most of my poetry also engages heavily with Latin America. This is [Prison Recipes] is Chile. This one, [Ruina Montium], is Argentina.”

Prof. Paden is an advocate for all things that fall under the umbrella of the humanities supporting academics and creatives of every sort at Transylvania University. Moreover, he is a believer in the value of supporting liberal arts education and living a life of the examined mind, and we’re grateful to have him as an ally and friend of TUWC.

Broken Tulips

Jeremy Paden



Consumidor de seu país se precisar de mais informações ou se tiver algum problema na obtenção de assistência técnica. Se não houver um Centro de Informações ao Consumidor no seu país, entre em contato com o Departamento de Serviço ao Consumidor e números de telefone encontram-se na seção cinza deste folheto.

durante y después del periodo de garantía en el producto no lo distribuya Philips, la organización e distribuyan oficialmente productos de Philips. Este servicio. En este caso, se podrán producir cambios en el acto. Diríjase a su

TRAVELIN' PRESENTERS: The TUWC at the IWCA

With a Travel grant won from WConline (our online scheduling platform), Caroline Host and I (with the guidance of Dr. Scott Whiddon) worked to craft a research presentation for the International Writing Center Association conference, showing the return rates of our biggest TUWC initiatives: Writing Partnerships and Course Embedded Consultation. This experience allowed both Caroline and me to further see the value that a school like Transylvania can provide.

Our Writing Partnership program (WP) has self-selected incoming first-years paired with a Writing Center staffer, who meet 6-8 times over the course of the semester to brainstorm, draft, and revise their work for FYS and other classes with writing assignments, as appropriate. Our CEC program has two TUWC staffers assigned to each CEC section of FYRS (there are typically 5-6 sections with CECs) to work closely with faculty and meet regularly with student writers. Most students in CEC sections meet with their assigned CEC 4-5 times.

Our findings show that these two initiatives, which show students the value of writing centers, entice nearly 40 percent of those students to come back for visits after they are done with required sessions. Caroline and I spent the first half of the fall '25 semester meeting once a week, in the writing center, with Dr. Scott Whiddon to work on a small part of the presentation; each week, we added another brick to the project – rethinking sources, considering data, crafting slides, and more.



Caroline Host and Dylan Howell
with Deepti Dhir from WConline

It was a slow and meticulous process; however, before long, we had written a complete research presentation. The experience of presenting this paper was stressful at first – as both of us are still new to presenting original work to professionals in the field. However, it was a joy to present our findings to a packed house of academics and scholars.

Doctor Kerri Hauman, who is over the FYS and FYRS programs, had this to say about the findings: “As for the findings from y'all's presentation, I'm very excited to dig into these numbers more and to look at them again once we have the numbers for Winter 2026. Certainly, we can already see that the return rates for students who had a WP are higher than for students who had a CEC. This likely makes sense, as I assume the return rate of WPs is at least partially due to the fact that they are in FYRS the next semester. These are numbers I'm hoping we'll be able to look at more closely to see if the assumption I just made is correct. I'm also hoping that we will pass a proposal for a Vertical Curriculum that would change the way we offer Writing Intensive courses, which I think could affect the return rate we see for students after their first year/FYS and FYRS.”

This experience is only the latest peer-reviewed presentation written by the TUWC; it is a committed multi-articled project concerned with the effects of return rates to Writing Centers and demystifying the work we do. We're pleased to be part of this long running story of TUWC-driven undergraduate scholarship – yet another way our program contributes to Transy's culture of learning.



Dylan Howell and
Caroline Host
working on grant
funding for the IWCA

Photo By
Dr. Scott Whiddon

An Equine Writer: Erika Williams, writing after the TUWC

At the Margins, we enjoy highlighting the work that TUWC alums are doing. For this issue, we're featuring Erika Williams ('25). Erika is a writer, an English major, a horse enthusiast (as is shown in the accompanying picture of her with her horse Troy), and the winner of the Judy Young Gaines student writing award for 2025. She now works at the Keeneland library in the horse industry as a writer. We interviewed her to learn about what she's doing in her career.

Q: What is it that you do now?

A: I work for Keeneland Library, which is the Lexington's racetrack's library, and the largest repository on the Thoroughbred racehorse. I'm the research services associate at Keeneland Library.

Basically, I help the Library run by doing whatever it needs—largely, researching information for patrons and connecting them to helpful materials, or inventorying, cataloging, and putting away new collections the Library's been given or managing existing collections, as well as greeting Library visitors at the front desk and giving them information, building panels for the Library's traveling exhibition, and dressing up as Keeneland's mascot, Buckles, for a children's storytime event. I end up doing something different every day, but it's always something fun. After all, Keeneland Library combines my two passions—horses and books—so it's the perfect place for me! Right now, one of my big projects is indexing a photo collection from the early 1900s. It's taught me to recognize a lot of racehorses from 1904 on sight!

Q: What sort of writing are you asked to do?

A: Most of the writing I do on a daily basis is aimed at relaying information—either through email, reporting to patrons what I've found through research, or through creating indexes or inventories, so that future researchers have a guide to finding what they want out of papers or photos. However, I've had more creative writing assignments than these! In the past, I've researched and written up fun facts about Keeneland's history for employee newsletters.



Q: What parts of your writing center experience has most helped you in this field?

A: That experience has really helped me in both the personable and knowledge parts of my job. I get exposed to a lot of different people through the visitors to the Library; it's my job to make sure that those who come through its doors find any guidance or information they need from me, as well as receive my best effort to make sure they have a good time while getting what they need or want. I also end up reading, writing, editing, and otherwise working with a lot of different styles of writing.

Erika Williams
With her
horse, Troy
Photo Taken by
Jill Williams

Q: What aspect of writing center work has surprised you as being the most helpful?

A: I never had doubts that the entire Writing Center experience would be helpful, but an aspect I did not expect to use as much is the learned skill of communicating to people who are coming from a background where they may not know much of anything of something you know and have a vocabulary for. It's a skill to figure out how knowledgeable people are—whether it's about horse racing or writing, and to make sure the information you're giving isn't being lost in a jumble of lingo the other person doesn't know or through assuming knowledge that they don't have. And just like at the Writing Center, I love the chance to teach people about what I love!

Q: What other skills do you use for this work?

A: I get to use my research skills every day. Now, I get to use it almost solely for horse-related research. I also get to do a lot of organization, something I love, whether it's of knowledge or physical books. And I get to use my horse knowledge in practical ways almost every minute on the clock. Basically, I use some of my favorite skills in practical ways that I know have purpose. But even more than skills, what I love is that every single day, I get to use my passions—for horses and books—and I get to learn more about them and preserve the avenues for others to do the same in the future.

A note from TUWC Director,

Scott Whiddon:

Hi! Hope y'all are well!

Thank you for reading the latest issue of The Margins – a TUWC alumni outreach project in collaboration with Natasa Mongiardo and the Alumni and Development Office. The Margins began as a senior seminar project by Josie Grant ('25) and is now led by TUWC Senior staffer Dylan Howell ('26).

It's an exciting time in TUWC. Last semester, we not only maintained high quality one-on-one writing support but also led a number of campus writing initiatives. With our friends in Chemistry and Biology, we supported over 30 students applying to medical post-graduate programs via our 4 week workshop series on personal statements; we also supported 15 first year students on a weekly basis via our Writing Partnership program – co-led by FYS director/WRC professor Dr. Kerri Hauman. Both programs showcase what we're best at: active listening, collaborative learning, bringing people together in the service of making things.

And for this semester, we're focusing on our Course-Embedded Consulting (CEC) program, which places two TUWC staffers in select sections of First Year Research Seminar (formerly known as "FLA II" for all you OGs). We had a fantastic pre-semester workshop led by Dr. Pam Bromley of Scripps College; her research in creative partnerships between writing centers and classroom spaces has been cited dozens, if not hundreds of times, and she's a long time ally of our program. This year's CEC cohort will support over $\frac{1}{3}$ of this year's first year class. We're pleased to have good help from our friends down the hall in the Bingham Center for Teaching Excellence, too!

And, we're training a brand new group of staffers – with majors ranging from art to psychology and everything in between. We've established a reading group focusing on Gen AI and writing centers – collaborating with campus leaders such as Dr. JJ Wallace and TU librarians and national level writing center directors such as Dr. Beth Towle (Salisbury). And, we're looking ahead to ways we can play a bigger role in campus life, too, especially in these challenging times for higher education.

Which leads to a quick request: we'd love to hear from ya – what you're doing, what you're making, what you're writing, and more. It's been a real joy featuring TUWC alums, current TUWC staffers, and TU faculty via The Margins; if you'd like to be part of our updates, just drop a quick line to me at swhiddon@transy.edu.

And finally, and most importantly: thank you.



For being a part of TUWC's story.

For all the work you did to support other writers in your time as a staffer – whether that was decades ago, or days ago.

For reading our little newsletter and staying in contact with our little program in a basement.

There's no TUWC without you, and it's a joy to begin my 20th year at Transy serving students and staffers alike.

all smiles,
scott
